



Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Aquifer District Declares Stage II Alarm Drought

On July 12, the District's Board of Directors declared Stage II Alarm Drought, because the 10-day average discharge at Barton Springs, one of the District's two drought trigger sites, has passed below the Stage II Alarm Drought threshold of 38 cubic feet per second. Lovelady monitor well, the District's second drought-trigger site, is less than a foot above its drought threshold (water level elevation of 478.4 feet above mean sea level) and is expected to cross below the threshold later this week. Only one of the two drought stage triggers needs to be reached for a drought declaration to be made.

The last groundwater drought declaration ended on January 29, 2015—over three years ago. Recharge associated with years of above average rainfall has helped maintain water levels in the area aquifers until recently. Since May of this year, both flow at Barton Springs and the water level at the Lovelady monitor well have been declining. Recent rainfall has not generated the runoff needed to sustain creek flow in the creeks and rivers that recharge the aquifers.

Declaration of Stage II Alarm Drought requires all District's permittees to implement mandatory measures specified in their User Drought Contingency Plans to meet monthly pumpage reduction requirements. All permittees must achieve at least a 20% reduction in monthly pumpage. Permittees with conditional permits have to reduce use even further. End-user customers served by water utilities on groundwater wells are required to comply with their utility's water use restrictions for this drought stage. Generally, restricting outdoor water use, including limiting landscape irrigation, pool filling and refilling, and non-essential water use such as water fountains, is sufficient to reach monthly pumpage targets for Stage II Alarm Drought. August is the first month that permittees will need to meet reductions in pumpage.

Useful links:

- Drought Status page: <http://bseacd.org/aquifer-science/drought-status/>
- Press Release archive: <http://bseacd.org/publications/press-releases/>
- Drought Management page: <http://bseacd.org/regulatory/drought-management/>
- Water Conservation & Protection page: <http://bseacd.org/education/water-conservation/>

BSEACD is a groundwater conservation district charged by the Texas Legislature to preserve, conserve, and protect the aquifers and groundwater resources within its jurisdiction, which includes parts of three Central Texas counties. It is governed by a Board of five elected directors and staffed with hydrogeologists, groundwater regulatory compliance specialists, environmental educators, geospatial systems specialists, and administrative support personnel.

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