

Friday, August 5, 2016

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Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District

Hays County Commissioners Approve Funding to Jointly Fund Groundwater Monitoring

On Tuesday, August 2 the Hays County Commissioners Court approved an interlocal agreement to partner with the District and jointly fund efforts to extend the District's groundwater monitoring network into the previously unmanaged portion of Hays County. The District has collaborated with adjacent groundwater districts to characterize and monitor water levels and water quality in the Trinity Aquifer in Central Hays County through the cooperation of area landowners allowing access to their existing wells.

With the help of Hays County, the District will--for the first time--be able to install a dedicated monitor well in this new area of the District. To date, staff have worked with landowners to establish 7 continuous monitoring sites that use existing wells. This funding will support installation of a dedicated multiport monitor well that will allow hydrogeologists to measure conditions in each separate layer of the aquifer.

Multiport monitor wells have proven to be essential in tracking water quality and water levels in other portions of the District. The water level data will help provide a better understanding of how the individual layers of the aquifer interact and respond to recharge from rainfall and drawdown from drought and pumping. The data collected will provide the basis for preserving groundwater quality and protecting existing wells from the effects of pumping from adjacent wells. With growing demands on the Trinity Aquifer, such precise monitoring will help to support informed decision making and better management of the shared groundwater resource.

In the coming months, the District will collaborate with Edwards Aquifer Authority, Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District, and Hays County to implement the first phase of the project which is expected to be completed by the end of 2018. More updates to follow...

EP Aquifer Test on the Horizon

District staff is completing the review of the Electro Purification (EP) Test Well Applications submitted on 3/15/16. The deadline for administrative completeness of the application is 9/11/16.

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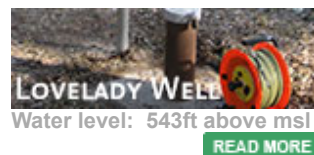
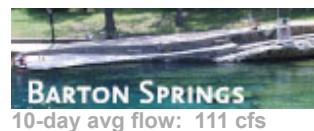
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Current Drought Stage: **NO DROUGHT**

The District uses two drought triggers to manage pumping and coordinate conservation.



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formal aquifer test that will be used to support a future production permit request. EP currently has six test wells constructed and is proposing to test three of those wells for approximately 5 days each. The overall test will be conducted at a rate to support a future production volume of 2.5 million gallons per day. Prior to aquifer testing, the three test wells will be developed then equipped with temporary instrumentation, packers, and pumps that isolate the target production zone (Cow Creek Formation).

District staff will coordinate with the applicant to monitor approximately 20 wells surrounding the pumping wells. The monitor wells were chosen to vary in location and in aquifer zone completion. Water levels will be monitored before, during, and after the well is pumped to measure baseline aquifer conditions, drawdown, and recovery (respectively). To augment the seven District continuous monitor sites, District staff will make spot measurements at additional key wells and the applicant will monitor the three other EP test wells.

The applicant has worked closely with District staff to develop a plan that meets District requirements. The volume pumped, pumping duration, and aquifer response in surrounding wells will be analyzed by staff, and test results will be evaluated through future Hydrogeological Reports and analysis. Results from this aquifer test will be used to inform a production permit decision.

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Onion Creek Study - Next Steps

Results from almost two years of study on Onion Creek surface water and groundwater interactions will be published and presented at the 66th annual Gulf Coast Association of Geological Sciences meeting held in Corpus Christi in September.

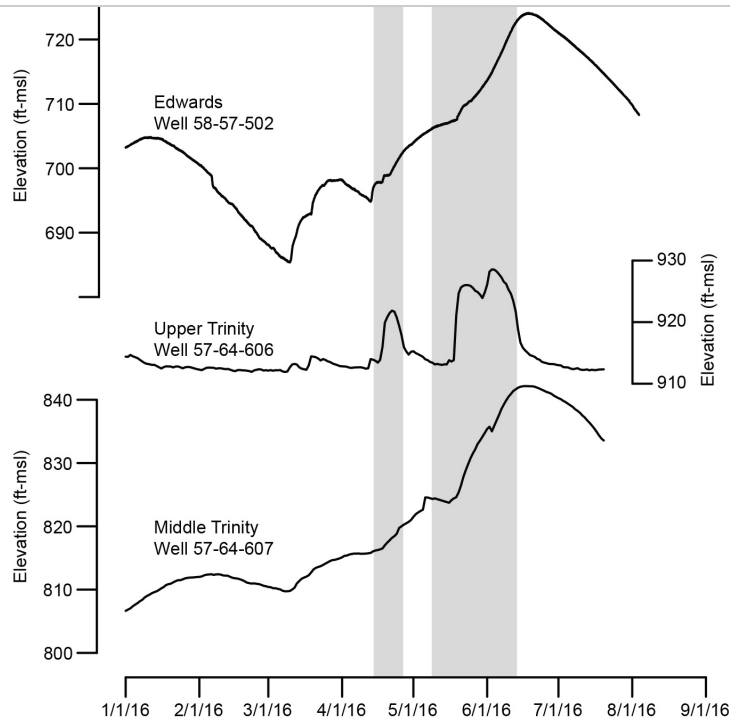
This study is a continuation of work that focuses on the Trinity Aquifers with the ultimate goal of understanding the pathways and interconnection of surface and groundwater. Results of the study demonstrated that portions of upper Onion Creek and south Onion Creek are providing recharge to the Middle Trinity aquifer. This was a new finding that challenged previous conventional wisdom.

These results have direct implications to water availability of the Middle Trinity Aquifer in Hays County, and also to planned wastewater discharges in Onion Creek. The next phase of the study will be designed to help refine the pathways of water flow from the recharge zone. Those activities will include more flow and water level measurements, mapping recharge features in the creek bed, and dye tracing. Studies are anticipated to begin Fall 2016.

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Water Levels Declining

Central Texas enters August with none of the area in drought conditions. This is directly the result of the wet winter and spring of 2015-2016 leading to some near-historic rainfall totals and high surface-water and groundwater levels. Groundwater levels in the Edwards and Trinity Aquifers reached their peak elevations in mid-June, and are now declining with the lack of rain in much of central Texas. The figure illustrates the rise and fall of aquifer levels in three wells in central Hays County for 2016.



As we enter a typical dry and hot Texas summer we are seeing the natural hydrologic response to those changing conditions--dropping water levels. The outlook from the Climate Prediction Center for the next few weeks calls for above-average temperatures and lower than average chances of rainfall. We are fortunate to have the high water-level conditions as we may enter La Niña conditions this fall and winter, which can result in drier than normal conditions.

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Upcoming Events, Meetings, & Deadlines

Thurs., Aug. 11: **BSEACD Board Meeting** ([details](#))
Thurs., Aug. 18: **BSEACD Board Meeting**
Thurs., Sept. 1: **Permittee Meter Readings Due**
Thurs., Sept. 8: **BSEACD Board Meeting**
Thurs., Sept. 22: **BSEACD Board Meeting**

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