

Thursday, May 5, 2016

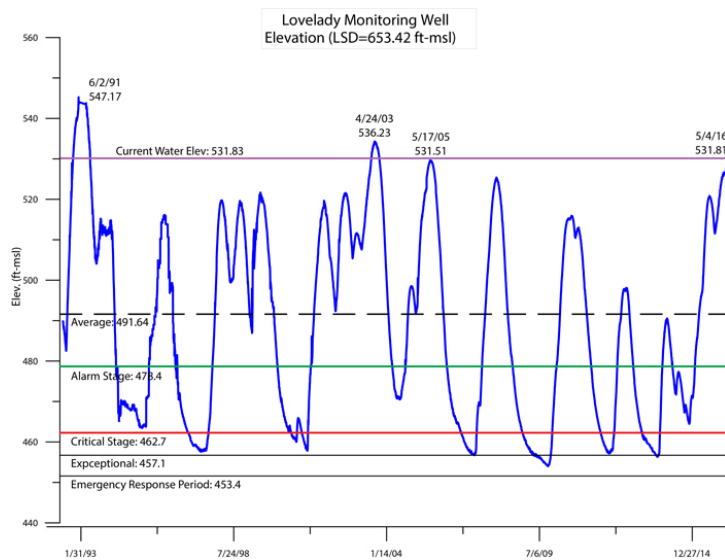
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Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District

Aquifer Status

The graph shows the groundwater level elevation at the Lovelady monitor well from 1991 to the present. The Lovelady well is one of the District's drought index wells (in addition to flow at Barton Springs). The graph illustrates that over the past two decades there have been dramatic peaks and critical lows. Due to the recent wetter-than normal rainfall in the region, the groundwater-level elevation in the Lovelady well has reached 531.8 ft-msl. This elevation is well above the average of 491.7 ft-msl. The current levels are similar to peak measurements taken at Lovelady 11 years ago in May of 2005 (531.5 ft-msl), and higher than levels reached in 2007 (the 3rd wettest year on record for the region). Barton Springs is also flowing at very high rates of greater than 100 cubic feet per second (cfs), also above it's average levels of ~53 cfs.



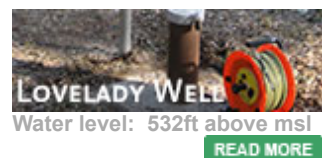
Climatologists attribute the wet conditions to a surprisingly strong El Niño phenomenon in 2015-16, which has already delivered 11 inches of rainfall this year—in addition to the high rainfall in 2015. Only time will tell if the stronger phenomenon this year will continue the trend of increasing Lovelady measurements beyond 2005 levels.

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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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likely approach significant drought conditions in 2016. However, after the creeks stop flowing, we know water levels will begin their usual decline.

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Well Water Checkup Recap

This year's Well Water Checkup and Ask-An-Expert Open House was a great success. District staff screened 58 well water samples from Edwards and Trinity wells for nitrate, salinity, pH, and bacteria.

There were a large number of well samples that came back positive for bacteria. This could be due to the exceptionally wet winter and spring. Runoff from rain events can wash bacteria from the surface into the groundwater system. Because the Edwards and Trinity Aquifers recharge so quickly, the District recommends well owners use basic treatment for drinking water (such as a filter and UV light) if there are any concerns about water quality.

Some of the samples analyzed did contain detectable quantities of nitrate, but all were below the maximum concentration of 10 parts per million (ppm) deemed acceptable for drinking water by the EPA. All nitrite results were below the EPA standard of 1 ppm.

Total dissolved solids (TDS) in water is analogous to salinity. Edwards Aquifer wells traditionally have TDS values between 250-400 ppm; Trinity Aquifer wells have higher variability and generally range from 500-1600 ppm.

Results from this Well Water Checkup are a good estimate of general water quality in your well. If you ever notice a change in color, taste, or smell, you should have your well water analyzed by an accredited lab. A list of local water quality labs and the District Well Owner Guide is available [here](#).

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District Rule Changes Approved

At the April 28th Board Meeting, the District Board of Directors took action to adopt rules changes. The rule making process was formally initiated in January 2016 as part of an ongoing effort to implement House Bill 3405, which annexed new area in Hays County, and to better equip the District to manage prospective large-scale Trinity Aquifer water projects. There was a 20-day public comment period to provide an opportunity for rule review and to submit comments or formal protests on the proposed rules. A public hearing was held on March 24th and the Board delayed action on adoption of the rules to consider the entire set of comments received from the public. The proposed rule changes were further modified to address the public comments submitted and to better clarify the process and intent of the rules.

The recently adopted rules focus overall on:

- Management strategies that will protect existing wells and preserve the long-term availability of water supplies from the Trinity Aquifer;
- Aquifer test, notice, and monitoring requirements for large-scale groundwater projects; and
- Establishing a policy and permitting framework for a science-based evaluation of the potential for unreasonable impacts to existing wells and the aquifer and requirements to avoid or mitigate for such impacts.

Once finalized, the adopted rules will be available on the District's website along with the District's formal Response to Comments

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TCEQ Rule Petition

On March 14, 2016, the City of Austin submitted a rule making petition to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). The petition asked the state environmental regulatory agency to consider modifying regulations for wastewater disposal by land application by adding a new optional method to reduce the amount of land and storage that may be required when permittees also have firm demand for beneficial reuse. The proposed rules were developed with input from a broad group of regional stakeholders. On April 22, 2016, the TCEQ Executive Director recommended approval of the petition to initiate rulemaking with additional stakeholder involvement. The TCEQ Commissioners will make a final decision on the rule making petition at their regular meeting on May 11, 2016.

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Permitting Update

The District's territory was expanded on June 19, 2015 through the passage of House Bill 3405 and well owners with an existing nonexempt use were immediately provided a 3-month period to apply for a Temporary Permit. The Temporary Permits were issued in September and October and provided well owners with an interim authorization to operate a well prior to conversion to a Regular Historical Production Permit.

At the April 28th Board Meeting, the District Board of Directors held a public hearing to approve 14 of the Temporary Permits for conversion to Regular Production Permits. There was a 20-day public comment period to provide an opportunity to submit comments or formal protests on proposed approval of the permit conversions. No comments were received and the Board approved all 14 permits as Historical Production Permits (13 Trinity, 1 Austin Chalk).

The following is the list of the approved Permits

	Annual Volume	Well Owner (Permittee Name)		Annual Volume	Well Owner (Permittee Name)
1	100,000	SWTX Pentecostal Church of God	8	750,000	St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
2	100,000	Las Lomas HOA	9	1,000,000	Wimberley Glassworks
3	180,000	Rolling Oaks Club Inc	10	1,000,000	St. Mark's Episcopal Church
4	240,000	General Telephone Southwest	11	1,200,000	First Christian Church
5	490,000	Hays City Holdings	12	2,000,000	Log Cabin Plaza
6	800,000	Tindol Restaurant Group LLC	13	2,000,000	Chuck Nash (Austin Chalk)
7	500,000	St. John's Catholic Church	14	2,000,000	Texas State University - Freeman Ranch

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Director Precinct Redistricting Process

Last year's legislation (House Bill 3405) extended the District's boundary to include shared territory with the Edwards Aquifer Authority in Hays County. To allow fair representation, the Board must redistrict the existing five precincts to include this new area. They have begun the process and selected several options for public comment. The comment period began at the April 28th Board meeting. Written comments will be accepted until close of business May 9. Oral comments can be made at the May 12 Board meeting.

Illustrative Plans and an overview of the process are available [here](#).

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- Thurs., May 12: **BSEACD Board meeting** ([details](#))
 - Thurs., May 26: **BSEACD Board Meeting** ([details](#))
 - Mon., May 30: **Office closed for Memorial Day**
 - Wed., Jun. 1: **Permittee meter readings due** ([details](#))
 - Thurs., Jun. 16: **BSEACD Board Meeting** ([details](#))
 - Jun. 21-23: **Groundwater to the Gulf training** ([details](#))

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