



The Texas Water Journal Forum

HISTORY OF THE EDWARDS AQUIFER DISPUTE A View From the Trenches

Tuesday, January 20, 2015, 9 a.m.-4:15 p.m.

11th floor, JC Kellam Building, Texas State University, San Marcos

Hosted by Texas State University's Department of Geography and
The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment

This day-long forum will focus on the early years of the almost 60-year conflict over the use of the Edward Aquifer. Featuring many of the prominent players from the dispute, the forum will provide an opportunity to create and preserve a living oral history on the one of the nation's most protracted and acrimonious water disputes.

The forum is free for those not wanting lunch, and registration is \$40 for the forum with lunch and parking. Registration is required for all attendees and is available on Texas State's Department of Geography's website at <http://www.geo.txstate.edu/>. If you require accommodations due to a disability to participate, please contact 512-245-2170 at least 72 hours in advance of the event.

Speakers:

- **Sen. Ken Armbrister**, Texas Senate and former Director of Legislative Affairs for Governor Rick Perry
- **Luana Buchner**, Edwards Aquifer Authority Chairperson; former Medina County Underground Water Conservation District General Manager
- **Robert Gulley**, Texas Water Journal (TWJ) Editor and former Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan Executive Director and former Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Plan Program Director
- **John Hall**, Environmental Defense Fund's Texas State Director Of Clean Energy; former Texas Water Commission Chairman

- **Sen. Glenn Hegar**, Texas Comptroller-elect
- **Stuart Henry**, Counsel for the Sierra Club in *Sierra Club v. Babbitt* and *Sierra Club v. City of San Antonio*
- **Russ Johnson**, McGinnis Lochridge & Kilgore Partner; Counsel for the City of San Antonio in *Sierra Club v. Babbitt* and *Sierra Club v. City of San Antonio*
- **Ken Kramer**, Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter former Director
- **Weir Labatt**, Western States Water Council Chairman; former Texas Water Development Board Member; former San Antonio City Council Member
- **Rep. Lyle Larson**, Texas Representative
- **Rep. Doug Miller**, Texas Representative; former Edwards Aquifer Authority Chairman and former New Braunfels Mayor
- **Robert Puente**, San Antonio Water System's Chief Executive Officer and President; former Texas Representative
- **Peter Schenkan**, Graves Doughert Hearon & Moody Partner; Counsel for the Sierra Club in *Sierra Club v. Babbitt* and *Sierra Club v. City of San Antonio*
- **Charlie Shockey**, former U.S. Department of Justice Senior Trial Attorney at the in *Sierra Club v. Babbitt* and *Sierra Club v. City of San Antonio*
- **Michael J. Spear**, former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regional director
- **John Specht**, former Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority General Manager from early 1970s until 1994
- **Todd Votteler**, TWJ Editor-In-Chief and Executive Manager Of Science, Intergovernmental Relations And Policy, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority; former Special Master for Judge Lucius Bunton in *Sierra Club v. City of San Antonio* and Assistant to the Court Monitor Joe Moore in *Sierra Club v. Babbitt*
- **Bill West**, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority General Manager since February 1994

Background: From the 1950s to 2013, the City of San Antonio and downstream environmental and agricultural interests in the Edwards Aquifer region were locked in a bitter struggle over the aquifer's use. Stakeholders made serious attempts to resolve the conflict; however, too many disparate interests, too much historical baggage, and too few effective tools existed to achieve lasting resolution. In 1991, the Sierra Club filed a lawsuit in federal court to ensure protection of the threatened and endangered species. The lawsuit resulted in the creation of the Edwards Aquifer Authority in 1993. The litigation actively continued for another four years and included an attempt by the federal court to take control of the aquifer. The turmoil over the use of the aquifer subsided but did not go away until the stakeholders reached agreement on a consensus plan for protecting eight federally listed species dependent on spring flow from the Comal and San Marcos springs and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved the plan in 2013. With the approval of that plan, the region may find the certainty regarding the use of the Edwards Aquifer that had eluded it for almost sixty years.

The Texas Water Journal is an online, peer-reviewed journal devoted to the timely consideration of Texas water resources management and policy issues from a multidisciplinary perspective that integrates science, engineering, law, planning, and other disciplines. It also provides updates on key state legislation and policy changes by Texas administrative agencies. The Texas Water Journal is published in cooperation with the Texas Water Resources Institute, part of Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M University.

