Summary of Public Comments Received

GMA-9 Public Meetings
Kerrville, Monday June 21, 2010
Boerne, Wednesday June 23, 2010
Dripping Springs, Thursday, June 24,2010

Written Comments Interpretive Tally Sheet (45 Submissions)

DFC	Edwards Group
No net increase in average drawdown through 2060	14
No more than a 9' increase in average drawdown through 2060	0
Declare the Edwards Group "not relevant" for all or part of GMA 9	1
No Specific DFC Recommendation	30

DFC	**Trinity Aquifer**
No net increase in average drawdown through 2060	25
No more than a 20' increase in average drawdown through 2060 (Scenario 5)	6
No more than a 30' increase in average drawdown through 2060 (Scenario 6)	0
No more than a 40' increase in average drawdown through 2060 (Scenario 7)	4
None stated, but comments trending toward no net increase in average drawdown through 2060	3
None stated, but comments trending toward 20'-30'-40' increase in average drawdown through 2060	0
Other Recommendation (% of rainfall, recharge, spring flow, etc.)	3
No Specific DFC Recommendation	4

Dear GMA 9 Members:
I am a long time resident of nearly 30 years in Hays County.
For the entire time, I have conserved water when I witnessed Mandola's, the Saltlick, Plum Creek, Sierra West etc waste water.
Last summer I lost my well water supply for the first time.
I oppose any additional drawdowns and I think it is urgent to reconsider the impact of any new development that can jeopardize current well owners.
In particular, the development of housing developments, wineries or industries that will demand high water usage. In the case of new development, rain collection and conservation is not enough to warrant unrestricted new development.
As a community we have the opportunity to safe guard the future for current residents without inviting catastrophic water shortages and new growth. Let's get real about Jacob's Well running dry...this is not about politics, it is about rights of landowners already here. We don't need to encourage growth, but we need to control it.

I am a SMRF member and here is our statement.
The current pumping (which is described as 2008 pumping) is having a great impact on the Trinity Aquifer, the wells of landowners, and the springs the aquifer provides to keep the hill country alive. The Texas Water Development Board's computer models already show that current pumping is drawing it down 35 to 40 feet, at rates of 1 to 2 ft. per year. This is only a general estimate for the average of the whole aquifer region of many counties. It is much worse in some areas, as evidenced in the short drought in recent years, when many wells went dry. The aquifer cannot take increased pumping, nor any further drawdowns of the aquifer level, so we urge the GMA 9 to keep the current pumping numbers as the Desired Future Condition. Do NOT choose the ADDITIONAL 20, 30 or 40 foot options you are considering for future drawdowns. Study what local impacts are first, to be SURE current well owners will have water before you give it away to others. And additionally if this 2008 pumping or "current" pumping is allowed to continue with the steady draw-down of the Trinity, groundwater districts need to educate people about water conservation and rain collection year-round, and also immmediately set up water conservation stages triggered during the dry times to keep current residents' wells from going dry and to preserve baseflows in springs. This is only sensible, and we hope you will agree this is the right thing to do for current well owners AND your communities which depend on the Trinity. Abuse of this treasured and somewhat renewable resource will only harm the people you represent in your elected office, and harm future generations as well, in a wide circle that reaches far beyond your districts. We are depending on you to make this critical decision intelligently.

Regards,
Dr. Martha Meacham

From: William C. Ward

Subject: Written comment on GMA-9 desired future conditions

The geologic map used in the TWDB's groundwater modeling is missing an important outcrop area of the Edwards Limestone (Ft. Terrett Formation) in southwestern Kendall and southeastern Kerr Counties. This is the rock (aquifer) that provides the headwater springs of Cibolo, Big

Joshua, Little Joshua, Ranger, and Frederick Creeks in Kendall County and Privilege, Bear, and Pipe Creeks in eastern Bandera County. Surely these creeks play a major role in recharge in parts of Kendall, Kerr, and Bandera Counties. If this area of Edwards outcrop was omitted, does this mean that the effects any regional drawdown will have on the springs and creeks mentioned above will be unknown?

Perhaps of less significance is that a regional north-south geologic cross section used in the preliminary reports on the latest TWDB modeling has no relation to reality in the portion representing northwestern Kendall County and Gillespie County.

These uncertainties about the geology used in the modeling along with poor data on spring flow, water budgets of the streams, and delineation of recharge areas would seem to require that GMA-9 take the most conservative approach to allowing future pumping from the Trinity and the Edwards-Trinity Aquifers. The science is not yet there to support any but the most cautious course.

Sincerely,

William C. Ward
26328 Autumn Glen
Boerne, TX 78006

Please do not allow anymore pumping out of the Trinity aquifer. The current levels are high enough. Thank you for your time on this.

Teresa Smetzer and family

Dear GMA 9 Members:

TWDB models already show that current pumping is drawing down the Trinity Aquifer 35 to 40 feet, at rates of 1 to 2 ft. per year! This estimate is much worse in some areas. During the short drought in recent years, many wells went dry. The aquifer cannot take increased pumping--how long before the water is no longer drinkable?

Please keep the current pumping numbers as the Desired Future Condition. Do NOT choose the extra 20, 30 or 40 foot options you are considering. Shouldn't you be SURE current well owners will have water before you give it away to others.

Groundwater districts need to:
-educate people about water conservation and rain collection year-round

-immediately set up water conservation stages triggered during the dry times.

This is the right thing to do for current well owners and YOUR communities that depend on the Trinity. Represent the people you were
elected to serve. We are depending on you.

Thank you,
Guy Dore'
San Marcos

To Whom It May Concern,

I wish to express my opposition to any increase in pumping limits from the Trinity Aquifer. Even if current drawdown limits are retained, future population growth in our area threatens the viability of the aquifer. Imagine the impact on property values as wells go dry. Please adopt regulations that encourage conservation.

Thank you,
Paul Murray
San Marcos

The current pumping (which is described as 2008 pumping) is having a great impact on the Trinity Aquifer, the wells of landowners, and the springs the aquifer provides to keep the hill country alive. The Texas Water Development Board's computer models already show that current pumping is drawing it down 35 to 40 feet, at rates of 1 to 2 ft. per year. This is only a general estimate for the average of the whole aquifer region of many counties. It is much worse in some areas, as evidenced in the short drought in recent years, when many wells went dry. The aquifer cannot take increased pumping, nor any further drawdowns of the aquifer level, so we urge the GMA 9 to keep the current pumping numbers as the Desired Future Condition. Do NOT choose the ADDITIONAL 20, 30 or 40 foot options you are considering for future drawdowns. Study what local impacts are first, to be SURE current well owners will have water before you give it away to others. And additionally if this 2008 pumping or "current" pumping is allowed to continue with the steady draw-down of the Trinity, groundwater districts need to educate people about water conservation and rain collection year-round, and also immmediately set up water conservation stages triggered during the dry times to keep current residents' wells from going dry and to preserve baseflows in springs. This is only sensible, and we hope you will agree this is the right thing to

do for current well owners AND your communities which depend on the Trinity. Abuse of this treasured and somewhat renewable resource will only harm the people you represent in your elected office, and harm future generations as well, in a wide circle that reaches far beyond your districts.

We are depending on you to make this critical decision intelligently.

Judith M Telford

Dear GMA 9 Members:
The current pumping (which is described as 2008 pumping) is having a great impact on the Trinity Aquifer, the wells of landowners, and the springs the aquifer provides to keep the hill country alive. The Texas Water Development Board's computer models already show that current pumping is drawing it down 35 to 40 feet, at rates of 1 to 2 ft. per year. This is only a general estimate for the average of the whole aquifer region of many counties. It is much worse in some areas, as evidenced in the short drought in recent years, when many wells went dry. The aquifer cannot take increased pumping, nor any further drawdowns of the aquifer level, so we urge the GMA 9 to keep the current pumping numbers as the Desired Future Condition. Do NOT choose the ADDITIONAL 20, 30 or 40 foot options you are considering for future drawdowns. Study what local impacts are first, to be SURE current well owners will have water before you give it away to others. And additionally if this 2008 pumping or "current" pumping is allowed to continue with the steady draw-down of the Trinity, groundwater districts need to educate people about water conservation and rain collection year-round, and also immmediately set up water conservation stages triggered during the dry times to keep current residents' wells from going dry and to preserve baseflows in springs. This is only sensible, and we hope you will agree this is the right thing to do for current well owners AND your communities which depend on the Trinity. Abuse of this treasured and somewhat renewable resource will only harm the people you represent in your elected office, and harm future generations as well, in a wide circle that reaches far beyond your districts. We are depending on you to make this critical decision intelligently.
R,
Mike Sloane (MLS and KLS)

COMMENT: GMA-9 MEMBER DISTRICTS
DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS

By

Mike Mecke
Kerrville, TX

It seems the destiny of Texas is to grow. We are exploding in population from within, and from outside. All together it is a very serious picture in a once rural dominated state, which for the most part, has limited water resources. Much of the growth is occurring along or west of I-35,

which is a region known for frequent and severe droughts. The Hill Country is where vegetation and climate from the East meets the drier West and the deserts beyond. I believe a high percentage of new and younger Texans in GMA-9 came here from wetter regions, big cities or from out of state. At least, that seems to be true in Kerr County where I live. Most did not grow up during or endure the Drought of the Fifties as many older native Texans did. That very intense, seven to ten year drought (depending upon where you lived) was a "character builder" and a severe trial for Texas farmers and ranchers, although city dwellers suffered too. Just refer to our Texas "bible" for those times by the late, great Elmer Kelton entitled "***The Time it Never Rained".***

Across much of GMA-9, growth and expanding population, home building and adding new business seem to be the goals of most city officials, city councils and the development community. This viral disease has seized the Hill Country due to its beauty, climate, clear and cool rivers and a convenient location to major cities. We are in the process of possibly destroying what many came here to enjoy and appreciate. The quickest way to damage the GMA-9 region is to dry up its water supplies by extended over-pumping of groundwater and ignoring or down-playing possible effects in a worst case scenario.

Many areas of the Hill Country cannot handle a lot of growth simply because there are not the water supplies to support those populations, especially with a severe "drought of record" event. Too many came to these counties and towns from areas that had ample, reliable rain and plenty of cheap water. Just turn on the faucet! These new folks now want their homes and towns to resemble those wetter areas, by reproducing large lush green lawns, parks and golf courses. There is little or no understanding of a term that is familiar to ranchers called "*carrying capacity"*. On a working ranch or in a pasture, it means "How many animals, including livestock and wildlife, can be present without damaging the desired vegetation." In good years and in drought these numbers will be adjusted to fit the conditions. I think towns, cities, counties and regions also have a carrying capacity for people. Sure, we supplement food by having the neighborhood grocery stores and we can often bring in **some** nearby water supplies or build another reservoir. How do we manage many more people once in place in GMA-9? Is drilling more wells into the same aquifer the answer? Isn't that more straws into the same glass of water? Where is a good reservoir site left in or near GMA-9? There are none.

So, what would Future Conditions in a drought of record do to the area where you live? For many it would be a disaster for springs, creeks and rivers affecting groundwater as well. I live just off of Town Creek northwest of Kerrville and last summer the creek stopped flowing several times. That drought was not anywhere near the length or severity of the Fifties Drought and we do not have 2060 population numbers yet. Wells and springs would also be affected, due to reduced aquifer recharge and lowered communication (interactions) between surface waters and the aquifers. It is not uncommon for rivers to lose and gain water from a shallow aquifer beneath them and vice versa. This is often important for both types of water resources.

Our region relies heavily upon groundwater to produce springflows which create our creeks, which develop into our rivers. Springs and creeks are vital also for ranching enterprises, wildlife and recreation business in GMA-9. Some area towns depend upon springflows to provide drinking water for residents. About half of Texas' springs have disappeared since the fifties. Can we afford to develop Future Conditions pumping levels which could or would, deplete groundwater supporting our county's precious springs during **any** scenario? I think to do so would be irresponsible planning and management of our resources.

All pumping is critical. We have no meters or good pumping data on Exempt Wells – a huge mistake statewide. Should we only have meters and limits on large commercial users in

Kerrville, Boerne or elsewhere – forgetting the thousands of urban homes using the same water supplies? That would not make sense either. They all can add up to the same thing – depleted aquifers, dried up springs and low river flows. This is especially true as the recent two year drought revealed. What would happen to our wells, springs, creeks and rivers if the Drought of the Fifties happens again and we are at the projected 2060 level? With increased use and widespread pumping by many more people, the effects will be rapidly felt and much more severe.

I ask the members of GMA-9 to gather all the data possible, factor in the projected populations, use the Drought of Record and very conservative calculations and planning process to arrive at safe DFC projections.

Thank you for your time, efforts and concern for our region.

Mike Mecke
Natural Resources Manager & Water Specialist – Retired
1701 Silver Saddle Dr.
Kerrville, TX 78028
830/896-0805
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Blog: http://ranchmagazine.com/water/

June 23, 2010

GMA 9 Public Meeting Boerne

Frances Lovett, 6749 Highway 27, Comfort, TX, 78013 Eastern Kerr County

Thank you to the Ground Water Management Area 9 Board for the opportunity to provide comments on the Desired Future Conditions of our aquifers. As a citizen who has attended many regional meetings as well as my local groundwater district meetings I appreciate your contribution to this process including your uncompensated time, stress and the wrangling you have endured.

I have struggled to understand the science of models, GAMS and MAGS. I have heard nothing from this scientific data which contradicts my own neighbor's observations, history or common sense. I am a long-time landowner dependent upon a well. My land lies along the Guadalupe River and includes riparian acreage.

For the Edwards Group of the Edwards-Trinity Plateau I support no net increase in average drawdown through 2060. I disagree with the position of my own Headwaters Groundwater Conservation District position that the Edwards is "not relevant" for their part of the GMA 9 for the following reasons.

Kendall county has proven conclusively the outflow from the Edwards in southeastern Kerr is a main source of flow for the Cibolo, their lake and the city of Boerne water supply

The premise that the HGCD no longer allows new well drilling in the Edwards is encouraging but no accurate data on exempt well pumpage or even unregistered/unknown old wells in the county exists. The impact of this pumping on spring and river flow during a drought such as the 1950's is indeed relevant. Accounts from local residents who were here to observe

the 50's drought are dismal. Consider the increased pumpage from the Edwards since then i.e. the last 50 years.
Certainly Edwards levels, spring flow and river flow is relevant to landowners along the river who depend on shallow alluvial wells as their only source of water. I have such a neighbor.

For the Trinity Group of Aquifers no more than a 20 ft increase in average drawdown by 2060 is preferred for the following reasons.

The USGS has identified the Kerrville to Comfort corridor as a high stress area at risk during periods or drought. One of the worst in the state. Well owners and well drillers in this area will verify the Trinitys in this area are already at risk with low production and dry wells. The aquifer impact of the area gravel mines heavy use of groundwater in their operations needs study.
We do not know whether there may be co-mingling of aquifer water with Aquifer Storage Reservoir water. Kerrville is completing its third ASR and the UGRA is planning an ASR in the Center Point area. ASR owners can pump until the ASR is empty but what if they are also pumping comingled Trinity water?
Kerr County has many Public Water Supply Systems who have had minimal input to date. A very important question one of them recently raised was the water's ancient age and poor quality from some of their Lower Trinity wells.
We have had very little discussion of population growth.

The GMA 9 has repeated frequently that the DFC's are open for review and revision as science improves and conditions warrant. Members have suggested a 2 yr timeframe but a 5 year review is mandatory. Certainly a beginning of no drawdown from the Edwards and minimum drawdown from the Trinity would allow for each groundwater district to take a responsible position on future DFC's and inform their own citizens. As the Bexar board member recently stated 'the elephant in the room is always pumping.' I would hope that within a 2 or 5 year time frame Kerr County led by the Headwaters Groundwater District could have that discussion. I know the usual suspects who are on record threatening our Board with a citizen's revolt when any comprehensive water plan is discussed do not represent the majority of Kerr County residents. I am optimistic that an informed electorate could facilitate this process statewide.

Frances Lovett
210-416-9109
wflovett@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Fieseler,

As a property owner in Blanco County I would like to express my opinion about GMA 9. Very simply put, the "Future Desired Condition" should be **No Increased Drawdown.**

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Weldon Yates

Weldon M. Yates,
P.O. Box 1838, Johnson City, Texas 78636

Ron,

Here is the written version of my oral comments last night in Boerne.

These are my personal remarks and not the official position of BCRAGD.

The elephant in the room is when are we going to run out of water and what will we do when it does?

GMA-9 has put three "scenarios" out for public comments. All three are for increases in pumping.

Nobody's well nowhere in GMA-9 will see a rise in level because of increased pumping.

How much your well level goes down due to increased pumping varies considerably depending on where you live. Thus it is very misleading to talk about "average" aquifer drawdown. The "average" comes from summing up areas which will see little drawdown with areas that will see drawdown several times the "average." Count on this. Everybody's well level will go down, at least some, with increased pumping. It's only a question of how much. If you had well problems during last year's drought, then your problems will only be worse when the next drought comes around.

The most recent GAM runs do not include drawdown maps that illustrate the variation of drawdown from the average overall drawdown. But previous GAM runs did. Such maps are very useful for visualization of drawdown variation over the expanse of GMA-9 and illustrate my point in the previous paragraph.

In certain areas an "average" drawdown over all of GMA-9 of, for example, 40 feet will result in widespread drastic drops in well levels. Depending on the thickness of the aquifer this may occur to the point where the aquifer will become completely dry in certain places. The areas most impacted are those with a high concentration of pumping.

Nobody's spring nowhere in GMA-9 will see an increase in flow because of increased pumping.

The story on springs is similar to the story for wells. Whether your spring will see reduced flow or even dry up due to increased pumping depends very much on where you live. Count on this. The spring that ran when you were a child and has now dried up is not coming back.

Droughts will occur and must be dealt with as they happen. With increased pumping the impacts of drought will be increasingly more frequent and more severe.

The explanation of Bill Hutchinson's technique behind the most recent GAM runs was woefully inadequate and confusing. Bill employed what is generically labeled "Monte Carlo" analysis. "Monte Carlo" is a technique that employs probability to model systems where one of the model imputs varies in a probabilistic manner, in this case the variable input of rainfall. A large number of model runs are made, each with a different rainfall input, and with the particular rainfall amount being determined at random but following a probability distribution. Thus most runs will have input rainfall close to the annual average while other, and fewer, runs will have input rainfall closer to observed extremes. When you plot the frequency of occurrence of

particular model output results, the results will show a probability distribution that mimics the probability distribution of the variable input. There will be a clustering of results around an average, with fewer occurrences at the extremes. You can characterize the probability distribution of the results in different ways. There is always an average that corresponds to average rainfall. There will be a 5% exceedance number which represents a model result, for example drawdown, which in the large number or model runs was exceeded one out of twenty times. Likewise a 95% exceedance represents a model result which was not exceeded nineteen out of twenty times. But it is very misleading to only look at the overall characteristics of the probability distribution of the model results. The best understanding, certainly for the layman, comes by looking at the complete frequency plot of the model results. Bill did not include such plots with the latest GAM runs, not did he include an explanation of the "Monte Carlo" technique that he used. This has led to extreme confusion among the public. I suggest that GMA-9 have Bill provide, by way of a presentation, those two missing bits to allay at least some of the confusion and misunderstanding.

And there is another aspect to the elephant in the room, one that was alluded to last night. It is quite possible, even likely, that once a total pumping number for 2060 is established and then the projected 2060 exempt pumping is subtracted that the result, the "regulatory MAG," will be less than current permitted pumping. This would say that there will be less room for permitted pumping in 2060 than today because of growth in exempt pumping and because, on the bottom line, we don't have much water.

Because of all these consequences of increased pumping GMA-9 need be very conservative in setting the management targets for total pumping. This would be conservative in the sense of conserving our aquifers and springs. Further it is much easier to increase management targets than to reduce them, especially as the targets get fossilized in permitted pumping amounts. Less increase is of course more conservative than more pumping. In my mind the pumping levels of Scenarios 6 and 7 are not just less conservative but are downright reckless. I suggest that GMA-9 adopt a management target pumping of no more than the pumping of Scenario 5. I am very concerned that the 33% increase of Scenario 5 may not be near conservative enough, but I believe that political considerations will preclude adoption of a lesser increase.

Finally I strongly suggest that the Edwards Group aquifer not be deemed non relevant. The practical effect of a non relevant Edwards Group would be to take the Edwards Group outside the joint planning process of GMA-9. Bandera and Kendall Counties are strongly dependent on Edwards Group springs as the headwaters for major streams in the two counties. Bandera and Kendall Counties and all the other GMA-9 players very much need to keep their seats at the GMA-9 table for the setting of Edwards Group DFCs.

Regards,
Lee

Lee Kneupper

(Follow-up email…….)

Ron,

It appears to me that GMA-9 has lost focus on the real task at hand.

The combination of pumping/drawdown/spring flow is an inseparable triad. Pumping is the only one of the three that GMA-9 can do something about, i.e. the only one of the three that is actionable by GMA-9. Drawdown and spring

flow will be the consequences of action taken by GMA-9 and its component GCDs to manage pumping.

Thus GMA-9 should focus on the question of what is the management target for total groundwater pumping in GMA-9 in 2060, river basin by river basin and aquifer by aquifer and GCD by GCD? Because a reduction in total groundwater pumping is not, it appears, on GMA-9's table this question reduces to what is the management target **increase in** groundwater pumping in GMA-9 between now and 2060, river basin by river basin and aquifer by aquifer and GCD by GCD?

The discussion of estimated current and future exempt pumping is a distraction. That discussion goes to the issue of who will do the pumping, something that matters not a wit to the aquifers and springs.

The discussion of the impact of our variable rainfall is secondary to the main question that GMA-9 should answer. GMA-9 can take no action that will influence rainfall. Droughts will happen and must be dealt with as they occur. This is a matter for drought management to address.

Regards,

Lee

Lee Kneupper
377 Johns Road
Bandera, TX 78003
830 796-3999

Dear GMA 9 Members:

The current pumping (described as 2008 pumping) is already impacting the Trinity Aquifer, private wells, and the springs throughout the hill country that arise from the aquifer. The Texas Water Development Board's computer models have demonstrated that current pumping is drawing the aquifer down 35 to 40 feet, at rates of 1 to 2 ft. per year as a general estimated average for the aquifer region. Some areas are more drastically affected which was demonstrated as wells dried up in the recent short drought over the last two to three years. Increase pumping and drawdown of the aquifer would be devastating to individuals and communities and aquatic habitat dependent on the aquifer and springs.

Please keep the current pumping numbers as the Desired Future Condition. Do not select the additional 20, 30 or 40 foot options under consideration for future drawdowns. Thorough studies of local impacts must be conducted and understood first, to ensure current well owners will continue to have water before addtional pumping is allowed, and that spring-dependent habitats are preserved.

In light of drawdowns already occurring with current conditions, please consider an outreach and education campaign to inform the public about water conservation and rain collection year-round, and also construct and implement provisions for water conservation stages to be triggered during the dry periods to keep current wells from drying up and to maintian baseflows in springs.

Please help preserve our precious water resources as you represent in your elected office. Do not harm the constituents and communities you represent.

Sincerely,
Susan Meckel
Hays County resident

Dear Ron, thanks for facilitating the meeting tonight. Here are my comments:

1. September 24th the US Riparian Team from Oregon are coming to the Helotes Creek Nature Center (info@helotescreeknaturecenter.org) to facilitate a 4 day workshop and study of area creeks and rivers. They said that Texas is one of the worst states for failing to capture and conserve water…all those gullies, all those flood events, and all that lost water. In addition, they said Texas is known for allowing the exploitation-for-profit of our aquifers (Ogllala and Edwards) and for pollution our creeks and rivers.

So, here we are, debating allowing the exploitation of our groundwater for profit.

2. The April 2010 issue of National Geographic magazine is devoted 100% to water issues. In this issue on page 32, it says that 97% of the entire planet's water is salt-water, 2% is locked up in ice on the Arctics, and 1% is all we have for our drinking and farming. It behooves us to protect it.

3. In Maverick county, where our family has ranched for over 80 years, Shell Oil has paid our 10,000 acre neighbor $1,000,000,000 (billion) for a shale hydro-fracturing drilling project which uses billions of gallons of water that will be extracted from new wells which are exempt and unknown to the data-collectors drafting the draw-down data, how many wells and extracted water is unknown and not accounted for in the data being used to make very important decisions?

4. My family supports zero drawdown.

We support gathering real and complete data (including exempted and un-regulated wells) for the GMA runs.
We support protecting ALL springs and ALL springs species.
We support aiding landowners to build small dams and other riparian features that protect and conserve our water.
We do NOT support the exploitation-for-profit of our water.
We support limiting development and population growth until the infrastructure and water can support it.

Either we conserve our water and natural resources, or fate and nature will take it away from us.

Thank you, Myfe Moore

June 21st, 2010

GMA 9 Member Districts:

The Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Desired Future Conditions (DFC) in Groundwater Management Area 9 (GMA-9). We also gratefully acknowledge the amount of time and energy that you have devoted to this important process.

Over the last few years, our organization, along with numerous other organizations and stakeholders, have advocated that the DFC selected for this area be based on an informed evaluation of pumping impacts to aquifer outflows during drought of record conditions. Given the nature of the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) aquifer system, almost any groundwater pumping will have an impact on aquifer outflow, so it is imperative to have a full understanding of how existing pumping and proposed pumping impact outflows over time, especially during droughts.

The most recent GAM run (Draft GAM Task 10-005) prepared by the Texas Water Development Board provides insight into these impacts. Through the inclusion of over 400 years of tree-ring data, the impacts of drought on existing and proposed pumping in the region can be evaluated.

The Task Report notes that the impact of pumping 60,000 acre-feet reduces spring and base flow about 33,000 acre-feet on average, and increasing the pumping amount to 92,000 acre-feet corresponds to an additional 14,000 acre-feet reduction. But this statement fails to highlight the fact that at *current levels of pumping*, aquifer outflows *during drought* (95% exceedance) are already reduced 26,000 acre-feet. And with a proposed pumping rate of 92,000 acre-feet, aquifer outflows to river and springs during drought would be reduced by more than 39,000 acre-feet annually, an amount equal to about 55 cubic feet per second.

Evaluating county-level results in the Task Report also highlights the impacts from current and proposed levels of pumping. Model output shows that at current levels of pumping in Comal County, baseflow nearly ceases during drought, and will likely reverse direction of flow with any additional pumping. Model output for Kendall County predicts that increasing pumping levels to 92,000 across the region during drought could result in baseflow reductions greater than 30 percent from existing average levels. One need only recall the images of a dry Guadalupe River at Spring Branch last summer to realize the impacts of reduced upstream baseflow in Kendall and Kerr Counties.

An additional area of concern relates to outflows across the Balcones Fault Zone to the Edwards Aquifer. Existing pumping has already reduced average outflow by more than 25,000 acre-feet. Increasing pumping to 90,000 acre-feet would further reduce this amount during drought by 23,000 acre-feet. For comparison, the total recharge to the Edwards Aquifer (within the Edwards Aquifer Authority Boundaries) was about 44,000 acre-feet in 1956.

The determination of Desired Future Conditions by GMA9 has far reaching implications. Outflows from the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer provide critical baseflow to area rivers and streams during drought, as well as provide additional water supplies to the Edwards Aquifer. Any reductions in outflows will be detrimental to these resources and will likely undermine efforts related to the Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program and the Guadalupe/San Antonio River environmental flows process.

Current levels of pumping are already having significant impacts on outflows from the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer. Given the repeated public comments calling for the protection of baseflow in GMA 9, and given the importance of these outflows to critical water resources in the region, we urge members of GMA 9 to adopt a Desired Future Condition for the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer that resembles the current conditions of the aquifer.

Thank you,

Tyson Broad
Research Associate
Lone Star Chapter, Sierra Club
512-477-1729

Dear GMA 9 Members: The current pumping (which is described as 2008 pumping) is having a great impact on the Trinity Aquifer, the wells of landowners, and the springs the aquifer provides to keep the hill country alive. The Texas Water Development Board's computer models already show that current pumping is drawing it down 35 to 40 feet, at rates of 1 to 2 ft. per year. This is only a general estimate for the average of the whole aquifer region of many counties. It is much worse in some areas, as evidenced in the short drought in recent years, when many wells went dry. The aquifer cannot take increased pumping, nor any further drawdowns of the aquifer level, so we urge the GMA 9 to keep the current pumping numbers as the Desired Future Condition. Do NOT choose the ADDITIONAL 20, 30 or 40 foot options you are considering for future drawdowns. Study what local impacts are first, to be SURE current well owners will have water before you give it away to others. And additionally if this 2008 pumping or "current" pumping is allowed to continue with the steady draw-down of the Trinity, groundwater districts need to educate people about water conservation and rain collection year-round, and also immmediately set up water conservation stages triggered during the dry times to keep current residents' wells from going dry and to preserve baseflows in springs. This is only sensible, and we hope you will agree this is the right thing to do for current well owners AND your communities which depend on the Trinity. Abuse of this treasured and somewhat renewable resource will only harm the people you represent in your elected office, and harm future generations as well, in a wide circle that reaches far beyond your districts. We are depending on you to make this critical decision intelligently.

L. Laszewski

Dear GMA 9 Members: The current pumping (which is described as 2008 pumping) is having a great impact on the Trinity Aquifer, the wells of landowners, and the springs the aquifer provides to keep the hill country alive. The Texas Water Development Board's computer models already show that current pumping is drawing it down 35 to 40 feet, at rates of 1 to 2 ft. per year. This is only a general estimate for the average of the whole aquifer region of many counties. It is much worse in some areas, as evidenced in the short drought in recent years, when many wells went dry. The aquifer cannot take increased pumping, nor any further drawdowns of the aquifer level, so we urge the GMA 9 to keep the current pumping numbers as the Desired Future Condition. Do NOT choose the ADDITIONAL 20, 30 or 40 foot options you are considering for future drawdowns. Study what local impacts are first, to be SURE current well owners will have water before you give it away to others. And additionally if this 2008 pumping or "current" pumping is allowed to continue with the steady draw-down of the Trinity, groundwater districts need to educate people about water conservation and rain collection year-round, and also immmediately set up water conservation stages triggered during the dry times to keep current residents' wells from going dry and to preserve baseflows in springs. This is only sensible, and we hope you will agree this is the right thing to do for current well owners AND your communities which depend on the Trinity. Abuse of this treasured and somewhat renewable resource will only harm the people you represent in your elected office, and harm future generations as well, in a wide circle that reaches far beyond your districts. We are depending on you to make this critical decision intelligently.

Alicia A. Taylor

Dear Managers,

I fully agree with the findings of the San Marcos River Foundation on protecting our aquifer and keeping our community healthy. I have already had 2 pecan trees die in my yard and cannot even imagine the effect on our community if more and more trees die. This is Texas and we will have drought so we absolutely must conserve water in our aquifer. Please support our community. I agree with following statement by the San Marcos River Foundation:

"The aquifer cannot take increased pumping, nor any further drawdowns of the aquifer level, so we urge the GMA 9 to keep the current pumping numbers as the Desired Future Condition. Do NOT choose the ADDITIONAL 20, 30 or 40 foot options you are considering for future drawdowns."

Thank you,

Kay Hetherly

Presentation at GMA 9 Meeting in Dripping Springs, June 24, 2010

My name is Al Broun. I am a professional geologist working as a volunteer with the Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District. We have been studying the Trinity Group Aquifers in some detail over the past five to seven years. I am also a 16-year resident in Dripping Springs and tonight I speak for myself.

Parents and grandparents have a way of telling people how wonderful their kids are. "My little Herby is the best looking piano player in first grade." Counties and Groundwater Districts are not that far behind the proud parents. A call with a familiar ring may be: "Our district is special and needs special consideration." Here in western Hays County we're no different than the rest except for the fact that **we really are special**. For years the Hill Country Trinity has played a supporting role in aquifer priorities for the State. We're the "Contributing Zone" for the Edwards, not the recharge zone for the Trinity. Now however, when you consider projected growth and demand, we have a full-blown study that must be completed by September first or else. Or else what?

The TWDB MAG models work well for large areas – Central Texas for example. They break down in my opinion, when trying to evaluate a small area or a small Groundwater District.

The Hays County Trinity Group aquifers are heterogeneous, karstic and relatively thin. When a model lumps the section, applies homogeneous averages and examines the aquifer with standard reservoir properties, it may err in detail. During last year's drought, water levels dropped by as much as 125 feet in Hays County and scores of families lost their wells. With a minimum saturated thickness and a lowered potentiometric surface, our aquifers are vulnerable.

The Upper Glen Rose is no longer a viable aquifer in the District with the exception of the area southeast of the Balcones Fault Zone. The last three wells drilled in the District found the Lower Glen Rose dry; the Cow Creek was also dry in one of the wells. The Cow Creek remains our most reliable aquifer and the porosity is limited to the upper carbonate interval. The Lower

Trinity clastic aquifer is dependant on favorable rock type that can vary from property to property.

My professional opinion is that until we have a MAG run with smaller cell sizes and are able to utilize the local geotechnical data, we should not accept any drawdown; not 40, not 30 and not 20 feet. Although we should move forward cautiously there is no need to panic. Hays County has sufficient groundwater for managed growth if combined with surface water, rainwater collection, conservation and common sense.

Mr. Fieseler:

Please accept this e-mail as my input on the GMA 9 alternatives under consideration.

I was present at the meeting on June 24 at the Dripping Springs City Hall. Listening to the public comments, I was reminded of the dilemma described as "the tragedy of the commons," in which a shared public resource is destroyed when individuals using that resource pursue their own self-interests. Surely, that is the situation facing ground water in most parts of Texas today, especially in fast-growing areas like Hays County.

Because there is so much variation in the location, distribution, depth and availability of ground-water resources, like the majority of the speakers at last night's meeting I urge you to adopt no new drawdowns for the Trinity Aquifer for the following reasons.

There are clear indications right now that another La Nina is forming, which is known to turn off our rainfall for who knows how long. Although the GMA is revisited every five years, that schedule is not flexible enough to adapt to this quick-changing condition, which produced an unusually harsh two-year drought from 2007 to 2009, contrasted with a weak El Nino that occurred in the preceding months and produced 58 inches of rainfall. During years not influenced by either condition, Texas usually experiences a temporary drought every summer when a large high-pressure system forms overhead and pushes away conditions -- even hurricanes -- that cause rain.

Evidence has shown that drought increases the drawdown of any aquifer as ground water is used to replace rainfall. The springs and shallow surface flows of the Blanco River are all connected to our ground-water resources, which are not only our only water supply but also our livelihood. Any more drawdown of the aquifer, whether by choice or from drought, has an especially adverse impact on us in Wimberley and our tourist-based economy. As part of the Colorado River watershed, Dripping Springs and northern Hays County have access to surface water not available to us in the Guadalupe-Blanco watershed, and their economy is not dependent on tourism.

When the Hays-Trinity Ground Water Conservation District was under different management, we could count on knowledgeable board members to protect the resource during the most recent drought, and they made difficult decisions toward that end that were not popular but necessary. Now that the district has new management with less

experience, I have little confidence this will happen again. For these reasons, I ask you to be conservative, consider the conditions unique to western Hays County and for the time being adopt no new increase in average drawdown for the Trinity Aquifer by 2060.

Thank you for your consideration,
Alice Wightman

200 Rim Road
Wimberley, Texas 78676
512-847-7461

I am concerned about the affect of pumping on our aquifers at this time of huge growth predictions for Central Texas and increasingly warmer average temperatures that are being recorded world wide. I understand that computer models show water level reductions of 1-2 ft per year for the Trinity! As a current central Texas resident, I am very concerned that this rate is unsustainable. Allowing additional pumping will only make things worse and should be off the table. Please proceed with all due caution! Our children's future health and well being depends on it.

--
Ann Jensen
1724 W McCarty Lane
San Marcos, TX 78666
ann@bookways.com

Thank you for the opportunity to address the representatives of GMA #9

I was going to show you all a bunch of maps and graphs, but due to the limited time and size of the crowd, I'll spare you that punishment. Instead, I'd just like to make three points.

Most people in Hays Co get their well water from the Middle Trinity Aquifer. Within the Middle Trinity, there are generally two sweet spots where most of the water comes from. One is the bottom of the Lower Glen Rose Formation and the other is the upper portion of the underlying Cow Creek Formation. The two are separated by the Hensel Formation which is 20 or 40 feet thick.

Last summer, water levels were such that the Lower Glen Rose, the upper sweet spot, was essentially dry which is why hundreds of wells went dry in the County. Water level monitoring in Western Hays indicates under current pumping conditions, we are drawing down the aquifer a over two feet per year on top of what declines would occur in a drought and on top of addition drawn down as is contemplated by GMA #9 and the HTGCD. Another 20 or 30 feet of drawdown and the Middle Trinity is out of the water supply business which would cause undue hardship of the residents that depend on the aquifer.

Second, maintaining current water levels in the Middle Trinity in the vicinity of Jacob's Well is critical to maintaining the spring and Cypress Creek. Based on water level monitoring data collected by the Hays Trinity, a 2-4 feet drop in water levels, or 2-4 feet of drawdown, Jacob's Wells stops flowing and Cypress Creek dries up. Other than the environmental impacts, it has been estimated if Cypress Creek dries up, there will be between an $88 to 162MM taking of

property values along wet Cypress and a 30-50% reduction in tourist business in Wimberley according to a recent study by RSI.

People have often asked me how much water can we pump. I think the answer is pretty clear. If you want to maintain a viable Middle Trinity Aquifer and keep Jacob's Well flowing, we are at that limit today. Jacob's Well has dried up twice and almost three time in the last ten years. The water levels in the middle Trinity, especially during drought, are approaching the bottom of the sweet spots.

Therefore I urge GAM #9 and the HTGCD to consider the environmental and economic hardships that happen if the selected DFC results in any significant amount of additional pumping. As chronic water shortages become more frequent, property values will fall and development cease.

Lastly, the TWDB estimates for exempt well pumpage aren't even close. The TWDB estimate of exempt well usage in 2010 is 1450 ac-ft. In 2009, the TWDB sent the Hays Trinity their estimate of irrigation use for the HTGCD which was 843 ac-ft for 2008. Agri-Life estimates another 53 ac-ft used for livestock in 2008. Subtracting 843 and 53 from 1450 leaves 554 ac-ft for over 6000 exempt residential wells or 82 gallons per day per well. The TWDB estimates 100 gal/day/capita, so the exempt usage for residential wells is off by two thirds.

I urge the HTGCD to quickly put together a committee to address this issue, develop reasonable estimates and submit them to the TWDB.
Thank you
Doug Wierman
GMA #9 Hearing 6/24/10

Subject: Input for DFC Alternatives

I favor allowing no more than a 40 ft increase in average drawdown by 2060. I also support the joint position statement on groundwater ownership of the TX Farm Bureau; TX Wildlife Association and the TX & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association.

Mike Coble

Subject: Input for DFC Alternatives

I favor allowing no more than a 40 ft increase in average drawdown by 2060. Furthermore, I support the joint position statement on groundwater ownership of the Texas Farm Bureau, Texas Wildlife Association, and the Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association.

Kathryn R. Allen
300 Hurlbut Road
Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Ron,

Just wanted to let you know that I and others were pleased with the fine manner in which you presented and moderated the GMA 9 public hearing this week.

The two camps were obvious but the data is clear---on the whole we are overpumping in the Hays County Trinity with the exception of a couple of sweet spots that make folks say, "What's the problem?"

The development folks don't want to admit there is a water problem associated with linear projections of population growth. The evidence is clear now that our water problem is serious and the Aquifer has reached its capacity of pumping in most areas here in Hays County. If folks want to fix their leaks and conserve on how much water they use daily, then perhaps the Aquifer can support a few more folks---except in drought. The fair and sensible course is to adopt a no additional pumping approach until science can refine that policy on a location by location basis.

Thanks again for how you handled the meeting. Very professional and instructive.

Charles
HaysCAN

Dear Mr. Fiesler

I am in favor of keeping the drawdown for GMA area #9 at its current (2008) level.

I write this to you as a resident of Hays County and, although I am not speaking for the Drippings Springs Planning and Zoning Commission, as a 4 year member of that commission.

Thank you,
Ted Lehr

I have been referred to you to voice my deep concerns about the amount of limited water we have in our aquifers and the need for strict guidelines to limit the amount that is pumped out. I have lived in Wimberley for many years and I find it horrifying that there is so little control on the amount of water that can be taken out of our precious water supply. Developers, who are usually interested in making their money and running out, cannot be the ones making the decisions on something as important as our water. We our lucky enough to live in a beautiful place and it is attractive because of the water. Please help us keep it as pristine and as plentiful for the future.
Thank you.

Christine Haney

Dear GMA 9 Members: The current pumping (which is described as 2008 pumping) is having a great impact on the Trinity Aquifer, the wells of landowners, and the springs the aquifer provides to keep the hill country alive. The Texas Water Development Board's computer models already show that current pumping

is drawing it down 35 to 40 feet, at rates of 1 to 2 ft. per year. This is only a general estimate for the average of the whole aquifer region of many counties. It is much worse in some areas, as evidenced in the short drought in recent years, when many wells went dry. The aquifer cannot take increased pumping, nor any further drawdowns of the aquifer level, so we urge the GMA 9 to keep the current pumping numbers as the Desired Future Condition. Do NOT choose the ADDITIONAL 20, 30 or 40 foot options you are considering for future drawdowns. Study what local impacts are first, to be SURE current well owners will have water before you give it away to others. And additionally if this 2008 pumping or "current" pumping is allowed to continue with the steady draw-down of the Trinity, groundwater districts need to educate people about water conservation and rain collection year-round, and also immmediately set up water conservation stages triggered during the dry times to keep current residents' wells from going dry and to preserve baseflows in springs. This is only sensible, and we hope you will agree this is the right thing to do for current well owners AND your communities which depend on the Trinity. Abuse of this treasured and somewhat renewable resource will only harm the people you represent in your elected office, and harm future generations as well, in a wide circle that reaches far beyond your districts. We are depending on you to make this critical decision intelligently.

Thank you Ida Miller

Ron

My name is Stuart Barron I am the Water/Wastewater Manager for the City of Kerrville. I will not be able to attend the GMA 9 Public Hearing but I want to give you the City of Kerrville projected growth rate. So the GMA could consider them while setting the ground water pumping limits.

The City of Kerrville's ten year historic growth average is 1.7% a year. The City has adopted a comprehensive plan that shows our population 35,000 in 2027 and 42,000 in 2047. Our currently population is 23,600. If you extrapolated out to 2060 using these numbers the City of Kerrville will almost double for a total population 48,500.

The Region J Water Plan shows the City of Kerrville population growing to 29,545 people and increase of 21% by 2060. I know there is a big different in these two numbers. I believe we should use the historical data and plan on doubling our population and pumping needs in the next 50 years.

Another question that has not been answered is which wells are the drawdown readings going to be taken from?

If the GMA sets an area wide draw down of 40 feet, does every Groundwater District get only 40 feet of drawdown, or do they get their area allotment for the 40 foot drawdown scenario?

Thanks for your time.

Stuart Barron
Water/Wastewater Manager
City of Kerrville
800 Junction Hwy|Kerrville, TX | 78028
(830) 792-8317 | (830) 792-8793 fax

I'm Doug Cones, General Manager of Dripping Springs Water Supply Corporation. We submitted written comments to the Groundwater District and the GMA earlier this week through a letter from our hydrogeologists, Thornhill Group, but I wanted to make a short statement today as well.

First, the Water Development Board's recent GAM runs have illustrated the observation of our, and other, hydrogeologists that recharge is the primary controller of water levels in the Trinity Aquifer, and pumping has a minimal effect compared to natural recharge and discharge.

Also, the Aquifer is not uniform throughout the GMA. DSWSC's wells are located in a recognized unique hydrogeologic location that for more than 40 years has maintained productivity even in times of drought, and does not impact Jacob's Well or other spring flows in the Wimberley Valley.

The GMA should adopt a DFC that recognizes natural recharge and discharge as the primary drivers of water levels, recognizes unique portions of the aquifer, and allows proven interactions of wells an springflows to be managed through local management zones. Because we believe Option 3 on the agenda best reflects and incorporates these concepts, we support Option 3.

Thank you all for your hard work, and we look forward to working with you.

Doug Cones

Dear Mr. Fieseler,

Will you please send the following comment to the members of GMA 9.

Given the choices of 20, 30, or 40 feet of draw down, the choice should be 20. A better answer is that groundwater control districts should work with the amount of water that is available through recharge. There should be no draw down. Water permit allocations should not exceed the amount of water recharging the aquifer for any particular county or area for which a DFC will be defined.

Sincerely yours,
Henry H. Brooks

Hi Mr. Fieseler,
Thank you for all your hard work with GMA #9. The meeting in Dripping Springs last week was very informative and much appreciated.

I urge the GMA #9 to keep the pumping levels at the 2008 amounts. I am a member of the HTGCD.

Thank you,
Laurie Coffin
13030 Fieldstone Loop
Austin, TX 78737

Please be very conservative with the desired future conditons. Impossible to take back water that is permitted as managed available groundwater. Scenario 5 preferred, but with conservative approach. The Edwards Group is relevant for planning and headwaters springs.

Paul Barwick, Boerne

Dear Mr. Fiesler,

As a small business owner I am not in favor of more or increased pumping of our precious ground water. Our business built a rain water catchment system when we built our business in 1996. We have always used rainwater for our needs which include the use of the rainwater in our production processes. Most buildings can be retro-fit with rain water systems and new construction can take advantage of the benefits by building with rainwater in mind. Common sense is needed with sustainable growth.

Bridget Hauser
Sunset Canyon Pottery

Hi Mr. Fieseler,
Thanks for all your hard work with GMA #9. The meeting in Dripping Springs last week was very informative and much appreciated.

I strongly urge the GMA #9 to keep the pumping levels at the 2008 level.
Thank you,

Chris Wall
13030 Fieldstone Loop
Austin, Texas 78737

Dear Mr.Fieseler,

Thank you for all your hard work with GMA #9.
I think it urgent to keep pumping levels at 2008 levels. I am a member of HTGC and Fieldstone Property Owners Asso.

Sincerely,

Peter Tilton

Hi Mr. Fieseler,
Thank you for all your hard work with Groundwater Management Area #9. The meeting in Dripping Springs last week was very informative and much appreciated.

I urge the GMA #9 to keep the pumping levels at the 2008 amounts. I am a member of the HTGCD.

Thank you,

Joel Grimmett
13171 Fieldstone Loop
Austin TX 78737

Hi Ron,
"Out of sight, out of mind," is an old, but relevant saying. People who can't see the water table, can't imagine it, so to them they see no harm in drilling more wells. This way of thinking is compounded further by similar thinking and behavior of most developers: "Here today and gone tomorrow." The developers (builders) put up houses, as many as they can per acre one day, and leave for tomorrow the consequences of their efforts; shoddy construction, dry wells, and flooding to the home owners and municipalities.

If those responsible for deciding to draw down the water table faster than it is replenished were held legally responsible for subsequent wells going dry, they might have a different attitude about their responsibilities to the future of the community at large.

Marvin H. Lehr, Ph.D.
Fieldstone resident

Ron: Per last week's meeting

First, I would like to express my appreciation for all of the hard work the Water Development Board and GMA9 members have put into this project. We are light years ahead of where we were 4 years ago.

That said, I feel that we have a wonderful theory that has not yet been tested in the real world. As you noted, we need to really refine how we use actual well data and select the wells we use very carefully. In other words, we still have a long way to go, and only time will tell how the model is actually working.

For that reason, I feel GMA9 should be very conservative in our approach to DFCs at this point. Setting liberal numbers would result in higher MAG amounts, and if these turn out to be unrealistic it is much harder to take permitted water back than not issue it until we have more realtime experience. I would suggest 0 drawdown in the Edwards group and 20 feet or less in the Trinity. These amounts can always be reviewed and increased later if justified.

I also feel that the MAGs should be set in linear increments, i.e. if 20 feet of drawdown is suggested, that should be modeled at 5 feet per decade and appropriate MAGs set after looking at the actual increase in numbers of exempt wells.

In addition, I think data should be collected (on a voluntary basis) on actual water usage from exempt wells. I think current estimates are considerably lower than actual usage, especially during drought periods.

Thanks again for your service.

Bob Webster
335 Hwy. 46W
Boerne, Tx 78006
Kendall County

Mr. Fiesler –

The drought-like conditions of the summers of 2008 and 2009 show clearly that pumping limits on aquifer water must be maintained. We have lived in northern Hays County since 1990 – on well water until 2009, when we had to bite the bullet and pay for LCRA water. If aquifer water were managed properly, fewer people in this area would have to do what we were forced to do.

We need to be good stewards of our resources – so that future generations can also live in this beautiful region of Texas.

Sincerely,
Susan Luton
Bear Creek Estates

Dear Ron,

Thank you for your coming to Dripping Springs to present last week on our water options.

Some of what you had to offer was very helpful, but I come away from these presentations (I was at the one the previous week in Wimberley) with a gnawing question about just how useful averaging a very non-uniform resource really is. Seems that when people talk about the aquifer, they toss around figures as though this were a swimming pool with stated depths marked along its sides. We all know it isn't and we are all aware that our particular fates regarding what increased pumping will do to our particular part of the world is anybody's guess. Water is too important an issue to be wrong about. I suggest we err on the side of caution.

For this reason, I have to say that I do not support increasing the pressure on our aquifer with any increase in pumping. No planned drawdown is the path to maintainance of this aquifer into the indefinite future. I would like to see pumping limits paired with recharge and development tied to real water availability, not wishful thinking or a mining mentality. I get very nervous when I see developers encouraging new migration into our area with promises of plentiful groundwater when that is not the case...and we all know it.

I wish people would just be more honest about their intentions when they speak in these meetings. I wish people would get up and say, "I make my money off building houses and installing utilities and making loans and building swimming pools and want more customers for my car wash or my cafe...." But they don't, they wrap their rationalizations for suburban growth in words like "property rights" or "progress" or say things like, "The growth is coming, you cannot stop it".

The only people who spoke at that meeting in favor of increasing pumping in our district were a banker (Sheila Cook works for Wells Fargo in Dripping Springs), the head of the local Chamber of Commerce (Charlene Farmer) whose husband also owns a swimming pool installation business) and one of our new board members (Mark Key) whose day job is installing utilities and whose family owns vast development lands in the area. That was it. No one spoke in favor of pumping increases because without a vested interest in bringing new populations into this area, the mere idea of increased pumping and more wells going dry and our springs and creeks drying up would be a ridiculous

idea for anyone who paid any attention at all to what is going on environmentally in this area of the world.

If I recall correctly not one person spoke in Wimberley in favor of increased pumping. Not one.

Our local GCD has been taken over recently by a group who knows absolutely nothing about groundwater science, geology or ecology, but you undoubtedly noticed that already, being a learned man yourself. They ran for office at the behest of local and national development interests that have targeted the Dripping Springs area for massive new growth that have apparently proven their ability to attract this new population as they have convinced companies like HEB and Home Depot to move operations to this little burg. I suspect on some drawing board somewhere, unbeknownst to us who live here now and enjoy our quiet country lives, there are plans for thousands upon thousands of new homes and businesses, just waiting on the go-ahead from GCD's and other local authorities. This isn't a good idea, but when money begins to trump good sense, we are all in trouble. It is a frightening thought that people are poised to begin massive new development when the land can barely support the population that lives here now.

Another aspect of this conversation is that there are very different attitudes and interests in the more urban parts of the Dripping Springs area than in the Wimberley Valley and surrounds. Downtown Dripping Springs has set its sights on becoming an urban extension of Austin and some of its citizens have decided they are tired of being a rural backwater and have signed onto a push for big city developments and the lure of making more money that promises.

This is not the case in Wimberley where, for the most part, people live there in order to have a quieter, semi-rural existence, along beautiful streams and rivers where the springs run most of the year. These two communities could not be more different and yet are jointly-governed by this GCD that is now firmly in the hands of development-minded interests. This is not a good thing for Wimberley, nor for the rural areas of Dripping Springs, where people are not even really aware of what harm can be done by this small group of elected officials who now have the power to speak on their behalf and give away their water to the highest bidder.

I could go on, I won't, but please do not allow our part of the world and the clean, clear water we use in our homes to pumped dry by bad ideas about growth, the inevitability of our aquifer being drawn down to unsustainable levels at some point in the future and by selfish ideas promulgated by short-sighted people, many with no personal interest beyond their pocketbooks.

We depend on knowledge and the attitude that our water is a finite and shared resource to carry the day, so please help us make this a reality in water policy.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Susan Cook
1600 East Gatlin Creek Road
Driftwood, Texas 78619

Hi Mr. Fieseler,

I was unable to attend the meeting at which GMA#9 considered the appropriate pumping levels for the Groundwater Management Area #9 (GMA). I understand, however, that HTGCD is considering future pumping levels for this GMA.

My family lives at 13125 Fieldstone Loop in North Hays County and as best as I can tell, I rely on well water within GMA #9. I am on a well that reaches the water level at 175 feet. For my family to retain the levels of water that we have historically used since 1990, the GMA should maintain pumping levels at NO MORE THAN the amounts used in 2008.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We appreciate your hard work with Groundwater Management Area #9.

Again, I urge the GMA #9 to keep the pumping levels at the 2008 amounts. I am a member of the HTGCD.

Thank you,
Jonathan Steinberg
13125 Fieldstone Loop
Austin, TX 78737