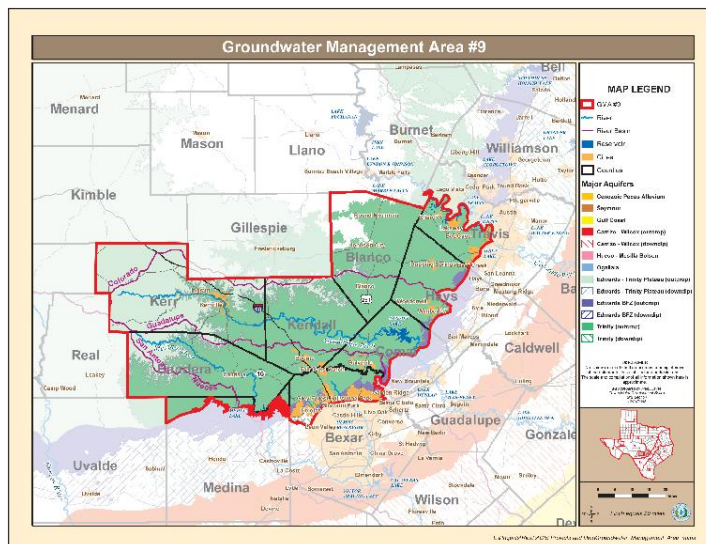


CONCERNED CITIZEN SPEAKS OUT AGAINST MINING OUR HILL COUNTRY AQUIFERS

As a result of completing the state mandated Desired Future Condition (DFC) process last year, the Hill Country's Trinity Aquifer set a 30 foot average drawdown management goal. This was despite heavy public protest stating this was too much and would not sustain spring flows. The next five year planning cycle is already underway, we can do better!

Texas and Hill Country groundwater supply planning is the responsibility of locally elected boards of Groundwater Conservation Districts (GCD's). To date, nearly 100 of these Districts have developed and implemented groundwater management plans to meet local needs and made decisions about rules for new permits. They have pursued science and monitored the groundwater levels of local aquifers and they actively manage restrictions in times of drought. But because most GCD boundary lines are actually on county lines, the effectiveness of this system is limited because groundwater flows freely regardless of political lines on a map.



In order to plan more regionally and consistently with aquifer boundaries, GCD boards participate in cooperative planning processes in their geographically defined Groundwater Management Area (GMA). GMA 9 falls entirely in the Hill Country.

Continuing public awareness and involvement throughout the entire desired future condition process, including implementation, is essential if we are to realize a regional groundwater management system that balances water supply and demand equitably and sustainably.

At a recent GMA 9 meeting, David Glenn P.G., an involved citizen from Wimberley in Hays County offered well written comments to help create a picture of the Trinity Aquifer and consequences of careless management of the resource. We believe these comments are important to share throughout the region:

PROPOSED PUBLIC COMMENTS AT GMA-9 MEETING APRIL 30, 2012, BANDERA TEXAS

Good Morning Gentlemen and Ladies. Most of your agenda today is focused on the Trinity Aquifer DFC, its initiation, compliance, and monitoring strategies, including review of GCD Management Plans for achieving the DFC. When approving the DFC, the TWDB framed their position on **“process”** and **“reasonableness”**. In closing they dropped the responsibility hot potato back in your lap and I quote,

“The reasonableness of the DFC with respect to socio-economic impacts, environmental impacts, and the exercise of personal property rights will depend on the way in which the Districts incorporate the Modeled Available Groundwater (MAG) into their management plans and rules and make related decisions regarding permit authorizations and administration.”

You all will be the Hill Country Watermeisters for the next fifty years! Imagine that you are responsible for a giant body of water covering the Hill Country called “Lake Trinity.” In 2010 the elevation of the lake is 100 feet. Over the next fifty years you know that the rains will come and go along with the constant requests to take water from the lake. The shoreline ebbs and flows and you

hear the outcries of waterfront owners whose boat docks and water intakes are left high and dry. Finally the year 2060 arrives and the lake elevation now stands at 70 feet.

Springs such as Jacob's Well in Wimberley have dried up along with Cypress Creek, and its 500-year old Cypress trees are dead because they depend on the flow produced by the original level of "Lake Trinity." Spring Lake in San Marcos, and even Barton Springs in Austin, cease to flow in severe droughts because they are fed in turn by Cypress Creek and the Blanco River which, as noted, depend upon the original water level in "Lake Trinity."

And real non-hypothetical lakes such as Buchanan and Travis can no longer meet their obligation to supply municipal water, agricultural water and estuary water because their levels, in turn, depend on the spring and stream flows that depend upon the original water level in "Lake Trinity." From a process standpoint you have done your job and achieved the goal - a 30 foot reduction in the level of "Lake Trinity."

Somehow I doubt that there will be a shout of acclamation from the masses saying, "Well done, good and faithful stewards". Instead you will hear appeals to the Sunset Commission about how you have squandered 30 feet of precious, life giving water. This is the situation in which you find yourselves today. You have invested nearly five years and much labor in getting to this point. In the Hill Country you can't separate surface water and ground water. Our creeks, rivers and lakes are sourced by springs from the aquifer. Likewise, water flowing in the creeks and rivers flows downstream to recharge the aquifer through karst features and fault zones.

The GCDs represented here are again urged to be conservative in your management plans and decisions with your fifty year allocation of modeled available groundwater. Hopefully GMA-9 will use a broad perspective in developing an area-wide coordinated monitoring strategy for adaptive management. Unfortunately, regardless of the definition of reasonableness, you are embarking on a policy goal of unsustainable mining of the aquifer! This is inconsistent with both the Texas Constitution and Legislative charge to GCDs for conservation, preservation, and protection of groundwater. Thank you for your consideration and may God bless you in your continuing watermeister deliberations. David H. Glenn, PG 5255, Wimberley, Texas

The world is run by those who show up. Consider taking an active role in the public meetings of your District. Groundwater management plans and rules are reviewed periodically meaning your voice can make a difference. This includes throwing your hat in the ring during election cycles, because elections have consequences.

The Directors of GCDs are elected to four year terms by local voters and will likely reflect the will of the constituents. Every two years, an election is held to achieve alternating terms for Directors. The process to establish the DFC of an aquifer within a GMA is complete when a majority vote by designated representatives of each GCD is recorded.

So get involved. The future of your water, that which makes life in the Hill Country not only special, but possible, depends on you, your voice, and most of all, your vote. The Hill Country Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to raise public awareness and build community support around the need to preserve the natural resources and heritage of the Central Texas Hill Country.

Visit www.hillcountryalliance.org/HCA/DecidingFutureCondition to learn more.