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# EDWARDS AQUIFER AUTHORITY GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

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## COOPERATIVE VOLUNTARY WATER CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN KICKS-OFF

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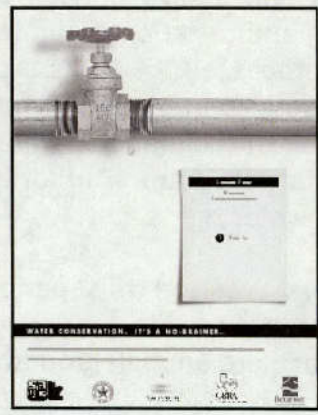
The proactive alliance of top managers of regional water groups are tackling water conservation issues. Regional water officials announced a public awareness effort aimed at keeping the region out of water restrictions this year. The Edwards Aquifer Authority (the Authority), San Antonio Water Systems (SAWS), Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA), San Antonio River Authority (SARA), and Bexar Metropolitan Water District (Bexar Met) leaders agreed to cooperatively raise the level of their water conservation messages in an effort to keep restrictions at bay this year.

"We have an excellent chance of skirting water restrictions this year if we all work a little harder to watch our water use over the next four weeks," stated Gregory Ellis, General Manager of the Authority. "Edwards Aquifer levels have been dropping so quickly that we thought we might reach 650-feet above mean sea level (msl) before the end of July. The Authority must take action when the level at the J-17 monitoring well at Fort Sam Houston drops below the 650-foot level. Keep in mind that restrictions at this level could include limited lawn watering. We'd like to avoid water restrictions if at all possible."

Significant drops in the aquifer level have resulted from San Antonio's water use escalating over the last several weeks due to hot dry weather at the same time as agricultural water use west of San Antonio has peaked. Harvest time occurs around the last couple of weeks in July and historically the aquifer's overall rate of decline lessens when farmers stop irrigating around the 4th of July holiday.

San Antonio's peak water use months, however, are still to come.

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## **COOPERATIVE VOLUNTARY WATER CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN KICKS-OFF (CONT'D)**

In San Antonio, Stage I is declared when the Edwards reaches 650' feet above mean sea level as measured at the J-17 monitoring well at Fort Sam Houston. All members of the group have agreed that while entering the drought plan is a serious matter, escaping mandatory water use restrictions this summer is quite possible, if consumers take some aggressive steps to help reduce water use.

### **2001 Aquifer Management Fees**

by Brock J. Curry, Administrative Program Manager

In July, the Authority collected \$547,884 in non-agricultural aquifer management fee revenue bringing the total collected for 2001 to \$4,861,696, or 60.29% of budgeted aquifer management fee revenue. Of the 435 non-agricultural groundwater users, 17 are considered delinquent for 2001. These delinquent fees total \$231,255. The Authority may soon begin formal enforcement proceedings according to the fee rules adopted by the board in 2000 to collect these delinquent accounts.

In July, the Authority also received \$889 from agricultural users for groundwater used in 2000. Year-to-date revenue collected totals \$380,183 or 95.05% of the amount budgeted as 2001 revenue.

### **Well Registration Program**

by Steven D. Walthour, Permitting and Enforcement Program Manager

Since January, Authority staff has been reviewing well registrations received prior to the adoption of the Authority's new well registration rules. Wells registered through this program are generally domestic and livestock wells that are exempt from the requirements to install a water flow meter and that need an initial regular permit. If a well is not exempt from the permitting and metering requirements, staff will notify the well owner. Confirmation letters will be mailed to owners in August 2001. Since July 2001, the Authority has registered 304 Edwards Aquifer wells.

If you have questions regarding the Authority's Well Registration Program contact Jeff Robinson, Regulatory Programs Coordinator, at 210-222-2204 or 1-800-292-1047.

### **Groundwater Withdrawal Transfers**

By Steven D. Walthour, Permitting and Enforcement Manager

Authority staff continues to receive notices of water right transfers from aquifer users who are transferring their interim authorization groundwater withdrawal rights to those in need of such water rights. Authority staff processed 14 transfers from July 1, 2001 to August 1, 2001 representing 1,236.676 acre-feet in groundwater withdrawal rights. Included in this month's transfer report, three changes of ownership or miscellaneous transfers were processed by Authority staff. Since the inception of the transfer program, Authority staff has processed 436 transfers representing 87,317.994 acre-feet of water rights.

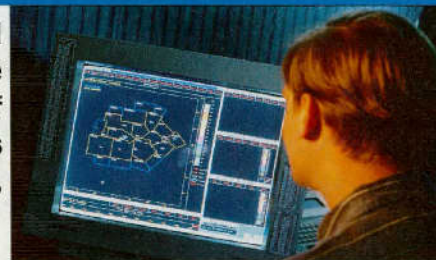
The number of transfers received this period is significantly less than previous months. Staff anticipates activity regarding transfers of groundwater withdrawal rights to increase as municipal and industrial pumpers acquire enough groundwater withdrawal rights to meet their growing needs.



## 2001 Precipitation Enhancement Program

by Bobby Bader, Program Coordinator

In July, only two rain enhancement flights occurred on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, totaling 5 hours, 37 minutes of total flight time. Fifteen ejectable flares were used during cloud-top seeding and 2 hours, 12 minutes of generator time used during cloud-base seeding. Cloud-seeding flights were conducted in Atascosa, Bandera, Caldwell, Guadalupe, Kerr, Medina and Uvalde counties.



The month of July was dominated by a high-pressure weather system, which prevented favorable cloud-seeding conditions from developing. As a result, the last cloud-seeding flight for the month occurred on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. This represents the longest consecutive number of days in the history of the program that no cloud seeding flights occurred. The Authority's program began in 1999. As this trend comes to an end, chances of beneficial rains will increase. August and September are typically the most active months for the development of tropical storm systems. The 2001 program ends September 15, 2001.

## 2001 Agricultural Water Conservation Loan Program

by Bobby Bader, Program Coordinator



The Authority is currently accepting applications for the Agricultural Water Conservation Loan Program. The Texas Water Development Board approved the Authority's \$1,000,000 loan application to provide low interest loans to farmers for the purchase of water saving irrigation equipment.

The interest rate for these loans is currently 4.35% on a seven year note.

If you are interested in applying for an agricultural water conservation loan please contact Bobby Bader at the Authority's Hondo Field Office (830) 741-8665.

## Habitat Conservation Plan

by Rick Illgner, Planning and Conservation Program Manager

In July, the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Work Group was updated on the status of the HCP by the Authority's HCP consulting team. Mr. Roy Frye, Hicks & Co., provided an overview of the program progress and provided the prelude to presentations of draft reports by Dr. Lonnie Jones, Texas A&M University, and Mr. Ed Oborny, BIOWEST on the economic and biologic consequences. Both reports considered their respective consequences under four annual aquifer withdrawal scenarios: 450,000 acre-feet, 400,000 acre-feet, 340,000 acre-feet and 175,000 acre-feet. The first two scenarios are prescribed in the Edwards Aquifer Authority Act, the third scenario was a planning number used by Region L in the Regional Water Plan. The last scenario represents an annual withdrawal amount that will provide a minimum of 150 cubic feet per second, the estimation of jeopardy by the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service at Comal Springs during a repeat of the drought of record according to model runs conducted for the Authority. The team emphasized that these are draft reports being developed with

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## Habitat Conservation Plan (Cont'd)

the best available data. Dr. Lonnie Jones, an economist working on the economic impacts of the most probable alternatives to be included in the Authority's HCP, as part of required Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and in the appendices. The EIS is required to consider the possible economic impacts of limiting pumping and retiring water permits. Dr. Jones report indicates substantial economic impacts occur at an annual withdrawal amount of 175,000 acre-feet.

Mr. Ed Oborny is a Senior Biologist working on the environmental requirements for the endangered species, specifically the San Marcos and Comal aquatic ecosystems. A portion of his task is to evaluate the possible impacts to the protected species under the withdrawal conditions listed above. While a comprehensive data set for both systems under a broad range of circumstances is not available, the "best available data" is being updated by the Authority's Comprehensive Monitoring and Critical Period Monitoring studies. In addition, the Authority has added a study to evaluate the range of the Comal Springs Riffle Beetle in Landa Lake. Preliminary results of Mr. Oborny's work indicate the following threats or risks:

Annual Withdrawal (Acre-feet)	Category	Hydrologic Alteration	Biologic Risk
275,000 – 325,000	1	Low	Low
125,000 – 275,000	2	Moderate	Low
325,000 – 375,000	3	Moderate	Moderate
375,000 – 450,000	4	High	High

## July 2001 Board Meeting

by Margaret Garcia, Public Affairs Program Manager

At their regular monthly board meeting held Tuesday, July 10, 2001, in San Marcos, Authority directors received a report from Authority Chief Technical Officer Geary Schindel, regarding environmental issues at R&H Oil, Camp Bullis and Camp Stanley. These facilities are all located in Bexar County. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in conjunction with the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC), is proposing to place R&H Oil on the National Priorities List (NPL) under the federal superfund program. The site poses little threat to the Edwards Aquifer since the aquifer is approximately 1000 feet below the site. Groundwater contamination sites that have impacted the Trinity Aquifer at Camp Bullis and Camp Stanley are located approximately 1.5 and 5 miles, respectively, north of the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone. Neither of these sites are believed to threaten the Edwards Aquifer at this time. Authority technical staff will continue to monitor these situations.

The Authority board also received a technical briefing from Mr. Tom Taggart, Director of Public Works for the City of San Marcos, regarding the operation of the new San Marcos Regional Surface Water Treatment Plant. San Marcos now receives almost 5 million gallons of surface water per day from the Guadalupe River, and has reduced their Edwards Aquifer demand by 3000 acre-feet per year.



## July 2001 Board Meeting (Cont'd)

In addition, Authority directors approved initial regular permits for 14 applicants, representing 5,676.33 acre-feet of Edwards groundwater. To date, the Authority has issued 464 initial regular permits. Authority directors also approved a five-year interlocal agreement with the San Antonio River Authority to fund the South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group (Region L) administrative costs.

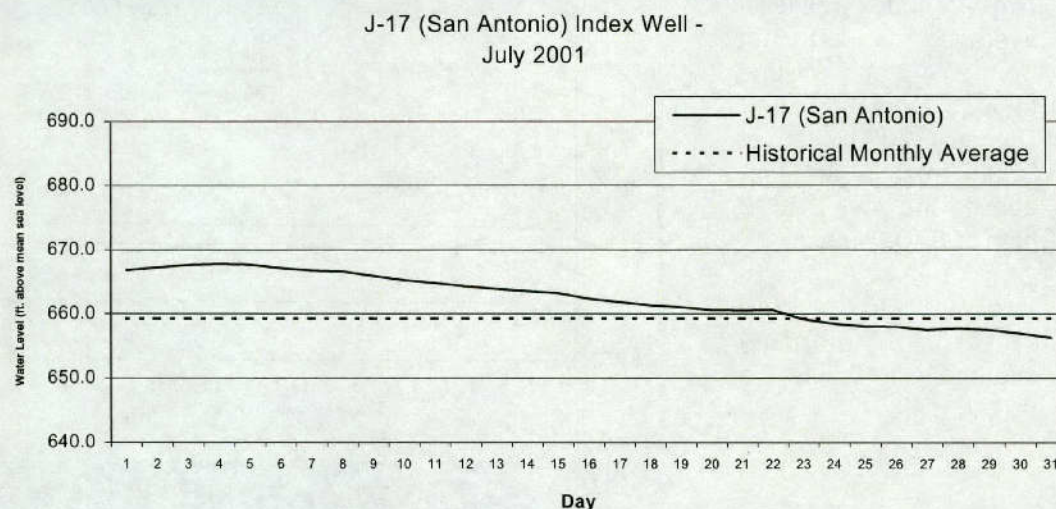
Authority directors also authorized a settlement offer for City of San Antonio - City Public Service (CPS) in the amount of \$18,786.60. This money will be used by CPS to fund a water-efficient washing machine retrofit program for CPS customers. Settlement offers are made to pumpers who exceeded their pumping allotments during the summer and early fall 2000. The Authority reduced pumping amounts for Edwards groundwater from May to November 2000, as a result of low aquifer levels and reduced springflow. CPS over pumped their October 2000 allocation by 39 acre-feet primarily because in 1999 they signed a contract with the Authority to limit their Edwards Aquifer use to about one-third of their authorized amount. The contract was signed as a means of conserving Edwards Aquifer water and saved CPS ratepayers approximately \$24,000 in aquifer management fees. The settlement offer represents the amount CPS would have paid in aquifer management fees had the contract been amended to increase the October allocation.

# Monthly Water Level & Springflow Report

## J-17 (San Antonio) Index Well—July 2001

The J-17 index well The J-17 index well level average fell 5.0 feet from 667.5' above mean sea level (msl) in June to 662.5' msl in July. The July 2001 high of 667.8' is 14.7 feet above the July 2000 high of 653.1' msl.

The J-17 historical monthly average for July is 659.3' msl.



## J-17 (San Antonio) Index Well—Combined Record for Two Wells:

	July 2001	July 2000	Historical Record	
Maximum	667.8	653.1	June 14, 1992	703.3
Minimum	656.3	640.3	August 17, 1956	612.5
Average	662.5	646.0	July (1932-2000)	659.3

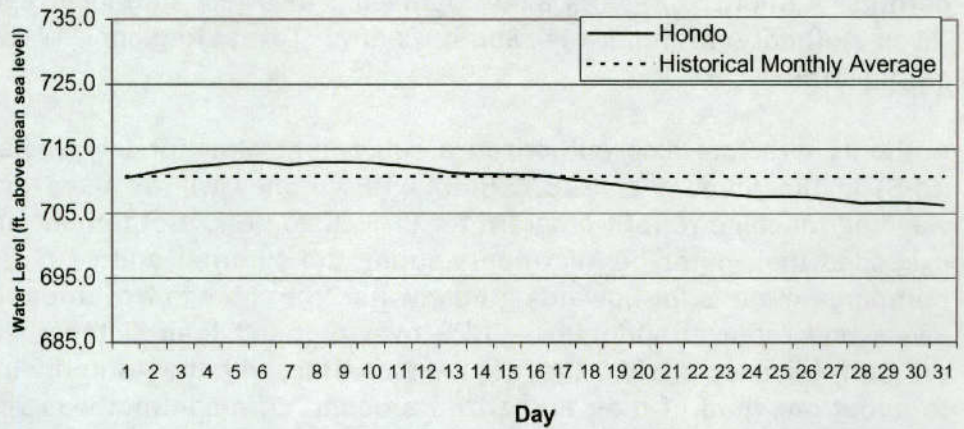


## Hondo Index Well—July 2001

The Hondo index well level average rose 2.0 feet from 708.1' msl in June to 710.1' msl in July. The July 2001 high of 713.0' msl is 18.0 feet above the July 2000 high of 695.0' msl.

The Hondo Well historical monthly average for July is 710.8' msl.

Hondo Index Well -  
July 2001



### Hondo Index Well—Historical Record: 1986-2001

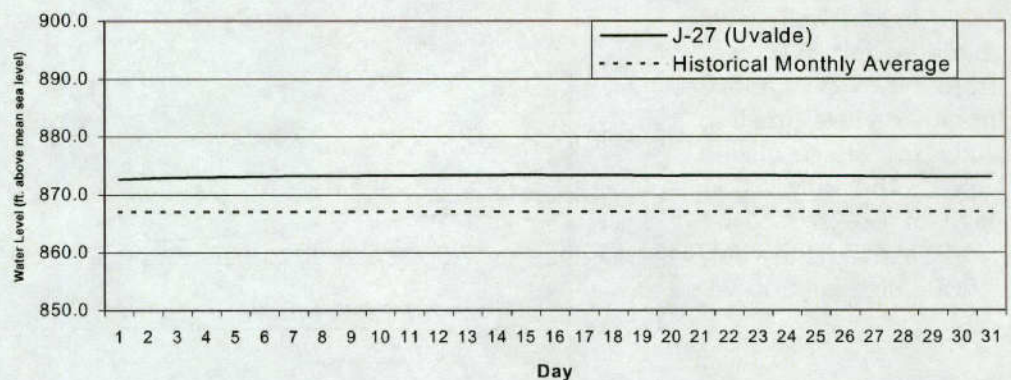
	July 2001	July 2000	Historical Record	
Maximum	713.0	695.0	June 14, 1992	779.0
Minimum	706.3	685.8	June 29, 1990	651.0
Average	710.1	689.9	July (1986-2000)	710.8

## J-27 (Uvalde) Index Well—July 2001

The J-27 index well level average fell 1.0 feet from 874.2' msl in June to 873.2' msl in July. The July 2001 high of 873.4' msl is 3.4 feet above the July 2000 high of 870.0' msl.

The Uvalde Well historical monthly average for July is 867.1' msl.

J-27 (Uvalde) Index Well -  
July 2001



### J-27 (Uvalde) Index Well Historical Record: 1940-2001

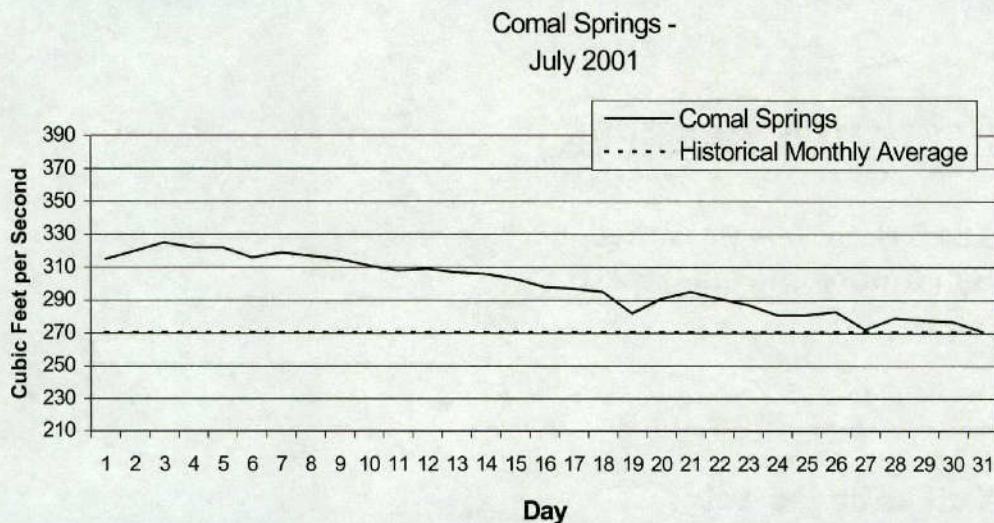
	July 2001	July 2000	Historical Record	
Maximum	873.4	870.0	June 15, 1987	889.0
Minimum	872.7	868.9	April 13, 1957	811.0
Average	873.2	869.3	July (1940-2000)	867.1



## Comal Springs—July 2001

Comal springflow reached a maximum flow of 325 cubic feet per second (cfs) on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. The minimum flow occurred on July 31<sup>st</sup> at 271 cfs.

The July 2001 average is 299 cfs, which is 28.5 cfs above the historical monthly average of 270.5 cfs.



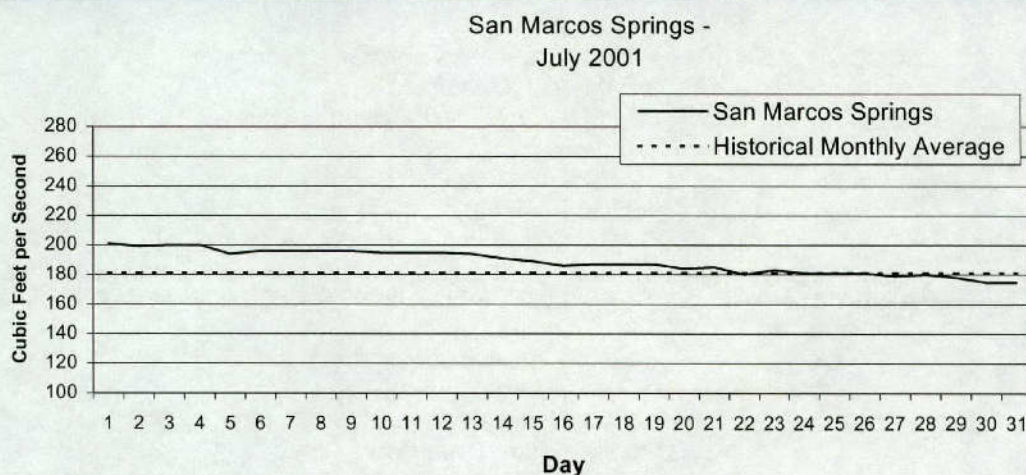
### Comal Springs Historical Record: 1927-2001

	July 2001	July 2000	Historical Record	
Maximum	325	263	October 14, 1973	534.0
Minimum	271	194	August 8, 1956	0.0
Average	299	225	July (1927-2000)	270.5

## San Marcos Springs—July 2001

San Marcos springflow reached a maximum flow of 201 cfs on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The minimum flow occurred on July 30<sup>th</sup> at 175 cfs.

The July 2001 average is 189 cfs, which is 7.8 cfs above the historical monthly average of 181.2 cfs.



### San Marcos Springs Historical Record: 1956-2001

	July 2001	July 2000	Historical Record	
Maximum	201	181	March 12, 1992	451.0
Minimum	175	134	August 15, 1956	46.0
Average	189	152	July (1956-2000)	181.2





**EDWARDS AQUIFER**  
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## Calendar of Events for August & September 2001

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Tues. 08/14	1:30 PM Critical Period Work Group 4 PM Board Meeting, Edwards Aquifer Authority, San Antonio, TX
Tues. 08/28	9 AM Finance/Administrative Committee 11 AM AMP Committee 2 PM Permits/Recharge Committee
Wed. 08/29	2 PM Legal Committee 3:30 PM R&T Committee Critical Period Work Group (Canceled)

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Mon. 09/03	AUTHORITY OFFICES CLOSED (LABOR DAY HOLIDAY)
Tues. 09/04	12 PM Executive Committee
Tues. 09/11	11 AM Finance/Administrative Committee 1:30 PM Critical Period Work Group 4 PM Board Meeting, Edwards Aquifer Authority, San Antonio, TX
Thurs 09/20 & Fri. 09/21	8 AM EDWARDS AQUIFER AUTHORITY WATER SYMPOSIUM
Tues. 09/25	9 AM Finance/Administrative Committee 11 AM AMP Committee 2 PM Permits/Recharge Committee
Wed. 09/26	10 AM Critical Period Work Group 2 PM Legal Committee 3:30 PM R&T Committee

**Questions regarding  
meeting times and  
dates, please contact  
the Authority at  
210-222-2204.**