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EAA Declares an Increase to Stage 4 Permit Reductions for the San Antonio Pool

San Antonio, TX – The Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) has declared Stage 4 Critical Period Management for Edwards groundwater permit holders in the San Antonio Pool of the EAA’s jurisdiction (Atascosa, Bexar, Caldwell, Comal, Guadalupe, Hays, and Medina counties) based on declining aquifer conditions. Today, the ten-day average at the J-17 index well is 629.7 feet above mean sea level (ft msl), which triggered an increase in the EAA Critical Period Management Plan (CPM) to Stage 4. Additionally, the Comal Springs ten-day rolling average is 99 cubic feet per second (cfs), which is within the Stage 4 threshold. Lastly, the San Marcos Springs is above all stages at 106 cubic feet per second (cfs).

As shown in Figure 1, EAA CPM Stage 4 for the San Antonio Pool reduces the annual authorized withdrawal amounts available to affected Edwards groundwater permit holders by 40 percent. These reductions apply to all Edwards Aquifer groundwater permit holders authorized to pump more than three acre-feet annually. This includes industrial and agricultural users, as well as water utilities authorized to pump water from the Edwards Aquifer for delivery to its respective customers. All affected permit holders must also report their pumping totals to the EAA on a monthly basis.

Residents and businesses within those counties who receive their water from a public water system should follow their respective water provider's directives regarding water use practices. It should be noted that the EAA does not enforce lawn watering activities or other general water limitations beyond the curtailment of withdrawals from the Edwards Aquifer. Any enforcement of such activities or limitations is enforced by a municipality. The EAA does not regulate the general public, but instead regulates Edwards well owners with withdrawal permits authorizing their right to pump from the aquifer.

The EAA is a groundwater conservation district that manages, enhances and protects the Edwards Aquifer, a major groundwater system serving approximately two-and-one-half million South Central Texans. The EAA jurisdiction spans across 8 counties including Uvalde, Medina, Bexar, and parts of Atascosa, Caldwell, Guadalupe, Comal and Hays counties.



Figure 1.

EAA Critical Period Management Plan How the EAA Manages Critical Stage Reductions

The intent of the EAA Critical Period Management (CPM) Plan is to sustain aquifer and springflow levels during times of drought. CPM applies to most well owners who have a permit to withdraw water from the Edwards Aquifer by temporarily reducing their authorized withdrawal amount. Based on ten-day averages of certain aquifer level and springflow readings, which are indicators of the current condition of the aquifer, CPM reductions are divided by aquifer “pools” described below.

THE SAN ANTONIO POOL

San Antonio Pool pumping permit reductions apply to Atascosa, Bexar, Caldwell, Comal, Guadalupe, Hays, and Medina counties.

Critical Period Stage	J-17 Index Well Level above mean sea level (amsl)	San Marcos Springs Flow cubic feet per second (cfs)	Comal Springs Flow cubic feet per second (cfs)	% of Water Reduction
No Stage indicates stable levels	660 feet or above	96 or above	225 or above	0%
Stage 1	less than 660 feet	less than 96	less than 225	20%
Stage 2	Less than 650 feet	less than 80	Less than 200	30%
Stage 3	Less than 640 feet	Not Applicable	Less than 150	35%
Stage 4	Less than 630 feet	Not Applicable	Less than 100	40%
Stage 5	Less than 625 feet	Not Applicable	Less than 45/40*	44%

*Stage 5 Comal Springs Flow - to enter this stage based on the springflow, the reading must be less than 45 cfs on a ten-day rolling average, or less than 40 cfs based on a three-day rolling average. To leave this stage, the ten-day rolling average must be 45 cfs or greater.

Why do we need to know Springflow?

The Comal and San Marcos Springs provide habitats for threatened and endangered species that are protected under the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP), which can serve as indicators species for the health of the aquifer. The EAA uses springflow to balance the water needs for the more than 2 million people that rely on the aquifer.

More information can be found at <https://bit.ly/EAACriticalPeriodManagementPlan> and <https://bit.ly/EAACPMTools>.