

San Marcos Daily Record



Edwards Aquifer Authority Sees Stage 4 Drought Restrictions In Near Future



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Officials from the Edwards Aquifer Authority are predicting aquifer levels to continue dropping, eventually triggering Stage 4 drought restrictions.

EAA hosted a press conference Wednesday to discuss the current aquifer conditions within the San Antonio Pool which is under Stage 3 water restrictions. Current restrictions impact groundwater permit holders in Hays, Atascosa, Bexar, Caldwell, Comal, Guadalupe and Medina counties.

"The trend over the last few days is, as we might expect, spring flows are lower and water levels have decreased over that time frame," said Paul Bertetti, EAA senior director of aquifer science research and modeling.

The J-17 index well, which is EAA's main measuring point for Edwards Aquifer levels, was at 632.6 feet above mean sea level on Wednesday with a 10-day average of 634.7 feet msl. J-17 lost 4.1 feet msl over the past 10 days. On average, the J-17 water level is usually 660.6 feet msl at this time of year, according to EAA, marking the well nearly 30-feet below its average.

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 We had declining water levels for [the San Antonio Pool] across the year. very little rainfall, I think we're something like 12-and-a-half inches or more



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Weather

73.4 °F SE Wind
 Slight Chance Thunderstorms 3.4mph

76 °F 101 °F

75 99 FRI	76 99 SAT	76 100 SUN	76 100 MON
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6:51 AM Thu Jul 14 WillyWeather



below normal for the San Antonio region,” Bertetti said. “We’re significantly below average. During July-August timeframe, that’s when we would have the lowest typical average water level. So, we expect them to be lower, about 10 feet during any given year.”

EAA will enact Stage 4 water restrictions for the San Antonio Pool if the J-17 index well falls to 630 feet msl over a 10-day period. Bertetti said if current trends continue Stage 4 restrictions could go into effect by mid to late August.

“So, it’s a little bleak,” Bertetti said. “If we do have rainfall, a severe storm, that could change on a daily basis ... Our estimates right now, it wouldn’t be surprising for us to reach Stage 4 some time later this summer within the next few weeks, especially if we don’t have any rainfall.”

San Marcos Springs, which is among one of the largest springs in the Edwards Aquifer, is 80 cubic feet per second below historic average. According to EAA, monthly streamflow average in July is 185 cubic feet per second but is currently at 107 cfs as of July 11. Water reduction restrictions haven’t, however, been enacted for San Marcos Springs.

“We’re still above the stage triggers in San Marcos,” Bertetti said. “Even though San Marcos is in the San Antonio Pool, right now Hays County is in the same stage 3 critical period management restrictions, but the flow in San Marcos is a little higher relatively speaking.”

Amid EAA’s water restrictions, the City of San Marcos is currently under Stage 2 drought restrictions, which went into effect on April 17 after the 10-day average Edwards Aquifer level fell below 650 feet msl.

Stage 2 drought rules place limits on the use of soaker hoses, drip irrigation, and using decorative water features.

The use of sprinklers is limited to one day per week on a designated weekday determined by address. Irrigation using hose-end sprinklers is allowed on the designated weekday before 10 a.m. or after 8 p.m. Irrigation with automatic irrigation systems is allowed on the designated weekday beginning at 8 p.m. and ending the following morning at 8 a.m.

Using soaker hoses or drip irrigation is allowed any day but must be done before 10 a.m. or after 8 p.m. Hand watering is still allowed on any day and at any time.

Filling decorative water features such as fountains is prohibited in Stage 2. At-home car washing, washing of impervious surfaces, and foundation watering is limited to one day per week.

The full text of Stage 2 rules can be found on the City of San Marcos website at www.sanmarcostx.gov/drought.

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