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For Immediate Release

Ann-Margaret Gonzalez

210.222.2204

210.383.3315

agonzalez@edwardsaquifer.org

EAA Declares a Decrease to Stage 3 Permit Reductions for the San Antonio Pool

San Antonio, TX – The Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) declares a decrease to Stage 3 Critical Period Management permit reductions for counties under the purview of the Edwards Aquifer Authority - including Atascosa, Bexar, Caldwell, Comal, Guadalupe, Hays, and Medina counties within the San Antonio Pool effective yesterday, Wednesday, October 26, 2022. At the beginning of this month, the San Antonio Pool was in Stage 4 effective Saturday, October 8, 2022.

Yesterday it was confirmed that the daily mean springflow for the previous day at Comal Springs was 111 cubic feet per second (cfs). The daily mean springflow has resulted in a ten-day rolling average at Comal Springs of 100 cfs which is above the threshold for Stage 4 within the San Antonio Pool, but still within the threshold for Stage 3. Additionally, the ten-day rolling average for water levels at the J-17 index well was 632.2 feet above mean sea level (ft msl) on October 26, 2022, which is above the threshold for Stage 4 for the San Antonio Pool. Hence, the EAA formally declares a decrease to Stage 3 permit reductions.

As shown in Figure 1, Stage 3 of the EAA Critical Period Management Plan for the San Antonio Pool requires Edwards groundwater permit holders in Atascosa, Bexar, Caldwell, Comal, Guadalupe, Hays, and Medina counties to reduce their annual authorized pumping by 35 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 enacted. Any enforcement of such activities or limitations is enforced by a municipality.

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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 2.5 million people that rely on the aquifer.

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