

September 8, 2011

Report your Hill Country Water Well Condition

HCA Sponsors effort to collect information about water wells

Beneath many places in the Texas Hill Country, more groundwater is already being pumped than can be replaced through recharge. This was observed as many wells went dry during the 2007-2009 drought, one from which the Trinity Aquifer did not fully recover before this most recent drought began.

The Hill Country Alliance (HCA) is urging people to report low water levels in wells, dry wells and poor water quality during this time of drought. “The future of your groundwater may very well depend on your observations.” states Milan J. Michalec, HCA Board Member. Send comments about your water well to waterwell@hillcountryalliance.org

Prior to 2005, Groundwater Conservation Districts (GCD) typically managed groundwater exclusively within its individual boundaries. Then the Texas Legislature passed HB 1763, calling for a regional approach and joint planning to determine the Desired Future Condition (DFC) of an aquifer.

A DFC is basically a statement of what groundwater level conditions should be in the future. It may represent water levels, amount of water in storage, spring flows, and base flow to streams and rivers. DFC plans were submitted to the Texas Water Development Board in 2010, however some are being challenged on the basis that they allow for withdrawal rates that threaten base flows and springs and would deplete water supplies for future generations.

Typically GCD’s have been formed along county lines, but groundwater occurrence and movement is independent from political boundaries on the surface of the land. Planning or lack of planning in one GCD can greatly affect the condition of any proximate aquifer. Because of this, DFC’s are set by regional planning areas known as Groundwater Management Areas.

Groundwater Management Area 9 (GMA 9) lies over the Trinity Aquifer and includes all of Kendall, Kerr, Bandera and Blanco Counties, as well as the northern portions of Bexar and Medina and western Hays. Southwest Travis and Western Comal are included although no GCD currently exists in those areas. As such, despite the best of efforts, gaps in groundwater data and information are significant.

Groundwater Conservation Districts actively monitor wells in order to record water levels and conduct local studies and analysis. Projects like this one encouraged by HCA can be used to document observations and to provide justification for new studies. This can result in better local decision making. Your well observations could factor into future GMA 9 planning and the future of the Trinity Aquifer.

The Hill Country Alliance (HCA) is a non-profit 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. Please visit the HCA website for more information about the latest news, events and initiatives: www.hillcountryalliance.org