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EDWARDS AQUIFER PROTECTION PROGRAM

NEWS AND UPDATES - ACQUISITIONS AND PROMOTIONS

We may be three months into 2016, but this is our first newsletter of the new year for the Edwards team. So we'd like to wish you all a happy belated New Year! And despite the lateness of this newsletter, 2016 has been extremely busy for the Edwards Program. In December of 2015, just before the City's annual winter break, we successfully closed on the 354-acre Burell Ranch conservation easement in Medina County. Then, in February, we successfully closed on the 229-acre Goodhorse Ranch tract, which the City of San Antonio helped purchase as an addition to Government Canyon State Natural Area, and on which we now hold an aquifer protection conservation easement. That's 583 new acres in the program, bringing our overall total of protected lands under the City's aquifer protection program to 135,954 acres.

In other news, we are pleased to report that Susan Courage has been promoted to the position of Sr. Management Analyst with the Edwards program. Susan has been with the Edwards program for three years now and oversees the monitoring side of the program. She is also our resident biologist and GIS expert. Please join us in congratulating Susan on her promotion and thanking her for all her dedication and hard work. We'll be looking to expand the Edwards team by one new employee as well, to fill the vacant Management Analyst position. It's a busy time for the Edwards team. Stay tuned for more news later this year!

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For more information on the program or to receive quarterly newsletters via email, please visit our website at:

<http://www.sanantonio.gov/edwardsaquifer>

For information on upcoming Conservation Advisory Board meetings, please visit the COSA board meetings and agendas website at:

<https://webapps2.sanantonio.gov/>





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Source: Government Canyon State Natural Area

WATER QUALITY NEWS

CITY COUNCIL CONSIDERS BANNING COAL TAR SEALANT

City Council may be considering a possible ban on the sale and use of coal tar-based sealants for use on road and pavement construction within the city limits. In November 2014, four City Council members signed A Council Consideration Request for the prohibition on coal tar-based sealants stating their potential risk to human health and the environment. Coal tar-based sealants are widely used in street and parking infrastructure to recondition and rehabilitate asphalt surfaces. They typically contain 20 to 35 percent coal tar or coal-tar pitch. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), these materials contain high levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are known human carcinogens. Coal tar-based sealants typically contains 35,000 to 200,000 parts per million of PAHs, which is about one-hundred times more PAHs than in used motor oil and 1,000 times more than in sealcoat products according to the USGS. The USGS along with other researchers have conducted numerous research studies on coal tar-based sealants and their potential harmful impacts.



Source: Coal Tar Free America

A prohibition on coal tar-based sealants would protect the Edwards Aquifer from slow contamination by runoff. The Edwards Aquifer Authority adopted a ban of coal tar-based sealants on environmentally sensitive areas over the aquifer in Hays and Comal Counties. The city of Austin also banned coal-tar sealants in 2005 after a study found concentrations of PAH's in city creeks. According to District 8 Councilman Ron Nirenberg, alternatives to coal-tar sealants, such as asphalt-based sealants, would have minimal economic impacts and are widely available. A presentation by city staff will be made to a City Council Subcommittee in June to determine if the product should be banned by a City-wide ordinance. For more information, contact the City's Office of Sustainability at (210) 207-6103, or visit <http://www.sanantonio.gov/RemembertheRiver/Commercial/CoalTarSealants.aspx>

SPRING ACTIVITIES

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Enjoy these fun-filled activities for the whole family:

- **Govt. Canyon SNA Wildflower Walk**—Celebrate the Vernal Equinox and enjoy early blooming wildflowers on a moderate intensity hike at Govt. Canyon State Natural Area—March 20th
- **San Antonio River Foundation's Mission Reach Flotilla Festival**—Compete for the most decorated kayaks and canoes and enjoy an evening of live music and activities at Mission County Park—April 9th
- **Poteet Strawberry Festival**—Indulge on strawberries and enjoy family-friendly attractions at the "Strawberry Capital of Texas," Poteet, TX—April 8th thru April 10th
- **Fiesta**—This year is the 125th anniversary of Fiesta. Enjoy the various festivities, carnivals, and parades across San Antonio—April 14th thru April 24th



For more information on family fun things to do this spring, please visit the websites below:

Govt. Canyon SNA:
<http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/government-canyon>

San Antonio River Foundation:
<https://www.sariverfoundation.org/events/mission-reach-flotilla/>

Poteet Strawberry Festival:
<http://www.strawberryfestival.com/>

Fiesta:
<http://www.fiesta-sa.org/>



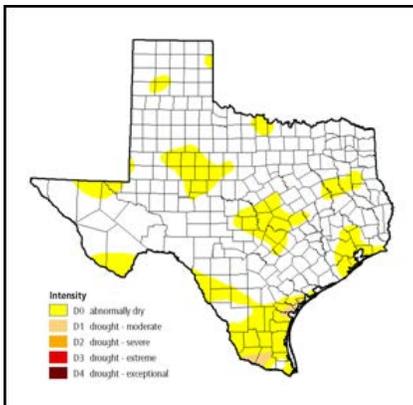
TEXAS NEWS

TEXAS BRACKISH GROUNDWATER STUDY

In times of extreme drought, it's easy to forget that we have vast reserves of water just beneath our feet, underground. The problem, of course, is that most of it isn't potable. According to the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), Texas has more than 2.7 billion acre-feet of brackish groundwater in the state's minor and major aquifers. That is nearly 90 times as much brackish groundwater residing under the state than what would be currently available if all of the state's reservoirs were full! Since 2009, the TWDB has been working on the Brackish Resources Aquifer Characterization System (BRACS) program to identify and analyze the brackish aquifers of Texas in greater detail. The BRACS program also designs groundwater flow models to estimate aquifer. To date, the BRACS program has yielded four internal studies on the Pecos Valley Aquifer, the Gulf Coast Aquifer (Corpus Christi), Gulf Coast Aquifer (Lower Rio Grande Valley), and the Queen City-Sparta aquifers. In 2015, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 30, which provides two million in funding to identify and designate brackish groundwater production zones in four aquifers, including the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer which runs just south of San Antonio, between the Colorado River and Rio Grande. The legislature also directed the TWDB to study the remainder of the state's aquifers and report back to the legislature by 2022. For more information on the BRACS program and the TWDB's role in groundwater analysis and research, please visit: <http://www.twdb.texas.gov/newsmedia/featured/stories/2016/02/index.asp>.



Source: Texas Water Development Board



Source: U.S. Drought Monitor (02/29/16)

WEATHER REPORT

SPRING SHOWERS IN THE FORECAST

After nearly two months without rain, the recent rains in central Texas was much needed! With nearly four percent of Texas suffering from moderate drought conditions towards the end-of-February, the rain was a huge welcome. The overall statewide drought conditions decreased from 3.6 to 0.8 percent of the state. However, the Lower Rio Grande Valley and Corpus Christi areas are still suffering from moderate drought conditions. These conditions are far less than what was seen last year when forty-three percent of the state was suffering from moderate drought conditions.

More rain is expected with projections showing an increase in rain in central Texas by the end of May. Hopefully, other parts of the state will get some of this much needed rain as well.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

UPCOMING SPRING & SUMMER EVENTS

Don't miss out on these informative events and activities regarding water and land conservation related issues:

- EAPP Conservation Advisory Board monthly meeting — San Antonio, TX — March 23rd
- TALT Impacts of Loss of Rural Lands on Water, Wildlife, & Agriculture — Corpus Christi, TX — April 15th
- TEXAS WATER 2016 — Fort Worth, TX — April 19th-22nd
- National Groundwater Association 2016 Groundwater Summit — Denver, CO — April 24th-27th
- Water Reuse in Texas Conference—San Marcos, TX—July 15th
- TCEQ 2016 Annual Public Drinking Water Conference — Austin, TX — August 9th-10th

Useful Links

City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Dept.

<http://www.sanantonio.gov/ParksandRec/NewsEvents.aspx>

San Antonio River Foundation
<http://www.sariverfoundation.org>

Edwards Aquifer Authority
<http://www.edwardsaquifer.org/>

San Antonio Water System
<http://www.saws.org/conservation/calendar/>



CONSERVATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

Q & A WITH SCOTT HALTY—SAWS REPRESENTATIVE

Question: How long have you served as a CAB member?

Answer: 15 years, since the inception of the Conservation Advisory Board.

Question: As the SAWS representative on CAB, how do you view the Edwards program?

Answer: I view the Edwards Program as a critical piece of the water quality protection puzzle, with the Health and Safety of our customers as our most important goal. The Edwards Program works hand in hand with existing water quality regulations. If we don't take care of our water resource, then the cost to treat our Edwards supply would be enormous.

Question: What changes have you noticed in the program during your tenure as a CAB member?

Answer: Mainly the faces (of the CAB members). The formula and members have worked so well there has not been any reason to make significant changes (to the program). I believe the success of the program is one of the reasons it is continually renewed.

Question: What do you like most about the program?

Answer: Beside the protection of water quality, I believe it ensures the preservation of the natural habitat and quality of life in the region.

Question: When you're not at work at SAWS, what do you like to do in your spare time?

Answer: I enjoy riding through the hill country and visiting small towns like Fredericksburg and Comfort. I also enjoy riding on my Oliver Super 55 tractor!



Scott Halty, CAB Member, San Antonio Water System Representative

LOCAL CONSERVATION NEWS

SAN ANTONIO NAMED FIRST MONARCH BUTTERFLY CHAMPION



Source: Monarch-Butterfly.com

The City of San Antonio recently became a Monarch Champion in the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Mayor's Monarch Pledge to increase and enhance Monarch butterfly and pollinator habitat. The national campaign encourages mayors and local governments to adopt specific actions to support butterfly migration, which has declined dramatically in the past few years. Scientists speculate that the reason for the decline is due to habitat loss, the increase in genetically modified crops, increased pesticide use, and climate change. Monarch butterflies migrate each spring and fall from Mexico to Canada and back to their wintering grounds in the mountains west of Mexico City. Their migration, which takes them across the state

of Texas and through San Antonio, is considered a biological phenomena since it takes multiple generations to complete the migration. San Antonio is often the first stop on their journey to the north in the spring and their last stop to the south in the fall. Therefore, San Antonio is an important migration route and the signing of the Monarch Pledge by Mayor Ivy Taylor is a huge step in their protection. The pledge means San Antonio will adopt twenty-four specific actions suggested by the NWF. These actions include promoting pollinator habitat, initiating citizen science projects, and changing landscaping ordinances and city mowing schedules to name a few. Most of these actions are not new to San Antonio. For years, community members have been involved in Monarch butterfly advocacy with such groups as the Monarch Larvae Monitoring Project (MLMP), the Museum Reach Milkweed Patch, and the Monarch Watch citizen science tagging program. These groups along with the Mayor's Monarch Pledge makes San Antonio a friendly welcome for these amazing butterflies. To read more on this important initiative, visit this Rivard Report story: <http://therivardreport.com/san-antonio-to-become-first-monarch-champion-city/>

DID YOU KNOW?

- In their larval stage, monarch caterpillars feed almost exclusively on milkweed and as adults get their nutrients from the nectar of flowers.
- Monarch butterflies can travel between 50 to 100 miles a day and it can take up to two months to complete their migration to their winter roost.
- Monarch butterflies are susceptible to the cold and cannot fly if their body temperature is less than 86 degrees.
- Threats to Monarch butterflies include loss of milkweed, which they depend upon as a larvae and from habitat loss, such as the illegal logging trade in Mexico.

Source: Defenders of the Wild