June 10, 2010                 contact: Annalisa Peace, Executive Director
(210) 320-6294 / (210) 275-9336

Press Release
Re: Change in rate structure proposed by SAWS

The Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance is delighted to wholeheartedly endorse changes to the water rate structure proposed by the San Antonio Water System (SAWS).

Our local member groups have long advocated changes to the rate structure such as these submitted by SAWS, and we thank the SAWS Board and staff for devising such an elegant and common sense method of encouraging additional water conservation. We believe the changes proposed will serve as the basis of an equitable system whereby those putting the most strain on our water resources will be charged accordingly, while those who conserve will be rewarded for their efforts. It is our hope that this rate structure will be adopted as proposed, and that it will result in a reduction of water use and the adoption of additional conservation measures where they are warranted.

Given that only 3% of the water on earth is fresh water, and only 1% of that freshwater is available for human use, we applaud SAWS extensive efforts to conserve water. Given that the Edwards Aquifer provides us with extremely high quality water, and that it is the basis of an ecosystem that we all rely upon, we are especially grateful for actions that prevent this precious resource from being squandered.

We find it outrageous that the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce is opposed to putting the burden of developing new water resources upon the largest consumers of those resources, and we question their motives for doing so. Especially as this body has consistently opposed proven measures to protect the quality of San Antonio’s main source of water and other improvements that have earned our city recognition as a leader in water conservation.

At this time, when stakeholders from throughout the Edwards region are working hard to devise a plan to protect this precious resource, failure to adopt this measure sends a strong message to others that San Antonio is unwilling to do our part to protect spring flows at Comal and San Marcos. We urge Mayor Castro and members of City Council to approve the rate structure as proposed by SAWS.

XXX

The Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance unites forty-eight member organizations behind a comprehensive plan to protect regional karst aquifers, their springs and watersheds, and the Texas Hill Country. For more information visit www.AquiferAlliance.org