

Dear GEAA members and friends,

This promises to be a very interesting event. Please pre-register by Saturday, Sept. 17 to reserve a lunch, by contacting kathyhunt@suddenlink.net or 361-573-1317.

We hope to see you there!

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TEXAS WATER: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

The League of Women Voters (LWV) and the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) invite the public to attend a day-long forum to learn about the challenges Texans face regarding water resources and how to assure there will be enough water for future needs throughout the state.

The forum will be held on **Saturday, Sept. 24, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.**
at SAWS headquarters, 2800 Highway 281 North, San Antonio, in Customer Service Building 2.

The registration fee for the forum is \$15, payable at the door, and includes a box lunch.

Speakers with expertise from the entire region, including water professionals, environmentalists, and public officials will give their viewpoints regarding the challenges and possibilities of managing water resources. The agenda will include time for participants to ask questions and express their own concerns and possible solutions.

Questions to be addressed by various panels reflect concerns common to areas of Central Texas. How can Texas best manage our water resources, especially in times of recurrent drought? How can the state prepare for increasing demands on water resources because of population growth? What problems are associated with transferring water from one area to another? How can the rights to groundwater be balanced between landowners and the whole community? What are some of the processes being used in our region to protect water resources.

These questions are part of a study by LWV of Texas, "State Water: What You Should Know." Representatives of local Leagues in Wimberley Valley, Victoria, San Marcos, San Antonio, Kerrville, and Comal areas have planned this day-long event as part of the LWV mission to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government.

Speakers will be representing various communities in the region, including Uvalde, Wimberley, Blanco, San Marcos, Victoria, and rural areas, as well as San Antonio. The forum is part of a state-wide LWV study of water resources, and is a follow-up to a regional forum held last fall. The Sept. 24 forum will address issues not covered in the previous forum, but relevant to the statewide water study being conducted by the League of Women Voters.

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Agenda

Purpose: To consider the competition for water in Texas, including governmental policy, public interest rights, and water resource protection concerns.

9:30 Registration/ Coffee

10:00 Welcome & Introductory Remarks

10:15 “Managing Limited Water Resources: Challenges & Possibilities”

Brief Introduction to set the stage might include: Speakers will discuss the challenges of managing water in Texas considering our dual systems for groundwater and surface water, our changing climate with less rainfall, and our increasing population.

Speaker 1: Representative from SAWS

To address: What are the major challenges to managing groundwater resources in Central Texas? How can we plan for a future that includes population growth and recurring droughts?

Speaker 2: Representative from GBRA

To address: What are the major challenges to managing surface water resources in the Guadalupe-Blanco River watersheds? How can we plan for a future that includes population growth and recurring droughts?

Speaker 2: Jennifer Walker, Lone Star Sierra Club

To address: The effects of population growth and climate change on the environment, especially water resources. Possibilities for changes in state water policies and possible lifestyle changes that individuals may need to adopt.

Questions from audience

11:25 “Water Transfers: From areas of surplus to areas of scarcity”

Speaker 1: SAWS representative

To address: What is the current process for determining where SAWS will seek water to be brought to San Antonio and the guidelines that they use? Could state policy regarding water transfers be improved and how?

Speaker 2: Con Mims, Executive Director, Nueces River Authority

To address: How does the current process for water transfers work from the standpoint of the “area of surplus?” What is his opinion regarding instituting a state agency to regulate all water transfers, establishing an exchange agency that lets prices float with the market, or retaining the current system?

Questions from the audience:

12:10 Lunch break

12:55 “Groundwater Rights and Right of Capture: SB 332”

Speaker: Greg Ellis, water attorney

To address: Background regarding SB 332, and explanation of the legal implications of the passage of SB 332 regarding groundwater rights of property owners vs. authority of groundwater districts. Explanation of points of view of property owners and points of view of groundwater districts. What happens now? (legal challenges?)

Questions from audience:

1:30 “Deciding Desired Future Conditions for Groundwater”

Introductory remarks: Groundwater Management Areas (GMA’s) have the responsibility of setting “desired future conditions” (DFCs) for aquifers in their area. What happens when the DFC set by the GMA is considered to be harmful to future water supplies? The panelists will give us a case history to consider.

Speaker 1: Ron Fieseler, GMA 9

To be addressed: Explain the process by which the DFC is set. What is taken into consideration? Who makes the final decision? What is the process for responding to a challenge?

Speaker 2: David Baker, Wimberley Valley Watershed Association & former Hays Trinity GWDC board member.

To be addressed: Background regarding the challenge that the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association has mounted to the DFC set by GMA 9. Why they are challenging.

Questions from the audience:

2:35 “Working together to protect water resources: the Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program (EARIP)”

Introductory remarks: The just completed Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program was an opportunity for competing water interests to work together for a solution. Panelists represent the diverse interests involved in managing the Edwards Aquifer. Can a consensus process work to solve competing interests?

Speaker 1: Dianne Wassenich, San Marcos River Foundation

To be addressed: Background info regarding the need for the EARIP. Describe how water is needed to protect the endangered species in the springs, along the rivers, and in the estuaries (whooping cranes). How well did the process work for endangered species?

Speaker 2: Jerry James, City of Victoria

To be addressed: Describe how water is needed for downstream communities. How well did the process work for you?

Speaker 3: Tom Taggart, City of San Marcos

To be addressed: Describe how water is needed for spring communities. How well did the process work for you?

Speaker 4: Adam Yablonski, representing agriculture stakeholders

To be addressed: Describe how water is needed for agriculture. How well did this process work for you?

Speaker 5: SAWS Representative

To be addressed: Describe how water is needed for the San Antonio metropolitan area. How well did this process work for you? What steps has San Antonio taken to conserve and store water?

Questions from the audience:

- 3:55 Next steps (about the LWV consensus process & inviting participants to join LWV)
Evaluations
- 4:15 Adjourn