

## The City of Blanco is Requesting to Discharge 1.6 Million Gallons of Wastewater Daily into the Blanco River...



Image of the Blanco River at Blanco River State Park.

Dear GEAA members and friends,

When it rains, it pours. A few weeks ago I sent you message about plans to discharge half a million gallons of sewage effluent per day into Honey Creek. Last week, I recieved notice that there are also plans to discharge sewage effluent into Indian Creek in Bulverde. Now this...

The City of Blanco is currently constructing a wastewater treatment facility, which is nearing completion. Blanco has recently requested an amendment to their wastewater discharge permit that would **authorize an increase in the**

**discharge of treated domestic wastewater from 225,000 gallons per day to 1,600,000 gallons per day into the Blanco River** - a sevenfold increase from their current Texas Land Application Permit (TLAP). The City of Blanco is asking TCEQ to allow them to discharge all of this wastewater into the Blanco River. The City has promised to sell and re-use as much as their effluent as possible, however, this "promise" is not binding and would not protect the water quality of the Blanco River and everyone that is connected to it.

Everybody downstream will be greatly affected by this decision.

Not all hope is lost as this permit is in its DRAFT form and still needs to be reviewed and approved by TCEQ.

[Here are 3 things YOU can do to Save the Blanco River:](#)

[1. Attend the Public Hearing.](#)

**Thursday, August 23rd at 7:pm**  
**Old Blanco County Courthouse**  
(Second Floor Courtroom)  
**300 Main Street**  
**Blanco, Texas 78606**

TCEQ will be holding a public hearing about the details of this permit. Citizens will be allowed to sign up for a 3 minute public comment. Let's fill the courthouse and show TCEQ that we do not support the City's request. For more information on the public hearing: [Public Hearing Notice](#).

[2. Submit comments to TCEQ.](#)

Citizens can still submit public comments to TCEQ with their opposition or concern about the City of Blanco's request to discharge 1.6 million gallons of wastewater daily until **August 23rd** or the public hearing. The WVWA and other parties have asked TCEQ for a 30 day extension on the public comment period. Read WVWA's comments to TCEQ [here](#).

**Website:** <http://www14.tceq.texas.gov/epic/eComment/>  
**Permit #:** WQ0010549002

Public comments do not need to be complex or scientific, a simple "I do not support this permit" will suffice. If you'd like more information on the effects of

discharge into rivers and streams, see below or read more [here](#). Feel free to copy and paste any information from this email into your public comments.

The practice of dumping treated wastewater into our Hill Country rivers, creeks, and streams needs to stop. In today's world, we have creative solutions and better alternatives to direct discharge.

While wastewater discharge has undergone some treatment, it is not treated to drinking water standards and is not nearly clean enough to be dumped safely into our creeks and rivers. This effluent water contains high levels of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) which cause algae blooms and take up oxygen in the water body. The waterway may become hypoxic (lacking oxygen), causing fish and other aquatic life to perish. Algae also restricts light moving into the lower portions of the river, altering habitat. These effects can reduce biodiversity even when a river is not completely devoid of oxygen.

At high levels, nitrogen is unsafe in drinking water, restricting transport of oxygen in the blood. This is especially dangerous for babies, children, the elderly, and young livestock. [\[1\]](#) Additionally, effluent water contains metals, pharmaceuticals, and many other chemicals from cleaning and body care products. [\[2\]](#) The full effects of these products are not yet known.

### [3. Share this information with your friends and neighbors.](#)

There are many residents of Blanco who still have not heard about this amended request. Please share this email with your friends and neighbors to spread the word and help give those who are affected a voice in this process.

Please file comments and attend the public hearing Thursday evening in Blanco to let the City Council know there are better options than dumping treated sewage into the pristine Blanco River. The WVWA and many other regional partners are advocating for a decentralized collection system that reuses treated effluent to offset groundwater pumping for local irrigation uses. Let's work together to create a [ONE WATER](#) approach for managing our water in the Texas Hill Country.

Thank you for all you do to keep our Hill Country rivers, creeks, and streams healthy and flowing. We'll see you out at the Blanco Courthouse on Thursday.

- A big thanks to the folks at [Wimberley Valley Watershed Association](#) for this message.



Image from the South San Gabriel River after TCEQ discovered the City of Liberty Hill was dumping their treated wastewater into the River. Increased nitrates and phosphorous from the wastewater can lead to algae blooms and decreased oxygen levels which can be harmful to aquatic life.

As previously mentioned, GEAA is also organizing opposition to contest a permit to discharge up to 500,000 gallons/day of sewage effluent from a [wastewater treatment plant](#) in Spring Branch via pipe into “a dry tributary: thence to Honey Creek; thence to the Guadalupe River” near the [Honey Creek State Natural Area](#). You can read the permit application and comment by clicking [here](#) and entering permit #WQ0015688001.

The two watersheds in the Honey Creek State Natural Area are in the catchment area of the Edwards Aquifer about 25 miles north of San Antonio. The catchment area, adjacent to the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone, comprises the upper parts of drainage basins of streams that lose water to the Edwards Aquifer as the streams cross the recharge zone. The watersheds are drained by ephemeral, first order streams that are tributaries to Honey Creek, a tributary to the Guadalupe River. You can read more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

You can learn more about and comment on the permit to release sewage effluent from a new development into Indian Creek at Bulverde

Point/Ammann Oaks, roughly 1.5 miles north of the Cibolo Creek by clicking [here](#) and entering the permit: #WQ0015092001

GEAA has a [long history](#) of opposing such [permits](#), and we hope to join with local residents to contest these permits. But, Texas stacks the deck in favor of the applicant; contesting these cases is expensive and exhausting.

That is why we plan to go to the Texas Legislature again to request that they pass [legislation that prohibits direct discharge of sewage effluent on the Edwards Aquifer Contributing Zone](#). If [SB 1796 / HB 3036 / HB 3467](#) had passed in 2017, we would not have to fight the Honey Creek permit. We are already working hard to get this legislation passed in 2019.

**You can help by [signing a petition](#) calling for a ban on the filthy practice of discharging sewage effluent into waterways that recharge the Edwards Aquifer.** We would like to have 5,000 signatures ASAP.

Stay tuned for more about what you can do to keep sewage effluent out of our Hill Country creeks and rivers.

Annalisa Peace

Executive Director  
[Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance](#)

**You can donate to GEAA [on line](#) or mail a check to PO Box 15618, San Antonio, Texas 78212**

**You can always keep up with interesting water news on [GEAA's Face Book page](#)**