



Dear GEAA members and friends,

This week we have reasons to celebrate and cause for concern. First the good news – the Edwards Aquifer and Cibolo Creek were big winners this past week!

We won a [big victory Tuesday](#) in a long-running case against the TCEQ's permit allowing the Johnson Ranch subdivision to release treated wastewater onto the neighboring ranch owned by the Lux and Graham families. The effluent would flow onto the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone and into Cibolo Creek. Pursuant to our [appeal](#), District Judge Amy Clark Meachum filed [a letter](#) stating the court would reverse the TCEQ's decision to issue the wastewater discharge permit and remand the cause back to TCEQ for further consideration. Moving forward, we hope that the [original recommendation to deny the permit](#) by the State Office of Administrative Hearings and this most recent action will put an end to this long-standing fight.

And, our partnership with the Bulverde Neighborhood Alliance to oppose 4S Ranch permit for direct discharge of sewage effluent into Lewis Creek, a tributary of the Cibolo, resulted in an negotiated settlement that included beneficial reuse of the effluent and several other measures more protective of the watershed.

These two actions, combined with other victories won this past year, mean that millions of gallons of sewage effluent per day will NOT be flowing into Cibolo Creek and recharging our Aquifer. Thanks to all of our partners in these actions. Special thanks goes out to Pat and Terrell Graham for their heroic efforts to protect the Cibolo watershed and the rights of all Texas property owners.

Sadly, there is not much to celebrate on the legislative front. We have yet to get our bill filed that would prohibit discharge of sewage effluent into waterways that recharge the Edwards Aquifer. [This legislation](#) is needed now more than ever. Please contact [your legislators](#) to urge them to sponsor this much needed legislation. Click [here](#) for more info.

And, Representative Paul Workman is up to his nefarious deeds again. Yesterday he filed [HB 1135](#), a repeat of [a bill](#) we defeated in 2013. If this bill is passed, San Antonio, Austin, and San Marcos would not be able to enforce their Aquifer Protection Ordinances, and all municipalities would have big problems enforcing stormwater regulations. Stay tuned for more on this and other legislation and urge your friends and neighbors to sign up for our legislative alerts [here](#).

Yesterday, the San Antonio City Council voted to join the [Southern Edwards Plateau Habitat Conservation Plan](#) (SEPHCP), which would use a land-swapping credit system to preserve habitat for two endangered songbirds and seven rare cave spiders and insects. GEAA and our local members have been involved in this HCP since 2009 and, while we are delighted to see implementation finally moving forward, we do have some serious concerns about the [Interlocal Agreement](#) that was approved. You can read our comments [here](#).

It was difficult to sit through the Council discussion yesterday without being able to participate. Bexar County Director of Public Works, Renee Green, got up before Council twice to say that a Citizens Advisory Committee had met 32 times over two years to make recommendations for this HCP. What she neglected to tell Council is that the draft HCP that reflected the recommendations of the Citizens Advisory Committee and the Biological Advisory Team was thrown out by Bexar County, which hired a different consultant to draft a plan that was much less protective than the original. The substitute draft was then submitted to US Fish and Wildlife and approved. We believe that this action constituted a violation of the Endangered Species Act and demonstrated extreme bad faith on the part of Bexar County; thus our concern about how this plan will be implemented by the City and the County with no meaningful public participation. Sadly, our meetings with the Mayor's staff only served to prepare her as to how to refute our concerns. Our thanks to Councilman Nirenberg, who moved to postpone the item until several concerns could be addressed. Read more [here](#).

Approval of the SEPHCP Interlocal Agreement will come before the Bexar County Commissioners on January 24th. Please contact [Judge Wolff and Bexar County Commissioners](#) and let them know that you want the City to be reimbursed 100% for any City owned lands that are used for mitigation by the SEPHCP, and that we need public representation on the Coordinating Committee that will manage the Plan.

Last but not least, all Comal County members are invited to attend our “Planning for Growth in Comal County” conference at the McKenna Events Center on February 2nd and 3rd. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

Have a great weekend!

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

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