



Dear GEAA members and friends,

Lots going on this week throughout Central Texas so, this will be a rather long message. Please feel free to cut, paste, and forward the portion that is pertinent to your community. Believe me, they will thank you.

Attention, tubers and river lovers!

Enjoy your outings but, please take your trash with you when you leave. And, consider picking up trash left by others after your next visit. [This footage](#) shows all the trash left behind by tubers on the San Marcos River a couple of weekends ago.



You can help out even more by signing up with the [San Marcos River Foundation](#) to count tubers each Saturday from 10:am to 6:pm. All you have to do is sit in a lawn chair and click a button every time a tube or boat or paddle board passes your spot on the river. Work a couple of hours if that is all you can do. SMRF hopes to have enough people to have at least four

shifts per day. If you can help out, email wassenich@grandecom.net . Just five Saturdays left for you to help on this important counting project so, don't miss out!

San Marcos

This Tuesday night (8/2) the San Marcos City Council will consider the application to change the land use designation a site at Wonder World and Hunter Rd to accommodate a new HEB. Read more [here](#). The site, next to Purgatory Creek where the spill way from the flood control dam discharges, [is a sensitive one](#) so we will be asking Council to:

Ask HEB to locate their new store on property they already own at the intersection of McCarty Lane and Interstate 35

Consider pervious paving wherever practical for reducing runoff

Construct adequate detention prior to construction to protect property downstream

Build well outside of the area impacted by the 1998 flood

Make sure that any caves discovered during construction are promptly reported to the EAA. Even a tiny surface crack can end up being a long cave that is important for recharge and may be habitat for endangered species. Ezell's Cave and blind salamanders are nearby. Archeologic items are also hard to see when the bulldozer or excavator operator is up in his high seat. It will be critical to have experts on hand while excavating this site.

We are told that HEB has gone above and beyond complying with the requirements of the City of San Marcos, for which we are grateful. Since HEB contributed to the publication of GEAA's "[Watershed Stewardship for the Edwards Aquifer](#)", we call on them to select the IH 35 site and to take every opportunity to incorporate the Low Impact Development techniques GEAA recommends to protect the Aquifer and make this new store a model development.

The [Council meeting](#) starts at 6:pm at 630 E. Hopkins and, you must sign up to speak by 5:30 p.m. Or, you can submit written comments to Mayor_Council_Info@sanmarcostx.gov.

San Antonio

Last week the San Antonio Planning Commission voted 5-4 to exclude recommendations for impervious cover limits and dark skies protections from the proposed [Sustainability Plan](#). Read more [here](#). As a stakeholder participant who participated in a year's worth of meetings, I am outraged that five members of the Planning Commission would favor a request from the [Real Estate Council of San Antonio](#) over the recommendations of an [inclusive panel of stakeholders](#). (Please note that this is NOT the San Antonio Board of Realtors, which normally represents the industry; realtors who called GEAA to express astonishment at the Planning Commission's decision did not know anything about RECSA.)

On Wednesday (8/3) at 1:30 pm GEAA will join others for a Press Conference on the east steps of City Hall (100 Military Plaza) to call on Mayor Taylor and City Council to reject the recommendation of the [Planning Commission](#) and adopt the Sustainability Plan submitted by the Stakeholders Group. You are all invited.

After the Press Conference, we will attend the [City Council B Session](#) at Municipal Plaza, where this item will be discussed. If you are not able to attend, you can watch the meeting [on-line](#).

In the meanwhile, please contact [Mayor Taylor and your City Council representative](#) to urge them to reject the Planning Commission's recommendation when they vote on this item at their August 11th meeting.

We will also be asking Council to replace the five members (as of this time we have been unable to get their names) who disregarded the lengthy and open [Sustainability Plan process](#) when their terms expire this October.

Kendall County

Meanwhile, in Kendall County, we are concerned about a permit application to the Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District for water withdrawals by [Kendall West Utility](#). Read more [here](#). KWU is requesting a permit to drill a supply well on a 1.55-acre lot off Cascade Caverns Road that they purchased so that they can pump and pipe the water to growing areas outside Boerne, including the Miralomas subdivision, a large development once known as Lerin Hills, and the Tapitio Springs Golf Resort. This plan is troubling, to say the least. We fear that permitting the amount requested would have severe impacts on Cascade Caverns and the endangered species indigenous to this area, as well as to local wells. Read more about that [here](#).

While GEAA opposes KWU's permit application, we recognize that the murky status of Texas water law exposes the Cow Creek GCD to a lawsuit should they deny the permit. We were happy to hear that Cow Creek will conduct a hydrological study of the area and will open this item for discussion at their [next meeting](#) at 6:pm at 201 E. San Antonio Ave. on August 8th. They are not expected to make a decision on this application any time soon. We believe that Cow Creek will be able to work with impacted area residents to craft an elegant solution to this problem, and hope that such a solution can serve as a model for future attempts at water export that are sure to come. (By the way, we note that the architect of this water grab cites [SAWS Vista Ridge project](#) has his inspiration – proving that bad policy begets more bad projects.)

In addition to getting approval for the allocation from the Cow Creek GCD, the City of Boerne will need to indicate it doesn't object to the project. Concerned citizens are urged to contact [The Boerne City Council](#) to ask them to withhold their approval, and to contact the [Trustees of the Cow Creek GCD](#) to ask them to devise an equitable solution that will prevent drawdown of water and negative impacts to this precious karst system.

New Braunfels

Quarrying activities continue to cause heartache in the New Braunfels area. Over the years, GEAA has partnered with local citizens throughout our region to protest permits for new quarries when the location is inappropriate and/or the applications do not represent the full and cumulative impacts to these communities. Recently, New Braunfels residents have contacted us with complaints about area quarries so, we were delighted to learn that [the EPA is taking action](#). During this upcoming session of the Texas Legislature, GEAA will continue to advocate empowering Hill Country counties to deny permits for incompatible land uses, such as locating quarries near existing neighborhoods, and to require the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality consider impacts to groundwater when permitting new quarries.

Whew! Kudos to those of you who read through to this point. And, thanks to the San Antonio Express News for all the reports provided here as links. As you can see, GEAA is pretty busy this August. Stay tuned for more on these and other important issues.

Annalisa Peace
Executive Director
[Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance](#)

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

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