

Request For Coverage: January 13, 2026

Salado Under Threat:

Reserve at Salado Creek Development Endangers
Bell County Drinking Water with Treated Sewage Discharge

What: Public Meeting held by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for the Reserve at Salado Creek wastewater permit

Where: Salado ISD Administration Office, 601 N. Main Street Salado, TX 76571

When: January 27, 2026, 7PM

Contact: Mike Clifford, GEAA Technical Director, 512-426-4463 / mike@aquiferalliance.org

A COMMUNITY MEETING WILL BE HELD IN ADVANCE OF THE TCEQ PUBLIC MEETING AT 5PM ON JANUARY 19 [AT BARROW BREWING IN SALADO](#). CONCERNED CITIZENS MAY ALSO [SUBMIT A COMMENT TO TCEQ BY CLICKING HERE](#) AND ENTERING PERMIT # WQ0016330001.

An Austin developer has applied for a wastewater permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to dump up to 700,000 gallons per day of treated sewage into Salado Creek, upstream of the Village of Salado. Area residents are alarmed by the proposed discharge of treated sewage effluent over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone (EARZ), where surface water flows to groundwater that's used for numerous local wells.

The Reserve at Salado Creek is just one of many new developments TCEQ has authorized to dump their treated sewage into Salado Creek (see figure 1 below). The cumulative impacts of so many treated sewage discharges would likely affect not only the quality of drinking water in Bell County, but also

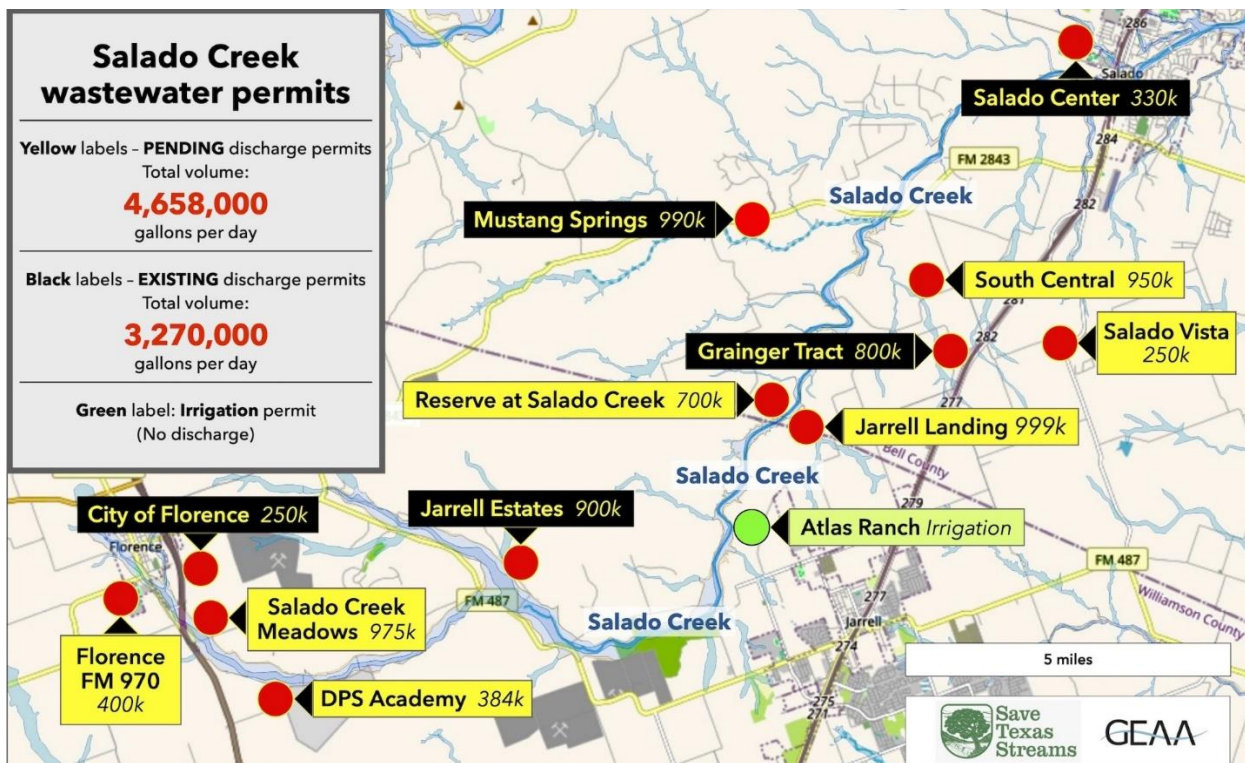


Figure 1: TCEQ has recently authorized numerous wastewater treatment plants along Salado Creek

Salado Creek itself, the Salado Springs complex, and the endangered Salado Springs Salamander that calls those springs home. Figure 1 doesn't even include DMB Development's planned 14,000 home Solana Ranch mega-tract, slated for buildout in the area beginning in late 2026.

"The pollution limits for the Reserve at Salado Creek wastewater permit are far too high for such an environmentally sensitive area in the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone, where surface water flows to groundwater through numerous cracks, faults, and fissures along Salado Creek," says Annalisa Peace, Executive Director for the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance. "When you add in the treated sewage discharges from all these other area developments, it's a potential crisis in the making."

Treated sewage effluent contains high levels of Phosphorous and Nitrogen, which cause algae growth and sometimes toxic algae growth, leading to the eventual killing of aquatic life in a waterway. The effluent also contains significant levels of bacteria, pharmaceuticals, forever chemicals, and other contaminants of emerging concern. The Village of Salado has 8 public water supply wells that sit along the underground Edwards Aquifer flow path for these discharged pollutants.

A decade ago, TCEQ authorized a similar wastewater permit for the City of Liberty Hill. By 2018, [complaints began pouring in from residents living along the South San Gabriel River](#) (see Figure 2 below). In 2020, one of those residents, Stephanie Morris, took TCEQ and the City of Liberty Hill to court. The court ultimately ruled in favor of Morris and directed Liberty Hill to reduce their Phosphorous discharge from 150 micrograms per liter to just 20 micrograms per liter. Notably, the Reserve at Salado Creek's draft permit allows for the 150 micrograms per liter Phosphorous limit that was overturned by the Texas courts.



Figure 2: The South Fork of the San Gabriel River was ruined by Liberty Hill's treated sewage discharge

The Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance and Save Texas Streams are both environmental advocacy organizations focusing on protecting Central Texas water resources. For more information, please visit aquiferalliance.org and savetexasstreams.org.