

## **Water Conference to Pose Question: “Save it or Drain it?”** *Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District to Host Event*

**WIMBERLEY, Texas** - With dozens of western Hays County water wells going dry, groundwater district officials are hosting a water conference to galvanize support for the county's dwindling aquifer before popular watering holes such as Blue Hole and Jacob's Well also go dry.

"It's a call to act as stewards of our groundwater and fight for sustainable management of the aquifer," said Andrew Backus, president of the Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District's board of directors.

Managing the aquifer sustainably means keeping the resource as healthy as it has been in the past to preserve groundwater and all the natural springs and streams and waterholes that make Hays County a great and unique place to live, Backus said.

**The “Save it or Drain it?” Water Conference will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Aug. 18 at the Wimberley Community Center, 14068 Ranch Road 12.**

**The conference is free and open to the public** and will include question-and-answer sessions with invited experts and district board members.

Lunch will be available for \$10. **Please RSVP to Beckie Morris at 512-858-9253** or to [manager@haysgroundwater.com](mailto:manager@haysgroundwater.com) by Aug. 16. Details of the conference are available at the district's website, [www.haysgroundwater.com](http://www.haysgroundwater.com)

The purpose of the conference is to address water issues in western Hays County - availability, reliability, management, cost, rainwater harvesting and other alternative water sources, and community impacts, Backus said.

Speakers include one of the State's leading experts on groundwater, Dr. Robert Mace of the Texas Water Development Board, and representatives of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority, who will discuss the possibility of water imports to Hays County. The Lower Colorado River Authority has also been invited to send a representative to discuss water imports. In addition, rainwater harvesting, including the viability of rainwater serving entire subdivisions, will be discussed by Dr. Kent Butler of the University of Texas-Austin and others.

District officials are hoping county residents can begin using rainwater as a primary water source, just as the pioneers who settled Hays County did in their time.

Hays County is one of the fastest growing counties in Texas. Unfortunately, most of that growth is dependent on single-family wells, which are exempt from the district's production limits.

Unmanaged drilling has put a severe strain on our aquifer," Backus said. "Wells are going dry and owners are having to take expensive measures to keep them pumping."

More growth is predicted. In fact, district forecasters expect more home water wells to be drilled this year than in any other single year in the history of Hays County.

We're asking county residents to help us find solutions that will enable us to protect our groundwater resources for current and future generations," Backus said. "Continued pressure on the aquifer will mean the end of Jacob's Well, of Blue Hole and of those famous dripping springs," he said.

Jacob's Well, an artesian spring near Wimberley, was considered a sacred place by Native Americans. Blue Hole, one of Texas' most famous natural swimming holes, is north of the Wimberley Square. Springs in western Hays County gave Dripping Springs its name.