

# News 8 Austin

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## Group says water laws not protecting river

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By: Russell Wilde

Even with recent rainfall, the San Marcos River is flowing much lower than usual.

For Mike McClabb, the San Marcos River is more than a river.

"It's a paradise in the middle of a hot environment," he said.

During the drought, he's watched the river's flow get lower and lower, and now he's concerned about what a new community might mean for water users downstream.

"To allow this developer to pump out of it just adds to it," McClabb said.

San Marcos River Ranch is to become a gated waterskiing community, complete with manmade lakes filled with water from the San Marcos River.

"It's all legal and the permit does have some provisions," Texas Rivers Protection Association President Tom Goynes.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality permit allows the developer 150-acre feet of water each year.

From May through August, if the flow in the river is below 130-cubic feet per second, pumping must stop. For the rest of the year, pumping could resume as long as the flow is 34 cfs.

"Biologist have told us when we drop below 100 cfs, species start dying," Goynes said.

McClabb is organizing a protest of the water laws he says are putting the river in



San Marcos River Ranch is to become a gated waterskiing community.

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### Water Laws

News 8's Russell Wilde tells us why people are saying the state's water laws must be changed.

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danger.

"I think the public needs to know what's happening with their water supply," he said.

Goynes said the permit is an outrage.

"We're telling people, 'Don't water your lawn. Let the grass die.' Why? Why did we do that? So that some rich folks can buy lake-front property and water ski," he said.



While the San Marcos River Ranch is selling lake front lots, Goynes said the law must be changed to protect the river during droughts.

"We can't have an unlimited number of vanity lakes or recreation lakes or whatever you want to call them all the way down the river to the coast," he said.

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