



Blanco Creek: Over 6,700 acres of land were protected in Uvalde County in December 2013 within this watershed.

EDWARDS AQUIFER PROTECTION PROGRAM

NEWS AND UPDATES

December was a busy month for the City's aquifer protection program. We protected an additional 6,767 acres in conservation easements in December, boosting our grand total of protected acres under the program to 116,683.

In fact, 2013 was the busiest year on record for the City's aquifer protection program. City staff and their nonprofit partners worked diligently all year long and were successful in acquiring 14 conservation easements during the calendar year, more than any other year to date for the program. Congratulations and thank you to all of the City partners who helped make this record-setting year possible.

As we enter 2014, we look forward to another robust year of land and watershed protection. Thank you for your continued support of this important City program, and Happy New Year.

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For more information on the program or to receive quarterly newsletters via email, please visit our new website at:

<http://www.sanantonio.gov/edwardsaquifer>





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TEXAS NEWS

NATIONAL WATERSHED TRENDS FELT IN TEXAS

A [recent study](#) conducted by the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences at the University of Colorado Boulder suggests that one in 10 watersheds in the United States is “stressed,” meaning the watershed’s demand for water exceeds supply.

This “stress” can be witnessed firsthand here in Texas, and is covered most recently by the Texas Tribune in a series of articles called “[Troubled Waters: the State of Texas Rivers.](#)” The series touches on the history, health and future of Texas rivers, many of which will suffer as demand for water across the state continues to rise at steady rates and drought conditions persist.

More on the Colorado Study here: <http://www.colorado.edu/news/releases/2013/09/18/today%E2%80%99s-worst-watershed-stresses-may-become-new-normal-study-finds>.

More of the Tribune’s “Troubled Waters” series can be found at: <http://www.texastribune.org/in-the-flow/>.



For more information on family fun things to do this winter, please visit the websites below:

San Antonio Botanical Gardens:
<http://www.sabot.org/>

San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo:
<http://www.sarodeo.com/>

San Antonio Zoo:
<http://sazoo.org/>

San Antonio Witte Museum:
<http://www.witemuseum.org/>

San Antonio Children’s Museum:
<http://www.sakids.org/home.aspx>

WINTER IN SAN ANTONIO

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

There are many fun-filled activities to celebrate the new year. Here are a few winter activities to bring in the new year with family and friends:

San Antonio Botanical Gardens — Winter activities include “Art in the Garden” as well as “Dog Days” in January and “Chocolate Day” in February.

San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo — Carnival, livestock centers, and concerts during the month of February.

Contemporary Art Month — Month-long art celebration in March featuring more than 400 exhibits at more than 50 venues across the city.

San Antonio Zoo — Celebration of “Zootennial” in 2014 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the San Antonio Zoo.



The Seco Sinkhole is one of the largest recharge features in the Edwards Aquifer. The sinkhole and cave are located on a private ranch in Medina County, which is protected by a conservation easement held by the San Antonio Edwards Aquifer Protection Program.

THE SECO SINKHOLE

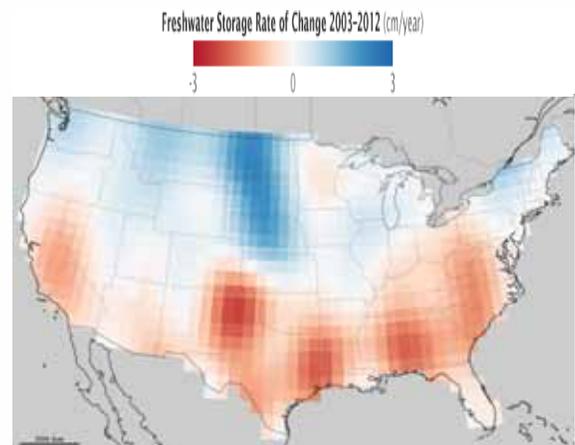
AQUIFER RECHARGE ON PROTECTED LAND

The massive recharge feature known as the Seco Sinkhole is located in western Medina County, not far from the Seco Creek. This enormous sinkhole is a magnificent sight to see. Located on a City of San Antonio-held conservation easement, the recharge feature has been studied by the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) for several years. In 1982, the EAA created a canal to help funnel rainwater from the Seco Creek into the sinkhole. Water entering the sinkhole eventually drops 75-feet to the bottom where it then flows through a limestone labyrinth of interconnected channels and crevices that are part of the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone. According to the EAA, as much as 150 cubic feet of water a second can flow into the sinkhole during a heavy rainfall event. In a wet year, this could be approximately 18,000 acre-feet of water into the Edwards Aquifer, according to the EAA — enough water to meet the average needs of almost 80,000 homes!

NATIONAL CONSERVATION NEWS

NASA CHRONICLES FRESHWATER DECLINE

Half of the world's water supply comes from beneath the earth's surface. Recent findings from NASA, however, suggest that much of the southern United States groundwater resources, including Texas, will suffer in the years ahead. Using data culled from 10 years of observations from the NASA GRACE Satellites, researchers have created a map (right) showing the rise and decline of freshwater resources throughout the country. The map clearly shows, in red, that much of the southern half of the country suffered extreme losses in freshwater resources from 2003 – 2012. Scientists in the report predict that these trends will continue into the future and, in some cases, even escalate. More information can be found on the NASA Earth Observatory website link: <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=82266&src=ve>.



Source: NASA Earth Observatory

Useful Links

Edwards Aquifer Authority:
<http://www.edwardsaquifer.org/>

Texas Ground Water Association:
<http://www.tgwa.org/>

Texas Land Trust Council:
<http://www.texaslandtrustcouncil.org/>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

UPCOMING 2014 WINTER-SPRING EVENTS

Upcoming 2014 conferences are right around the corner! Don't miss out on these informative events regarding water and land conservation related issues:

- [Gulf Coast Water Conservation Symposium](#) — Jan. 23 — Houston, TX
- [Land Stewardship Workshop for Land Contractors](#) — Jan. 24 — Llano, TX
- [TX Ground Water Association Annual Convention](#) — Jan. 29-31 — Lubbock, TX
- [TLTC Texas Land Conservation Conference](#) — Feb. 26-28 — Austin, TX
- [Texas Water 2014](#) — April 14-17 — Dallas, TX



SAN ANTONIO FEATURED IN PBS DOCUMENTARY

WATER BLUES, GREEN SOLUTIONS

The University of Texas at San Antonio, in partnership with the City of San Antonio, the Edwards Aquifer Authority, SAWS and the San Antonio River Authority, plans to host a special screening of the Penn State Public Media documentary "[Water Blues, Green Solutions](#)," in early 2014. The film focuses on innovative water conservation strategies in four major cities throughout the United States, including San Antonio.

With the State of Texas mired in drought for much of 2012 and 2013, the Penn State PBS team visited San Antonio to interview City officials, local scientists, and private landowners to better understand what is being done to address the concerns over water in such dry times. The result is both hopeful and heartening, as the film explores the myriad water conservation initiatives in place throughout the greater San Antonio area. To learn more about the documentary visit: <http://h2oblues.org/>.



Source: Penn State Public Media

For more information on when and where this special film screening will take place, contact Edwards Aquifer Protection Program staff on page 1 of this newsletter.

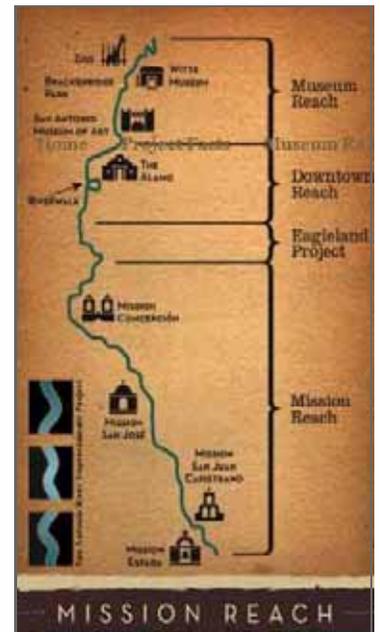
DID YOU KNOW?

- In 1921, a disastrous flood along the banks of the San Antonio River resulted in the building of the Olmos Dam.
- In 1938, San Antonio passed a bond to fund the "San Antonio River Beautification Project", which began the evolution of the river into the present day River Walk.
- The River Walk has inspired similar projects in other cities including, Little Sugar Creek Greenway in Charlotte, North Carolina and Cherry Creek Greenway in Denver, Colorado.
- In January of each year, San Antonio has a "Mud Festival" during the annual draining and maintenance of the San Antonio River.

SAN ANTONIO MISSION REACH

SAN ANTONIO RIVER EXPANSION PROJECT

The San Antonio Mission Reach, part of the San Antonio River Improvements Project (SARIP), is an ecosystem restoration and recreation improvement project of an eight mile stretch of the San Antonio River. The Mission Reach extends from South Alamo Street to Mission Espada and projects consist of riverine and riparian woodland restoration and recreational improvements. The Mission Reach is one of three projects of the SARIP. The SARIP was established through a \$358.3 million investment by Bexar County, the City of San Antonio, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) and the San Antonio River Foundation. The SARIP focuses on flood control, amenities, ecosystem restoration, and recreational improvements to the San Antonio River. A major component of the Mission Reach project is providing recreational opportunities on the river. Several miles of trails along the river provide access to pedestrians and bicyclists. Another amenity is the paddling trail in designated areas of the Mission Reach. Barge traffic will not be allowed on this part of the river, allowing paddlers to navigate safely along the river. The paddling trail is downstream of Mission Road and the low water crossing at Camino Coahuilteca. The river can be accessed at several areas (blue poles). The total trail is approximately 6 miles and includes several riffle structures that were constructed to improve aquatic habitat. More information on the [Mission Reach and SARIP](#) can be found at: http://www.sanantonioriver.org/mission_reach/mission_reach.php.



RESTORING OUR RIVER'S FUTURE



Source: San Antonio River Authority