

**2016 Edwards Aquifer Authority
Regional Water Conservation Program Work Plan**

5.1.3 Regional Water Conservation Program

Table 7.1 Budgeted Amount: \$1,973,000

Budgeted Amount: \$1,813,000

Amended Work Plan Amount: \$4,640,750

Long Term Objective:

To reduce withdrawals from the Edwards Aquifer by 10,000 acre-feet, realized through implementation of conservation measures that will conserve 20,000 acre-feet of water.

Discussion:

Conservation is one of four springflow protection measures of the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) intended to reduce aquifer withdrawals, and subsequently increase aquifer level and springflow. The concept is to reduce aquifer withdrawals by 10,000 acre-feet and the EAHCP contemplates using a Regional Water Conservation Program (RWCP) to achieve the goal in the following manner:

- An initial donation of 10,000 acre-feet is solicited from Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) permit holders to remain in the EAA Groundwater Trust for a period of ten years.
- The donated water is returned to the original donors through the implementation of conservation initiatives and technical assistance provided by the EAHCP. As conservation savings accrue, one-half of the savings are realized by the party participating in the RWCP and the other half is placed in the Groundwater Trust for the remaining term of the EAHCP ITP; allowing the original donors to have their donated water returned on a pro-rata basis. Consequently, 20,000 acre-feet of conservation savings are necessary for full return of the original donations.

In order to provide an immediate benefit to the aquifer and springflow, several entities within the EAA jurisdictional area have agreed to reduce their authorized withdrawals. As of January 2015, the initial donations are 8,400 acre-feet. This initial contribution of water rights were placed in the Groundwater Trust for a period of ten years (see Table below):

Table 1: Initial Commitment Contracts.

Entity	Acre-Feet of Water Donated
San Antonio Water Supply	8,000
City of San Marcos	300
Texas State University	100
TOTAL	8,400

Loaned water rights will be returned to the loaning entity at the end of 10 years or when an equal amount is identified as conserved and in reserve by the RWCP. Loaned water will be returned to the donor entity in a proportion equal to their contribution.

At the September 18, 2014 Implementing Committee, a RWCP work group was appointed to review the progress of conservation initiatives and make recommendations to achieve the goal of reducing aquifer withdrawals by 10,000 acre-feet. The work group had an initial meeting on October 15 and met five times, concluding on December 11. A final report was presented to the January 15, 2015 Implementing Committee with nine recommendations:

1. Implement an outreach program to ensure all permit holders are aware of the RWCP.
2. Look for opportunities to pay permit holders for permanent conservation of historically unused permitted water.
3. Expand the search for reuse and industrial technology opportunities in the EA Region and offer incentives for their excess capacity.
4. Look for opportunities to create flexible agreements with program participants (i.e. varying terms).
5. Provide settlement opportunities for permit holders who over-pump their permit.
6. Offer incentives and assistance to encourage municipalities to promote landscape conservation, especially during peak demand.
7. Create a conservation incentive program for exempt well owners.
8. Explore partnerships with land trusts.
9. Target conservation measures to producers that use flood irrigation.

In 2013 and 2014, twenty communities and utilities within the EAA jurisdiction were ranked, based on Gallons per Capita per Day, and thirteen were contacted to determine interest. Only two agreed to participate with the EAHCP and their total savings, and commitment to the Groundwater Trust has been approximately 200 acre-feet.

In late 2015, a leak repair program with the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) was negotiated and executed, successfully fulfilling the goal of the 10,000 acre-foot goal in the RWCP’s Groundwater Trust by 2020. The contract is in effect through the term of the Incidental Take Permit (ITP) (March 31, 2028) and is estimated to conserve almost 20,000 acre-feet.

Table 2: SAWS – EAA 5-year water savings commitment and fiscal obligation.

Water	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Estimated Savings (AF)	4,745	4,745	4,745	4,745	632	19,612
Commitment to the Groundwater Trust (AF)	2,372.5	2,372.5	2,372.5	2,372.5	316	9,806
Payment	\$4,507,750	\$4,507,750	\$4,507,750	\$4,507,750	\$600,400	\$18,631,400

With the payment of \$950 per acre-foot of water conserved that has been used as a standard for other RWCP participants, the contract will cost \$18,631,400 and commit the remaining 9,800 acre-feet into the Groundwater Trust to complete the 10,000 acre-foot goal.

Target Performance Measures for 2016:

After execution of the contract with SAWS, the RWCP has approximately \$400,000 budgeted to be utilized throughout the region for the remainder of the ITP in order to fund additional conservation initiatives.

Nine Performance Measures were identified for 2016:

1. Obtain additional staff and resources to pursue measures that will reduce aquifer withdrawals;
2. Pursue the recommendations presented by the RWCP work group;
3. Find a more efficient means of coordinating with the Department of Defense;
4. Pursue direct communications parties that have been specifically targeted, such as the Texas Aggregate and Concrete Association and the San Antonio Zoo;
5. Continue to develop innovative ways to reduce withdrawals from the aquifer;
6. Build synergy between existing conservation programs to achieve success in other aspects of the springflow protection measures.
7. Convene a meeting of the Regional Conservation Monitoring Committee.
8. Move conserved water to the Groundwater Trust.
9. Proportional return of initial commitments back to each permittee shown in Table 1 as water is received.

Methodology:

This work plan will be implemented by EAA staff with limited assistance from other contractors as needed.

Budget for Implementing 2016 Regional Water Conservation Work Plan:

The requested budget for the Regional Water Conservation work plan is \$4,640,750 (see Table 3). The increase in funds from Table 7.1 of the EAHCP for this effort will be provided from the

EAHCP fund balance for 2013-2015 as well as redistributing the program budget for the remainder of the ITP (to 2027). There will be approximately \$400,000 remaining to be utilized for other RWCP initiatives after the funding obligation to SAWS is fulfilled.

Table 3: Final 2016 Budget

SAWS Year-1 Contract Costs	Funds Allocated for the City of Uvalde Program Implementation	Table 7.1	2016 Budgeted Amount	Amended 2016 Budget
\$4,507,750	\$133,000	\$1,973,000	\$1,813,000	\$4,640,750

Monitoring:

Parties that have elected to contract with the EAA for program implementation will be required to provide an accounting of low flow devices (i.e. low flow toilets, and showerheads) or other means that have been used to reduce demands. EAA staff will provide photo documentation of the implementation of the program through routine visits of parties and distribution centers, etc.

Science Committee Review: Not applicable to this work plan

Regional Conservation Monitoring Committee Review: Does require review of the work plan.