

Affects of new pumping guidelines to be explored in study

October 28, 2003

The Victoria Advocate

VICTORIA, Texas- A study commissioned by two regional water authorities is set to begin in November to determine the effects of proposed pumping guidelines that could allow the Edwards Aquifer to drop to near-critically low levels.

The aquifer, which covers an 11-county area, feeds the state's largest springs. It is the primary source of water for the city of San Antonio.

The decision to implement the study was made following a proposal by the Edwards Aquifer Authority board to raise aquifer pumping limits to levels beyond state-mandated pumping limits, the Victoria Advocate reported in its Wednesday editions.

The study, which will be performed by the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and the San Antonio Water System, will try to determine the downstream effects of proposed rules and is being conducted in response to concerns from downstream residents about allowing San Antonio to pump more water.

Victoria Mayor Gary Middleton said he believes the study will show that increased pumping will diminish the flow on the Guadalupe River, from which Victoria draws much of its water supply.

Residents in Victoria say San Antonio's water supply would benefit most from the relaxed pumping regulations. But officials in San Antonio claim the changes in the management of Edwards Aquifer is just one step in a plan to have the aquifer managed regionally, a concept all parties agree on.

The new pumping rules, scheduled for adoption in December, would allow water to be pumped at a rate exceeding the state-mandated limits put in place to protect wildlife in and around the aquifer.

The new guidelines are part of a larger project, the Lower Guadalupe Water Supply Project, which in large part aims to establish a storage system that would allow water from Edwards and Carrizo aquifers to be taken during wet months and stored for use during hot, dry summer months.

Information from: The Victoria Advocate