

San Marcos residents conserve water

Submitted by [Brad Rollins](#) on Friday, 6 March 2009
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Despite exceptionally low rainfall for the last year, San Marcos residents have been doing their part to protect precious water resources by limiting their per capita water use well below state averages.

The 2008 statistics on water use show that San Marcos residents used 122 gallons per person per day—doing better than the state goal of 140 gallons and the city's own target for 2008, which was 133 gallons each day.

The Texas Water Development Board Water Conservation Task Force has recommended to water utilities to reduce per capita use by one per cent a year until they reach 140 gallons/ person/day.

"We have improved on that goal significantly," said Tom Taggart, Director of Public Services. "San Marcos residents tend to pay close attention to their water use—because of our rate structure that encourages conservation and because they are aware of how dependent the San Marcos River is on spring flow and the Edwards Aquifer."

The city has a year-round water ordinance that prohibits outdoor sprinkling during daytime hours (10 a.m. - 8 p.m.) as well as a four-stage drought response plan triggered when aquifer levels or spring flows drop to low levels.

The city of San Marcos receives about 70 to 80 percent of its water supply from Canyon Lake and pumps 20 to 30% from the Edwards Aquifer. Surface water is piped to San Marcos from Canyon Lake via the Guadalupe River and a 20 mile pipeline. The water is treated at the San Marcos Water Treatment Plant.

The city's pumping from the Edwards Aquifer during 2008 was 1,912 acre-feet, only 35 percent of the 5,433 acre feet the city has in aquifer water rights. The city's total water production for 2008 was 7,287 acre feet from both surface and ground water sources out of a total of 11,183 acre feet in both surface and aquifer water rights.

San Marcos's per capita use compares to Austin (for fiscal year 2008) at 159 gallons/ person/ day for non-industrial use; 160 gallons in New Braunfels for 2008, and 139 gallons in San Antonio.

San Marcos received only 17 inches of rain in 2008, less than half the average rainfall of 37 inches annually. So far in 2009, San Marcos has received less than an inch of rain (a total of 0.83 inch) already a deficit of 4.13 inches for the first two months of the year.

- **FROM THE CITY OF SAN MARCOS/MELISSA MILLECAM**

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