



# County Lines Determine Water Rights

## Kendall, Comal Counties Have Different Restrictions

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**KENDALL COUNTY, Texas** -- Kendall County residents who get their water from wells are under some of the most severe drought restrictions in South Texas, while their neighbors in Comal County are free to run their wells dry if they choose to, even though both counties rely on the Trinity Aquifer for water.

That difference lies in the fact that Kendall County voters approved a groundwater district 10 years ago, which can impose usage limits on residents who rely solely on wells for their water supply. Voters in Comal County have shot down two attempts in recent years to create a district in the county.

"Voters turned us down in the '95 effort on a 9-to-1 vote," said Precinct 2 County Commissioner Jay Millikin. "In 2001, they turned us down 2-to-1."

There's at least one neighborhood that has some streets divided by the county lines. Those living in Kendall have their water usage reduced by 40 percent, which means watering your lawn until it's green is not allowed, unless you want to shell out some more money.

"Our fines start at \$250 for a drought violation," said Micah Voulgaris, the general manager of the Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District, which oversees Kendall County. .

"Certainly there should be some equality since we draw from the same pool of water," said Severo Garza, who lives in Kendall County, but has neighbors down the street in Comal. "They've got to be greatly concerned that people on the other side of the county line play havoc with the water," added Millikin.

He believes if there was a vote today, many of those residents who opposed even eight years ago would support the measure. For now, there's no telling how high or low their water supply currently sits.

"We are clueless in Comal. We don't have a clue what's going on because we don't have a groundwater district," said Millikin.

"I've had a lot of calls from people in Comal County asking what we can do to help them and there's absolutely nothing I can do to help them," Voulgaris said.

That may change soon. Kendall County's groundwater district is in part of the Trinity Aquifer's Priority Groundwater Management area, or PGMA. Under the PGMA, which also encompasses the well users in Comal, groundwater districts must come together on a 50-year plan for the aquifer. After submitting their plan, the state will then set limits on how much water each landowner can pump.

"What number they get now, they're not going to have any input on it," said Voulgaris. "It'd be great to have a groundwater conservation district that operates like the Edwards (Aquifer) does," said Millikin. "Where you have one district that manages the whole Trinity Aquifer, but we couldn't get support in Comal County."

Millikin said the state can mandate a groundwater district and is currently working on such an initiative. He expects something to happen later this year.

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