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## Troubled Waters: Security of supply saturates perception

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About 70 miles separate the cities of Austin and San Antonio, and until recently, that distance could also apply to their views on water.

San Antonio has long been recognized as a national leader in water conservation.

"I think we're probably a little more aware of the problems of drought than Austin," San Antonio resident Bill Clark said.

For hundreds of years, San Antonio has relied almost solely on the Edwards Aquifer for its water-- a reliable, but not infinite source.

"In the long term, I'm not sure how it's going to fare with the growth and population," Clark said.

They've seen the problem coming for a while now, but over the decades attempts to find additional water sources have failed.

Meanwhile, in Austin, the city is more used to worrying about the dangers of flooding than drought.

With the Colorado River running through town, many Austinites couldn't see the limits of their water.

A recent drought has changed that.

"I think everyone's thinking a lot more about the water usage," Austin resident Andrew Morris said.

Morris has lived in Austin for the last 15 years. The current drought has opened his eyes.

"When you go out to Lake Travis, in particular, you can see the water going way down. I go out there, and you can see it on the news every day, and it makes you think, whoa, water usage, it's really down and it makes me more conscious of it," Morris said.

He is new to severe water restrictions, but he's embracing conservation wholeheartedly, even changing his landscape.


"We did go back here and plant, just this year for the first time a lot of plants that are suited for the southwest rather than the kind of the southeast," Morris said.

Back in San Antonio, Clark said short-term conservation is important, but long-term planning is crucial.

"I think it's a very critical part of the future for any place, but especially the places in the western part of the U.S. and here in terms of getting an adequate water supply and deciding how you're going to divide that up," Clark said.



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### Water History in Texas

To view a [history of major events](#) for water development in Texas, and a general history of the [Texas Water Development Board](#), click the links.



The current drought has opened many eyes.

Other avenues to a water source having been blocked, San Antonio is now looking to the ocean for its future water.

"I think that one of the major solutions in the long term is going to be desalination of sea water. I think it's got to happen," Clark said.


Austinites like Morris are hoping their current conservation efforts will be enough to avoid such drastic steps here.

"I think it would be good to keep last summer or the drought in mind as the new normal, because I think it's very easy, if next year it monsoon rains, it would be easy to think, 'Okay, I can go back to not having to worry about it,'" Morris said.

That's something Clark is already trying to live by, because he knows drought, or not, water is precious.

"Eventually water will be more valuable than oil. You can live without oil. You have to have power and so on, but you've got to have water. I think eventually that'll be true," Clark said.

A lesson between neighbors has created a new attitude toward a finite resource that connects everyone.

  
Troubled Water Series

Part 1: [Water Wars: Regional cooperation drying out](#)

Part 2: [Troubled Waters: Texas rice farmer takes on water wars](#)



With current drought conditions, more people are finding ways to limit water use.

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