

Aquifer plan a major success

Express-News Editorial Board

Updated 08:36 p.m., Thursday, December 29, 2011 A good-news story closed out 2011 in the Edwards Aquifer region of Texas.

The [Edwards Aquifer Authority](#) put the final stamp of approval on a conservation habitat plan and funding mechanism to protect endangered species that live in springs fed by the aquifer.

The EAA's Wednesday vote to approve a funding mechanism put the finishing touches on the process mandated by the Legislature to devise a plan that can win approval from the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#). That approval, hoped for in 2012, will protect Edwards pumpers from the type of federal environmental litigation that launched more than 20 years of legal and legislative wrangling to balance protection of the endangered species and the human need for the aquifer's water.

Failure would have threatened the regional economy from San Marcos to the Gulf Coast.

Through the difficult years of grappling with the issue, regional leaders and water planners encountered many bumps and disruptions.

Approval of the Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Plan is an amazing accomplishment.

At a time when dysfunction marks the upper levels of American government and politics, the Edwards region found a way to compromise and meet the needs of a hugely diverse set of interests.

The [EAA board](#), headed by Chairwoman Luana Buckner; the [EARIP committee](#), headed by [Robert Gulley](#); and numerous municipalities and other government entities deserve major kudos for reaching this deal.

Many public servants, including Texas Water Development Board member [Weir Labatt](#), selflessly contributed huge amounts of unpaid personal time to pave the way for a better future in the region.

Controversies about hopes for adjusting the funding process and other issues lie ahead. Some ratepayers will complain about the aquifer pumping cost increases that loom in 2012.

But the foundation for protecting access to the Edwards Aquifer has been crafted. And that is a significant accomplishment.

Read more: <http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/article/Aquifer-plan-a-major-success-2431518.php#ixzz1outnmbMD>

FAIR USE NOTICE This document contains copyrighted material whose use has not been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. The Texas Living Waters Project, which is a nonprofit undertaking, is making this article available in our efforts to promote comprehensive water planning in Texas. We believe that this constitutes a "fair use" of the copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. If you wish to use this copyrighted material for purposes of your own that go beyond "fair use", you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.