

**Press Release: June 30, 2011**

Bastrop, Texas. On June 30, 2011, the Bastrop County-based nonprofit organization Environmental Stewardship submitted a petition to Groundwater Management Area 12 (GMA-12) appealing the desired future conditions for the aquifers within all areas of groundwater management in Area 12 – Central Texas (Bastrop, Brazos, Burleson, Falls, Fayette, Freestone, Lee, Leon, Limestone, Madison, Milam, Navarro, Robertson, and Williamson counties).

According to the Texas Water Code, groundwater conservation districts within each GMA are required to define "desired future conditions" for the groundwater resources within the area. A desired future condition is simply a measurement of future groundwater conditions that help determine the future of our aquifers and thus our supply of water. The Texas Water Development Board determines how much groundwater is available for withdrawal; these decisions establish the future of groundwater resources across the state.

Environmental Stewardship contends that the Desired Future Conditions adopted by GMA-12 on August 11, 2010 do not include available scientific study and reliable technologies and therefore fail to protect the Colorado and Brazos rivers, area springs and streams. According to the Texas Water Development Board's model, there has been a dramatic decrease in outflows of water in Area 12 in the past that will continue into the future, and the Management Authority has failed to make adjustments or to determine future trends. In addition, water from Bastrop and nearby counties is being marketed to other areas without a careful analysis of water's present and future availability.

Scientific studies conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey and other concerned organizations show that the Colorado River has historically gained water from the aquifers as it passes through Bastrop County. Environmental Stewardship's independent analysis of the GMA-12 models show that the Colorado River and other surface features will suffer a steady loss of groundwater discharge that could have a profound impact on the area. The current drought, increased demand and pumping, and water marketing have resulted in a decline in the water level of the Simsboro Aquifer, which is part of the major Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer Group. Environmental Stewardship believes that available scientific data indicates a serious decrease in available water will result if corrective steps are not taken now.

The Texas Water Development Board recently approved a \$2.5 million loan to the Guadalupe Blanco River Authority to finance research and development costs for a proposed state pipeline to carry water from Bastrop, Lee and other rural counties to highly developed urban areas along the I-35 and Texas 130 corridors from Kyle to San Antonio. Environmental Stewardship and other groups, including Lost Pines Groundwater Conservation District officials, question the methods used to determine future water needs and supply.

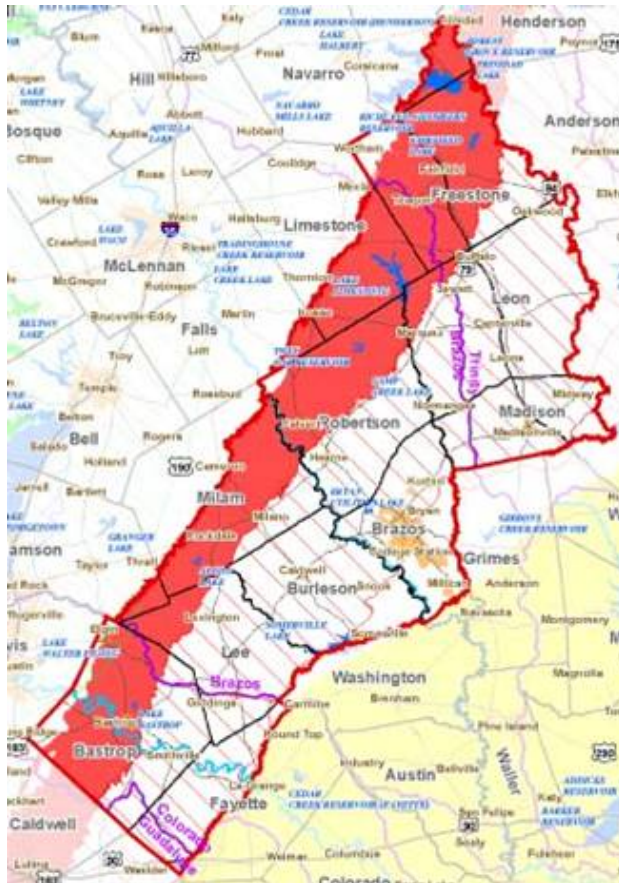
According to Environmental Stewardship Executive Director Steve Box, the petition and studies that led to it are objective efforts to preserve the area's water resources and natural environment. The population of Texas, he said, is expected to continue to grow at a fast rate, and economic development will continue as well. Combined, he said, they will place more demands on water use, especially in urban areas. Non-urban areas such as Bastrop County will see their own supply of water diminish. He points out that the area's trees are already suffering from a decrease in groundwater levels, emphasizing that action to correct present policy is necessary now. Without the right planning, based on complete scientific studies, our natural environment and economic growth will be affected for generations, he said.

Environmental Stewardship has taken the lead on behalf of the area's resources and citizens to question current practices and to provide reliable scientific information. The organization is motivated by concern for the area's natural resources that have taken millennia to develop but may be destroyed by careless disregard in a matter of a few years. According to Mr. Box, Environmental Stewardship is reaching out to all citizens and groups, urging every Texan to become informed and to join in its efforts to preserve the supply of our most precious resource. He invites all Texans interested in more information and in getting involved to access the ES website at [www.environmental-stewardship.org](http://www.environmental-stewardship.org).

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Environmental Stewardship is a charitable nonprofit organization whose purposes are to meet current and future needs of the environment and its inhabitants by protecting and enhancing the earth's natural resources; to restore and sustain ecological services using scientific information; and to encourage public stewardship through environmental education and outreach. We are a Texas nonprofit 501(c) (3) charitable organization headquartered in Bastrop, Texas. For more information visit our website at [Environmental-Stewardship.org](http://Environmental-Stewardship.org).



**Figure 1. Groundwater Management Area 12**

**Red area is Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer outcrop.**