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PRESS RELEASE:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Wimberley Valley Watershed Association Prepares for Nov. 16 “DFC” Hearing**

Earlier this year, the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association filed a petition appealing the 30 foot decline of water levels in the Trinity Aquifers in the Texas Hill Country set by the Groundwater Management Area 9 (GMA 9) in July 2010. This decline was approved in conjunction with the “Desired Future Condition”, or DFC process that is designed to project groundwater pumping through 2060.

WVWA is appealing on the grounds that this level of decline is unreasonable and unsustainable and is calling for the Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District (HTGCD) and GMA 9 to revise the drawdown amount as it will deplete the aquifer. There is widespread evidence the 30 foot DFC will negatively impact private property rights of well owners, landowners, aquatic habitats and businesses dependent on the spring flow, which feeds the creeks and rivers in the Hill Country.

**Background:**

In Texas, the “rule of capture” generally gives landowners the right to capture and use the groundwater beneath their land as they see fit and the only thing limiting their use of that water is the size of the pump. The problem is groundwater is also a shared resource and when one individual, business or water supplier pumps out too much; it takes away what is left for those around them – so much so that wells and springs that have produced for decades are going dry.

In general terms, a DFC is a statement of what an aquifer should look like in the future. It may represent water levels, amounts of water in storage, discharge to springs or base flow to rivers and streams. The Texas Water Development Board oversees the DFC process.

**Present:**

The purpose of the WVWA appeal is to request action from the TWDB, GMA-9 and the Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District to determine a realistic DFC for groundwater sustainability in the areas in the Texas Hill Country that recharge and support base flows to Jacob's Well and Cypress Creek.

The filed appeal states that the proposed DFC of a 30 foot average drawdown would allow even more pumping in Hays County than the TWDB-approved management plans' available groundwater. Recent experience shows that current pumping by itself may be unsustainable, as evidenced by the unavailability of water in wells and springs during the current drought and the drought of 2008-09.

During the height of the 2008-9 drought in Central Texas, daily mean flow at Jacob's Well essentially stopped for 167 days. The 2009 cessation of flow occurred with only an approximate 2-3 foot drawdown; much less than the average drawdown allowed in the proposed DFC.

For the last 11 months, central Texas has been in one of the driest periods in recorded history. Jacob's Well and Cypress Creek, which both weathered the Drought of Record in the 1950s (a drought lasting approximately 10 years) have stopped flowing. The current lack of spring flow has resulted in the braids of Cypress Creek drying up and parts of the Blanco River are dry as well.

The economic impact of depleting the groundwater in the Wimberley Valley (where groundwater is the **only** source of potable water) has yet to be determined, but geological data on the base flow in springs and rivers documents the critical nature of maintaining habitat, ensuring good water quality, sustaining property values and sustaining businesses involved in recreation and tourism.

The depletion of springs and rivers also jeopardizes the substantial public and private investment in river parks and nature preserves such as Jacob's Well Natural Area and Blue Hole Regional Park. Investments in those two parks alone total more than 13 million dollars to date.

Jack Hollon, president of WVWA said, "In summary, a 30 foot average drawdown of the Trinity Aquifer in GMA 9 would lead to a major degradation of economic, ecological and quality of life conditions across the Texas Hill Country."

The WVWA DFC Hearing will take place at 10 a.m., Nov. 16 in Johnson Hall at the Wimberley Community Center. It is expected to last until 3 p.m. There will be numerous expert testimonies but the TWDB will not hear public opinion that day. Instead, for 10 days following the hearing, the TWDB will accept the written public opinions of concerned citizens.

WVWA encourages residents and concerned citizens to attend the hearing in a show of support for adoption of a sustainable DFC that will protect local drinking water supplies, Jacob's Well, Blue Hole and the future of Cypress Creek. After the hearing public opinion letters should be mailed to:

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P.O. Box 13231  
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To view and download the full DFC petition and supporting technical documents go to [www.jacobswellspring.org](http://www.jacobswellspring.org) and [www.hillcountryalliance.org](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org).