



SUTTON COUNTY

**Underground Water
Conservation District**

GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023 - 2028

Re-Adopted:

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CH 1 DISTRICT MISSION & OVERVIEW

1.1 DISTRICT MISSION

It is the Mission of the Sutton County Underground Water Conservation District (the District) to preserve and optimize our groundwater resources for the use by current and future residents of the District. The District also seeks to maintain groundwater ownership and rights of the landowners and their lessees as provided in the Texas Water Code §36.002.

1.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The District, a local government agency, provides for the conservation, preservation, protection, recharge and prevention of waste of the underground water reservoir, Edwards- Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer, located under the District; by consistently adhering to Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code (TWC). The District conducts administrative and technical activities and programs to achieve these purposes by collecting, archiving water well and aquifer data, regulating water well drilling and production of permitted, non-exempt wells, promoting the capping or plugging of abandoned wells, providing information and educational material to local property owners, interacting with other governmental or organizational entities, and undertaking other groundwater-related activities that may help meet the purposes of the District. The District also strives to maintain groundwater ownership and rights of the landowners as provided in the TWC §36.002.

1.3 TIME PERIOD FOR THIS PLAN

This plan becomes effective upon adoption by the Board of Directors and approval by the Texas Water Development Board executive administrator. This new plan remains in effect for a five-year period or until a revised plan is approved, whichever is earlier.

1.4 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE DISTRICT

The Sutton County Underground Water Conservation District was created by the 69th Texas Legislature (1985) under the authority of Section 59, Article XVI, of the Texas Constitution, and in accordance with Chapter 51 and 52 of the Texas Water Code. Note, in 1995, by Acts of the 74th Legislature, Chapter 52 of the Texas Water Code was repealed and replaced with Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code effective September 1, 1995. The District was created to provide for the conservation, preservation, protection, recharge and prevention of waste of the underground water located under the District. The District encompasses all of Sutton County and is governed by a five-member locally-elected board of directors. The board includes four members from individual precincts and one at-large member; with elections being held every two years. Sutton County's economy is primarily based on agriculture, oil and gas, tourism, and recreational hunting.

Location and Extent

The District lies within the Edwards Plateau and consists of approximately 929,920 acres in Sutton County, Texas. Sonora is the county seat and the only city in the county. The population of Sutton County

was approximately 3,372 in 2020. Sutton County is bordered by Schleicher County to the north, Kimble County to the east, Edwards and Val Verde Counties to the south and Crockett County to the west.

Topography and Drainage

The land is generally rolling to stony, flat topped hills with elevations from 1,900 to 2,500 feet. The District is included in two different river basins, the Colorado and the Rio Grande. The western half of the county slopes southwestward into the Devils River. The eastern half drains to the North Llano River and a small portion drains northeastward to the San Saba River.

1.5 REGIONAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

West Texas Regional Groundwater Alliance

Since 1988 the District has been involved in coordination of district activities with other GCD’s managing the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer. In 1988, four groundwater conservation districts; Coke County UWCD, Glasscock County UWCD, Irion County WCD, and Sterling County UWCD signed an original Cooperative Agreement. As new districts were created, they too signed the Cooperative Agreement. In the fall of 1996, the original Cooperative Agreement was redrafted, and the West Texas Regional Groundwater Alliance was created. The regional alliance consists of seventeen locally created and locally funded groundwater conservation districts covering all or part of twenty-two counties, which encompass approximately 18.2 million acres or 28,368 square miles of West Central Texas. This West Texas region is as diverse as the State of Texas. Due to the diversity of this region, each member district provides its own unique programs to best serve its constituents. Current member districts are:

Coke Co. UWCD	Kimble Co. GCD	Plateau UWC & SD
Crockett Co. GCD	Lipan-Kickapoo WCD	Santa Rita UWCD
Glasscock GCD	Lone Wolf GCD	Sterling Co. UWCD
Hickory UWCD # 1	Menard Co. UWD	Sutton Co. UWCD
Hill Country UWCD	Middle Pecos GCD	Reeves County GCD
Irion Co. WCD	Permian Basin UWCD	Wes-Tex GCD

This Alliance was created because the local districts have a common objective: to facilitate the conservation, preservation and protection of groundwater supplies, protection and enhancement of recharge, prevention of waste and pollution, and beneficial use of water and related resources. Local districts monitor water-related activities which include but are not limited to the State’s largest industries of farming, ranching and oil and gas production. The alliance provides coordination essential to the activities of these member districts as they monitor these activities in order to accomplish their objectives.

West Texas Weather Modification Association

In 1996, in response to the resident landowners of seven groundwater conservation districts, the West Texas Weather Modification Association was formed for the purpose of providing weather modification (cloud seeding) for rainfall and recharge enhancement throughout the geographical region of its members. The target area of the Association includes all seven counties and part of an 8th for a total area of over 5.8 million acres or 9,000 square miles of West Central Texas. Current membership includes:

City of San Angelo
Crockett Co GCD
Irion County WCD

Plateau UWC & SD
Santa Rita UWCD

Sterling County UWCD
Sutton County UWCD

Recognizing the importance of rainfall in the region, this Association was formed to provide benefits from enhanced rainfall which includes a reduction of groundwater withdrawals, increase in runoff, and increase in agricultural productivity with the resulting economic impact for the region, provide additional recharge, and increase spring flow. These benefits are not only realized within the region but also downwind and downstream of the target area.

Regional Water Planning

The District has been active in the Region F, Regional Water Planning Group meetings to provide input in developing and adopting the 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016, and 2021 Regional plans. As the Regional Planning Group moves toward adopting future Regional Plans the District will continue to participate in the planning process.

Groundwater Management Area

Groundwater Management Area 7 covers all or part of thirty-three counties and includes twenty groundwater conservation districts. These GCD's manage groundwater resources at the local level in all or part of twenty-four counties within GMA 7 and surrounding areas. The District continues to actively participate in meetings and discussions to determine a feasible future desired condition of the aquifers within the management area and district.

CH 2 GROUNDWATER RESOURCES & MANAGEMENT

2.1 GROUNDWATER RESOURCES

Central Edwards Plateau (Plateau) Geology

The underlying Paleozoic rocks provide a relatively impermeable base for much of the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer. The Trinity hydrostratigraphic unit is composed of the Trinity Group, which consists of the Basal Cretaceous Sand, the Glen Rose Limestone, the Antlers Sand, and the Maxon Sand. The Basal Cretaceous and Maxon sands are sometimes grouped together and are laterally equivalent to the Antlers Sand (sometimes also referred to as Trinity Sands) in the northern plateau area where the Glen Rose Limestone is absent.

The Fredericksburg Group consists of the Fort Terrett Formation and the lower part of the Fort Lancaster Formation, the Devils River Formation within the Devils River Reef Trend, and the West Nueces and McKnight formations within the Maverick Basin. The Lower Washita Group is composed of the Fort Lancaster Formation, the Devils River Formation within the Devils River Reef Trend, and the McKnight and Salmon Peak formations within the Maverick Basin. Locally, these units are combined and referred to as the Edwards Group Limestones and form the Edwards hydrostratigraphic unit of the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer.

The Upper Cretaceous sediments include the uppermost section of the Washita Group sediments (Del Rio Clay and the Buda Limestone). The Boquillas Formation of the Eagle Ford Group and the Austin Chalk Formation of the Austin Group sediments are present only within Val Verde and Terrell counties.

The Upper Cretaceous sediments are generally considered confining units to the underlying Edwards hydrostratigraphic unit of the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer.

2.2 TECHNICAL DISTRICT INFORMATION REQUIRED BY TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE AND TEXAS WATER CODE

Texas Water Code § 36.001 defines modeled available groundwater as “the amount of water that the executive administrator determines may be produced on an average annual basis to achieve a desired future condition established under Section 36.108.”

The joint planning process set forth in Texas Water Code § 36.108 must be collectively conducted by all groundwater conservation districts within the same GMA. The District is a member of GMA 7. GMA 7 adopted DFCs for the Edwards/Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer on August 19, 2021. The adopted DFCs were forwarded to the TWDB for development of the MAG calculations. The submittal package for the DFCs can be found here:

https://www.twdb.texas.gov/groundwater/management_areas/gma7.asp

2.2.1 MODELED AVAILABLE GROUNDWATER IN THE DISTRICT

Please refer to Appendix A – GAM Run 21-012 MAG

2.2.3 AMOUNT OF GROUNDWATER BEING USED WITHIN THE DISTRICT ON AN ANNUAL BASIS

Please refer to Appendix B – Estimated Historical Groundwater Use and 2022 State Water Plan Datasets

2.2.4 ANNUAL AMOUNT OF RECHARGE FROM PRECIPITATION

Please refer to Appendix C – GAM Run 23-011

2.2.5 ANNUAL VOLUME OF WATER THAT DISCHARGES FROM THE AQUIFER TO SPRINGS AND ANY SURFACE WATER BODIES

Please refer to Appendix C – GAM Run 23-011

2.2.6 ANNUAL VOLUME OF FLOW INTO THE DISTRICT, OUT OF THE DISTRICT, AND BETWEEN AQUIFERS

Please refer to Appendix C – GAM Run 23-011

2.2.7 PROJECTED SURFACE WATER RESOURCES

Please refer to Appendix B – Estimated Historical Groundwater Use and 2022 State Water Plan Datasets

2.2.8 PROJECTED TOTAL WATER DEMAND

Please refer to Appendix B – Estimated Historical Groundwater Use and 2022 State Water Plan Datasets

2.3 Consideration of the Water Supply Needs

2.3.1 WATER SUPPLY NEEDS

There are sufficient water supplies to meet all projected demands in Sutton County.

SUTTON COUNTY

All values are in acre-feet

RWPG	WUG	WUG Basin	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060	2070
F	County-Other, Sutton	Colorado	0	0	0	0	0	0
F	County-Other, Sutton	Rio Grande	0	0	0	0	0	0
F	Irrigation, Sutton	Colorado	0	0	0	0	0	0
F	Irrigation, Sutton	Rio Grande	0	0	0	0	0	0
F	Livestock, Sutton	Colorado	0	0	0	0	0	0
F	Livestock, Sutton	Rio Grande	0	0	0	0	0	0
F	Manufacturing, Sutton	Colorado	0	0	0	0	0	0
F	Mining, Sutton	Colorado	0	0	0	0	0	0
F	Mining, Sutton	Rio Grande	0	0	0	0	0	0
F	Sonora	Rio Grande	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sum of Projected Water Supply Needs (acre-feet)			0	0	0	0	0	0

Please refer to Appendix B – Estimated Historical Groundwater Use and 2022 State Water Plan Datasets

2.3.2 WATER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Projected water management strategies for Sutton County listed in the TWDB estimated historical water use/2022 state water plan data packet (Appendix B) are:

- Atmospheric weather modification in weather modification for Sutton County
- Develop additional Edwards-Trinity Plateau Aquifer supplies for Sonora
- Demand reduction in municipal conservation for Sonora
- Demand reduction in water audits and leak for Sonora

From 2020 to 2070, the total water management strategies in Sutton County are projected to increase from 259 AF to 376 AF.

Preservation and protection of groundwater quantity and quality has been the guiding principle of the District since its creation. The goals and objectives of this plan provide guidance in the performance of existing District activities and practices. The district continues to encourage conservation, reuse and weather modification to meet the projected strategies in the TWDB 2022 State Water Plan and the TWDB Estimated Historical Water Use.

Please refer to Appendix B – Estimated Historical Groundwater Use and 2022 State Water Plan Datasets

SUTTON COUNTY

WUG, Basin (RWPG)

All values are in acre-feet

Water Management Strategy	Source Name [Origin]	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060	2070
Irrigation, Sutton, Colorado (F)							
Irrigation Conservation - Sutton County	DEMAND REDUCTION [Sutton]	9	18	27	27	27	27
Weather Modification	Weather Modification [Atmosphere]	6	6	5	6	5	6
		15	24	32	33	32	33
Irrigation, Sutton, Rio Grande (F)							
Irrigation Conservation - Sutton County	DEMAND REDUCTION [Sutton]	47	94	141	141	141	141
Weather Modification	Weather Modification [Atmosphere]	28	28	29	28	29	28
		75	122	170	169	170	169
Mining, Sutton, Colorado (F)							
Mining Conservation - Sutton County	DEMAND REDUCTION [Sutton]	4	6	6	5	3	2
		4	6	6	5	3	2
Mining, Sutton, Rio Grande (F)							
Mining Conservation - Sutton County	DEMAND REDUCTION [Sutton]	15	24	26	19	13	9
		15	24	26	19	13	9
Sonora, Rio Grande (F)							
Develop Additional Edwards-Trinity-Plateau Aquifer Supplies - Sonora	Edwards-Trinity-Plateau, Pecos Valley, and Trinity Aquifers [Sutton]	35	35	35	35	35	35
Municipal Conservation - Sonora	DEMAND REDUCTION [Sutton]	9	9	9	10	10	10
Water Audits and Leak - Sonora	DEMAND REDUCTION [Sutton]	106	112	114	116	117	118
		150	156	158	161	162	163
Sum of Projected Water Management Strategies (acre-feet)		259	332	392	387	380	376

2.3.3 MANAGEMENT OF GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES, AND ACTIONS, PROCEDURES, PERFORMANCE, AND AVOIDANCE NECESSARY TO EFFECUTATE THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The District will implement and utilize the provisions of this plan as a guide for determining the direction and/or priority for District activities. Operations of the District and all agreements entered into by the District will be consistent with the provisions of this plan.

The District has adopted Rules for the management of groundwater resources and will amend those Rules as necessary pursuant to TWC Chapter 36 and the provisions of this plan. Rules will be adhered to and enforced. The promulgation and enforcement of the Rules will be based on the best technical evidence available. The District will seek cooperation in the implementation of this plan and the management of groundwater supplies within the District.

Please refer to Appendix D for a copy of the District's Rules, or click: [Sutton County UWCD Rules :: Sutton County Underground Water Conservation District](#)

2.3.4 METHODOLOGY FOR TRACKING PROGRESS

The methodology that the District will use to trace the progress in achieving the management goals as

prescribed by TWC 36.1071(a) will be as follows:

The District General Manager will prepare and present an annual report to the Board of Directors on District performance regarding management plan goals and objectives for the preceding year during the first meeting of each year. The annual report will be maintained at the District office.

CH 3 GOALS, MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES, AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The District recognizes the importance of public education to encourage efficient use, implement conservation practices, prevent waste, and preserve the integrity of groundwater. Since the District was formed in 1985, it has provided residents with materials, programs, water analysis, and other information when requested, including requests from the TWDB for water level and analysis data.

3.1 GOAL 1- §36.1071(A)(1) PROVIDING THE MOST EFFICIENT USE OF GROUNDWATER

The District, through programs and its Rules, strives to ensure the most efficient use of groundwater in order to sustain available resources for the future while maintaining the economic growth and respecting private property rights of the District.

Management Objective 1.1

The District will require that all new wells be registered in accordance with its current Rules.

Performance Standard 1.1

The Board of Directors will receive quarterly briefings by the General Manager regarding the District's well registration program for new wells. The registration data will also be included in the Annual Report to the Board of Directors.

3.2 GOAL 2- §36.1071(A)(2) CONTROLLING AND PREVENTING WASTE OF GROUNDWATER

An important goal of the District is to implement strategies that will control and prevent the waste of groundwater. The District believes education to its citizens is the best way to prevent waste of groundwater in the District.

Management Objective 2.1

The District will annually provide at least one printed publication, and one public speaking event to provide educational leadership on eliminating and reducing wasteful practices in the use of groundwater.

Performance Standard 2.1

Printed publications and reports of any public speaking events will be included in the District's Annual Report to be provided to the Board of Directors.

Management Objective 2.2

The District will minimize the potential contamination of groundwater by monitoring the spacing and completion of wells.

Performance Standard 2.2

All new registered wells drilled within the District will be in accordance with District Spacing Rules, and maintain information on registered wells to be reported quarterly at regular Board Meetings.

3.3 GOAL 3 – §36.1071(A)(5) ADDRESSING NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES

The District understands that the groundwater is a natural resource that must be maintained and researched. The District is committed to continuously learn more about our Edwards-Trinity Aquifer.

Management Objective 3.1

The District will provide at least one printed publication to provide educational information on the Edwards-Trinity Aquifer.

Performance Standard 3.1

Printed publications will be included in the District’s Annual Report to be provided to the Board of Directors.

Management Objective 3.2

The District will collect at least 8 water quality samples and collect results from a certified lab at least annually from the Water Quality Monitoring Network.

Performance Standard 3.2

Report annually to the Board of Directors any contaminants outside of drinking water standards from at least 8 wells monitored in the District’s water quality monitoring network. The results will also be included in the District’s Annual Report and a database will be maintained in the District office.

3.4 GOAL 4- §36.1071(A)(6) ADDRESSING DROUGHT CONDITIONS

Groundwater in the District is very affected by drought, and therefore one of the District’s main concerns. The Texas Water Development Board provides a very useful website for information on drought called “Water Data for Texas”, which can be found here: www.waterdatafortexas.org/drought.

Management Objective 4.1

The District has an approved Drought Contingency Plan compliant with TCEQ standards, it also has a drought index well with trigger levels referenced in the plan (see Appendix E).

Performance Standard 4.1

The Drought Contingency Plan is attached as Appendix E. It will also be accessible to the public through the District’s website.

Management Objective 4.2

The District will measure its drought index well at least quarterly to monitor drought conditions in Sutton County.

Performance Standard 4.2

The Drought Index Well measurements will be presented at the Board Meetings at least quarterly and included in the Annual Report.

3.5 GOAL 5- §36.1071(A)(7) ADDRESSING CONSERVATION

The District will continue to be a source for available informational materials and programs to improve public awareness of efficient use, wasteful practices and conservation measures including the water conservation best management practices guide presented by the Water Conservation Advisory Council: www.savetexaswater.org/bmp/.

Management Objective 5.1

Promote public awareness of the need for water conservation. Present a minimum of one public water conservation show, demonstration, event, or educational talk each year.

Performance Standard 5.1

Report these educational activities to the District Board of directors in the Annual Report.

3.6 GOAL 6- §36.1071(A)(7) ADDRESSING RECHARGE ENHANCEMENT

The District is committed to keeping rainfall data and investing in recharge enhancement in the District.

Management Objective 6.1

The District will maintain a district-wide rainfall event network using voluntary monitors and automatic digital rainfall collectors to help evaluate recharge.

Performance Standard 6.1

The District will report at least quarterly to the Board of Directors rainfall totals collected from at least 10 of the automated rain gauges around the county and ten Stratus Professional rain gauge (Model RG202) located throughout Sonora, TX in the rainfall monitoring network.

3.7 GOAL 7- §36.1071(A)(7) ADDRESSING PRECIPITATION ENHANCEMENT

The District is committed to promote conservation and research in precipitation enhancement in the District.

Management Objective 7.1

The District will continue to support and participate in the West Texas Weather Modification Association.

Performance Standard 7.1

Provide West Texas Weather Modification Association Annual Report to the Board of Directors. The District will stay current with membership assessment fees and attend at least 50% of the regularly scheduled meetings.

3.8 GOAL 8- §36.1071(A)(8) ADDRESSING THE DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS ESTABLISHED UNDER §36.108

The District uses the best available science to establish its DFC. See Appendices A and C.

Management Objective 8.1

The District will measure wells at least quarterly within the water level monitoring network through steel tape, and electronic sensors.

Performance Standard 8.1

Report at least quarterly to the Board of Directors the measurement of water levels from at least 10 wells monitored in the District's water level monitoring network. The water level report will also be included in the District's Annual Report.

Management Objective 8.2

The District has an ongoing program using its drought contingency well and monitoring network of water wells to assess groundwater resources; then analyzing changes in the potentiometric surface of the aquifer.

Performance Standard 8.2

The District will complete an analysis on the cumulative water level trend every five years and present the evaluation to the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting.

3.9 MANAGEMENT GOALS NOT APPLICABLE

Controlling and Preventing Subsidence (36.1071(a)(3))

The rigid geologic framework of the region precludes significant subsidence from occurring. This management goal is not applicable to the operations of the District, according to Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 of the Texas Water Development Board's subsidence risk report, 'Identification of the Vulnerability of the Major and Minor Aquifers of Texas to Subsidence with Regard to Groundwater Pumping'. The District has reviewed this report and found that the risk of subsidence is low for Sutton County. The District will continue to look for signs of subsidence and respond to any reports of potential subsidence in the District. The Texas Water Development Board's subsidence risk report can be found here: <http://www.twdb.texas.gov/groundwater/models/research/subsidence/subsidence.asp>.

Addressing Conjunctive Surface Water Management Issues (36.1071(a)(4))

There are no surface water management entities within the District. There are no surface water rights in Sutton County. This management goal is not applicable to the operations of the District.

Addressing Rainwater Harvesting (36.1071(a)(7))

The semiarid nature of the area within the District makes the cost of rainwater harvesting projects economically unfeasible. Educational material and programs on rainwater harvesting are provided by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. This management goal is not applicable to the operations of the District.

Addressing Brush Control (36.1071(a)(7))

The District recognizes the benefits of brush control through increased spring flows and the enhancement of native turf which limits runoff. However, most brush control projects within the District are carried out and funded through the NRCS and ample educational material and programs on brush control are provided by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. This management goal is not applicable to the operations of the District.

APPENDIX A – GAM Run 21-012 MAG

APPENDIX B - ESTIMATED HISTORICAL GROUNDWATER USE AND 2022 STATE WATER PLAN DATASETS:
SUTTON COUNTY UNDERGROUND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

APPENDIX C GAM RUN 23-011: SUTTON COUNTY UNDERGROUND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MANAGEMENT PLAN

APPENDIX D - DISTRICT RULES

APPENDIX E – DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

APPENDIX F – RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

APPENDIX G - EVIDENCE OF NOTICE AND HEARING