

Troubled & troublesome water

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It has been gratifying to receive several comments regarding an earlier discussion about our good fortune in Comal County to be blessed with an array of water resources.

To follow up on our discussion about the stewardship and responsibilities we have personally and as area dwellers, let's begin with a striking reality that needs to be front and center for our thinking and planning.

The Earth's surface is 71% water. Of that, however, only 3% is "fresh." To make it even more dramatic, 2.5% is "unavailable" for use, leaving just at .5% as what we have to work with and steward. Hmm.

Our surface and subsurface resources locally remain impressive. It does seem we are rapidly moving into a threatened circumstance if you just think of every new well as "another straw" dipping into our aquifers.

But for good rainfalls, we have to face with honesty the limitations the circumstances present to us. When our "rapid growth benchmarks" keep lifting us and areas of the Hill Country and along the interstate corridors into "top ranks" nationwide, we need to factor resource consequences alongside "taxable property multipliers."

The numbers bring with them infrastructure and continuing service demands on capacities. It's far more than building a school here or there. Planning efforts are so very important! The consequences and impacts are essential for our extraordinary creeks and rivers on the surface as well.

A series of wonderments come together in any attempt to think constructively toward addressing our troubled at-risk supplies and troublesome practices that show damaging disregard for what would keep quality for us and future generations.

Much Hill Country growth and development is happening outside the corporate limits of our I-35 and I-10 corridor cities.

What measures might the Texas legislature provide for oversight and scrutiny to "do things carefully and responsibly?" Taking as well as returning the good waters could become the basis for 21st Century water policies. Perhaps a cluster of at-risk counties could become the basis for increased scrutiny before damages become irrevocable.

How might we educate our young people and bring along the adults and decision makers for more careful use of our water resources?

The "stages" of water conservation seem so outmoded. Might we put into practice conservation policies for personal consumption and outdoor use reflective of a sense of the finite sources?

Swinging back and forth on a yoyo scale of more and less use seems off the mark for our current circumstances. Do we need bolder oversight enhancing the voices of landowners and agricultural interests prior to massive moves toward excavation or cuts for passages through ageless bluffs and hillsides?

How do we develop our future so as to take full measure for what are described by state climatologist John Nielsen-Gammon as "drier and warmer conditions now?" Do we glibly go ahead, marketing the Hill Country life with such abandon that we show no sense of limits that could protect and preserve before it's too late?

Finally, might you join our CCCA endeavors to assist in finding a way to protect parcels of prime natural habitats and drainage areas by setting them aside in perpetuity?

If the pace for "slicing and splicing" acreage continues with "takes" there may be little left to preserve. Those interested in learning more can go to the Comal County Conservation Alliance website (comalconservation.org) for information and to join the efforts. Even more, any reader would be welcome to assist in developing a way to add

some natural space adjacent to Fischer Park or a portion of El Rancho Cima (the Sentinel) out above the Blanco River's edge at "the Devil's Backbone."