IN Drought, Abbott Keeps Lawn Green by Drilling


November 10, 2013

With what has been described as the worst drought in recorded history punishing parts of Texas, Attorney General Greg Abbott found a way to keep watering his yard without risking fines or incurring huge monthly bills: He drilled his own well.

Now his lawn is green, and there are no pesky city watering restrictions to worry about.

He is not alone. Abbott, the leading 2014 candidate for Texas governor, has joined an exclusive and growing list of Austin residents. That list includes Ben Crenshaw, the golfing legend, and Mack Brown, the University of Texas football coach — residents who are coping with the drought and rising water bills by procuring their own private water supply underneath their land.

But the trend is worrying city leaders and environmentalists, who fear that the rise in well drilling in rapidly growing Austin will negatively affect limited groundwater supplies, reduce the flow into rivers and discourage conservation.

“To me it’s just unconscionable. It’s a total disregard for the resource,” said Andrew Sansom, executive director of the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University. “What we should be doing is reducing our consumption of water.”

Abbott installed his well a few months before the city began aggressively enforcing its lawn-watering restrictions, issuing at least $11,000 in fines since August. In Abbott’s upscale West Austin neighborhood of Pemberton Heights, where lawns are remarkably green, some residents have put up signs that read “Watering by Private Well” to avoid reproach at a time when most of Austin can water grass only once a week.

Abbott and others who have drilled their own wells say they have a right to the water under their land and contend it is a better way keep their grass green. After all, is it not preferable to put well water on the lawn instead of the scarcer treated drinking water provided by the city?

Austin has no power to stop landowners from drilling water underneath their own terrain in property-rights Texas. It can only monitor the proliferation of private wells, which Jason Hill, an Austin Water Utility spokesman, said officials are doing “vigorously.”

The City Council recently passed an ordinance requiring water well owners to register with the city and pay an annual fee of $90. So far, 314 wells are on file, and dozens more residents have submitted their intent to drill, but the city estimates that more than 500 existing wells have yet to register.

“We’re taking steps to see that we’re conscious of those wells,” said Greg Meszaros, director of the Austin Water Utility. But he was quick to add, “We’re respecting Texas property rights.”

The tension between property rights interests and the management of underwater resources is sure to increase in Texas politics as the drought continues to take its toll on the state’s surface water supplies. With the major reservoirs supplying Austin holding just over a third of their capacity, growing cities and industries are looking to groundwater to quench their thirst.

But the resource is hardly managed in some areas of the state, including Austin. While state legislators have set up nearly 100 entities elsewhere to regulate groundwater, Texas’ capital city goes by the century-old “rule of capture.” According to the rule, Abbott can pump the water under his land as much as he likes, even if a neighbor’s well were to go dry as a result — as long as he is not intentionally wasteful or malicious. (continued on page 2)
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we near the end of 2013 and move toward 2014, I would like to take a moment to reflect on some of the wonderful strides that were made through the collaborations of our local chapters of TAWWA and WEAT. The attendance at the monthly meetings has showed continued growth and in 2014 we are going to continue to bring interesting and informative topics that will be entertaining and thought-provoking. I am proud to report that other TAWWA/WEAT activities such as the Water For People Golf Tournament, 3rd Annual Summer Seminar, YP Seminar and tours, Basura Bash, and our Annual Scholarship Fundraiser have seen continued growth as well.

On behalf of the local chapters of TAWWA and WEAT, I would like to thank our sponsors for their generosity and support, also our members for their support and attendance at events and activities. Because of your continued support these events continue to grow in participation and fund raising efforts. This gives us more opportunities to provide more scholarship support to local students. I had an opportunity to speak with several of the scholarship recipients, and one of the things that I found interesting was how they expressed interest in some day being leaders in the TAWWA and WEAT organizations, so they could assist other students as well. So we are not only investing in these students’ futures, but the future of water quality standards in Texas, as well as the nation.

We plan on continuing the momentum going into 2014 with our first monthly meeting on January 16th. On February 22nd, we will have our first Basura Bash. Please don’t miss this opportunity to beautify the rivers in our community! On February 28th, we will be hosting the 2nd annual TAWWA/WEAT Sporting Clays Tournament where all proceeds will go to benefit travel expenses to WEFTEC 2014 for the Texas Water 2014 Operations Challenge champion. Again, I would like to thank everyone for their continued support through sponsorships and attendance or participation in meeting and events. You’re greatly appreciated!

I would like to take a moment to thank everyone for this opportunity to serve as President of the WEAT San Antonio Section. I would also like to express my appreciation for your kindness, guidance, support, and most of all your patience. I would like to thank our past and current local officers for their continued dedication and their hard work to keep our South Texas AWWA and WEAT chapters moving in a positive direction. For anyone interested in becoming more involved or to receive additional information on this year’s upcoming events and sponsorship opportunities, please contact me or any of the officers listed in this newsletter.

On behalf of the local TAWWA and WEAT Officers, we wish everyone and their families a safe and happy holiday season!

Sterling Lee

President, WEAT- San Antonio Section

IN Drought, Abbott Keeps Lawn Green by Drilling (cont.)

A Texas court has upheld the rule of capture in 1954 for the father of Clayton Williams, a 1990 candidate for governor. Clayton Williams Sr. pumped so much water under his land that a popular Fort Stockton spring went dry, but justices ruled that he was within his rights because underground water supplies “belong to the landowner, and may be used by him at his will.”

Abbott’s spokesman, Matt Hirsch, declined to say whether Abbott supports continuing to govern groundwater in Texas using the rule of capture and whether he would seek any changes to it as governor. Hirsch did say Abbott favors individual rights to groundwater.

“As the Texas Supreme Court has made clear, all Texas landowners have a right to the water under their property,” Hirsch said.

A search of state records did not turn up any wells for state Sen. Wendy Davis of Fort Worth, who is poised to be the 2014 Democratic nominee for governor.

“She has a strong record of protecting the rights of Texas property owners and believes that if you own the land, you own the water underneath,” said Bo Delp, Davis’ campaign spokesman. He also said she supports the rule of capture and would not seek to change it if elected governor.

Still, groundwater is not an unlimited resource. Pemberton Heights lies atop the northern segment of a vast underground trove of water known as the Edwards Aquifer. Pumping of the aquifer south of Austin has been so heavy that a federal judge forced the state to manage the resource more than 20 years ago.

The Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Groundwater Conservation District is responsible for managing one such southern portion of the resource. Pumping in the Edwards there is known to directly affect spring flows in Austin’s iconic Barton Springs Pool, which the district must protect.

While pumping still puts Barton Springs at risk during times of drought, regulation and monitoring means the aquifer is well understood and managed, said John Dupnik, the district’s general manager.

In Austin, where no such restrictions exist, “all that pumping, all that well development, it’s occurring in a vacuum,” Dupnik said. “It’s not monitored. There’s no understanding of how it affects the system.”

Voters recently approved $2 billion in state financing to help pay for water supply projects, as Texas grapples with its exploding population amid a crippling drought. Abbott told reporters recently that a multipronged strategy, including conservation, is needed to meet the state’s water needs. But another key strategy would be to drill, he said: “We need to look in the right areas for more access to groundwater.”
**Speaker for January Meeting:**

*Linda Bevis, PE*
*San Antonio Water System*

Ms. Bevis has more than 15 years of experience in operations engineering, project management, utility engineering, hydraulic modeling and infrastructure planning. She is a project engineer in the Water Master Planning Department. A graduate of the University of Texas at San Antonio with a bachelor’s degrees in civil engineering, Ms. Bevis is a registered professional engineer in Texas.

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**Speaker for February Meeting:**

*David Sloan, PE*
*Freese and Nichols, Inc.*

David Sloan is a Senior Process Engineer with Freese and Nichols, Inc., with 30 years’ experience in the planning, evaluation and design of water and wastewater treatment and reuse facilities. Mr. Sloan has a BS and MS in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. He is a member of WEF, AWWA, AMTA and the WateReuse Association. David is a board-certified environmental engineer, and serves on the AWWA, WEF and WEAT Water Reuse Committees and the Potable Reuse Committee of the WateReuse Association.
BASURA BASH RIVER CLEAN-UP

On the cold, rainy morning of November 9, 2013, about 10 members of the local TAWWA/WEAT chapters and their families contributed to another successful Basura Bash River Clean-up in the Olmos Basin. Volunteers from several companies including HDR, KBR and Michael Baker participated in the event.

The next Basura Bash will be held on February 22, 2014 at Olmos Park. We hope you’ll join the fun and help keep Olmos Park beautiful!


OLMOS BASIN ALLIANCE

The Olmos Basin Alliance (OBA) is a newly formed advisory committee to address the problem of man-made trash in Olmos Basin Park and the surrounding areas. The OBA includes representatives from the San Antonio River Authority, City of San Antonio, Bexar County, among many others. If you’re interested in finding out more about the OBA or receiving the OBA’s Good Neighbors to Nature newsletter, please contact Karen Bishop at 210-302-3642, or kbishop@sara-tx.org. More information can also be found on the OBA’s Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/OlmosBasinAlliance.

WEBINARS

WEAT will be hosting a FREE webinar on Stormwater Issues and Phase II MS4 Requirements on January 15, 2014. Attendees can register at www.weat.org.

TAWWA will be hosting a two-part webinar that will give guidance on developing a consumer outreach program for a utility or city. Part I will be held on January 14, 2013 from 12:30 to 1:30 pm, and will focus on the big picture items such as budgeting, strategies, timeline and implementation. Part II will be held on February 28, 2014 and will focus on the media components of a consumer outreach program. Both webinars are available to members for $45, or non-members for $75. Attendees must register in advance at www.tawwa.org/events.
2013 ANNUAL YP FALL FORUM

The San Antonio joint WEAT/TAWWA 2013 Annual YP Fall Forum featured Ron Soos, a coach of the Gallup StrengthsFinder system, who explained the StrengthsFinder system and how attendees could use their strengths every day in their jobs. Gallup found that successful people did not have any one specific trait or talent, but rather one of thirty-four different strengths. Successful people were found to be successful because they were the best at using their individual strengths to the fullest capacity.

Participants of the forum were required to take an online assessment prior to the Forum in order to find out their individual top five strengths, generously paid for by the local TAWWA/WEAT chapter for all attendees. Armed with their strengths, the 45 participants listened intently to Ron. The participants engaged in a lively discussion on individual strengths and gave humorous examples of how their strengths have shown personally and professionally. The participants left the Fall Forum with a better understanding of their strengths and an enthusiasm to pursue these strengths in the workplace. To find out your top five strengths, you can take the assessment at gallupstrengthscenter.com for $10.
The South Texas Chapter of TAWWA and San Antonio Section of WEAT are now on Facebook!

Please go to the link below and “Like” South Texas Water Professionals to be connected and stay informed about upcoming events and activities.

Visit us at
www.facebook.com/SouthTexasWaterProfessionals
9TH ANNUAL TAWWA/WEAT SCHOLARSHIP DINNER

The 9th annual TAWWA/WEAT Scholarship Dinner was held at the San Francisco Steakhouse on Thursday, December 5, 2013. Kevin Wolff, Bexar County Commissioner, spoke about water projects across Bexar County and their benefit to the local community. Sergeant Christopher Bratton of the United States Marine Corps attended the dinner to collect toys that were donated for the Toys for Tots program. The raffle was continued this year with 14 fantastic prizes including an iPod Touch, Spurs tickets, a Microsoft Surface RT and a 40” Samsung LED television. Andrea Beymer was recognized as a Distinguished Member for her efforts in establishing the local TAWWA chapter and Young Professionals committee. The profit from the dinner was over $9,500, to be used for future scholarships! Thank you to all the dinner sponsors, participants, and those that helped to organize the evening. It was a very successful event!
The WEAT San Antonio Section would like to announce it’s 2013 Scholarship Recipients:

**Jose Calvillo** is a senior Civil Engineering major at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). He is active in the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), Engineers Without Borders, and the Society of Hispanic Engineers. He is also a member of the Texas Society of Professional Engineers. Jose is a graduate of San Benito High School and would like to work in an environmental field upon graduation from UTSA. Jose has demonstrated a strong ethic for community service by volunteering for multiple events at the San Antonio Food Bank, San Antonio Children’s Festival, Rebuilding Together San Antonio, and the Human Rights Campaign Gala in San Antonio.

**Ruben Castanon** is a senior Civil Engineering major at the University of Texas at San Antonio. After completing his undergraduate degree in May 2014, he plans to pursue his Masters Degree in Civil Engineering. Ruben is a Gates Millennium Scholar and has been a member of the UTSA College of Engineering Deans List and Honor Roll List. Ruben is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the UTSA Hispanic Student Association, and the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. After completion of his Masters Degree, Ruben plans to pursue a career in structural or environmental engineering.

**Adam Hamed** is a third year Mechanical Engineering student at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). Adam is a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the UTSA Lacrosse team. Adam has volunteered for Habitat for Humanity and was a member of the Make a Difference Team for the Meat Me in Bulverde event, which benefits the San Antonio Children’s Museum. Adam plans to use his degree to study environmental conditions related to mechanical processes.

**Dylan Swoboda** (not pictured) is a senior at New Braunfels High School (NBHS) and plans to pursue a Civil Engineering Degree at Texas A&M University in College Station. Dylan has completed several Advanced Placement courses at NBHS and has been a member of National Honor Society since January 2013. Dylan’s GPA is ranked in the top 10 percent of his class and he has been a student athletic trainer since his sophomore year in high school. Dylan’s current interests in the civil engineering field are water and wastewater.

**Rachel Turner** is a junior Civil Engineering major at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas. Rachel is active in a variety of intramural sports, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and the SMU Student Chapter of Engineers Without Borders. She is a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society. Rachel has participated in SMU In The City by helping to design and rebuild playgrounds in Dallas, Habitat for Humanity, and was an Engineering and Humanity Week Volunteer. Rachel is planning to pursue a career in the water/wastewater field specializing in treatment.

The TAWWA South Texas Chapter participates in the Texas Section scholarship program. This year, our San Antonio Chapter is pleased to announce our local state scholarship awardees:

**Katie Jagge** is a graduate of Southwest High School and currently pursuing a degree in Speech Language Pathology from Texas State University. Sherry Jagge (Katie’s mother) is a member of AWWA and works for United Water in San Antonio. She holds a Class C Surface Water License and TDH Bottled Water License.

**Eric Newberry** (not pictured) is a graduate of Louis D. Brandleis High School. He is currently enrolled in the Texas Maritime Academy pursuing a degree in Marine Transportation with a minor in Maritime Administration from Texas A&M University at Galveston. Eric is a member of the Corps of Cadets. Erin Newberry (Eric’s mother) is a Water Resources Coordinator with the San Antonio River Authority (SARA). Erin is a Right of Way Agent and has participated in the Texas Water conference event and planning.

**Narine Wandrey** (not pictured) is a graduate of Claudia Taylor Johnson High School and is pursuing a degree in biology from the University of Dallas. She is a student member of AWWA through the University of Dallas. Narine is the President and Founder of the Dallas Chapter of the American Society of Microbiology and President of UD Earth Science and Service. She has received Tri-Beta honors and was a 2013 Goldwater Scholar nominee.
WEAT San Antonio Section
TAWWA South Texas Chapter
9th Annual Evening Social and Scholarship Fundraiser
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Dodson’s Drive was established in 2011 to help foster growth and professionalism in our industry’s YPs. One representative from WEAT and TAWWA will be sponsored through the Dodson’s Drive fund to attend the YP Summit held in conjunction with the Utility Management Conference.

Date: February 25-28, 2014
Location: Savannah, Georgia

Do not miss this opportunity to network with WEF/AWWA leadership and advance your professional development.

Application Deadline: January 3, 2014
Applications can be downloaded at: www.weat.org/yp.shtml
**TAWWA / WEAT**
**SOUTH TEXAS SECTION**
**JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING**

**When:**
Thursday, January 16, 2014
11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

**Where:**
San Antonio Water System
Tower II – 1st Floor
Room C145
2800 US Hwy. 281 North
San Antonio, Texas

**Speaker:**
Linda Bevis, P.E.
SAWS

**Topic:**
“Polishing Our Treated Water, SAWS Winwood Pump Station GAC”

**THIS MONTH’S MEETING IS SPONSORED IN PART BY PEPPER LAWSON**

Please RSVP by noon, Wednesday, January 15, 2014 to:
Lauren Hawa, Secretary, South Texas Chapter, AWWA
Email: Lauren.Hawa@freese.com    Phone: 210-298-3849
The price for lunch is **$12.00** with RSVP, **$15.00** without RSVP
February 28, 2014

Raffle!
Individual and Team Awards!
WEAT Ops Demonstration!
Shells Included!
Gift Cards!
Pavilion for Snacks, Drinks, Networking and Bragging!

PARTICIPANTS ENJOY:
- Raffle!
- Individual and Team Awards!
- WEAT Ops Demonstration!
- Shells Included!
- Gift Cards!
- Pavilion for Snacks, Drinks, Networking and Bragging!

$330 Yeti Cooler on raffle, among other items!! Tickets are only $10 each!

Please contact Lance Rothe at lance.rothe@hdrinc.com for sponsorship opportunities or team registration.

Only 80 shooter spots available!
- Station Sponsor ($200): 12” X 18” logo sign at one station
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- Event Sponsor ($400): logo on two “Event Sponsor” banners at pavilion and registration
- Individual Shooter ($75), Team ($300): not included in sponsorship, purchase separately
- Raffle Sponsor ($100 and up): Contact Adam Conner at adam.conner@saws.org

Food sponsored by EI²!

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San Antonio Gun Club
February 28, 2014

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<th>E-mail</th>
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### Logic Puzzle

**First Names**
- Ava
- Jade
- Marisol
- Valentina

**Magazines**
- Newsweek
- People
- Time
- US Weekly

**Houses**
- Bungalow
- Colonial House
- Country House
- Victorian House

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<td>People</td>
<td>Bungalow</td>
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<td>Jade</td>
<td>Newsweek</td>
<td>Colonial House</td>
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<td>3 min, 5 sec</td>
<td>Marisol</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Country House</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 min, 8 sec</td>
<td>Valentina</td>
<td>US Weekly</td>
<td>Victorian House</td>
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**CLUES**

1. The employee whose last day will be July 11 didn’t teach. Marisol finished after the owner of the bungalow.
2. The runner who finished with a time of 2 min, 59 sec is Valentina.
3. The owner of the country house is not Marisol.
4. The Time subscriber finished after Valentina.
5. Ava didn’t finish with a time of 3 min, 2 sec and didn’t subscribe to People.
6. Either the runner who finished with a time of 3 min, 2 sec or the runner who finished with a time of 3 min, 5 sec lives in the bungalow.
7. The owner of the bungalow subscribed to Time.
8. Of the US Weekly subscriber and Ava, one completed the race at 2 min, 59 sec and the other lives in the Victorian house.
9. The runner who finished with a time of 3 min, 8 sec didn’t subscribe to Newsweek.

**Answer to logic puzzle on page 14.**
### Upcoming Meetings and Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Presenter</th>
<th>Event Host</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 14, 2014</td>
<td>TAWWA/WEAT Consumer Outreach Program Webinar, Part I</td>
<td>TAWWA</td>
<td>Webinar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 15, 2014</td>
<td>FREE Stormwater Webinar</td>
<td>WEAT</td>
<td>Webinar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 16, 2014</td>
<td>Monthly Meeting: “Polishing Our Treated Water, SAWS Winwood Pump Station GAC” (Linda Bevis, PE)</td>
<td>TAWWA/WEAT</td>
<td>SAWS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 22-23, 2014</td>
<td>Collection Systems Conference and Expo</td>
<td>WEAT</td>
<td>San Marcos, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 20, 2014</td>
<td>Monthly Meeting: “Implementing Potable Reuse with Direct Raw Water Blending: CRMWD's Raw Water Production Facility in Big Spring (David Sloan, PE, BCEE)</td>
<td>TAWWA/WEAT</td>
<td>SAWS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 22, 2014</td>
<td>Basura Bash</td>
<td>TAWWA/WEAT</td>
<td>Olmos Basin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 25-28, 2014</td>
<td>Young Professionals Summit</td>
<td>AWWA/WEF</td>
<td>Savannah, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 28, 2014</td>
<td>TAWWA Consumer Outreach Program Webinar, Part II</td>
<td>TAWWA</td>
<td>Webinar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 28, 2014</td>
<td>2nd Annual Sporting Clays Tournament</td>
<td>TAWWA/WEAT</td>
<td>San Antonio Gun Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 14-17, 2014</td>
<td>Texas Water</td>
<td>TAWWA/WEAT</td>
<td>Dallas, TX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Calling All Young Professionals!**

In an attempt to better serve the Young Professional (YP) members, we are asking that all members under the age of 35, or less than 10 years in the industry, please e-mail Heather Lindner at: heather.lindner@hdrinc.com with their name, e-mail, and phone number. If there are others in your offices who are not yet TAWWA/WEAT members, but might also be interested in participating in YP events and functions, please pass this request on to them.

Thanks!

**Logic Puzzle Answers**

- 2 min, 59 sec, Valentina, US Weekly, Country house
- 3 min, 2 sec, Jade, Time, Bungalow
- 3 min, 5 sec, Ava, Newsweek, Victorian house
- 3 min, 8 sec, Marisol, People, Colonial house

**Are You Receiving This E-Newsletter in Error?**

Please e-mail Heather Lindner (Heather.Lindner@hdrinc.com) to be removed from the list.