



## **“Currents”**

### August 2024

#### **Request for Conservation**

The flood on July 23<sup>rd</sup> provided welcome, but temporary relief to the drought. The heavy rainfall boosted flow of the Guadalupe River for about three weeks, but since the second week in August, flows have once again been below the long term average. Kerr County is still in the midst of an exceptional drought. As a steward of our beautiful Guadalupe River, the Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA) is encouraging everyone to reduce the amount of water being used.

The current rate of flow of the Guadalupe River in Hunt is approximately 15 cubic feet per second, which is 75 percent below the long-term average. These declines are, in part, attributed to persistent below-average rainfall because we are now in our third year of severe drought. Our average annual rainfall is 30 inches, but in 2022 and 2023, Kerrville received only 12.3 and 18.2 inches of rain, respectively. Year-to-date rainfall in 2024 is 20.2 inches, which is above average but still not enough to alleviate drought conditions.

Regulatory entities for surface and groundwater withdrawal have recognized the seriousness of the drought conditions and alerted permitted water users that they must reduce pumping. In turn, the permit holders have communicated the necessary reductions to their water customers. However, some water users like private well owners and streamside landowners are considered exempt and not required to follow the same restrictions. If you use your private well for household, noncommercial uses or to water your livestock, then your water use is not restricted. Similarly, if you own property along a waterway and pump water for household, noncommercial uses or to water livestock on that property, you can legally continue pumping even during severe droughts. It is to these water users that we are making urgent requests for conservation.

If you are a streamside landowner, you can support the effort to conserve water by reducing the amount of surface water you pump from the river. Private well owners can also demonstrate conservation by voluntarily reducing water use. A great way to do that is by cutting back or eliminating water usage for lawn irrigation, landscaping, and other non-essential purposes. Approximately 40% of all household water usage happens outside of the house in the yard. Consider discontinuing all irrigation system use (including drip lines) and focus only on hand watering plants that appear heat stressed. All plants benefit from watering either late at night or in the early morning when temperatures are at their lowest to reduce evaporation.

As the drought continues, every drop of water in the river, creeks, and aquifer is important. Responsible use of our water resources is a necessary part of preserving healthy, flowing waterways in Kerr County. Whether you enjoy fishing, swimming, kayaking, or relaxing next to the cool water, conservation can allow these activities to continue during this drought period.

UGRA urges you to conserve water. Please demonstrate your stewardship and appreciation of our water resources by reducing usage – together we can make a difference! If you are already doing your best to conserve water, we thank you for it.

### **Let's Keep Our River Clean**

*Shelby Taber, Natural Resources Manager for UGRA, [staber@ugra.org](mailto:staber@ugra.org) or (830) 896-5445*