

Conservation area for aquifer easily approved

By Paul Bailey
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Creation of the Barton Springs-Edwards Aquifer Conservation District was approved Saturday by voters in a 155-square-mile area that includes a large part of South Austin.

Approval came by better than a 4-1 margin, on a vote of 2,317 to 462.

"We are very, very happy," said Roger Duncan, co-chairman of Texans for Aquifer Production, the group that has been working to get the district authorized.

"I think voters will look back and see this as a wise decision," he said. "It may have been a low key election that drew a small voter turnout, but we think it is a major decision on environmental and ecological issues of today."

The conservation district is designed to provide a legal means to prevent excessive pumping of water from the aquifer. Duncan said the vote means people have recognized the importance of preserving the amount of water in the aquifer.

"Without this conservation district, someone could literally pump the aquifer dry, and no one could do a thing about it," Duncan said. "We have legal means to control pollution of the aquifer, but we had no legal means to ensure that it will always have water until today."

The Barton Springs-Edwards Aquifer Conservation District covers an area from the Colorado River south almost to Kyle. The eastern boundary roughly follows

ELECTION ROUNDUP

- Taylor elects Black B6

- Bee Cave incorporation

- Hays rural fire district

- Stoney Point road district

Interstate 35 and the western edge extends almost to FM 1626 west of Austin. Most of the voters live in South Austin.

The election followed more than two years of legal and legislative battles to establish the district.

"The key to the passing of the issue was the elimination of any tax requirements," Duncan said. The district is simply a legal means to oversee and control the use of water.

The conservation district will be governed by a five-member board, which will have the power to develop plans for ground-water use and conservation.

The aquifer is a water-bearing geological formation that extends from Kinney County in South Texas to Bell County in Central Texas. It is the source of drinking water in some communities and is the source of Barton Springs.

Two Austin area water districts voted Saturday to be included in the Barton Springs-Edwards Aquifer Conservation District.

Creedmoor-Maha Water Supply voted 108-3 to be annexed into the conservation district. Go Forth Water Supply voted 54-7 to be also included in the district.