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**THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2009**

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### **TCEQ RESTRICTS JUNIOR WATER RIGHTS**

Brazos River basin *affected*

The executive director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality notified non-municipal junior rights holders, with a priority date of 1980 and later, that their right to divert water from the Brazos River basin is immediately suspended.

The priority doctrine, according to Texas law, determines that the most senior water rights will be served first during times of drought regardless of the permitted water use. As a result, junior water rights, or those rights issued most recently, are suspended or curtailed before the senior water rights in the area.

The Texas Water Code requires that the flows of the Brazos River must be available for use by land owners with property adjacent to the Brazos River for domestic and livestock use as part of their inherent riparian rights. These D&L users have senior priority before any appropriated water rights.

The lack of significant rainfall in the area and the declining flow of the Brazos River means many junior water rights have already reached their permitted flow restrictions and have not been allowed to divert any surface water. All approved temporary water rights in the area have also been suspended. Should drought conditions continue to persist, additional suspensions or restrictions of remaining water rights may be necessary.

Individuals can take action to conserve water:

- \$ water your lawn no more than twice a week and only during early morning hours,
- \$ use a drip irrigation system instead of sprinklers,
- \$ wash full loads of dishes or laundry,
- \$ cut back on washing your vehicle,
- \$ replace old plumbing with water saving fixtures,
- \$ consider installing a cistern to catch rainwater for future use,
- \$ plant native plants (that require less water).

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