



News from the Helotes Heritage Association

Dear Readers,

Today was the Preliminary Hearing for the contested case to oppose SAWS plans to extend sewer service into the Hill Country of NW Bexar County and beyond. The hearing was held in Austin. Its purpose was to decide who has legal standing in the case and determine future dates for the legal proceedings.

There was some legal wrangling, however when it was all said and done, HHA, GEAA, the City of Grey Forest and several individuals were granted legal standing. BP and the Hills of Castle Rocks were also given standing. Other groups participating in the HHA and GEAA team include the Hill Country Planning Alliance and the San Geronimo Valley Alliance, however, they were not listed as having standing simply to keep our team effort manageable.

We are opposing SAWS actions because their intention would be to install the sewer lines in the river beds through out the Hill Country and because providing sewer systems to the affected area would open up the area to high-intensity development. It is our opinion that this type of high-intensity development and sewer construction would cause considerable and irreparable harm to the Edwards Aquifer.

The judge consolidated the two cases into one, so that the consolidated area extends from 471 and FM 1283 to the south up to IH-10 in the north and covers most of the area between Loop-410 and Loop-1604. The agreed dates for legal proceedings culminate with a "Hearing on the Merits" scheduled for December 8, 2008 (yes that is 2008, not 2007).

It is not realistic to think that grass-root community groups can effectively oppose legal actions brought forward by SAWS. Because this is a serious and involved legal action, HHA has retained Mr. Eric Allmon with the law firm of Lowerre & Frederick out of Austin to represent our team. The above-mentioned groups have banded together to contest SAWS sewer plans and to join forces and pool resources to preserve our environment.

HHA will try to keep the community apprised of this long-term legal battle. It is a daunting challenge, but one that must be engaged. Thanks to all groups and individuals that have supported this cause so far, and hopefully will continue to do so as this effort develops.

Sincerely,
Ron Green, President
Helotes Heritage Association