



Groundwater Conservation District Declares Extreme Drought Stage, Implements Immediate Conservation Measures to Protect Aquifers

For Immediate Release: Friday, February 27, 2026

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The Board of Directors of the Southwestern Travis County Groundwater Conservation District voted at its February 19, 2026, meeting to declare D-3 Extreme Drought Stage, effective immediately, due to persistent and intensifying drought conditions across the District.

According to the most recent U.S. Drought Monitor map released February 26, 2026 (map date February 24, 2026), 66% of the District is classified as Extreme Drought (D-3) and the remaining 34% as Severe Drought (D-2). This marks the seventh consecutive week that more than half of the District has been in Extreme Drought.

Under District rules, the Board may declare a higher drought stage when a majority of the District has been at a higher drought intensity for at least two consecutive weeks and conditions warrant the declaration. In addition to drought severity and aquifer conditions in the District, the Board considers drought intensity in Travis and neighboring counties, long-term rainfall deficits, and climatological forecasts when making drought determinations.

Groundwater Use Reductions

Effective Immediately

- **Exempt Wells, Limited Production General Permits, Non-exempt Domestic Use General Permits:**
30% voluntary reduction in groundwater use
- **Test Well General Permits:**
No use without Board authorization
- **Operating Permits:**
30% mandatory reduction of the quarterly permitted volume

District permittees must follow the monthly drought allocations and response measures in their approved User Drought Conservation Plan (UDCP). End-user customers served by groundwater-based utilities must comply with their utility's water-use restrictions.

Recommended Water Conservation Measures

Residents and permittees are strongly encouraged to:

- Water lawns, trees, and shrubs no more than once per week.
- Water only between 8:00 PM and midnight to minimize evaporative loss.
- Refrain from refilling swimming pool (topping off only).
- Use leak-proof troughs for livestock watering.

- Pump groundwater into livestock stock tanks only when necessary.
- Avoid filling ponds, lakes, tanks, or other surface impoundments with groundwater.
- Wash vehicles at commercial car washes only when necessary.
- Avoid washing buildings, driveways, streets, patios, or other outdoor surfaces unless required for health, safety, or fire prevention.
- Use water for dust control only when legally required.

Additional D-3 Drought Restrictions

- No new non-exempt wells may be drilled, except to replace existing permitted wells. This restriction does not apply to exempt wells. The Board may consider approval of a new non-exempt well only if necessary to mitigate an imminent threat to public health, safety, or welfare.
- The District will not accept applications for new operating permits or for amendments increasing production under existing permits, except under the same limited public health and safety criteria.

Helpful Resources

- District Drought Management: <https://swtcgcd.com/drought-management>
- District Interactive Map: <https://swtcgcd.com/district-map>
- Texas Water Development Board Drought Dashboard: <https://www.waterdatafortexas.org/drought>
- LCRA Municipal Water Use Restrictions (for residents served by utilities that purchase water from LCRA): <https://www.lcra.org/water/permits-contracts/water-supply-contracts/water-use-restrictions/>

The District will continue to monitor aquifer conditions and drought indicators and will provide updates as conditions change.

The Southwestern Travis County Groundwater Conservation District is a groundwater conservation district established by the Texas Legislature to preserve, conserve, and protect the aquifers and groundwater resources within its jurisdiction. The District is governed by a seven-member elected Board of Directors and operates with a small, dedicated team of hydrogeologists, regulatory compliance professionals, and administrative staff.

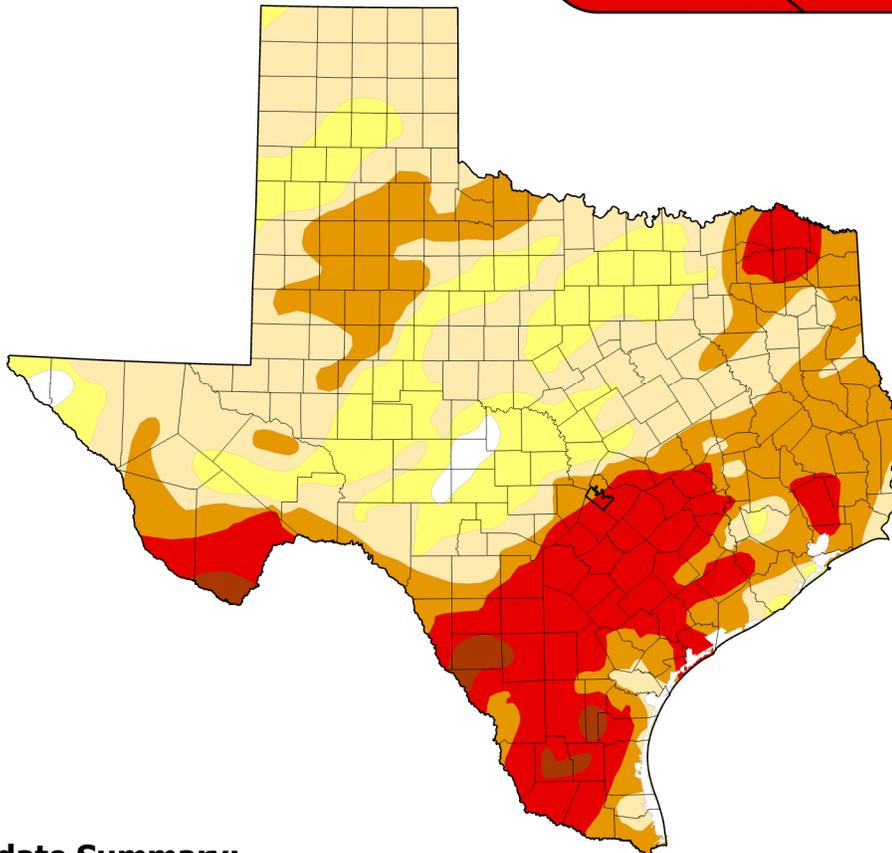
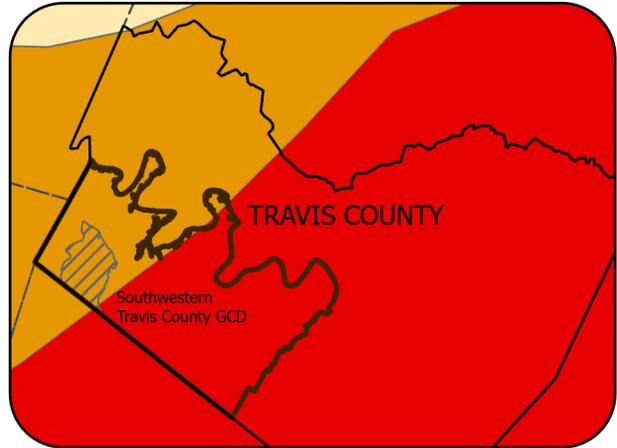


Drought Update – February 24, 2026

Current Declared Stage: D3 Extreme Drought

SWTCGCD % at or above each drought stage.

-  **Hamilton Pool Management Zone**
-  **D0+ Abnormally Dry: 100%**
-  **D1+ Moderate Drought: 100%**
-  **D2+ Severe Drought: 100%**
-  **D3+ Extreme Drought: 66%**
-  **D4 Exceptional Drought: 0%**
-  **None: 0%**



Drought Update Summary:

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor map released February 26, 2026 (map date: February 24, 2026), 66% of the District is classified as extreme drought (D3), with the remaining 34% classified as severe drought (D2). This is the seventh consecutive week that more than 50% of the District has been classified as D3. The District Board of Directors declared D3 Extreme Drought Stage on February 19, 2026, based on drought severity in the District and surrounding counties, aquifer conditions, and other relevant factors. <https://swtcgcd.com/district-map>

Drought Thresholds:

Under District Rule 5.2, at least 50% of the District must be at a higher drought intensity for two consecutive weeks to declare a higher stage. To lower the stage, the reduced intensity must cover at least 50% of the District for four consecutive weeks. The Board may also consider other relevant factors when declaring drought stages.