



Groundwater Conservation District Eases Drought Response, Continues to Encourage Water Conservation

For Immediate Release: Thursday, July 30, 2026

Contact: admin@swtcgcd.org or 512-276-2875

The Southwestern Travis County Groundwater Conservation District has lowered its drought stage from D-2 Severe Drought to D-1 Moderate Drought, effective July 30, 2026, following continued improvement in drought conditions across the District.

While recent rainfall has reduced drought intensity, groundwater levels remain near historic lows across much of the District. Long-term groundwater pumping exceeding the aquifers' natural recharge rates has caused sustained groundwater level declines, which have been exacerbated by prolonged and intense drought. Because much of the Trinity Aquifer underlying the District is deeply confined and groundwater moves slowly through the aquifer, improved drought conditions do not translate into immediate improvements in aquifer levels. In many areas, groundwater pumping continues to exceed natural recharge rates, further limiting aquifer recovery. Although mandatory groundwater use reductions are no longer in effect, water conservation remains one of the most effective ways to support aquifer recovery, protect groundwater resources, and promote long-term sustainability.

Under District Rules, the Board may declare a lower drought stage when a majority of the District has remained at a lower drought intensity for at least four consecutive weeks and determines that conditions warrant the declaration. At its July 16, 2026, meeting, the Board directed staff to implement the reduction to D-1 Moderate Drought once the required conditions were met, emphasizing the importance of responding promptly to improving conditions while continuing to protect groundwater resources.

According to the most recent U.S. Drought Monitor map released July 30, 2026, 54% of the District is classified as Abnormally Dry (D-0) and the remaining 46% as Moderate Drought (D-1). This marks the fourth consecutive week since the District reduced its drought stage to D-2 Severe Drought on July 2, 2026, that more than half of the District has been classified as D-1 Moderate Drought or less severe, meeting the District's requirement for reducing the drought stage. It also marks the fifth consecutive week overall that more than half of the District has been classified at or below D-1, and the second consecutive week that more than half of the District has been classified as Abnormally Dry (D-0).

Current Drought Response Measures

Effective Immediately

- **Exempt Wells, Limited Production and Non-exempt Domestic Use General Permits:** 10% voluntary reduction in groundwater use

- **Operating Permits:** 10% voluntary reduction of the quarterly permitted volume

District permittees must continue implementing the drought response measures in their approved User Drought Contingency Plans (UDCPs) and the ongoing conservation measures in their approved User Conservation Plans (UCPs). End-user customers served by groundwater-based utilities must continue to comply with their utility's water-use restrictions.

Recommended Water Conservation Measures

The District encourages residents and permittees to continue conserving water by:

- Checking for and promptly repairing plumbing leaks.
- Watering lawns, trees, and shrubs no more than once every five days.
- Watering only between 8:00 PM and 8:00 AM to minimize evaporative losses.
- Keeping swimming pools, landscape or decorative ponds, and fountains covered whenever possible, using water recirculation systems, and refilling only to replace normal evaporative losses.
- Washing vehicles at commercial car washes only when necessary.
- Avoiding washing buildings, driveways, streets, patios, or other outdoor surfaces unless necessary for health, safety, or fire prevention.
- Using leak-proof troughs for livestock watering whenever possible.
- Not maintaining more than 50,000 gallons of groundwater in ponds, lakes, tanks, or other surface impoundments, except for livestock watering and wells specifically designated for firefighting.

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, drought indicators, and weather patterns and will adjust its drought response as conditions warrant.

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.



**SOUTHWESTERN TRAVIS COUNTY
GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Current Declared Stage: D1 Moderate Drought
Drought Update – July 30, 2026

SWTCGCD % at or above each drought stage.

 **Hamilton Pool Management Zone**

 **D0+ Abnormally Dry: 100%**

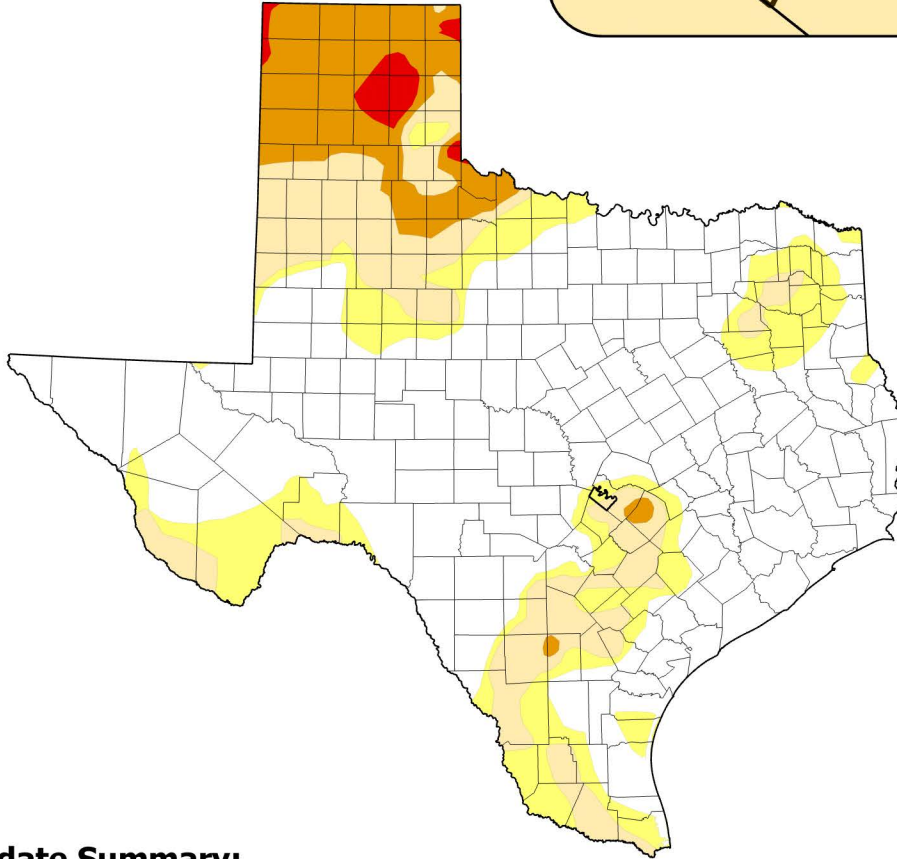
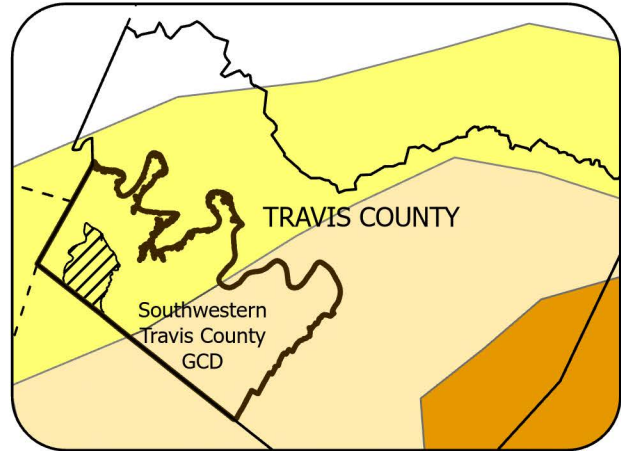
 **D1+ Moderate Drought: 46%**

 **D2+ Severe Drought: 0%**

 **D3+ Extreme Drought: 0%**

 **D4 Exceptional Drought 0%**

 **None: 0%**



Drought Update Summary:

According to the most recent U.S. Drought Monitor map released July 30, 2026 (map date July 28, 2026), 54% of the District is classified as Abnormally Dry (D-0) and the remaining 46% as Moderate Drought (D-1). This marks the fifth consecutive week that more than half of the District has been classified at or below D-1 Moderate Drought, satisfying the threshold in the District's drought rules for reducing the drought stage from D-2 Severe Drought to D-1 Moderate Drought, effective July 30, 2026. <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.

Source: U.S. Drought Monitor GIS Data <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DmData/GISData.aspx>