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## North-Central Texas Residents Wonder Where the Water is Going



By [NGI Staff Reports](#) on August 25, 2006 at 4:00 a.m.

No one likes a dry hole, whether it was drilled for oil, gas or water. Some residents of Parker County, TX, say their water wells are running dry because of all the water that's being pumped from their aquifer to produce natural gas from the Barnett Shale. However, the region also has experienced a great deal of urban development, and that, too, drains the aquifer as more residents and businesses tap the water supply. And there's also been a drought.

"Groundwater development due to urban growth, recent gas exploration of the Barnett Shale and the recent drought have all led to increased pumping of the Trinity Aquifer in North Central Texas," said the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). "These groundwater pumping activities have raised concerns with regard to how this increased pumping has and potentially may affect groundwater conditions in the future."

In May the TWDB contracted with R.W. Harden & Associates Inc., Freese & Nichols Inc. and the Bureau of Economic Geology to study the effects of pumping on the Trinity Aquifer in the Dallas-Fort Worth study area. The area includes all or parts of Bosque, Comanche, Cooke, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hamilton, Hill, Hood, Jack, Johnson, Montague, Palo Pinto, Parker, Somervell, Tarrant and Wise counties.



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Robert Mace, director of the groundwater resources division of the TWDB, told *NGI* that plans for the study got under way before the drought and water pumping for Barnett Shale development became big issues.

The study aims to determine how water levels have changed in response to additional pumping, estimate current and future pumping and attempt to predict future groundwater conditions. Results of the study are expected in January.

TWDB staff are measuring water levels in well of the Trinity Aquifer as supplement to the annual TWDB level measurement program, which collected 187 measurements in the 18-county study area in 2005 and 2006.

Wise County is no stranger to conflict between the interests of gas well and water well owners. A decade ago, Mitchell Energy & Development Corp. was sued for allegedly contaminating water wells in Wise County. A \$204 million judgment against a Mitchell subsidiary was reversed on appeal, and the appeal was later upheld by the Texas Supreme Court (see *Daily GPI*, July 7, 1998).

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