



Saving Water: Challenges & Opportunity

October, 2010

Pathways to Sustainability

Karen Guz

Director – Conservation

Background: San Antonio



- **San Antonio is America's 7th largest city and growing fast**
- **SAWS is largest local provider of water and wastewater services provided for over 1.3 million people**
- **Primary supply is an aquifer which also feeds springs and rivers key to sustaining endangered species, aquatic habitats and estuaries**
- **All new supply options are expensive and politically controversial**
- **Region is drought prone with extreme precipitation fluctuations**

Catalyst for Change; Federal Law

San Antonio Express-News

Serving South Texas since 1865

SATURDAY, August 24, 1996

★ Final Edition 50c

Bunton orders pumping limits

City leaders react angrily, plan to file appeal Monday

By KEN DILANIAN
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

Flanked by local leaders at a dramatic City Hall news conference, Mayor Bill Thornton vowed Friday to appeal a federal judge's order that he decried as favoring animals over people.

"Today I think it's time we draw a line in the sand to fight for consideration of humans and human rights," Thornton said. "Quite frankly, the court is jacking us around."

Thornton's sentiments were echoed by a variety of city officials who protested an order by Senior U.S. District Judge Lucius D. Bun-

ton III that may require San Antonians to stop watering their lawns in an effort to save five federally protected species at Comal and San Marcos springs.

After years of warnings, threats and voluntary plans, Bunton finally imposed a legally binding court order in response to allegations from the non-profit Sierra Club that San Antonio's Edwards Aquifer water use is violating the Endangered Species Act.

Governments at all levels have failed to properly preserve the Edwards, Bunton wrote, and that failure is killing species in violation

■ See THORNTON/8A



"Today I think it's time we draw a line in the sand to fight for consideration of humans and human rights. Quite frankly, the court is jacking us around."

— Mayor Bill Thornton

"The Edwards Aquifer region has finally reached the point where the aquifer is unable to provide for the needs of all those who depend upon it during dry years."

— Senior U.S. District Judge Lucius D. Bunton III



SAWS chief foresees ban on lawn watering by Oct. 1

By JERRY NEEDHAM
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

A federal judge ordered restrictions on pumping from the Edwards Aquifer by the city of San Antonio and other defendants Friday, in an endangered species lawsuit filed by the Sierra Club.

Mayor Bill Thornton and City Council members vowed an appeal.

The order by Senior U.S. District Judge Lucius D. Bunton III does not take effect until Oct. 1. Depending on how much rain falls by then, the San Antonio Water System and other large users of aquifer water could be limited to no



The water debate is about a lot more than blind critters.

Carlos Guerra/1B

more than 1.2 times their winter average pumpage.

Joe Aceves, SAWS president, said that to meet that limit, the city probably would have to ban any outdoor water use by residen-

■ See FEDERAL/8A

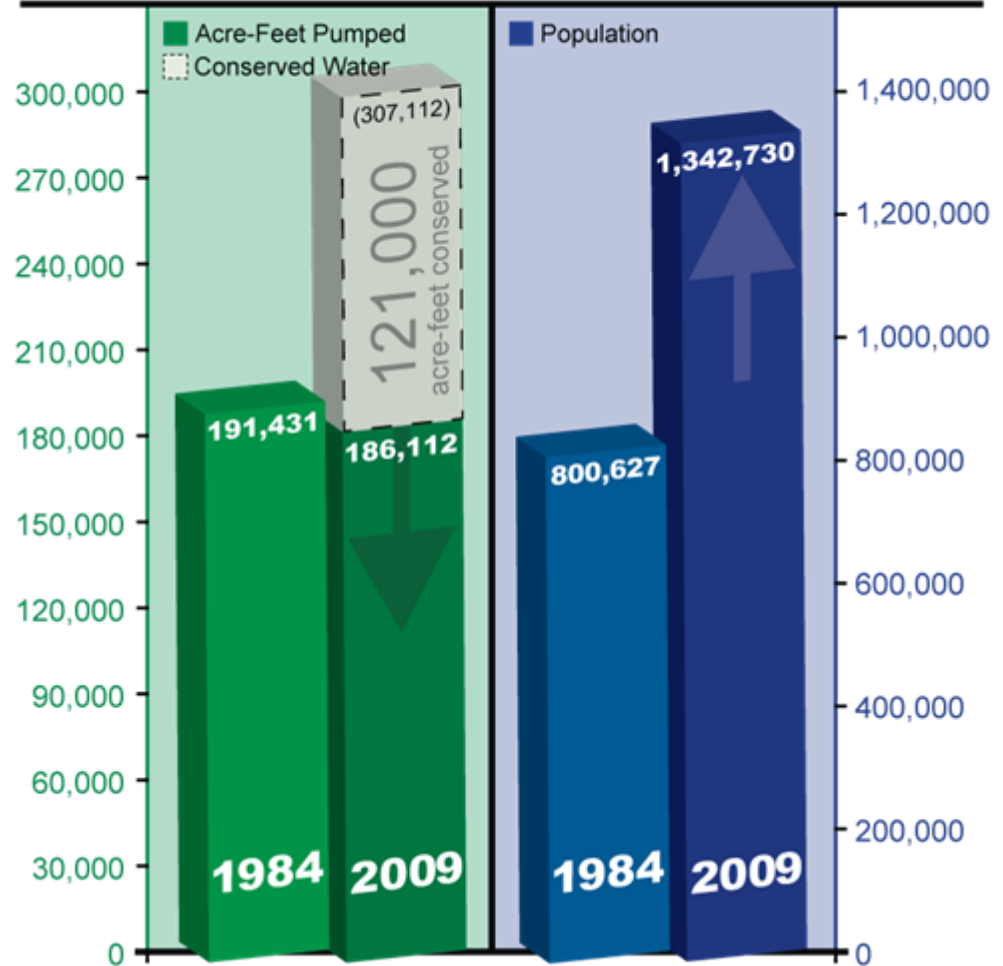
Leaders feared San Antonio could not thrive with pumping restrictions.

Managing Water Demand

**67% More
Customers**

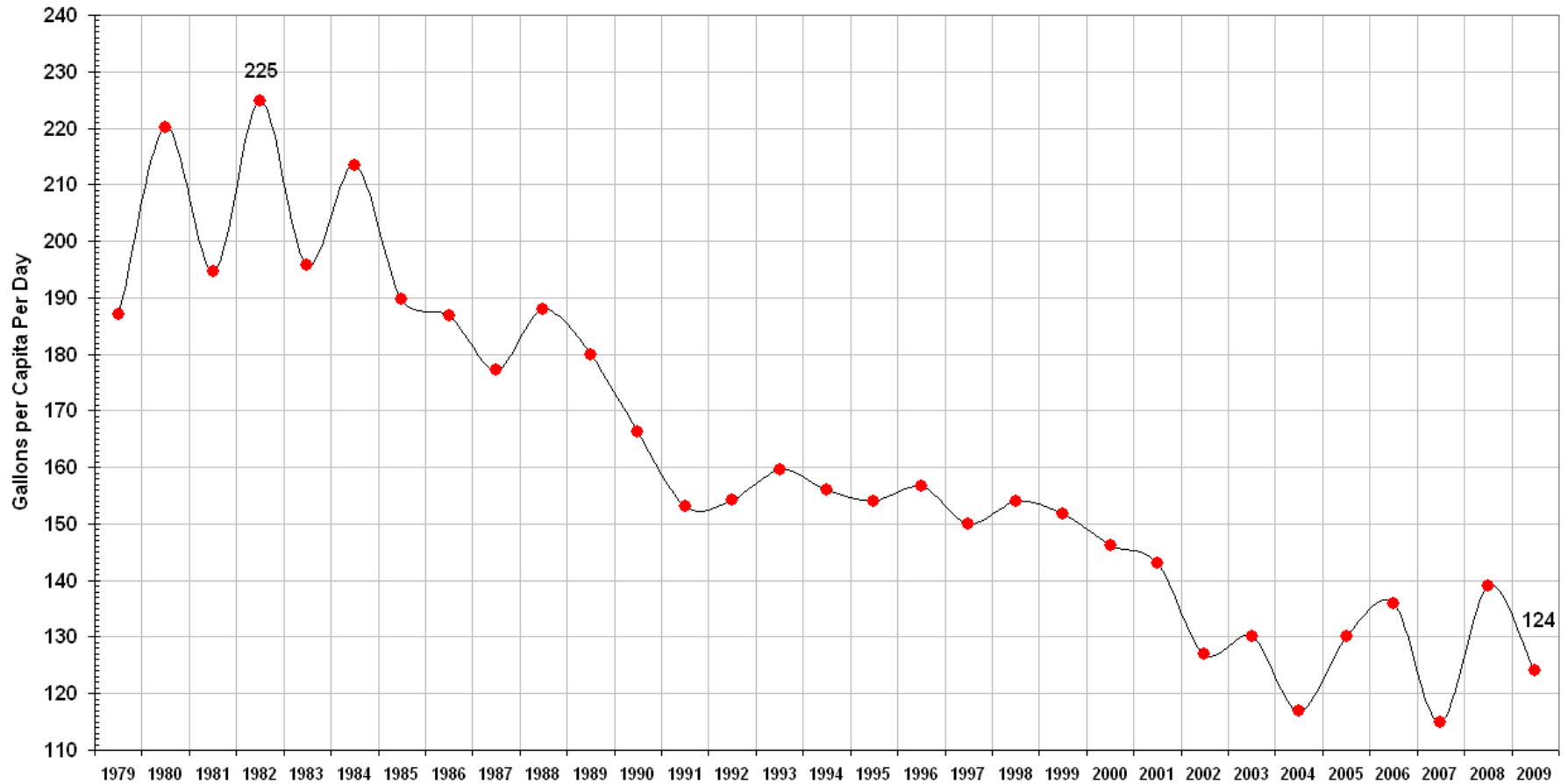
**0% More
Water**

SAWS Total Production (1984 vs. 2009)



San Antonio GPCD

San Antonio Water System
Gallons Per Capita Per Day (GPCD)
1979 - 2009



What Is the Good News?

- It is possible to grow and thrive economically while meeting water management challenges
- Drastic lifestyle changes are not required to make dramatic changes in gallons per capita
- Water rates will go up less if existing water supplies are maximized

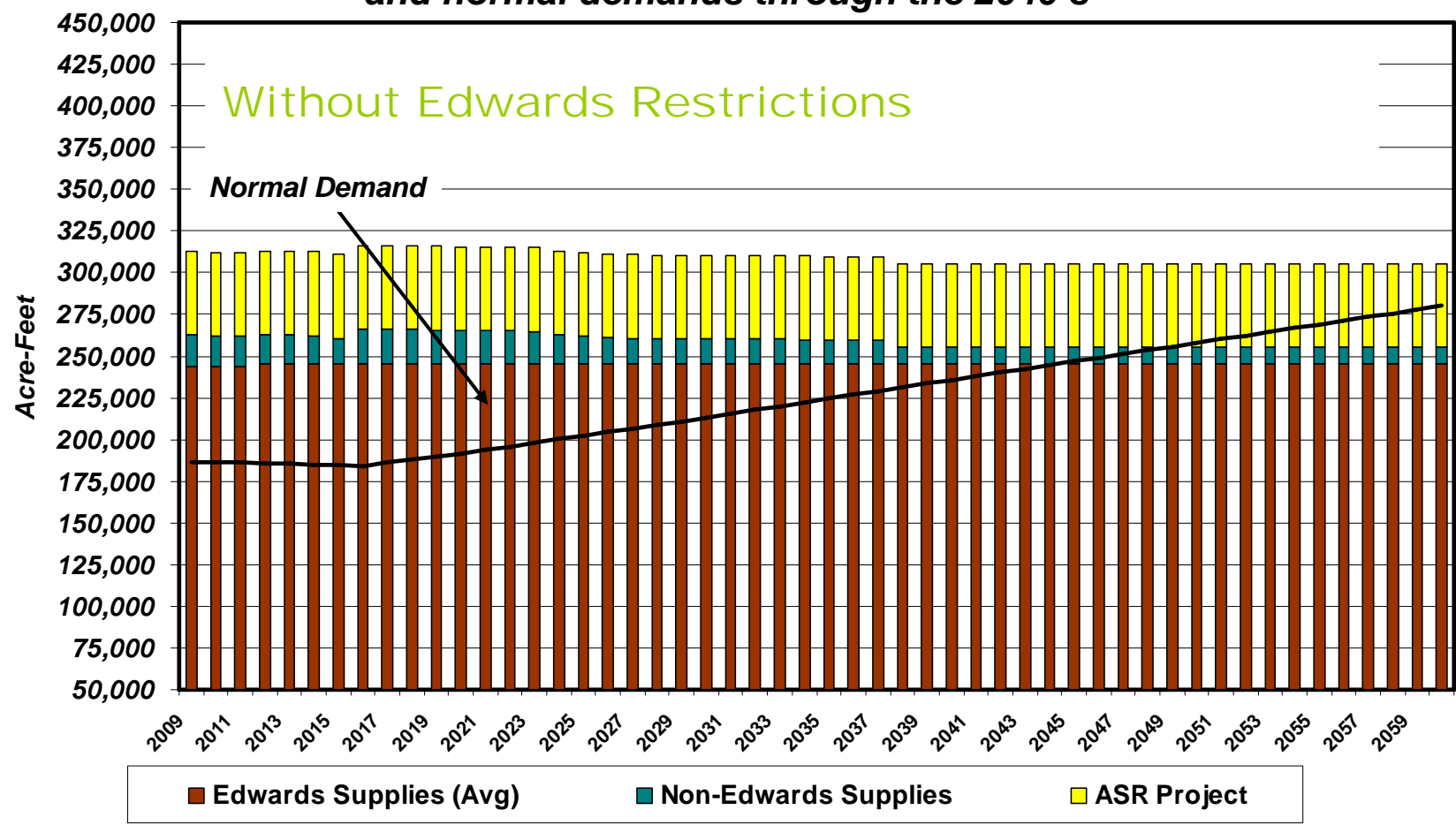
What Are Key Choices ?

Management of demand manages cost

- Conservation is critical to the Water Management Plan
- New supplies are being planned, but are less expensive due to conservation
- Peak demand is particularly critical due to restrictions on available water in summer months
- The permanent water plans for San Antonio include
 - Continue strong community ethic to conserve water
 - Set aggressive conservation goals & investment
 - Continue reasonable rules of use
 - Utilize drought management when needed

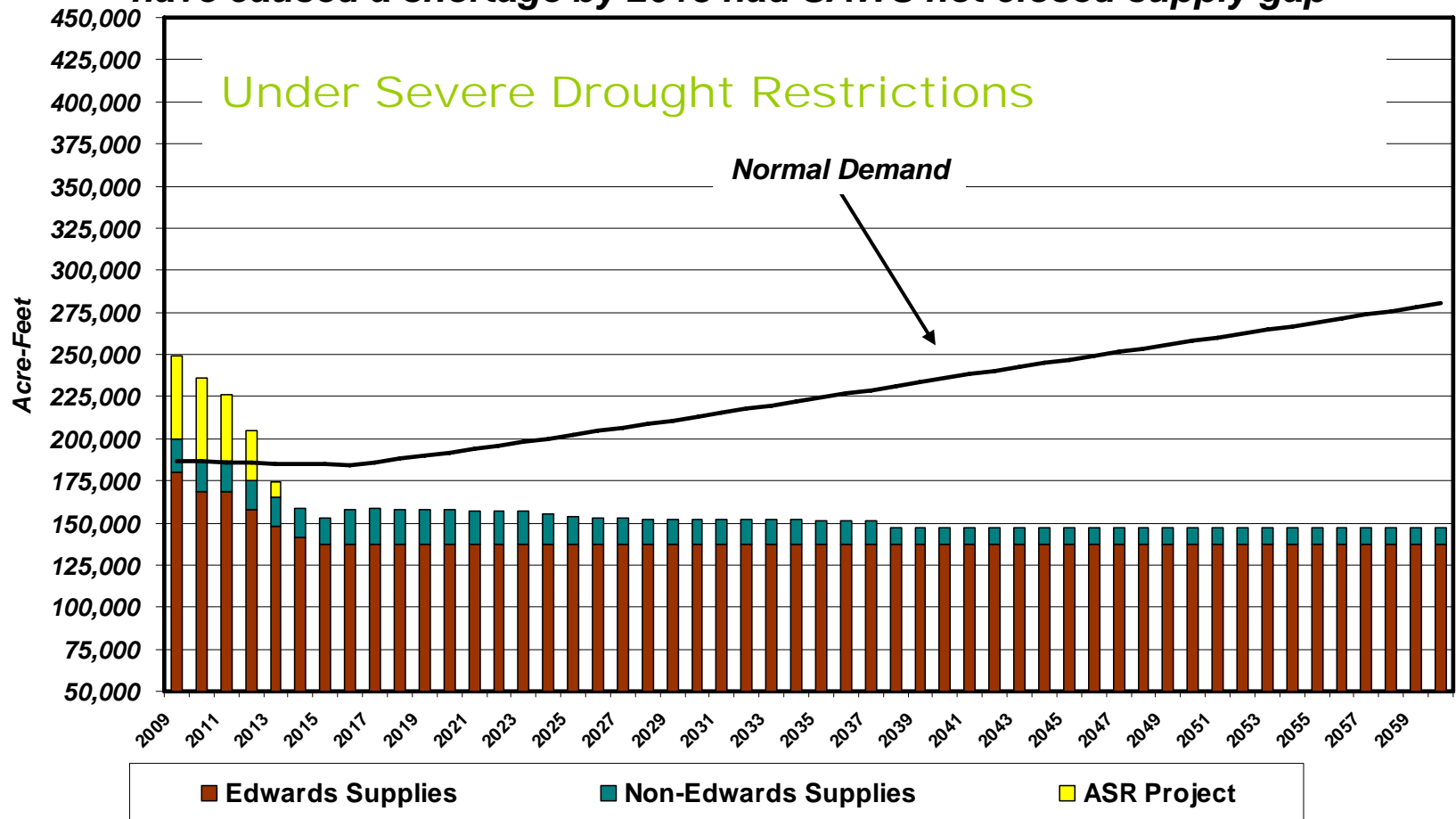
Supply and Demand (Average Conditions)

Current water supplies in average conditions would meet high and normal demands through the 2040's



Supply and Demand (Drought Conditions)

Edwards supplies are cut by 40% in extreme drought, which would have caused a shortage by 2013 had SAWS not closed supply gap



What Are Program Components?

1. Financial Incentives

- Rebates & other incentives to encourage new equipment at homes and businesses
- Rate structures to discourage high discretionary usage



Kick the Can

It's a great ways to save money and water.



2. Education & Outreach

- Many events, e-newsletter, & Home Consultations

3. Reasonable Regulations

- Far reaching ordinances that cover a wide range of activities involving water



Program Goal: 1 billion gallons/year



**Kick the Can
FREE Toilets**



**Watersaver Landscape
Rebates**



**Wash Right
Washing Machine Rebate**



**Hot Water
On Demand Rebate**



**Home Water
Conservation Audits**



**San Antonio
Landscape Care Guide**



**E-Newsletter with
Irrigation Advice**



**Drought Restriction
Enforcement**



Reporting Water Waste



**Large-Scale Retrofit
Rebate Program**



**Toilet
Retrofit Program**



**Commercial Cooling
Tower Audits**



**Restaurant Certified
WaterSaver Program**



**On-Site Cooling
Water Reclamation**

Customer Education Efforts

Community Based Marketing Programs



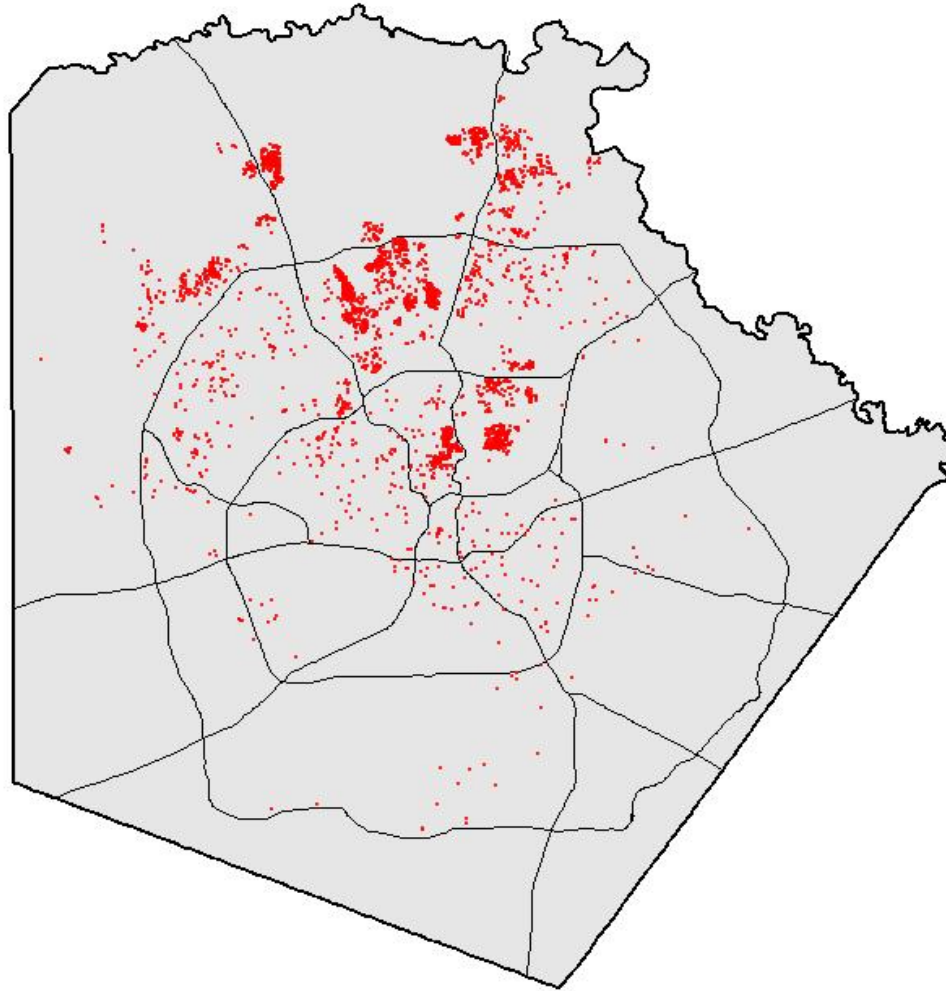
Model also drives retrofits where needed.

Fix A Leak

- EPA WaterSense program promotes checking for leaks each spring
- Non-profit groups received payment for households that completed water audits
- Homeowners received rebates
- Generated community wide response

Top 1% Residential Water Users

Outreach Targeted to Top Water Users



Reasonable Regulations

- Water Waste Against the Law
- Time of Day Irrigation
- Drought Rules
- San Antonio Irrigation Standards; above state
- Rain Sensor Requirement
- Cooling Tower Efficiencies
- Power Washing Rules of Use
- Irrigation Check-Ups for Large Properties/Large Users
- Making Condensate Water Accessible on Commercial Construction
- Turfgrass Selection & Soil Under Turfgrass
- High Efficiency Toilets, Urinals, Faucets & Showerheads During Construction; to EPA WaterSense standards
- Limited total irrigation size for residential
- Water on request only in restaurants
- Charity car washes only at car wash operations
- Soon: pool construction standards

www.saws.org/conservation/ordinance/

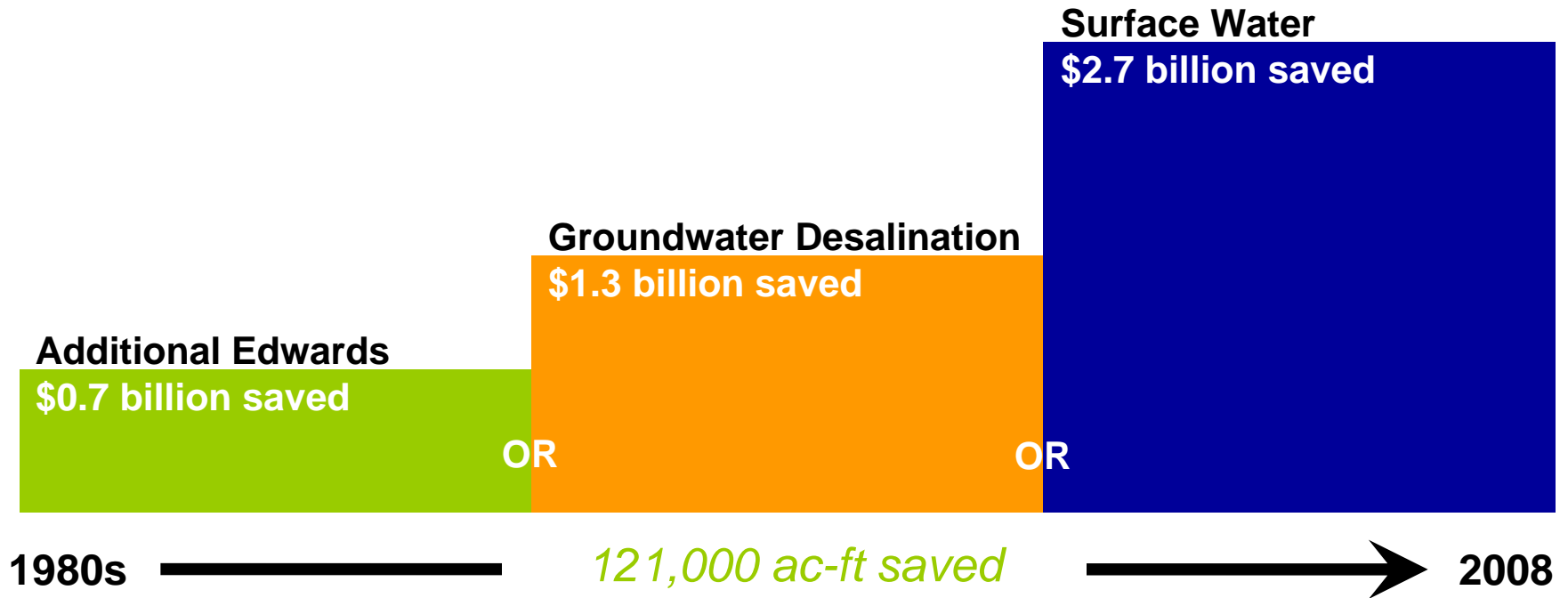
How Does It Work Financially?

Conservation is fully supported by financial analysis.

- San Antonio expects to continue growth in population during the next 50 years
- Access to our primary supply will not become easier; it may become more restricted
- There are no cheap or non-controversial supply options available surrounding San Antonio
- Every analysis done by our Finance Department supports tremendous long-term savings as a result of conservation success
- YES...rates go up to cover expenses, but LESS than they would without conservation working.

Water Management - Conservation

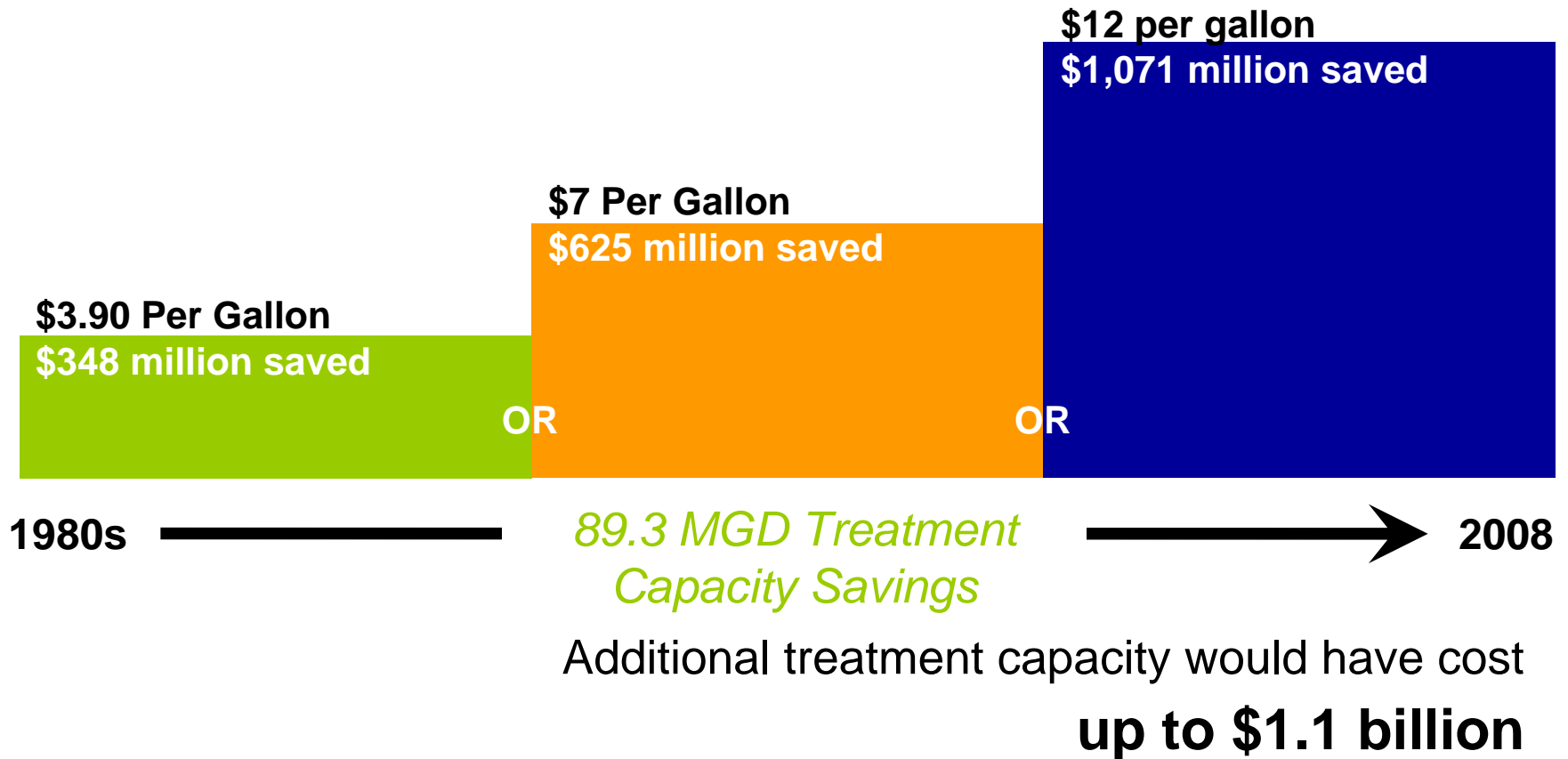
Water Supply Savings



Deferred alternative supplies would have cost
up to \$2.7 billion

Water Management - Conservation

Wastewater Treatment Savings



Conservation vs. Efficiency

- True sustainability requires both a conservation and an efficiency mindset
- Efficiency alone will not lead us to the gains required to reduce water or energy demands needed to continue to thrive
 - Highly “efficient” irrigation can use up to 100,000 gallons/month on large single family lots.
 - A “conservation” mind-set in the community is open in communicating to citizens that this is inappropriate and unsustainable

Contact Information

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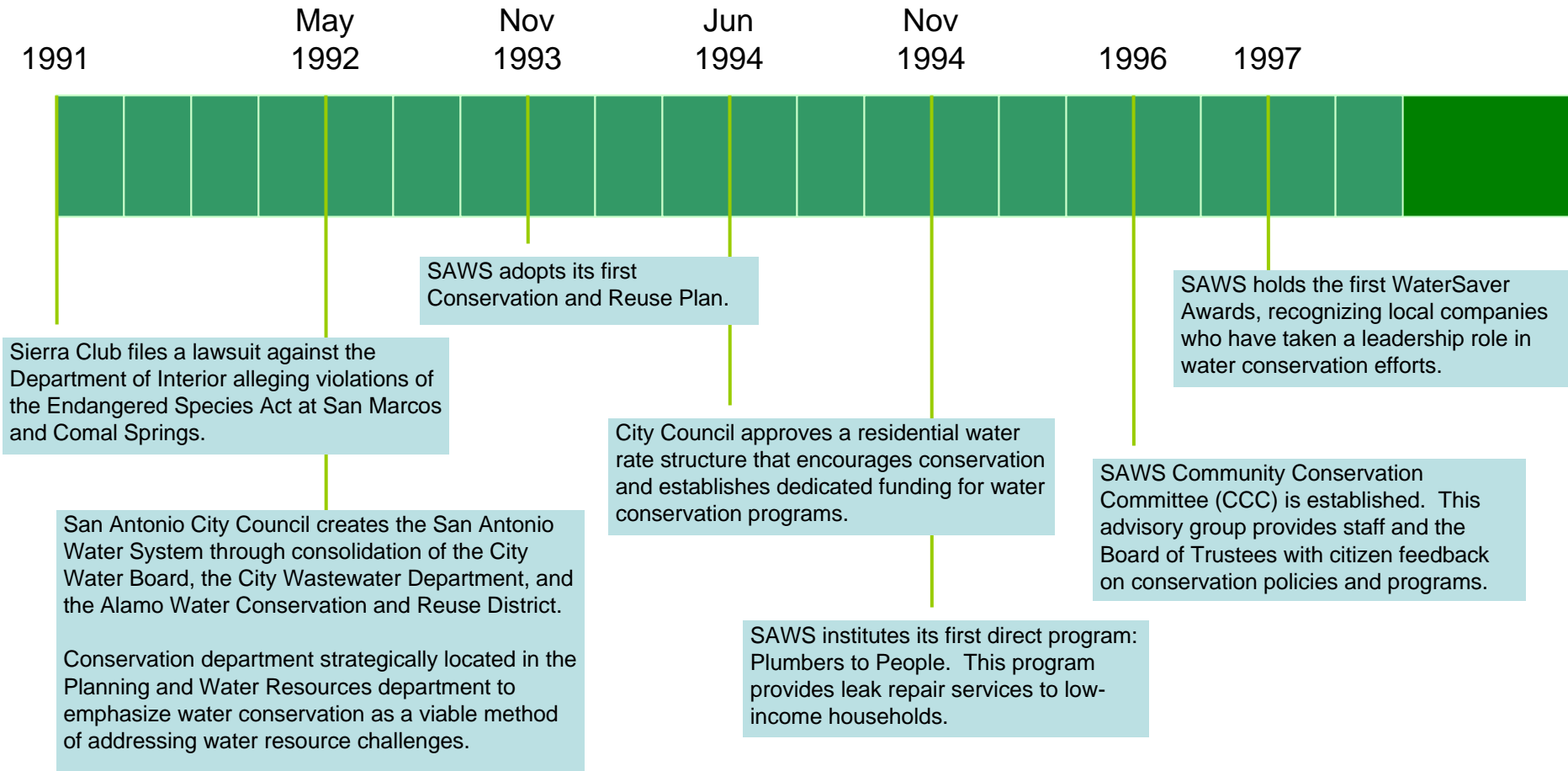
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History of Conservation



History of Conservation

Jan 1998 Mar 1998 Oct 1998 Jan 2001 Dec 2001 Jan 2002

San Antonio City Council approves a fee on all commercial water accounts in support of commercial conservation programs.

SAWS Board of Trustees approves the first Water Resource Plan, titled "Securing our Water Future Together." This plan identified methods for meeting future water needs through diversification of our water resources.

SAWS per capita consumption drops to 143 gallons per person per day.

With input from Region L and regional planning groups throughout the state, TWDB adopts the first state water plan. In this plan, the San Antonio region is the only area in the state that adopts "advanced conservation" as a significant resource option.

Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) appoints SAWS representative to the South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group (Region L). Region L is one of 16 regional planning groups in Texas, tasked with the development of a 50-year water plan for inclusion in the state water plan.

Water use reduction goals established in the 1993 Conservation and Reuse Plan for 2008 are achieved a full 7 years in advance.

History of Conservation

