

Sole Source Aquifer Recharge Area

The Sole Source Aquifer (SSA) Protection Program is authorized by section 1424(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 201, 300 et. Seq., and 21 U.S.C. 349) that requires protection of drinking water systems that are the sole or principal drinking water source of an area and which, if contaminated, would create a significant hazard to public health. Aquifers are a geological formation, group of formations, or part of a formation that is capable of yielding a significant amount of water to a well or spring.

SSA designation protects an area's ground water resources by requiring the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to review all proposed projects within the designated area that will receive federal financial assistance. The Edwards Aquifer I & Edwards Aquifer II located between Austin and San Antonio and areas to the west are the only SSA designations located in Texas.

EPA defines a sole or principal source aquifer as one which supplies at least 50% of the drinking water consumed in the area overlying the aquifer. These areas have no alternative drinking water source(s) which could physically, legally, and economically supply all those who depend the aquifer for drinking water.

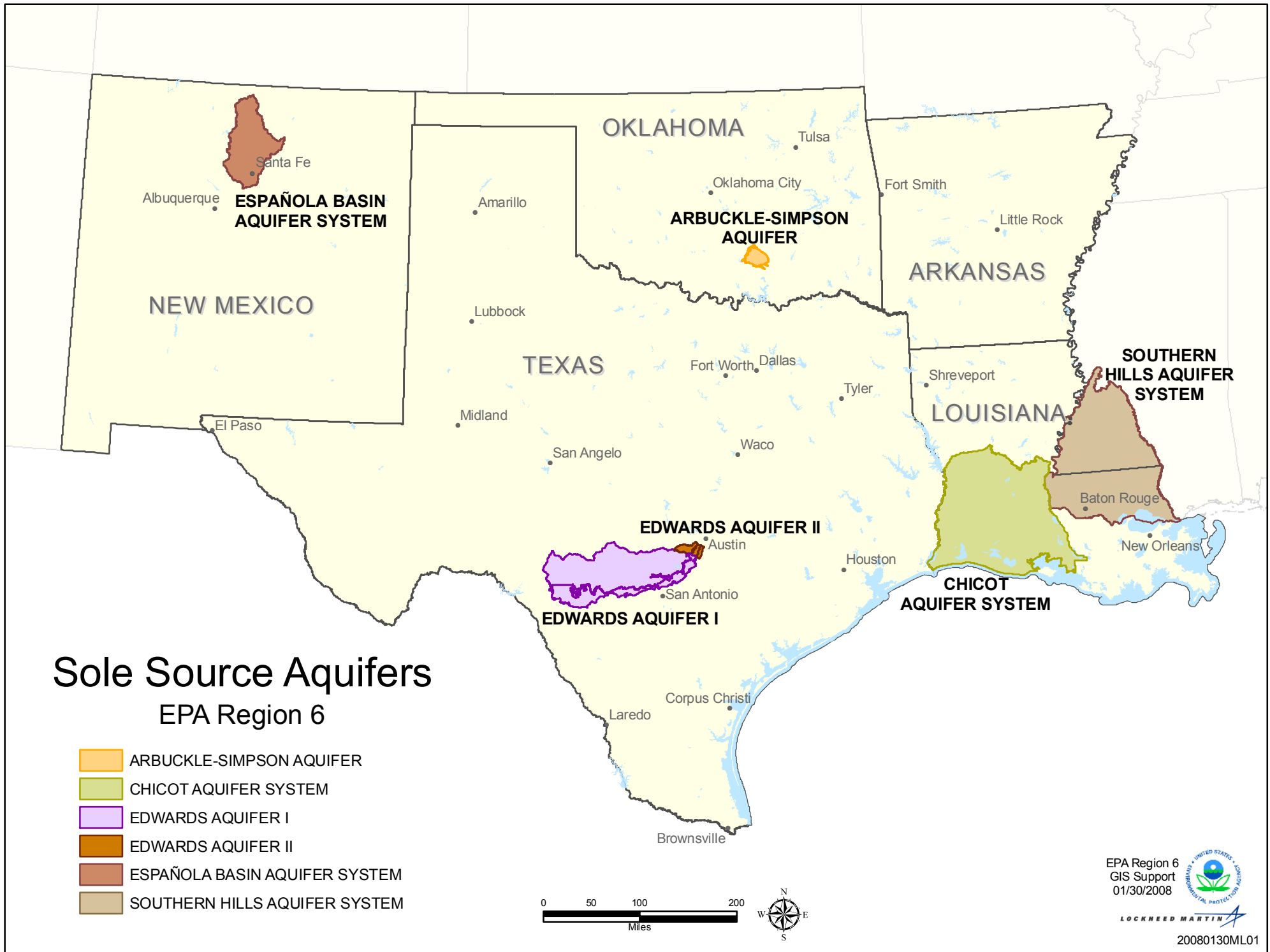
Region 6 of the EPA administers Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and New Mexico. Their web site can be found here: <http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/region6.html> . Contact information can be found on the site.

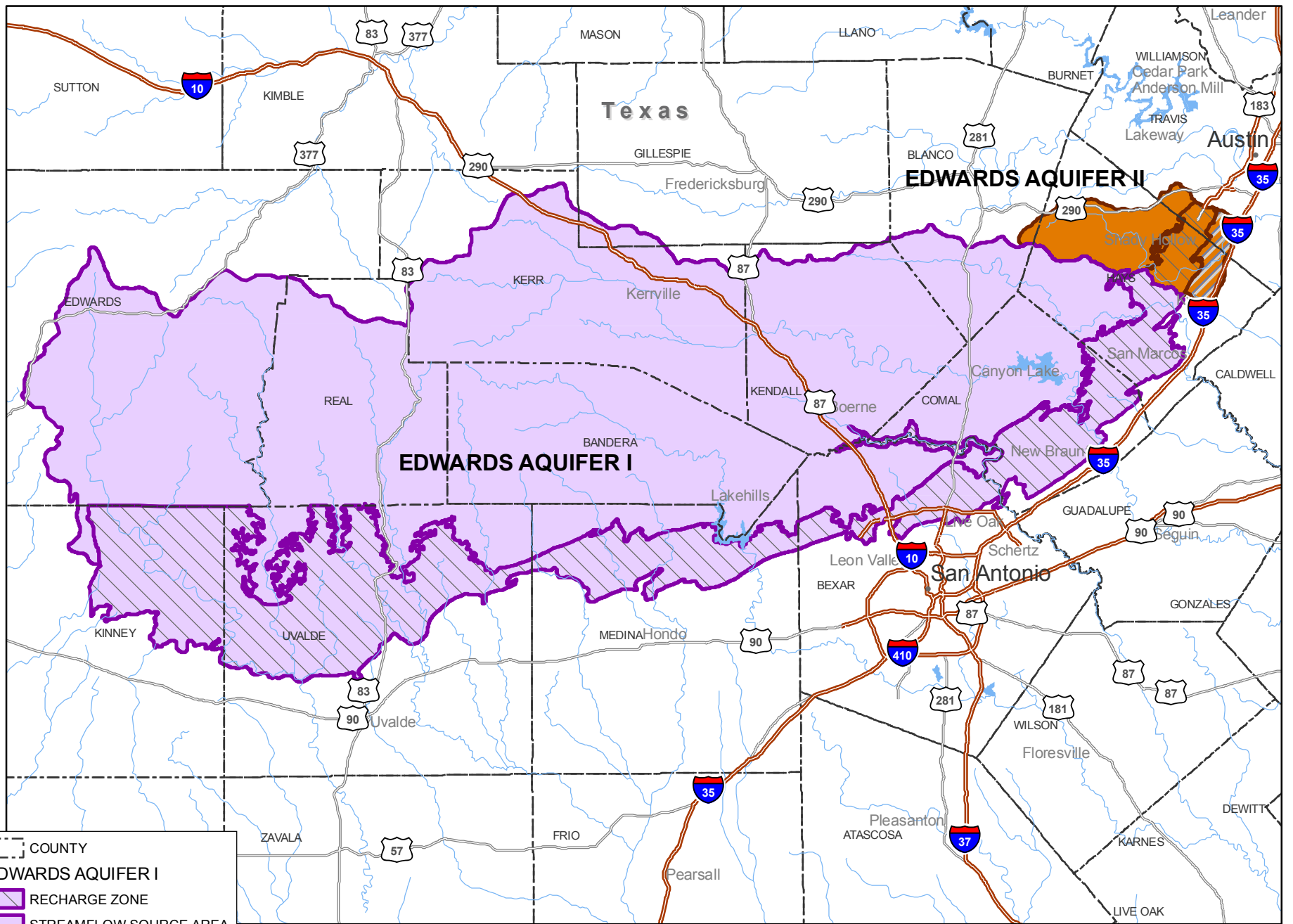
Maps for the SSA areas are attached to determine if proposed projects are within the recharge area. If a project is located in or near the recharge area, a PDF map showing the project location in relation to the SSA boundaries would benefit the environmental report. Maps convey a lot of information in a short time to people reviewing the report.

The SSA issue is limited to only a few counties within Central Texas. Typical Rural Development projects will usually not impact the aquifer, even those located within the recharge zone. The environmental review needs to explain why there is no impact.

For those project located out of the area, simply state this in the report. For projects located in the area and there is no water or air pollutant discharge from the project which could impact the aquifer, simply state this if this is the case. For projects located in the area that do have water or air pollutant discharges, consult with the EPA and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for possible mitigation measures. If mitigation does not satisfy the EPA, the project approval is doubtful.

The TCEQ web page is located here: <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us> . To some degree, they are the state equivalent of the federal EPA.

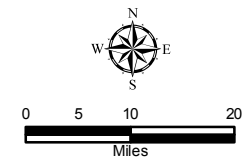




COUNTY
 EDWARDS AQUIFER I
 RECHARGE ZONE
 STREAMFLOW SOURCE AREA
 EDWARDS AQUIFER II
 ARTESIAN ZONE
 RECHARGE ZONE
 STREAMFLOW SOURCE AREA

Sole Source Aquifers

Edwards Aquifer I and II



EPA Region 6
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