

# Shrinking aquifer prompts water reclamation plan

Friday, April 03, 2009

WEST MONROE, LA — This town of 13,000 and other nearby communities have been told that their main water source, the Sparta Aquifer, is being tapped at a rate greater than it is being replenished with rainwater, according to an April 3 Associated Press (AP) [report](#) on KSLA News 12.

The massive aquifer sprawls for hundreds of miles underneath parts of Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas; however, this town and others in the region tap a shallow section of the aquifer. US Geological Survey (USGS) scientists have confirmed that this part of the aquifer is drying up.

Ben McGee, a Ruston, LA-based hydrologist with the USGS, is quoted in the report as saying no one knows when the aquifer will stop producing, or where it could happen first.

West Monroe has proposed reducing the amount of water it pumps from the aquifer and building a \$20 million wastewater reclamation plant that will supply industry, the report said. It notes the plant would be unique to the United States and model two similar systems in Africa.

Mayor Fred Norris said he is hoping for state funding to assist with plant construction costs before saltwater intrusion occurs in that segment of the aquifer or before it dries up.