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## **Sandlot baseball returns to Fort Stockton July 17 to celebrate Comanche Springs revival**

FORT STOCKTON, Texas – Baseball games and water usually mean rainouts, but not this time! On Saturday July 17, teams from Fort Stockton and Marfa will be playing a sandlot baseball game to celebrate the Comanche Springs water restoration effort underway in Fort Stockton.

The 2 p.m. game at Blue Sox Field in Rooney Park – it is free – pits the Spring City Boys against Los Yonke Gallos de Marfa. It is part of a jam-packed weekend of events, including the beloved Water Carnival July 15-17 at the Comanche Springs Swimming Pool.

The game is being organized by the nonprofit group, Texas Water Trade, which is spearheading the Comanche Springs restoration in collaboration with the City of Fort Stockton.

“We’re so excited about bringing more people to Fort Stockton to see all that it has to offer, including the historic bathhouse,” said Texas Water Trade CEO Sharlene Leurig, “and what better way to do that than at the same Water Carnival that drew people to Comanche Springs’ cool, clear waters for generations.”

“This is a great project, and the sandlot game is a wonderful way to celebrate it and get folks excited,” said Fort Stockton Mayor Chris Alexander. “From swimming to tourism to agriculture, restoring Comanche Springs’ flows would be an enormous shot in the arm for Fort Stockton and Pecos County.”

The story of Comanche Springs is known to every student of Texas water law. Once a 30-million gallon a day oasis on the edge of the Chihuahuan Desert, Comanche Springs supported dozens of local farms and a vibrant tourism industry – built around what was then a spring-fed swimming pool. But the springs’ perennial flows ended in the 1950s due to significant groundwater pumping ‘upstream’ from the spring, meaning less water for swimming, tourism and downstream farms.

Over the past decade, however, the once-quiet springs have begun flowing again in the winter months when the aquifer rebounds from summer irrigation pumping – leading Texas Water Trade and others to ask, ‘Could Comanche Springs be permanently restored?’

Texas Water Trade and the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment recently completed a [two-year study](#) on the feasibility of restoring Comanche Springs to perennial flows using voluntary markets. Texas Water Trade is now engaging with landowners and irrigators upstream of the springs

to see if they can be incentivized to temporarily suspend or reduce groundwater pumping to help restore year-round spring flows. Texas Water Trade has significant funds available to incentivize such activities, whether through rotational fallowing, switching to less water-intensive crops or developing replacement wells in an entirely different aquifer.

“We have a phenomenal opportunity and we’ve been floored by the response from Fort Stockton and Pecos County in support of this vision,” said Leurig, speaking to the Fort Stockton Rotary Club in May.

The game is free to attend, and the organizers are happy to have free refreshments on hand courtesy of Rambler Sparkling Water and the Brick Vault Brewery in Marathon.

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