

GBRA RIVER RUN

A publication of the GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY Fall 2011



Experts Refute Alleged Whooping Crane Deaths

M.O.U. Approved



Supporting Prop 2



New Regional Reps

From the GM

Water Management Challenges Continue

This issue of the *River Run Magazine* includes an update on the allegations made by The Aransas Project (TAP) in a lawsuit filed March 10, 2010, that a number of whooping cranes died during the 2008-09 drought because of the failure of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to adequately manage the flow of freshwater into the San Antonio Bay ecosystem.



On Aug.1, 2011, the GBRA submitted reports from experts from all over the country establishing that TAPs allegations were false and that the whooping crane flock is thriving.

The flock has exhibited continued growth over the last seven decades, from a low of 15 individual cranes in Texas in 1941 to record a reported 283 this past winter based on counts by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) staff based at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. The population has grown more in the last decade than in any previous decade and is larger than any time in the past century. It clearly was not set back as claimed during the winter of 2008-09.

Long before TAP came into existence, GBRA, on its own accord and through partnerships with organizations like the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust (GBR Trust) and Ducks Unlimited (DU) led efforts to protect and enhance the habitat of the whooping crane and a multitude of other waterfowl that depend on the San Antonio Bay and Estuary system.

In fact, GBRA recently entered into a formal relationship through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between GBRA, Ducks Unlimited, the GBR Trust and the San Antonio Bay Foundation, which establishes a framework to facilitate cooperative efforts in the conservation of important natural resources of mutual concern associated with the Guadalupe River System. Please see the article on page 7 explaining the goals and objectives of this agreement.

These articles are very important because they provide the context for a serious challenge in the management of water resources in the Guadalupe River Basin. The TAP lawsuit could be the first in a series of attacks on the way Texas manages its water resources.

Some changes could cause the loss of water supply reliability, necessitating the construction of expensive water supply projects. One expert has calculated that the costs could be as much as \$6.7 billion between 2010 and 2060. Power supplies could also be affected.

The MOU and other efforts pull stakeholders together to find solutions that protect the environment and allow for growth and prosperity for our constituents. I urge you to read both of these articles carefully for an understanding of the serious issues we face. We must all work together to address these issues and provide a reliable, sustainable water supply for the natural world and for our citizens.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. E. West, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

W. E. "Bill" West, Jr.
General Manager

Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority

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GBRA River Run

Fall 2011

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Front cover: by Connie Rothe
Back cover photo: by Connie Rothe

GBRA

Introduces Community Representatives

Through internal realignment and establishing and filling a new position, the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) has emphasized its commitment to economic development and community relations throughout its 10-county district.

Earlier this year, Teresa Van Booven, a member of the Water Resources Division, was promoted to the position of project and community representative. Then Thomas “Tommy” Schulte was

hired in August as a regional representative for community and economic development. That position also is within the Water Resources Division.



Teresa VanBooven

Photo by Connie Rothe

is responsible for coordinating and participating in projects for water and wastewater services and new business development; coordinating and implementing property rights and property acquisitions; coordinating customer meetings and customer education; conducting research and securing funding for internal projects; and assisting communities throughout GBRA's Upper Basin with community and economic development projects and activities.

Schulte, who earned his bachelor's degree in political science from Texas A&M University and a master's degree in public administration from Sam Houston State University, resides in GBRA's Lower Basin and maintains an office in Victoria.

In his new position, Schulte generally is responsible for explaining GBRA's operations and policies to constituents,

business and economic development organizations, local governments and community leaders; participating in civic and private community affairs within the Lower Basin; assisting



Tommy Schulte

Photo by Jennifer Schulte

communities throughout GBRA's Lower Basin with community and economic development projects and activities; accessing services from GBRA; and providing support for GBRA operations and new water and wastewater projects.

“GBRA is fortunate to have someone of Teresa's experience and commitment, and her promotion was a natural progression of work she has been doing for this organization,”

David Welsch, GBRA's

executive manager of business development and resource management, said. “We are fortunate to have her in this role of working with our Upper Basin communities because she's already a familiar face who knows how to get things done.”

“Schulte has already hit the ground running, serving as a deft liaison for GBRA,” Welsch said, adding, “With his experience of having worked as a policy fellow in the Houston Mayor's Office and as a director of alumni relations will serve him well as we expect him to quickly strengthen GBRA ties with its Lower Basin communities.”

To reach Van Booven, email her at tvanbooven@gbra.org or call (830) 379-5822. Schulte's office is located at 101 W. Goodwin, Suite 902, Victoria, Texas 77901. He can be reached at tschulte@gbra.org or call (361) 578-5778.

Basin Shorts

GM Speaks on the Panel at Growth Summit

The Austin-San Antonio Corridor Growth Summit, held Sept. 9 in San Marcos, Texas, provided more than 450 attendees with insight into the various infrastructure needs, population movement and explosive development occurring along the Interstate 35 and Highway 130 corridors. Bill West, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority general manager, explained what projects GBRA was considering in order to address the water supply and related infrastructure needs in the region.

Panelists, moderated by Jeff Barton of Doucet and Associates, also included Pete Dwyer of Dwyer Realty, Mike Weaver of Prime Strategies, and Jeff Coddington of Oxford Commercial. Steve Sexton, president of Formula 1 United States Grand Prix, previewed the new Formula 1 track and event venue near Austin and detailed the anticipated economic development the facility would bring to the region.

The *Austin Business Journal* and *San Antonio Business Journal* co-hosted the summit.

Lake Dunlap Dam Repairs Remain on Schedule

After having adjusted the repair schedule to the dam at Lake Dunlap, GBRA's staff instructed contractors to commence making repairs Aug. 14.

Hydroelectric crews planned for a 60 to 90-day calendar of activities and recently said the work remained on schedule. Crews anticipate the work will end by Thursday, Dec. 1.

GBRA Executive Manager Speaks to Rotary

Communities located within GBRA's 10-county statutory district need information about water and wastewater services may contact GBRA for a speaker. Recently, David Welsch, GBRA executive manager for Business Development and Resource Management, addressed a recent meeting of the Port Lavaca Rotary Club.

Welsch was able to share information related to GBRA's current operations and activities not only in Calhoun County, but throughout the Guadalupe River Basin.

To request a GBRA speaker for your organization, contact Cinde Thomas-Jimenez at (830) 379-5822 or email cthomas-jimenez@gbra.org.

Water Resource Manager Participates in LWV-Sponsored Water Forum

Jim Murphy, GBRA's executive manager of Water Resources and Utility Operations recently participated in "Texas Water: What You Should Know," a water forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters of the San Antonio Area.

The day-long forum held in September at San Antonio Water System headquarters brought together water professionals to address the challenges Texans face regarding water resources and adequate planning for future needs.

Experts participating in the forum tackled such difficult issues as preparing for increased demands of water during drought and transferring water from one area to another to balance the use of groundwater and surface water.

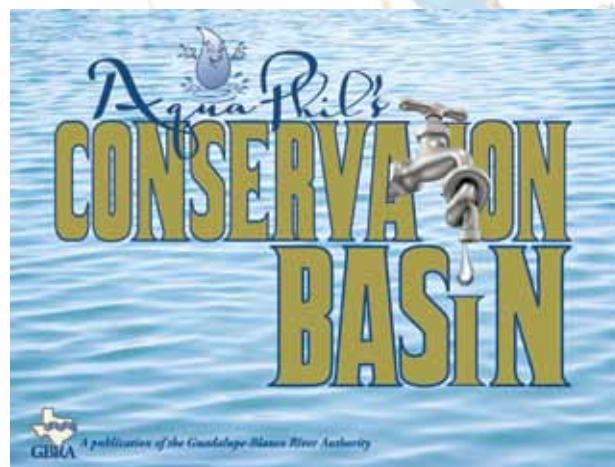
Brochures Offer Conservation Tips

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority recently produced both English and Spanish versions of a brochure designed to help its constituents conserve water.

Aqua Phil's Conservation Basin provides conservation tips for inside the home and around the lawn and garden. The brochure even includes suggestions to minimize fire hazards during drought conditions.

Copies of *Aqua Phil's Conservation Basin* may be obtained through GBRA and are available online.

Scan this QR code with a cell phone using a barcode reader app to access an online copy of the English version.



GBRA Board Adopts Resolution

Supporting Proposition 2

During the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority's Board of Directors meeting in September, the Board voted unanimously in favor of a resolution supporting Proposition 2, which will be on the November ballot.

Proposition 2 is a constitutional amendment that will allow for the issuance of additional general obligation bonds by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) in an amount not to exceed \$6 billion outstanding at any time for water supply, water quality and flood control projects.

"When it comes to preparing adequately for our state's future, Proposition 2 is one of the most important measures to be put on the ballot in a while," Bill West, GBRA general manager said, adding, "Voter support of this significant amendment is crucial."

As the population continues to grow, so does its need for cost-effective water and wastewater infrastructure. The population in Texas is projected to double over the next 50 years while its water supplies decrease. If additional water supplies and infrastructure are not created, Texas businesses and workers could lose an estimated \$115.7 billion in income, and significant job creation potentially jeopardized.

Without the additional bonding authority, the TWDB will not be able to fund loans to communities trying to address their water

infrastructure needs. Since 1957, the legislature and voters have approved constitutional amendments authorizing the TWDB to around \$4.2 billion in bonds for financing water-related projects. Of the amount used, more than \$1 billion has been issued in the past three years. TWDB officials estimate that its existing bond authority will be exhausted two within the next one to

VOTE YES

years. Proposition 2, to be voted on Nov. 8, 2011, will provide TWDB with the necessary constitutional authority to meet the state's water and wastewater infrastructure needs.

Texas' general revenue would not be required to repay these bonds because they are designed to provide a self-supporting loan program. Repayments on the loans will pay for the bonds.

The Water Development Board typically provides loans to political subdivisions such as cities, counties, districts, river authorities, and non-profit water supply corporations. Generally, TWDB often can issue debt at better rates and then lend to community borrowers who benefit from the lower interest rates available on the state's bonds.

With the exception of the cost of the election, supporting Proposition 2 poses no cost to taxpayers.

Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority
Board of Directors Resolution
In Support Of

2011 - Proposition 2

Whereas, the water, wastewater, pipelines and other utility infrastructure in the State of Texas has begun to age and requires repair; and

Whereas, new infrastructure is needed to ensure support for rapidly increasing civilian and business populations; and

Whereas, on November 8, 2011, the citizens of the State of Texas will have an opportunity to consider approving *Proposition 2*, a constitutional amendment that allows for the issuance of additional general obligation bonds by the Texas Water Development Board for the purpose of supporting state infrastructure such as water supply, water quality and flood control projects; and

Whereas, State of Texas general revenue will not be required to repay these bonds, which are designed to provide a self-supporting loan program and the only cost to the State will be the cost of the election; and

Whereas, the Texas Water Development Board will use the bond proceeds to make loans to Texas communities for projects, repairs, improvements and expansions, continuing its ability to partner with local entities on these infrastructure needs; and

Whereas, Texas cities, counties, water districts, river authorities and nonprofit water supply corporations are eligible to use Texas Water Development Board's financial assistance programs and would benefit from the passage of *Proposition 2*.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority by official action of the Board on September 21, 2011, does hereby explicitly support the *Proposition 2* ballot measure for the November 8, 2011 election.

SIGNED AND EXECUTED this 21st day of September 2011.


Grace G. Kunde
Chair of the Board of Directors
of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority

ATTEST:


Arlene N. Marshall
Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Directors
of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority

KIOSK @

the Boerne Public Library



Top Right: Cinde Thomas-Jimenez demonstrates how to use the kiosk.

Left: Boerne City, Patriack Heath Library, officials and citizens attend the kiosk unveiling.

Bottom: Debbie Magin and Cinde Thomas-Jimenez were instrumental in developing the kiosk.



Photos by LaMarriol Smith

Through the installation of a new interactive, watershed kiosk at the Patrick Heath Public Library, Boerne area residents will be able to explore local water sources, geology and watersheds. The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) and the City of Boerne unveiled the kiosk during a ribbon-cutting ceremony in August at the new library, located at 451 North Main Street.

Designed by skilled professionals at GBRA and the City of Boerne, the kiosk displays educational topics by touch screen. Users can explore mini-lessons on a myriad of water subjects, such as watersheds, local geology, the water cycle, groundwater management, wildlife habitat, wells, rainwater harvesting, sustainable practices and the history of the library site.

“Our library is designed to serve as a teaching tool on sustainable building and landscape practices for our region,” said Mayor Mike Schultz. “A partnership on water education with GBRA at our new library is a perfect complement to the ongoing education efforts the city implements with residents. It is very important for all of us to be aware of practical and sound conservation in our semi-arid climate.”

“The kiosks include links to the City of Boerne’s website, Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District, GBRA and numerous other water-related agencies,” said Cinde Thomas-Jimenez, GBRA environmental education administrator. “The more citizens learn about their local water resources, the more likely they are to conserve and protect water. This educational kiosk is a great window to understanding Cibolo Creek, the City of Boerne, and the Guadalupe River.”

Trust Inks Historic Partnership M.O.U.

by Steve Jester

Environmental organizations operating in and around the Guadalupe River Basin recently formed an historic four-way partnership to work together for the conservation of wetlands and wildlife in the Guadalupe River system.

Formed through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), this partnership includes the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust (GBR Trust), the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA), the San Antonio Bay Foundation (SABAY) and Ducks Unlimited (DU), and is evidence of the broad array of supporters who recognize the Guadalupe River as being among the most unique rivers in the country and are committed to protecting the river and its associated habitats.

The agreement was conceived in 2009 when Todd H. Votteler, Ph.D., representing both the GBRA and the GBR Trust met with Scott Yaich, Ph.D., director of conservation operations for DU at Ducks Unlimited's national headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee. The purpose of the discussion was to begin exploring a formal relationship regarding cooperative conservation projects in the Guadalupe River Basin. Calhoun and Refugio counties have been identified as priority wetlands conservation areas in the North American Waterfowl Conservation Plan, a plan that has been a major focus of DU's conservation efforts. After the initial meeting additional steps were taken to explore the possibility of a more formal working relationship, including contacts between DU management and the GBRA Board, and the addition of Todd Merendino, Ph.D., DU's Texas manager for conservation programs, to the GBR Trust Board.

The goal of this MOU is to establish a framework between the participants to facilitate cooperative efforts in the conservation of important natural resources of mutual concern associated with the Guadalupe River system through the establishment of a formal relationship. "This agreement will be a model for cooperation and achievement between international conservation organizations, and local conservation and government entities around the country. I have already heard from other groups that want to create similar partnerships," said Votteler.

With its origins in the Texas Hill Country and its connection to the major springs of the Edwards Aquifer to the delta and bays on

the Texas Coast, the river system supports an astonishing array of unique natural habitats while providing for the needs of people.

"San Antonio Bay is surrounded by priority wetlands. Having an agreement in place with such respected environmental organizations will only help facilitate future conservation projects," said Tommie Streeter-Rhoad, executive director of the San Antonio Bay Foundation.

"Conservation is most effective when supported by diverse partnerships," said Steve Jester, executive director of the Trust. "While each organization in the new agreement has a different focus, each values the water, wetlands and associated habitats of the Guadalupe River system, particularly those found in counties along the Texas coast." Consequently, even though organizational missions and methods may differ, there is broad overlap in desired outcomes of long term conservation of functional wetland and riparian habitats that provide such great benefit to both nature and local communities.

The GBR Trust and DU have already found a way to put this new partnership to work on the ground. A large part of the Trust's work in conserving the resources of the Guadalupe River system involves the use of perpetual conservation easements donated by landowners. Landowners who want to permanently

conserve their property through a donated conservation easement typically incur a number of costs associated with the transaction. Ducks Unlimited has agreed to consider reimbursement for some of these transaction costs for landowners donating a conservation easement to the Trust in areas where DU is actively working on habitat restoration and conservation. Ducks Unlimited in turn will seek to leverage the value of the donated conservation easements as match for grants to restore and

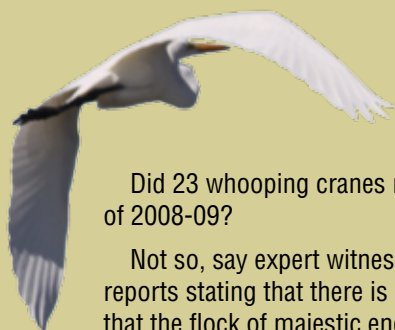
enhance more wetland habitat, ultimately contributing further to the mission of all signatories of the four-party agreement.

"The Trust is looking forward to many more cooperative efforts with DU, GBRA and the Bay Foundation" Jester added.



Photos courtesy Texas Parks and Wildlife

“TAP has it all wrong on alleged whooping crane deaths in 2008-09 — all the information points to the fact that the flock is thriving.” —Bill West



Did 23 whooping cranes really die as a result of the Texas drought of 2008-09?

Not so, say expert witnesses in a federal lawsuit who have filed reports stating that there is no evidence of such a die-off, and that the flock of majestic endangered birds that winters in Texas is actually thriving.

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) submitted the reports from several scientific experts in August in U.S. District Court in Corpus Christi, in response to a lawsuit filed last year by an organization called The Aransas Project (TAP). TAP alleges that Texas violated the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) by not allowing enough fresh water to reach the San Antonio Bay ecosystem on the Texas Gulf Coast, where whooping cranes winter.

Experts Refute Alleged

by Joel Williams

Endangered Species Act Claim

TAP's federal lawsuit alleges that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) violated the "taking" provision of Section 9 of the federal ESA. That provision prohibits a "take," which is any activity that kills or harms a listed species, or that destroys its habitat.

The TAP lawsuit contends that during the drought, a reduced amount of fresh water reaching the coastal marshes caused the salinity to rise so high that the wintering whooping cranes were unable to find sufficient food and water. The suit alleges that those conditions weakened the birds and led to the deaths of 23 whooping cranes. Despite the headlines of articles that spread across the country, only two to four birds are known to have died in Texas that winter, a number consistent with normal winter losses.

The case is set to go to trial on Dec. 2 in U.S. District Court in Corpus Christi. The deadline for dispositive motions, such as a motion for summary judgment, was Sept. 15 and the deadline for challenges to expert testimony was Sept. 30. Parties reported the results of a mediation conference Oct. 12 and discovery ended Oct. 31.



Photo by Janet Thome

A large flock of Whooping Cranes is captured in flight over a wetland landscape. The birds are scattered across the sky, with some in the foreground and others further back. The ground is covered in tall, green and brown grasses, and a small pond is visible in the middle ground. The sky is a clear, light blue. The overall scene is a natural, outdoor setting.

ed Whooping Crane Deaths

Experts, Continued

TAP seeks remedies that include extensive federal intervention in the way Texas manages its water resources.

Kathy Robb, an attorney working on behalf of GBRA on the case, said the lawsuit underscores two emerging legal questions under the Endangered Species Act:

- ◆ What is required to establish “take” under Section 9 of ESA?, and
- ◆ Can state regulators acting under state law, be the proximate cause of “take” under Section 9 of the ESA?

“The sweep of the complaint in *The Aransas Project v. Shaw*, et al, is outside the scope of permissible claims under ESA,” Robb wrote in an article published earlier this year in *The Water Report*. “The remedies sought, if granted, would upend Texas’s water regulatory scheme and profoundly affect the authority of states generally to issue water permits and regulate the use of their water.

“The lawsuit has no scientific basis,” said William “Bill” E. West, Jr., GBRA’s general manager.

“TAP has it all wrong on alleged whooping crane deaths in 2008-09 — all the information points to the fact that the flock is thriving,” he said.

West also said that the effort to provoke a federal takeover of water management in Texas could have dire consequences in the region. Potential consequences include an end to new water permits, imposition of a whooping crane habitat conservation plan, reduced amounts of water diverted from rivers, new rules for timing diversions of existing water rights and possible impacts on management of groundwater from aquifers that contribute to the flow of the Guadalupe River.

Photo by Connie Rothe



Necropsy Evidence

Of the known whooping crane deaths from that winter, the evidence includes two carcasses and fragments of two other birds, noted Dr. Richard Stroud, a veterinary pathologist with more than 40 years' experience, who retired in 2009 after 19 years as the Veterinary Medical Examiner at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) National Wildlife Forensic Laboratory in Oregon.

Stroud's experience includes performing the first two of the 11 known necropsies—medical examinations of animal carcasses to determine cause of death of whooping cranes at the National Lab. Over his career, he has testified as an expert on cause of death in 28 cases involving wildlife mortality of endangered species, mostly on behalf of the USFWS Division of Law Enforcement. Stroud's report stated that:

- ◆ The analysis of the available physical evidence from 2008-09, which is two intact whooping crane carcasses and fragments of two additional carcasses, does not support TAP's contention that the death or injury of any whooping crane in 2008-09 were caused by lack of adequate food or water.
- ◆ Whooping cranes have well-developed salt glands located above their eyes which rid their bodies of excess salt, making them capable of surviving in a salt marsh environment like many other marine adapted species.
- ◆ The most likely cause of death from the evidence is disease or predation or both. (One partial carcass was reported seen in the mouth of an alligator.)
- ◆ Trauma, such as shootings and collisions with structures, weather-related injuries, and exposure to toxins, infectious, bacterial, fungal, and viral disease, including from supplemental feeders providing corn, all are documented causes of crane mortality.
- ◆ Wildfire as the cause of death of animals and birds including the whooping cranes cannot be determined scientifically by merely observing, or in this case, not observing animals or from aerial survey counts.

GBRA's Stewardship

One of the unfortunate outcomes resulting from the filing of this case, explained Todd Votteler, Ph.D., GBRA's executive manager of Intergovernmental Relations and Policy, is that TAP has worked very hard to cast GBRA as 'anti-environmentalists,' when in reality, few other groups or agencies outside of the Fish and Wildlife Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife have done more to ensure the viability of the Aransas-Wood Buffalo whooping crane flock on their wintering grounds than GBRA and its affiliate organization, the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust.

It was GBRA that initiated a multi-year study by Texas A&M on the needs of the whooping cranes that winter at San Antonio Bay. A summary of the findings of that important research can be viewed online at: <http://www.gbra.org/documents/studies/sages/ExecutiveSummary.pdf>.

“The remedies sought, if granted, would upend Texas’ water regulatory scheme and profoundly affect the authority of states generally to issue water permits and regulate the use of their water.” — Kathy Robb

Votteler, who also is executive director *emeritus* of the GBR Trust, said, “Over the past several years, the GBR Trust, supported by GBRA, has acquired several parcels of land that have been placed in conservation easements and ultimately may prove to be added habitat for this ever-growing natural flock,” adding, “GBRA, the GBR Trust, the Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners constructed a 2.25-mile-long water supply canal to a unit of the refuge that benefits migratory waterfowl as well as whooping cranes.”

GBRA also created the San Antonio Bay Foundation, an organization whose mission is to foster and steward the natural resources of the San Antonio Bay estuarine system for optimal benefit of marine life, coastal wildlife and the people who use it for recreation and their livelihoods.

And GBRA's efforts have been continuous, Votteler said, “Most recently, GBRA, the GBR Trust, the San Antonio Bay Foundation and Ducks Unlimited have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on wetland habitat conservation and enhancement with a special emphasis on Calhoun and Refugio counties, which includes all of San Antonio Bay as well as the Guadalupe River Delta.”

Aerial Survey Accuracy

The Aransas-Wood Buffalo whooping crane flock is making its nearly 2,500-mile trek from Wood Buffalo National Park in Alberta, Canada, to the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. And again, the state is experiencing exceptional drought conditions. “Yet, signs indicate the flock is thriving,” West said, adding, “This is why the experts have begun to pay more attention to the official flock counts and the way in which those counts are conducted.”

Another respected biologist, Michael Conroy, Ph.D., who served as a statistician and wildlife biologist at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center established by the USFWS, recognized as one of the premier installations in the world in the area of quantitative ecology, reported that:

Experts, Continued

◆ Estimates of whooping crane mortality from a periodic aerial survey of mostly unmarked birds are not valid, due to uncertainties in data resulting from possible bird movement and failure to detect all birds at each survey.

◆ Individual surveys cannot reliably estimate abundance, due to variations in survey conditions, bird movements, and other factors that are not accounted for in the aerial surveys.

Conroy later worked at the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Georgia in conjunction with the Department of the Interior, and is the author of three books and more than 135 scientific publications, including the standard reference books in the area of applied population modeling, statistical estimation, and adaptive management in natural resource.

He retired after 30 years of federal service in 2009 to become a senior research scientist at the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources at the University of Georgia, and continues collaboration and consultation with the USFWS on statistically valid surveys of endangered species.

Adapting for Drought

Renowned avian ecologist Douglas Slack, Ph.D., who has studied cranes for more than 40 years and is co-author of at least 70 journal and symposium articles in his field, indicated in his report:

◆ The whooping crane is an opportunist omnivore with a broad winter diet in the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge that

includes a variety of foods like snails, insects, blue crabs, worms, clams, wolfberries, and acorns, adapting diet choices to the food available.

◆ The high water content of the cranes' foods may provide all the water cranes need to meet their physiological needs, and it is not clear that cranes actually drink water at all.

◆ None of the expected signs of a flock in poor body condition due to winter food or water shortages, such as delayed winter migration, increased mortalities in the non-winter months and reduced reproductive success, occurred in the months following the 2008-09 winter. On the contrary, the flock had an early spring departure, record low reported mortality in the months following the winter, and near-record nesting levels in 2009. The flock successfully migrated the 2,500 miles to its summer location in Canada at the Wood-Buffalo National Park.

◆ The flock has exhibited exponential growth over the last seven decades, from a low of 15 individuals in Texas in 1941 to record reported 283 this last winter of 2011. The population has grown more in the last decade than in any previous decade. It is larger than any time in the past century. It clearly was not set back, as claimed, during the winter of 2008-09. At least 19 of the 23 reported mortalities of 2008-09 were simply undetected during aerial surveys due to frequent bird movements.

Slack retired in May as Regents Professor, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at Texas A& M University, and has had leadership roles in The Wildlife Society and Audubon Texas, among many other awards and honors.

"GBRA is delighted that the whooping crane population continues to thrive and that the July 2011 U.S. Whooping Crane Coordinator report upgraded the status of the cranes to "stable," West said.

Economic Impacts

Regarding the economic impact of freshwater inflow requirements sought by TAP, David Sunding, Ph.D., Thomas J. Graff, Professor in the College of Natural Resources at the University of California at Berkeley, and co-director of the Berkeley Water Center, explained in his report that:

◆ Instream flow requirements of the sort proposed by TAP would have significant negative economic impacts for the Guadalupe and San Antonio River basin.

◆ The loss of water supply reliability resulting from the proposed instream flow requirements would cause more frequent water shortages and require construction of expensive water supply projects that otherwise would not be needed.

◆ Water shortages and extra water supply costs resulting from the proposed instream flow requirements would cost Texans an estimated \$6.7 billion between 2010 and 2060.

“Over the past several years, the GBR Trust, supported by GBRA, has acquired several parcels of land that have been placed in conservation easements and ultimately may prove to be added habitat for this ever-growing natural flock.” — Todd Votteler

“GBRA is delighted that the whooping crane population continues to thrive and that the July 2011 U.S. Whooping Crane Coordinator report upgraded the status of the cranes to stable.” — Bill West

◆ In the first three decades considered in the model (2010-2040), the largest losses occur in the electricity generating sector. Power generation would become less reliable as cooling water supplies become less reliable under the proposed flow requirements.

Sunding has served on the National Research Council and on the U.S. EPA’s Science Advisory Board and has testified before the U.S. Congress and in litigation regarding the economics of natural resources and the environment.

Brian Perkins, a water resource engineer with HDR Engineering in Austin, focusing on the Guadalupe and San Antonio River basins and other basins in Texas, also reported negative economic consequences of the lawsuit’s proposed remedies. His report indicated:

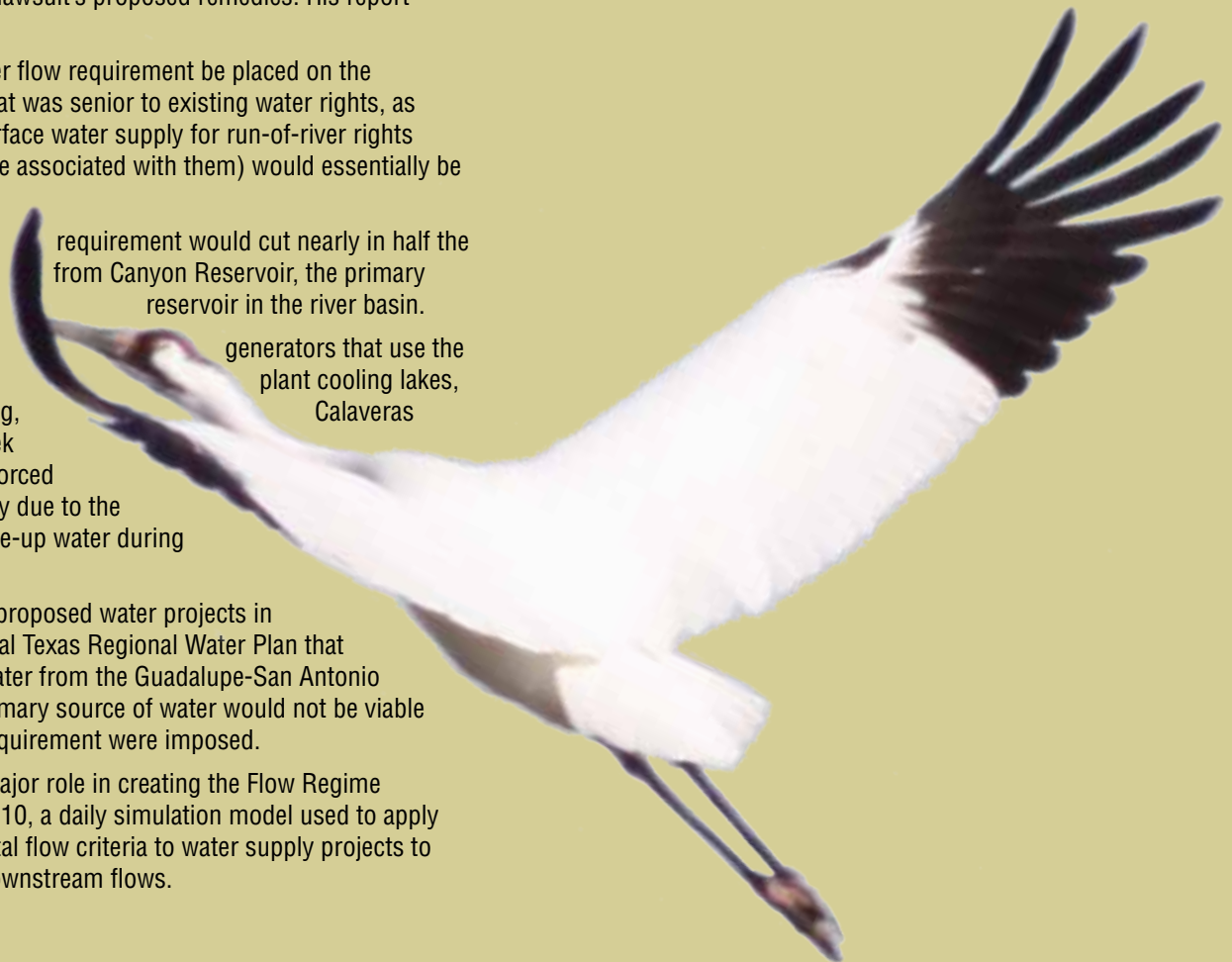
◆ Should a freshwater flow requirement be placed on the Guadalupe estuary that was senior to existing water rights, as requested by TAP, surface water supply for run-of-river rights (those with no storage associated with them) would essentially be zero during droughts.

◆ Such a proposed firm supply of water requirement would cut nearly in half the water supply from Canyon Reservoir, the primary reservoir in the river basin.

◆ Power electric generators that use the three major power plant cooling lakes, including Lake Braunig, Lake, and Coletto Creek Reservoir, would be forced to shut down regularly due to the inability to divert make-up water during extended droughts.

◆ In addition, future proposed water projects in the 2011 South Central Texas Regional Water Plan that depend on surface water from the Guadalupe-San Antonio River basin as the primary source of water would not be viable if such a proposed requirement were imposed.

Perkins played a major role in creating the Flow Regime Application Tool in 2010, a daily simulation model used to apply complex environmental flow criteria to water supply projects to predict supply and downstream flows.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Sally Greear



Today Sally Greear still refuses to slow down, although she retired from GBRA in 2004 with 30 years of dedicated service. Now a conservationist, Greear continues to give back by working for the National Park Service.

In 2009, Greear and her husband, Lee, took on their first assignments as park hosts at Chaco

Canyon Historical National Park in N.M. and Capital Reef Park in Utah. This summer she trained as a ranger at Rocky Mountain National Park in Grand Lake, Colo., Greear also enjoys her second home, a log cabin that she and her husband built near Carson Forrest on the Red River.

Greear was an accounting assistant during her tenure with GBRA, but she volunteered with the Texas Watch Program and monitored local streams and rivers. She also got to know many employees at the divisions. "Seeing other employees at their jobs gives me lots of respect for them and how hard they work," she said. Greear recalls fondly the time when she went from using five- and 10-column ledger paper for accounting to using computers. "It was an exciting time!"

The Greears now alternate their summers between park hosting and traveling with their grandchildren to the Texas coast. Fall and winter months usually are spent in Martindale, gardening, raising cattle and still accounting for a local company. Sometimes old habits are hard to break.

Sally Greear:

Started at GBRA—1974

Retired at GBRA—2004

Phone—(512) 357-2219

Email—lgreear2@gmail.com

In Memoriam: Frederick "Fritz" Schlather

Former GBRA Board Member, Frederick "Fritz" Schlather died July 22, 2011, at the age of 73.

Schlather was born in Cibolo, Texas, graduated from Seguin High School and earned his degree from Southwest Texas State University. He joined the U.S. Air Force and became a commissioned officer until 1965.

Appointed as director to the GBRA board in 1997, Schlather assisted in the installation of early-warning flood gauges along the upper Guadalupe River basin among many other accomplishments during his tenure. In all, he served eight years on the board.

Schlather and his wife Sandy were married and resided in Cibolo. They raised two children, Erick and Liesl, and Schlather began a career as Cibolo State Bank president.

Eventually the bank was sold, and a buffalo named "Samson" who lived on the bank's property would need a new home. Schlather moved the buffalo to his farm with numerous oak trees. Samson became Schlather's most endeared pet and lived to the age of 25.

More than 100 Texas live oak trees exist today at parks, churches and neighborhoods in Cibolo planted by Schlather.

Schlather is survived by his wife, Sandy; son, Erick Schlather and fiancée, Stacie Hill; daughter, Leisl Schlather and husband Karl Kuby III; and his grandchildren.



Photos courtesy GBRA archives



Photos by Liz Sedlacek



Participants Make Splash at Canoe Race

More than 50 participants in 29 boats set off in Gonzales on an adventure paddling down the Guadalupe River from Lake Wood to the U.S. Hwy. 183 bridge in the Come and Take It Canoe Race, which is part of the three-day Come and Take It Festival.

Ultimately, Tommy Yonley turned in the fastest time on the 13.5-mile trek with an hour, 35 minutes and 36 seconds.

In addition to the fastest time, other achievements were recognized from the trip down the Guadalupe. Abby and David Sacket and Gregg and Lindsey Hutchins claimed a trophy for the most trash collected.

The Come and Take it Festival is rooted in historical events. On the morning of Oct. 2, 1835, a cannon blast marked the birth of Texas as a flag with the words "Come and Take It" flew during a fight between Gonzales settlers and Mexican soldiers.



employee anniversaries @ gbra

GBRA recognizes the following employees for the dedication of service. (These employees started with GBRA between the months of May and October.)

May

5/14/2011	Joseph Tschatschula	Port Lavaca WTP	New Hire
5/23/2011	Casey Salinas	Regional Lab	New Hire
5/24/2010	Ernest Luna	San Marcos WTP	1
5/4/2009	Clint Retzloff	Coletto Recreation	2
5/19/2008	Bruce Wasinger	General	3
5/19/2008	Jaynellen Ladd	Water Resources	3
5/19/2008	Joey Kisiah	Port Lavaca WTP	3
5/11/2007	Denise Lyssy	General	4
5/18/2007	Hunter Duncan	Western Canyon	4
5/2/2005	Norma Harvey	General	6
5/12/2003	Cinde Jimenez	General	8
5/1/2001	Yolanda Pierce	General	10
5/19/1987	Michael Urrutia	Water Resources	24
5/31/1983	Alan Zolnosky	Coletto Recreation	28
5/4/1981	Alvin Schuerg	General	30
5/5/1980	James King	Hydro	31
5/2/1978	Joseph Downey	Luling WTP	33
5/10/1976	Thomas Hill	Water Resources	35
5/17/1976	Juan Juarez	Hydro	35

June

6/6/2011	Christopher Harder	Western Canyon	New Hire
6/15/2009	Allen Lawson	Western Canyon	2
6/30/2004	Daphne Harder	General	7

6/2/2003	Tommie Rhoad	Water Resources	8
6/23/2003	Teresa VanBooven	Water Resources	8
6/21/2001	Janet Thome	General	10
6/1/2000	Todd Votteler	General	11
6/7/1999	Tammy Beutnagel	General	12
6/10/1986	Sammy Salas	Luling WTP	25
6/1/1983	Carl Korth	Coletto Reservoir	28
6/27/1977	Jeffrey McKee	Hydro	34
6/25/1973	David Welsch	Water Resources	38

July

7/19/2010	Mellinda Brzozowski	Regional Lab	1
7/27/2009	Donald Carpenter	Luling WTP	2
7/5/2007	Clarissa Frnka	Regional Lab	4
7/5/2006	Timothy Hill	Western Canyon	5
7/28/2003	Lee Gudgell	Water Resources	8
7/2/1984	Allen Ognoskie	Hydro	27
7/2/1982	David Kenda	Hydro	29
7/10/1978	Joel Heideke	RUD	33
7/6/1976	Debbie Magin	Water Resources	35

August

8/1/2011	Thomas Schulte	Water Resources	New Hire
8/23/2010	Richard Valadez	Western Canyon	1
8/17/2009	James Wall	San Marcos WTP	2
8/24/2009	James Irby	Coletto Reservoir	2
8/15/2008	Allan Smith	Buda WWTP	3
8/18/2008	Jeffery Hebert	Western Canyon	3
8/27/2007	Emmylou Roberts	Regional Lab	4
8/5/2002	Josephine Longoria	Regional Lab	9
8/5/2002	Larry Shahan	San Marcos WTP	9
8/18/1975	Richard Maxwell	Hydro	36
8/25/1975	Christy Dietert	General	36

September

9/16/2008	Kylie McNabb	Regional Lab	3
9/28/2001	Gerardo Rodriguez	Water Resources	10
9/1/2000	Brian Lyssy	Regional Lab	11
9/10/1999	Ryan Boedeker	Canal RWSS	12
9/14/1998	Susan Cochran	Water Resources	13
9/2/1992	Jason Eeds	Lockhart WWTP	19
9/15/1992	Ronnie Parenica	Port Lavaca WTP	19
9/3/1991	Stephanie Shelly	Port Lavaca WTP	20
9/1/1988	Eduardo Montana	Lockhart WWTP	23

October

10/12/2009	Gregory Holt	Hydro	2
10/25/2007	Annlee Drazkowski	General	4
10/20/2003	Jose Leal	Lockhart WTP	8
10/1/2001	Barbara Gunn	General	10
10/15/2001	Marella Dalme	General	10
10/10/1998	Dennis Walker	Buda WWTP	13
10/11/1990	Elizabeth Sedlacek	Water Resources	21
10/22/1979	Herbert Wittliff	Calhoun Canal	32
10/8/1973	Ronald Gosnell	Canal RWSS	38

Photos courtesy GBRA archives



David Welsch

The information for the employee anniversary list was compiled by Daphne Harder, Human Resources Department of the Office of Finance and Administration.

GBRA *Training & Licenses*

Allan Smith of Buda WWTP attended Water Laboratory Training.

Dennis Walker of Buda WWTP attended TWUA - Utilities Management - PC0217/CC0550.

Richard Gaona of Calhoun Canal attended the Red Cross Hurricane Conference.

Michael Tompkins of Calhoun Canal attended Fire Hydrants and Valves Training and TWUA Golden Crescent Training.

Herb Wittliff of Calhoun Canal attended the Red Cross Hurricane Conference and National Weather Service Training.

Don Koble of Calhoun County RWSS attended the Red Cross Hurricane Conference and One Call Board of Texas.

Wilfred Korth, Jr., of Coletto Recreation attended BRA Electrical Safety Training.

Clint Retzloff of Coletto Recreation attended GBRA Electrical Safety Training.

Curtis Seiler of Coletto Recreation attended GBRA Electrical Safety Training.

Marlon McAdams of Coletto Reservoir attended GBRA Electrical Safety Training.

Barbara Gunn of General attended the Cox Smith - ADA/Privacy/GINA, the Cox Smith - Harassment and Retaliation Training, and SAHRMA Employment Law Conference.

Daphne Harder of General attended the the Cox Smith - ADA/Privacy/GINA, the Cox Smith - Harassment and Retaliation Training, and SAHRMA Employment Law Conference.

Susan Hubbert of General attended the 2011 TSCPA Energy Conference.

Christopher Lewis of General attended "C" Wastewater License Training.

Yolanda Pierce of General attended Business Writing for Results.

Tammy Beutnagel of General attended the Conference for Women.

Janet Thome of General attended Building Geodatabases Training.

Rodney Voss of Hydro attended the Texas Safety Summit.

Josephine Longoria of Lab attended Water Laboratory Training.

Brian Lyssy of the Lab attended Business Grammar and Proofreading Training and Pesticide Applicator Training.

David Garcia of Port Lavaca WTP attended the Texas Electrician CE Course, the Red Cross Hurricane Conference, and National Weather Service Training.

David Lundin of Port Lavaca WTP attended Fire Hydrants and Valves Training, and the TWUA Golden Crescent Training.

Stephanie Shelly of Port Lavaca WTP attended the Red Cross Hurricane Conference, and Boat Safety Training.

Joseph Tschatschula of Port Lavaca WTP attended TWUA Golden Crescent Training.

Richard Matheaus of Rural Utilities Department attended Utilities Management - PC0217/CC0550, and TRWA - Chlorination Systems and Chemical Handling Training.

Darel Ball of Water Resources attended Texas Water 2011, TWUA Armadillo Country Water Utility Assoc. - SCADA and Control Systems, Eagle Ford Workshop, Haz-Mat Technician Refresher Course, Biosolids, Odor and Corrosion Conference - San Marcos, and TEXPERS Conference - Irving.

Gerardo Rodriguez of Water Resources attended GBRA Electrical Safety Training.

Richard Valadez of Western Canyon attended TRWA - Technology Based Training: Chlorinator Systems and Chemical Handling.

Lowell White of Western Canyon attended "C" Surface License Training.

Architects Selected for ELC Master Plan

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) chose to work with Jackson-McElhane Architects of Austin on the development of an Environmental Learning Center (ELC) master plan, which would be located in Comal County, Texas.

After notice of GBRA's Request for Qualifications (RFQ), 55 firms requested RFQ packets and a total of 14 firms completed and submitted competitive qualifications. From those 14 firms, a review committee invited a total of five firms to make in-person presentations with the final selection ultimately going to Robert Jackson, Michael McElhane and their partners for the project.

In the photo, Robert Jackson of Jackson McElhane Architects gets input from Comal county residents during a meeting at Tye Preston Memorial Library.



Photo by LaMarriol Smith



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Mark Your Calendar

Dec. 2, 2011

TWDB's Basic Floodplain Management Course
The 700 Main Center, Victoria, TX
<http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/wrpi/flood/workshop.asp>

Dec. 3-4, 2011

Thirty-second Annual Budafest
Buda, TX <http://www.budafest.org/>

Dec. 16, 2011

GBRA Board Meeting
River Annex Bldg., Seguin, TX

Jan. 18, 2012

GBRA Board Meeting
River Annex Bldg., Seguin, TX

Feb. 1-3, 2012

Texas Trails Conference
El Tropicano Riverwalk Hotel, San Antonio, TX
<http://www.texastrails.org/>

Feb. 15, 2012

GBRA Board Meeting
River Annex Bldg., Seguin, TX

Mar. 6-9, 2012

TWCA Annual Convention
Sheraton, Dallas, TX
<http://www.twca.org/meetings.html>

Mar. 21, 2012

GBRA Board Meeting
River Annex Bldg., Seguin, TX

Mar. 26-28, 2012

NWRA Federal Water Issues Conference
Washington Court Hotel, Washington, DC
<http://www.nwra.org/events/2012/3/federal-water-issues/>

Whooping Crane at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge

Photo by Connie Rothe

