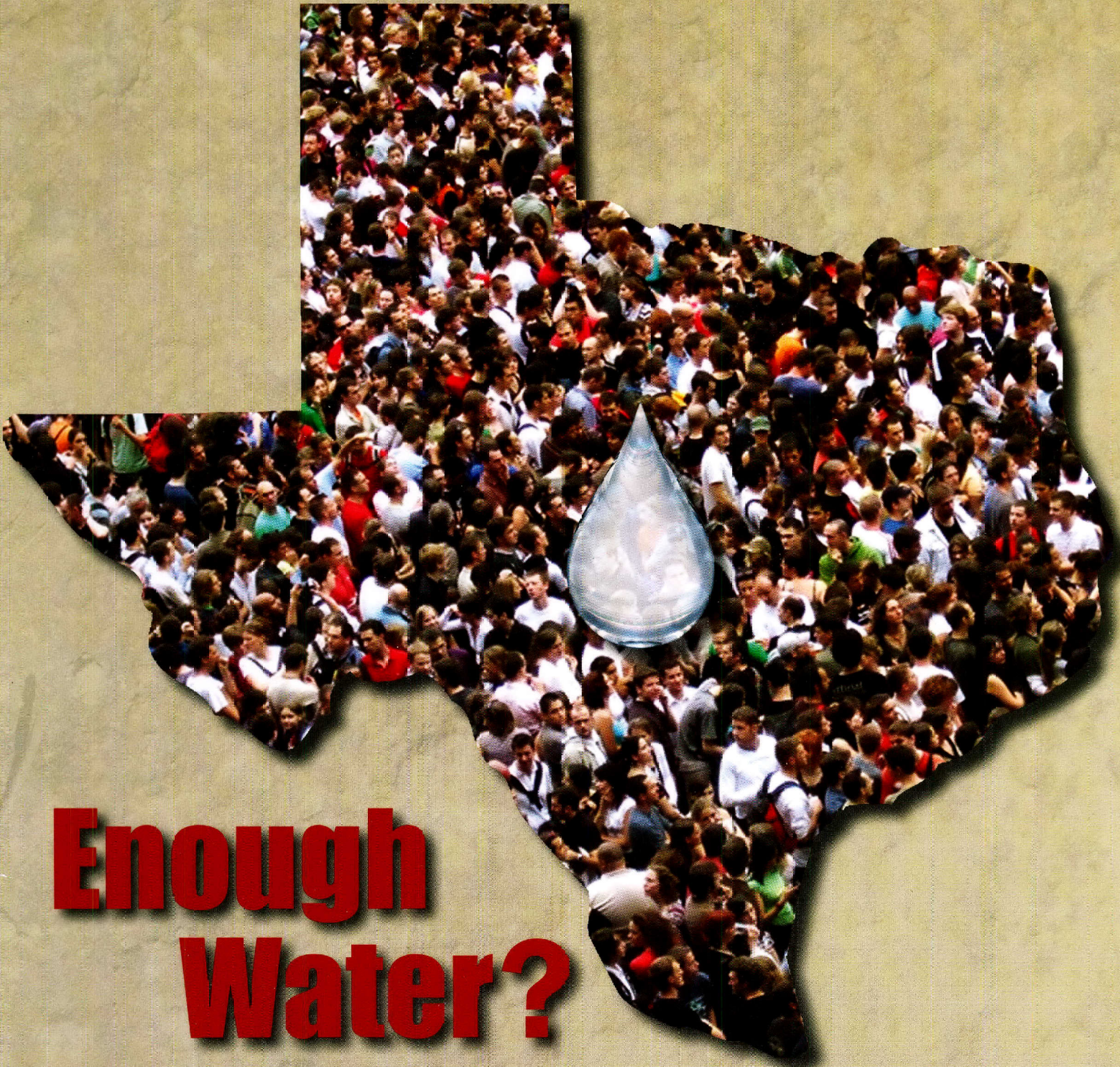


GBRA RIVER RUN

A publication of the GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY Fall 2012



Enough Water?

New E.D. for SABAY



Salt Water Barrier



E-Flows Planning

From the GM

GBRA Eyes a Mid-Basin Project

As the Texas Legislature opens for its 83rd Session in January 2013, the state will be facing many challenges and entities like the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority will be vying for attention from House and Senate members. Tantamount on GBRA's list of issues for the Legislature is that of funding for the state's water plan, and in particular, funding to assist in the realization of GBRA's Mid-Basin Project that will bring new water to the fast-developing region of Hays, Caldwell, Comal, Guadalupe and Gonzales counties.

Bringing GBRA's Mid-Basin Project, which is a recommended strategy in the 2011 South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group's projects in the *State Water Plan*, closer to fruition will help position the region for responsible and sustainable growth. Last December the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) awarded GBRA a \$4.4 million loan from its Water Infrastructure Fund to finance development costs of GBRA's Mid-Basin Project, which could comprise the use of both surface and groundwater. The project is one of two that the TWDB has included in its Legislative Appropriations Request. Now, it is up to the Legislature to approve funding for some projects. In addition to TWDB's commitment to the project, another advantage of the proposed Mid-Basin Project is a fast developing customer base. Potential customers and developers in the region that contains the Interstate Hwy 35 and Texas 130 Toll Road corridors include Walton International, Cherryville, the General Land Office of Texas, the City of Lockhart and others.

With a mission to protect, conserve, reclaim and steward the resources of its district and to provide leadership in regional cooperation, GBRA is constantly looking for ways to meet the needs of its constituents. Looking beyond the Mid-Basin Project, GBRA also is working to make seawater desalination (desal) from the Gulf of Mexico a reality for Texas. Projects that produce higher yields of water, such as desal, are not included among "recommended strategies" in the *State Water Plan*, so development may be scheduled as far off as 2060. While desalinated seawater represents an untapped resource, it currently is not being considered for funding for construction in Texas, GBRA is one of only a few entities that have given desal serious consideration.

This issue of the *GBRA River Run Magazine* explores more about the Legislature's inevitable encounter with how and how much to fund water infrastructure projects that are critical to growth and the state's long-term economic development needs. Please take time to read the article beginning on page 8.



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GBRA River Run

Fall 2012

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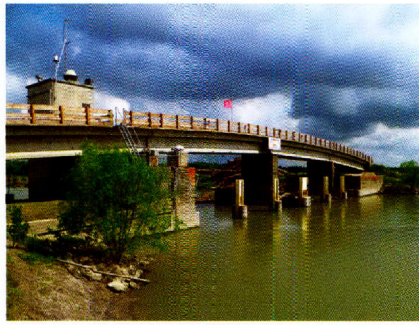
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Front cover: by Connie Rothe

Back cover photo: by LaMarriol Smith

A New Position and Promotions at GBRA

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority recently added a new position and internally promoted several other employees.

Patti Coggins joined GBRA in December as its grant writer/administrator, a newly created position organizationally located within the Office of Communication and Education.



Patti Coggins

Photos by Janet Thome

Coggins, who earned her bachelor of science degree in human science and nutrition from the University of Mississippi, her master of science and doctoral degrees in agriculture and food science from Mississippi State University, works from GBRA's main office in Seguin.

From 2003 to 2011, she was research director and director of Garrison Sensory Evaluation Laboratory at Mississippi State University where her responsibilities included grant writing for federal programs and initiatives in order to support the facility and personnel as well as managing multiple governmental grants.



Leigh Crettenden

In her new position, Coggins will prepare proposals and grant applications, research, identify, develop and procure federal, state, local and private grant and funding opportunities in the areas of civil infrastructure, hydro-engineering, energy, environment, technology and education.

Additionally, she will assist the organization's managers with developing, implementing and maintaining reporting requirements for such grants.

"We are very excited to have Patti and look forward to drawing upon her extensive expertise in grant writing and administration,"

LaMarriol Smith, chief strategic communications and public affairs officer said, adding, "During her tenure at Mississippi State University, she garnered more than \$14 million through her grant writing efforts."

GBRA also recently promoted webmaster Leigh Crettenden to Information Technology

Manager, effective in January 2013. Crettenden, who started with GBRA in March 2006, will take over the IT reigns from Angela Whitley, who is leaving after 15 years with GBRA, having started as a network administrator in November 1997.

Other recent promotions include: Don Koble, who started with GBRA in November 1981. Koble was promoted from senior operator at Calhoun Canal to chief operator at Calhoun Canal, effective in December; Jim Wyatt, who started with GBRA in February 1980, was promoted from electrical instrumentation technician to SCADA administrator, effective in December; hydro maintenance crew member David Maltony, who started with GBRA in April 1995, was promoted to the position of purchasing and inventory coordinator, effective in September; and Kylie Gudgell, who started with GBRA in September 2008, was promoted from laboratory technician III to laboratory analyst I, also effective in September.



Jim Wyatt



David Maltony

San Antonio Bay Foundation Hires New Executive Director

The Board of Directors of the San Antonio Bay Foundation (SABAY) confirmed the appointment of Daniel M. Alonso as the new executive director of the foundation effective Dec. 1, 2012. The San Antonio Bay Foundation was organized July 2008 as a vehicle to protect and steward the resources of San Antonio Bay and its associated estuarine system.

Alonso, who earned his bachelor of science degree in range wildlife management from the Texas A&I University in Kingsville (now Texas A&M University Kingsville), will be responsible for the operation and management of all aspects of the San Antonio Bay Foundation under the direction of its Board of Directors.

Born and raised in San Antonio, Alonso possesses 25 years of natural resource management experience, including work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in Texas as the Refuge Manager of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), in Utah at the Ouray NWR, in Oregon at Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge and in Texas at the Anahuac NWR. His 25 years in the USFWS provides Alonso with a diverse background in forming partnerships, leveraging funds, organizing and planning natural resource projects, working as a community partner and providing environmental education opportunities.

"I am deeply honored to assume the duties of Executive Director of the San Antonio Bay Foundation and working with a multitude of partners in protecting and enhancing the natural resources within its geographic area for the betterment of the resource and benefit of the public and local communities," Alonso said.

Alonso takes the reins of SABAY as Executive Director Tommie Rhoad retired after years of public service with Pedernales Electric Coop, the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and SABAY.

"While we are going to miss Tommie, I am confident that we have recruited a seasoned veteran in Alonso, whose expertise



Photo by Connie Rothe

will further the mission of the SABAY Foundation and engage the constituents in the communities we serve," said Steve Wilson, DVM, chair of the SABAY Board of Directors.

Alonso is an avid outdoors enthusiast who enjoys bay fishing, waterfowl hunting, wildlife photography, and big game hunting. His other hobbies include classic car restoration, and do-it-yourself home improvement projects. He and his spouse of 24 years reside in Rockport, Texas, and have three daughters enrolled in three Texas Universities.

The San Antonio Bay Foundation serves as a vehicle for the protection and preservation of the bay and estuary system at the end of the Guadalupe River Basin. The mission of the SABAY 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.

TPWD Treats Water Hyacinth

In September, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) initiated the 2012 vegetation management program to control water hyacinth at Lake Gonzales (H-4) and Lake Wood (H-5). These treatments are being done to remove excessive vegetation and improve navigation on the lakes. According to John Findeisen of TPWD, prior years of herbicide treatments have proven effective and allowed for the expansion of native aquatic vegetation in these reservoirs, especially Lake Gonzales. These lakes have seen subsequent increases in the relative abundance of sunfish and largemouth bass.

"The lakes will be treated with aquatic herbicide, AquaNeat, whose active ingredient is glyphosate, and is approved for

aquatic use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency," Debbie Magin, GBRA's director of Water Quality Services, said at the time. "It will be used on water hyacinth infesting both lakes Gonzales and Wood. In addition, Lake Wood also was treated with Clearcast, an agent approved for use on lakes used as water supplies."

Treatment proposals were submitted by the TPWD and approved in compliance with the Statewide Vegetation Management Plan. According to Magin, the TPWD Statewide Vegetation Management Plan requires anyone, including TPWD, to submit a treatment proposal before any nuisance vegetation can be treated on waters of the state.

COME AND TAKE

Twenty-six participants in 14 boats recently participated in the Come and Take It Canoe Race, paddling down the Guadalupe River from Lake Wood to the U.S. Hwy. 183 bridge. The race is part of the three-day Come and Take It Festival, which 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.

Race results are provided by class on the following page.



It Canoe Race



Photos by Julie Mathews

Unlimited Class

HR:MIN:SEC

1st	John Baltzell	1:38:54
2nd	Mark Simmons, Gary and Ashley Robinson, John Qualls, Pat Petrisky, Linden Welsh	1:45:55
3rd	Megan, Aoigail, and Norianne Yeager, John Bugge	2:07:38

USCA C1 Class

1st	Joy Emshoff	2:19:34
2nd	Ed Jones	2:21:14
3rd	Richard Crow	2:37:06

USCA C2 Class

1st	Jerry Nunnery, Eric Whicker	1:49:58
2nd	Brian Jonas, Vance Flores	1:59:43
3rd	Mike Smith, Eddie DeLarosa	2:18:16

Solo Unlimited Class

1st	Michael Rendon	1:44:05
2nd	Gary Kohut	1:59:19

Women's Unlimited Class

1st	Erin Magee	1:54:08
2nd	Brenda Jones	2:31:43

Recreational Class

1st	Craig Woodman, Melanie Grabowske	4:03:00
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Dornak

Gets Active in Plum Creek

Introduced in the last issue of the GBRA River Run, Nick Dornak, the new watershed coordinator for Plum Creek, has been busy with a variety of activities affecting the Plum Creek Watershed.

For starters, Plum Creek watershed stakeholders are getting a healthy dose of feral hog management education via the Hog Out County Grants Program. The desire is to help prevent the more than \$52 million in agricultural losses that feral hogs cause annually in the State of Texas. Feral hogs have also been identified as a potential source of E. coli found in Plum Creek which is monitored extensively throughout the watershed. Through efforts of the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership, Hays and Caldwell County Commissioners, local businesses, volunteer groups and landowners, more than 800 feral hogs were removed from the watershed and more than 100 individuals received at least an hour of feral hog management training from October through December 2012.

Dornak also has been working to provide financial and technical assistance to members of the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership, including cities, farmers and ranchers in the Plum Creek watershed. His efforts have included assisting in the pursuit of funds through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program administered by Texas Water Development Board to address failing septic systems in Hays County, the Capitol Area Council of Governments Solid Waste Grant Program to fund community collection events in Caldwell County, and coordinating countywide efforts for the Hog Out County Grants Program. He also has applied for a Clean Water Act, Section 319 grant for the development of a Plum Creek Riparian Cooperative

to enhance stakeholder knowledge of riparian ecosystems and encourage participation in best management practices that have been identified in the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan. Dornak served as co-coordinator for the 5th Annual Keep Lockhart Beautiful, a Plum Creek Cleanup that brought 300 volunteers together on Sept. 22, 2012 to clean several city parks and waterways. Additionally, Dornak has given dozens of presentations to schools and organizations throughout the watershed since taking on his position in March 2012.

Dornak, a Goliad, TX, native earned his bachelor of science degree in Agricultural Development from Texas A&M University and his master of science degree in Rangeland Ecology and Watershed Management from the University of Wyoming.



Photo by Liz Sedlacek



Photo by LaMarriol Smith

GM Moderates Water Forum

GBRA General Manager served as moderator for Greater Boerne Water Forum in September at the Boerne Convention and Community Center.

Panelists participating in the forum included Rep. Doug Miller, Rep. Allen Ritter, Steve Clouse and Ed Vaughn. The theme of the forum was "Perspectives from the State Capitol and Regional water Experts."

Work Plan for the Texas Instream Flow Program Progresses



by **Debbie Magin**

How much water do Texas rivers and streams need? In response to that question, Senate Bill 2 (SB2) was passed in 2001. The legislation directed the state “to conduct studies and analyses to determine appropriate methodologies for determining flow conditions in the state’s rivers and streams necessary to support a sound ecological environment.” The agencies assigned these tasks were the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). In response to the directives in SB2 the three agencies developed the Texas Instream Flow Program (TIFP). In 2005 the National Academies of Science reviewed the TIFP and found that it conforms to best scientific practices and will provide “enormous benefits to the state.”

Achieving the goal of the legislation to determine flows that will support healthy aquatic communities requires a multidisciplinary approach. The TIFP looks at water quality, hydrology and hydraulics, biology, connectivity to the riparian environment and the physical processes at work in the streams. To maintain a sound ecological environment within a stream requires not one flow but a “flow regime.” Flow components such as pulse flows that move detritus, overbank flows that bring in nutrients, subsistence flows that can support the aquatic community during times of drought, along with base flows, are needed to provide a healthy aquatic environment. For each river basin or sub-basin, TIFP conducts site specific studies in order to determine flow-ecology relationships for each of these flow regime components. Since 2007, studies are ongoing in the Lower San Antonio and Middle and Lower Brazos River sub-basins.

Over the next three years, the state agencies, along with GBRA, will conduct the TIFP study of the lower Guadalupe River. The study process includes data collection and evaluation, both of current data measured in the streams as well as the historical data collected by other scientific efforts, such as the Clean Rivers Program and the U.S. Geologic Survey. Along the way, stakeholders in the Guadalupe River Basin will have multiple opportunities to help develop the goals of the study, review the findings and inquire about what is being done on their river. The first two public meetings will be held in January 2013. The process

will include peer review by other knowledgeable scientists that work in the fields of aquatic biology, hydrology and geomorphology.

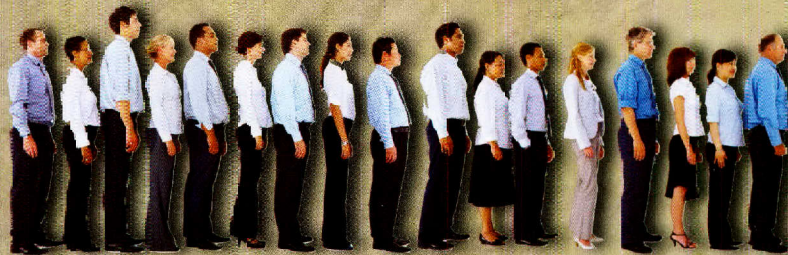
The timing of the SB2 TIFP study of the lower Guadalupe River is right. In 2007, Senate Bill 3 (SB3) was passed and formally established the Environmental Flow Allocation Process, a process to rapidly determine the amount of flow necessary to provide for a sound ecological environment in the streams and bays and estuaries.

The SB3 process relied on the best available science to make recommendations, but includes an adaptive management process to refine environmental standards as additional studies are completed or conditions change. The SB3 process for the Guadalupe/San Antonio and Mission/Aransas Rivers was completed in 2012 and the stakeholders who represented industries, municipalities, environmental interest groups, river authorities, agriculture and both commercial and recreational fishing, have provided TCEQ with recommended flow regimes for both instream and inflow into San Antonio Bay. The stakeholders also identified a work plan of studies and projects that are needed to reevaluate and adapt the flow needs as the basins change with time. The top priority in that work plan is the completion of the TIFP study on the Guadalupe River.

The TIFP on the lower Guadalupe River will get started in early 2013, with several public meetings. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to help set the goals of the study. Preliminary work has already begun to gather baseline fish data, sample sediments, evaluate riparian areas, and develop water quality models. Work has already been completed to evaluate historical fish data for trends, look at floodplain lake formation and dynamics, segment the river based on geomorphic characteristics, determine habitat requirements of Golden Orb and review literature describing previous work that has been completed in the basin, all of which will be used to develop an instream flow study design specific to the Lower Guadalupe River Basin.

2013 Texas Legis faces water drama

by Barbara Elmore



Old West movies often depict leathery cowboys crossing barren plains, hoarding water in their canteens for a long journey and scrapping for the last drop if the canteen feels light.

Today's water battles bear a striking resemblance. Substitute vast numbers of people for the cowboys, shrinking reservoirs and aging pipes for the canteens, and the picture facing Texas legislators as they convene in 2013 comes into sharp, dry focus.

Some lawmakers are writing a script that shows the state investing unknown amounts to keep the water flowing.

Republican House Speaker Joe Straus of San Antonio, for example, calls the need for legislative attention "critical" as he travels around the state to talk up water. What form that attention will take is unknown, as a method for funding projects does not yet exist and the battle ahead appears to be difficult and protracted.

Complexities of water

Texas water issues are complex. Within the state's vast borders, water supplies in some areas are robust, while others are near-crisis. Some areas have large reservoirs that enable them to sell water to water-poor neighbors. Some municipalities depend on wells and implement strict conservation measures when rainfall is low and the water table drops. Other locales ask for voluntary conservation.

Competing budget interests—education, health care, transportation, immigration—also are vying for legislative attention.

Complicating the water picture is the drought of 2011, which climatologists agree was the worst one-year drought since 1895. A 1954-1956 drought occurred too long ago for many people to remember, but state leaders' actions to fix water problems afterward, such as construction of reservoirs, were responsible for a healthy water supply that allowed the state

slature

of epic proportions



to grow into an economic and agricultural force. The increasing population that star status attracts is a problem, however, especially when combined with the 2011 drought, which cost \$7.62 billion in agriculture losses alone.

“The drought last year—even though we are climbing out of it—the severity of it has a lot of people’s attention,” Carolyn Brittin of the Texas Water Development Board, said recently. “The economic engine of the state is also paying attention.”

The TWDB manages the state’s water planning process and offers financial assistance programs to help fund projects. Brittin is its deputy executive administrator.

The economic engine she mentioned includes other states competing for industry by

comparing their plentiful water supplies with Texas’ diminished reservoirs. “People understand the problem—verification is coming from other states around the country,” said Rep. Doug Miller, R-New Braunfels. The state of Wisconsin, which has water aplenty, airs advertisements showing its brimming lakes side-by-side with Texas’ Lake Medina, which is only 13 percent full. “They say, ‘Do you want to go to Texas?’ It’s an economic, competitive factor.”

These are the backdrops for the drama that Texas legislators will be starring in come January.

Setting the state legislature’s table

Although the issue is as big and diverse as the Lone Star State, water planners on the regional level have offered legislators a course of action. It is called the 2012 State Water Plan, and its introduction is blunt: “In serious drought conditions, Texas does not and will not have enough water to meet the needs of its people, its businesses, and its agricultural enterprises.” It then offers conservation and water management strategies necessary to meet needs.

Taken as a whole, the water plan’s price tag is a steep \$53 billion dollars. Although the cost complicates discussions,

the TWDB is making proposals to the legislature that require smaller amounts of financing.

“In serious drought conditions, Texas does not and will not have enough water to meet the needs of its people, its businesses, and its agricultural enterprises.”

The TWDB was created after the 1954-1956 Texas drought with a mandate to plan for the state’s water supply. In 1997, after another drought, Texas changed its method of water planning. The legislature created a bottom-up process, where 16 state groups make decisions about regional water needs. The last three state water plans are products of this process.

However, all planning stops at the plans because the state has balked at the expense and because of the philosophy of some legislators against incurring more debt. Every legislative proposal to finance water projects has failed thus far. For example, a tap fee

Water Drama of Epic Prop

that originated in the House years ago, which would have charged home and business owners annual fees for water, never got out of the House, said Rep. Alan Ritter, R-Nederland, chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, speaking at a public water forum hosted by the Texas Tribune, a nonprofit media organization.

Now planners and legislators are pinning their hopes on the 2013 legislative session to tackle some of the \$53 billion in projects in the 2012 Water Plan. "Regional entities are asking for about \$27 billion in assistance," Brittin said. She stresses that no one is asking for the state to pay for \$27 billion in projects. "They are asking for interest subsidies for which the local entities would pay back the whole of the capital and most of the interest."

Projects requiring TWDB help sometimes work this way: A city, county, or river authority unable to absorb the full debt of a project may apply for water project funds through a State Participation Program. This program gives the TWDB temporary ownership interest in the project by assuming most of the debt. TWDB must obtain legislative approval before issuing the bonds. If a project is approved, the entities move ahead and repay the debt on a deferred timetable,

“ But we cannot solve this problem with conservation only or reallocation of agriculture supplies to municipal areas. ”

The TWDB has approved a \$4.4 million loan for a GBRA feasibility study to identify surface and groundwater supplies and transmission delivery options. That proposal awaits legislative approval before going forward.

Population pressures and funding

The 2012 State Water Plan noted that the population of Texas increased more than 20 percent between 2000 and 2010. That growth was not distributed evenly. For example, although some of the state's 254 counties have less population now than they did in 2000, others have grown more than 80 percent.

Sudden growth is a challenge for any entity that serves the public. Because almost 55 percent of Texans rely on groundwater for drinking, droughts

like the last one are a big concern, especially since the drought continues to affect the largest population areas even today. For example, the Edwards Aquifer, which comprises about 95 percent of San Antonio's drinking water, fell to a level at its J-17 well of about 648 feet in mid-November 2012. The long-term average elevation of J-17 is 654 feet.



and no project has ever defaulted on its state-backed loan. The last funding the legislature appropriated and authorized for State Participation was \$225,050,000 in 2010-2011.

A recent big project to use the State Participation Program was a 101-mile pipeline built right after the 1996 drought and opened in 1998. It is called the Mary Rhodes Pipeline and it delivers water from Lake Texana near Edna to Corpus Christi, which is the largest customer for the water. The project brought together the federal and state governments to finance construction. It cost \$127 million, and the TWDB still has \$47,800,000 loans outstanding to the Lavaca-Navidad River Authority.

One of the projects the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority is hoping will move onto the legislative table in 2013 is its Mid-Basin Project, which would provide water for a growing population in Hays, Caldwell, Comal, Guadalupe and Kendall counties. The capital cost would be \$547 million, but people who use the water would pay off the loan when water supplies go online.

Although lawmakers have not yet reached consensus on how to pay for water or even what the state's role should be, they did put Proposition 2 before voters in November 2011. Voters approved it, allowing the TWDB to issue additional bonds for water improvements as long as no more than \$6 billion are outstanding at any one time.

Legislators need to discuss what the approval of Proposition 2 means for future water projects, said William E. West, Jr., general manager of the GBRA. "They need to talk about how many projects in the plan qualify for Proposition 2. Some legislators believe that only those projects with immediate payback and nothing at risk should be funded." That philosophy poses an equity problem for some parts of the state, he noted. Big cities with dense population can finance projects on their own, while rural areas cannot.

Portions

What might happen

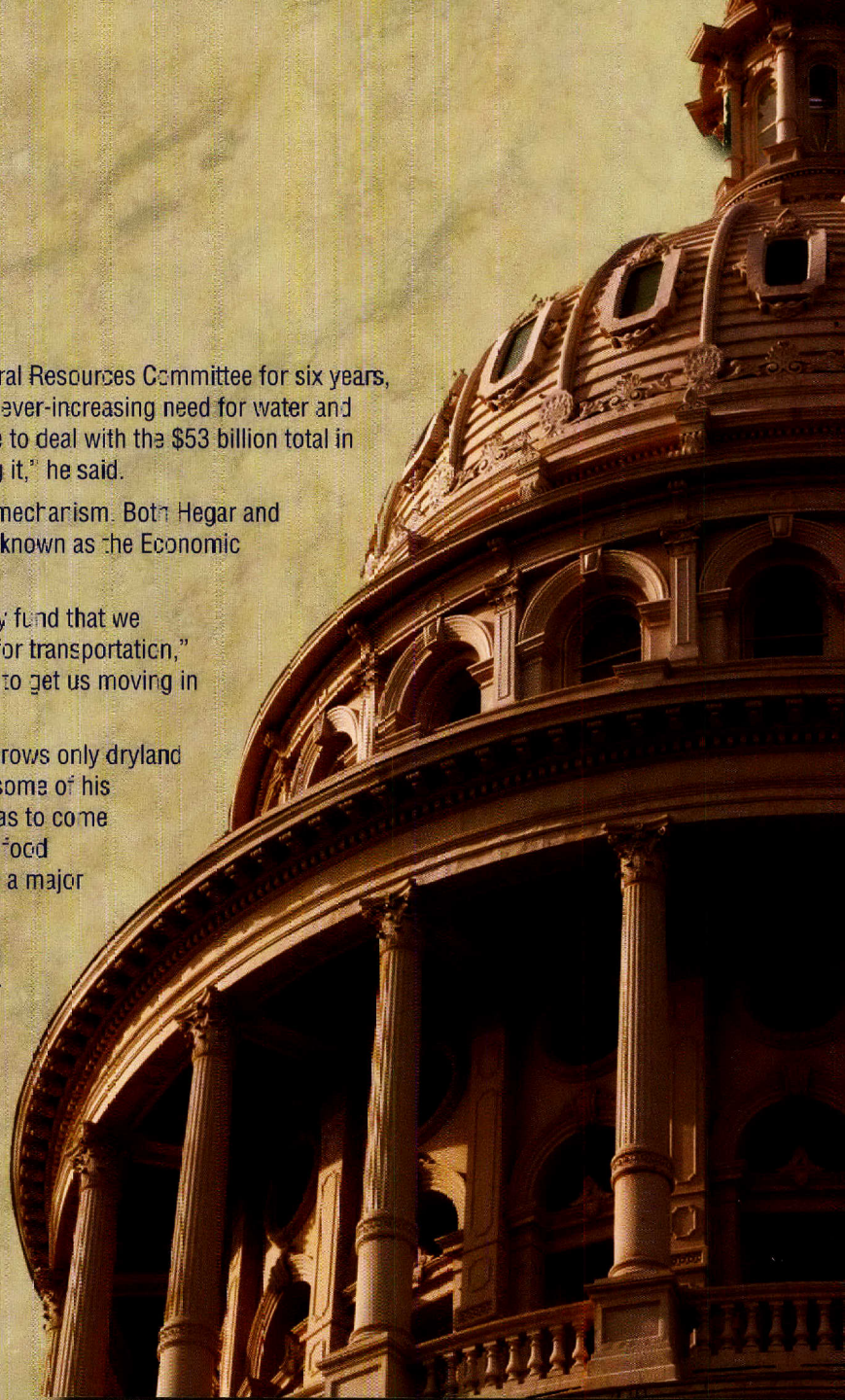
Sen. Glenn Hegar, R-Katy, who has been on the Senate Natural Resources Committee for six years, said the drought of 2011 brings a heightened realization of an ever-increasing need for water and water infrastructure. He also noted that legislators do not have to deal with the \$53 billion total in the water plan all at once. "But we must get started on funding it," he said.

The question is how to get everyone to agree on a funding mechanism. Both Hegar and Miller mention the state's \$8.1 billion rainy day fund, formally known as the Economic Stabilization Fund.

"I believe we have been blessed with an increasing rainy day fund that we would be wise to use for infrastructure funding for water and for transportation," Hegar said. "That's not the sole solution—that is just to begin to get us moving in that direction."

Hegar, who once grew rice on his farm north of Katy, now grows only dryland crops. The farm gives him insight into state water needs that some of his urban colleagues may not have. "We all like to eat, and food has to come from somewhere. It's much better to have a strong and stable food supply within our country than outside of it. And agriculture is a major economic driver for the state."

Conservation is important too, he noted, adding that battles still exist between urban areas and agricultural regions. A win-lose water plan, where a city wins at the price of a rural area, or vice-versa, makes everyone losers in the end, he adds.



Miller, a four-year member of the House Natural Resources Committee, said he hopes for enough "residual memory" of the 2011 drought to allow for legislation that will develop a funding stream instead of a one-time appropriation. He also sees a connection between water and electricity. "There is a great nexus between those two; in the production of power, you need water. In the end use of electricity, you will be using water. Texans can't do without either, and tying those two together is a logical avenue to research."

If the problem is not fixed, leaders warned that the economic engine of Texas will stall. "We know the state has big issues of balancing the budget, and there is health care and education," West said. "But we cannot solve this problem with conservation only or reallocation of agriculture supplies to municipal areas. The powers that be recognize the need for the state to step up, but what does that mean? What components of the water plan warrant the state's assistance? All special efforts to raise money so far have failed."

Still, he remains optimistic that some projects will be approved. "What that funding is, what is the mechanism, and how many projects, is the focus. We need visionary projects, because all the easy ones have been done. With a legislature that meets only every two years, we need action this session."

HOLD THE SALT

by Barbara Elmore

Drought requires return of rarely seen barrier on Guadalupe River



Photo by Charlie Hickman

A barrier that once was a rare sight at the confluence of the Guadalupe and San Antonio rivers near the tiny South Texas community of Tivoli has appeared with more frequency since 2009—one more result of the historic drought that has gripped the state.

To picture the barrier, imagine two banana-shaped balloons in the river, side-by-side, made of heavy-duty rubber like the tires on a car. Although boaters and landowners might do a double-take at the sight, those who depend on the Guadalupe River for drinking, irrigation, aquaculture, business, or other purposes can take comfort knowing that the odd-looking structure is protecting fresh water from the corrosive salt water of San Antonio Bay.

Although the barrier is more than 45 years old, people often forget about it because of its less-than-constant presence. When not in use, it sits on the river bed, deflated. During times of normal or high river flow, it could sit idle for months or years.

Landowners and boaters have spotted it more often lately as low river flow requires its presence to raise the river above sea level to keep higher seawater from creeping into lower river water.

“Salt water intrusion into the Guadalupe is rare,” said Herb Wittliff, plant manager at GBRA’s Port Lavaca Water Treatment Plant. “River flows have to get down to zilch for salt water to invade the river.” However, low flows occurred often in 2009, 2011, and 2012.

GBRA, which holds senior water rights in the area, built the Lower Guadalupe Diversion Dam and Salt Water Barrier in 1965 to maintain fresh water supplies after the severe drought of the 1950s. The balloons, originally made by tire maker Firestone with a replacement made by Bridgestone, have performed perfectly over the years, Wittliff said, allowing GBRA to ensure good water quality for the City of Port Lavaca and other users.

The balloons’ permanent home is the floor of the Guadalupe River about 10 miles upstream from its mouth at San Antonio Bay. During times of average rainfall, when the river is percolating, they are out of sight to anything but fish. But when the river elevation drops, the barrier rises to elevate the Guadalupe between 1 to 2 feet at the point of diversion to keep it above brackish San Antonio Bay.

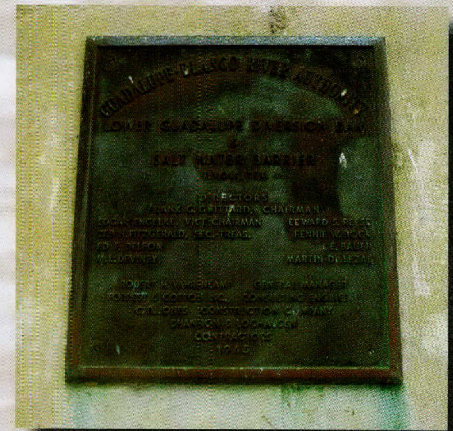
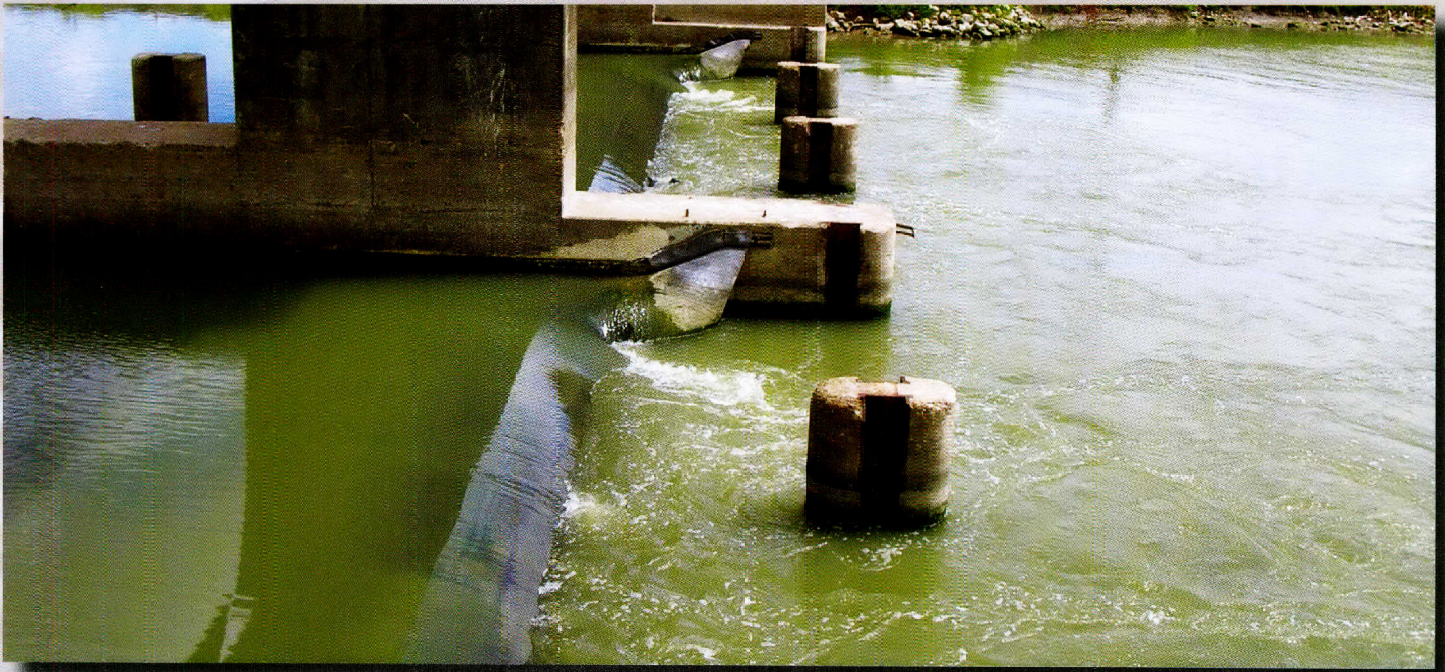


Photo by Charlie Hickman

Photos by Bryan Serold

Wittliff emphasized the amount—about a foot and a half of water—because some landowners believe the barrier is responsible for river flooding on their land. The criticism is unfounded, said Wittliff and Bryan Serold, operations manager for GBRA's Lower Basin.

"It's important that we are talking about a foot and a half," said Wittliff. "During flood times, the barrier is inoperative and in times of low flow, there is no flooding of land." GBRA diverts a small amount of water when the river rises, but most of the river water continues on a path to the bay.

The Guadalupe does indeed overflow its banks during times of heavy rainfall, inundating land that Serold called "as flat as a pool table." That's nature taking its course, however. "When the river is high enough to flood, there are natural cuts where it flows across the country," Serold said. During flooding, the barrier bags are out of the picture. Nor does the middle support cause water to overflow, he added, because water flows over it.

The massive structure draws attention both because of its sporadic appearance and its size. Most of the barrier, which

measures 10 feet in diameter and 50 feet in length, is underwater. The center bulkhead provides support, with the force of the dam concentrated there. This pier is essential to successful operation. "Without it, the span would be too wide for the bags to do their job," said Wittliff.

"When we want to activate the bags, we pump water out of the river into the bags and they swell up and create the dam. If the barriers are up and the river floods, they deflate."

Because of boating and other river pursuits, GBRA workers try to alert people when they inflate the barrier. "Some years you forget it's there," Wittliff said. "When it comes back into operation, we issue a press release."

Even during drought, the barrier helps keep the taps open for water customers, including 15,000 people in Calhoun County. The City of Fort Lavaca, which relied on deteriorating groundwater before GBRA stepped in, would not have a secure water source otherwise, Wittliff said. "If we got into a drought like the 1950s, we could not supply them water without the barrier."

Partnership Delivers Information to Streamside Landowners

by Steve Jester



Photo by Janet Thome

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust has been working to develop relationships with local soil and water conservation districts (SWCD) in the middle and lower Guadalupe River basin over the last eight months with the specific goal of cooperatively delivering riparian zone function information to streamside landowners.

SWCDs are locally governed, landowner operated subdivisions of state government typically organized along county lines with the mission to create interest and action in the application of soil and water conservation and resource management and to provide leadership in the conservation field to citizens of the District. This mission is in close alignment with the mission of the GBR Trust, which is to preserve the unique natural heritage of the Guadalupe watershed for future generations, by protecting open landscapes, working farms and ranches, and wildlife habitat through conservation easements, education, and outreach that connects people to the water and the land.

The GBR Trust has met with the local governing boards of five soil and water conservation districts so far and is seeking to meet with several more over the next few months in the middle and lower basin. These locally elected boards have been receptive to the idea of forming partnerships to deliver information to streamside landowners, and so far three workshops have been held. While the effort is taking a break over the winter, several more workshops are in the planning stage for spring 2013. Additionally, the GBR Trust was asked to present information on the organization to two SWCD award banquets in October where 75-80 local landowners and conservation leaders were in attendance. For a number of the attendees these events served as an introduction to the GBR Trust and its mission.

The riparian workshops have also been well received by attending landowners and resource agency staff. While many landowners have creek or river frontage that is very important to them, many were hearing for the first time how the soil, water,

vegetation and landform influences how these areas function on the landscape. The workshops stress understanding and concepts as opposed to proposing specific management practices or recommendations.

The GBR Trust is committed to continuing this series of workshops, in partnership with SWCDs or other resource management organizations, over the next twelve to eighteen months. The workshops are free to attendees and include a classroom session, lunch and a field trip to a streamside area. Check the GBR Trust website or contact the GBR Trust at 830-379-5822 to learn more.

How Does the Trust Work?

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust works to accomplish its conservation mission in the following ways.

- **Land Conservation** – The GBR Trust holds conservation easements which are voluntary restrictions on development and subdivision that a landowner can place on their property deed to conserve working farms and ranches, important wildlife habitat and open space. Conservation easement donors may also qualify for certain income tax advantages. The GBR Trust also owns a small amount of property outright. Its current portfolio of conserved land includes 9,400 acres of conservation easements and 800 acres of owned land.
- **Landowner Outreach** – The GBR Trust conducts landowner outreach within the basin to deliver information on conservation tools and techniques as well as providing information on other topics of conservation concern. The GBR Trust typically interacts with several hundred people each year through presentations, meetings, workshops and other events.
- **Partnerships** – The GBR Trust is also engaged with a number of local, regional, statewide and national conservation partners to work together on conservation projects including land restoration, land conservation and outreach. Partners include both public agencies and other nonprofit organizations such as Ducks Unlimited. These partnerships range from informal working relationships to formal, signed agreements.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Charles Durst

Durst remembers “spilling water” while on the night shift at Lake McQueeney. He was working the shift alone, as crewmen usually do, when he heard the familiar rushing of the river outside, flowing furiously over the dam. But this time a loud crash followed. It made Durst jump, but he told himself it was just a traveling log caught up against the side of the dam. He then remembers a story he was told about the ghost of a man that travels the river at night.



Photo by Connie Rothe

“I do not miss being at ‘the hole’ especially when it was thundering and lightning,” Durst said. “The hole” was the post where crewmen manually operated the dam gate valves to control water flow and was only a 3-foot by 5-foot building, without heating or air conditioning. It was also the only thing that separated the crewman on duty from the fierce weather and river only yards away.

Today, Durst smiles and says the ghost stories about things that went bump in the night at the hydro lakes were passed between new and old crewmen, and probably are still in circulation today.

Durst was hired as a hydro crewman in 1981 for GBRA. He was told he would work 12-hour shifts, need to know how to swim, learn to “spill” water, perform maintenance at the hydroelectric dams built in the 1930s, and operate spill gates in all types of weather imaginable.

“Some people think this is an easy job, but not just anybody can do it,” said Durst. “You have to have a strong mind to ‘spill’ water for 12 hours a day.”

He also admits that hydro work can be difficult and hazardous, especially during a flood when lake capacities double or even triple, and large objects such as boats and tree trunks travel between the lakes and over the dams.

Durst retired in 2009 but keeps busy doing handy man work at his church, The Bethel Pentecostal, and for friends and family and at home.

When Durst finds the time, he enjoys lake fishing. Durst, along with his wife, Marie, have raised three sons and a daughter, and they have 10 grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Durst says he still does morning exercises he was required to do while employed at GBRA. “Old habits are hard to break,” said Durst, now in his mid-60s. He admits he needs all the help he can get to keep up with his 8-year-old grandson.

Charles Durst

Started at GBRA—1981
Retired at GBRA—2009

Phone—(830) 379-2641

Board Holds Meeting in Kendall County

The GBRA Board of Directors met in a regular monthly meeting Oct. 17, 2012, at the Boerne Convention and Community Center in Kendall County, Texas. Michael D. Schultz, Mayor of the City of Boerne offered a welcome and a number of other local officials attended the meeting, including, Cheryl Landman, Mayor of the City of Fair Oaks Ranch; Jeff Haberstroh, a City of Boerne councilman and Kathy Sanford, a City of Fredericksburg councilwoman.

During the board meeting, constituents heard a presentation related to GBRA’s educational programs, partnerships and initiatives, a discussion about the feasibility of a power and desalinated water project, and a discussion about a memorandum of understanding between GBRA, UGRA, Kendall County, Kerr County, Kendall County Water Control and Improvement District No. 1, Headwaters Groundwater Conservation District, and Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District to conduct a water

supply study to assist in securing water supplies for the area and financial assistance from the state.



Photo by LaMarriol Smith

employee anniversaries @ gbra

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

October

10/8/1973	Ronald Gosnell	Canal RWSS	39
10/22/1979	Herbert Wittliff	Calhoun Canal	33
10/11/1990	Elizabeth Sedlacek	Water Resources	22
10/10/1998	Dennis Walker	Buda WWTP	14
10/15/2001	Marella Dalme	General	11
10/1/2001	Barbara Gunn	General	11
10/20/2003	Jose Leal	Lockhart WTP	9
10/25/2007	Annlee Drazkowski	General	5
10/22/2011	Tommy Walenta	San Marcos WTP	1
10/17/2012	Elizabeth Aguilar	General	New Hire

January

1/28/1976	Bryan Serold	Water Resources	37	1/21/2008	James Murphy	Water Resources	5
1/11/1977	Rodney Voss	Hydro	36	1/4/2010	Steven Maricle	Hydro	3
1/14/1980	Darel Ball	Water Resources	33	1/3/2012	Bryan Bertelson	San Marcos WTP	1
1/14/1980	Mark Henneke	Water Resources	33	1/16/2012	Toby Dennis	Western Canyon WTP	1
1/31/1981	David Lundin	Port Lavaca WTP	32	1/16/2012	Derek Schedlbauer	Western Canyon WTP	1
1/16/1981	Curtis Seiler	Coledo Recreation	32	1/6/1995	Sandra Terry	General	18
1/4/1983	Alan Schneider	Coledo Reservoir	30	1/27/2004	Steve Wallendorf	San Marcos WTP	9
1/5/1987	Samuel Widmer	Coledo Recreation	26	1/24/2005	Susan Hubbert	General	8
1/27/1988	Sara Vazquez	Coledo Recreation	25	1/2/2007	Sheryll Kisiah	Canal RWSS	6
1/2/2008	Edwin Boettner	Shadow Creek	5				

November

11/1/1976	Michael Gerdes	RUD	36
11/19/1979	Wilfred Korth	Coledo Recreation	33
11/10/1981	Don Koble	Canal RWSS	31
11/14/1983	Jason Lewis	Coledo Recreation	29
11/6/1995	Thomas McNeal	RUD	17
11/24/1997	Jeannine Herrmann	General	15
11/19/1997	Angela Whitley	General	15
11/8/1999	James Asbury	General	13
11/22/1999	Eric Mendez	Lockhart WWTP	13
11/20/2000	Robert Scott	Hydro	12
11/1/2007	Gynna Hernandez	General	5
11/5/2008	John Moryl	Canyon Hydro	4
11/21/2009	Fred Hernandez	Shadow Creek	3
11/21/2011	Stuart Evans	Regional Lab	1

December

12/25/1981	Roy Odom	Hydro	31
12/6/1983	Constance Rothe	General	29
12/28/1992	Dianne Fly	Coledo Reservoir	20
12/10/1999	Jerry Sharp	San Marcos WTP	13
12/20/2000	Wallis Gudgell	Hydro	12
12/29/2000	James Medrano	Hydro	12



Photo GBRA archives



Michael Gerdes

Photo by Tammy Beutnagel

GBRA *Training & Licenses*

Dennis Walker of Buda attended the 2012 NFPA Electrical Safety in the Workplace Compliant Class and Basic Electrical Troubleshooting Class.

Richard Gaona of Calhoun County attended the 2012 NFPA Electrical Safety in the Workplace Compliant Class and Basic Electrical Troubleshooting Class, and the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program.

Jim Lumley of Calhoun County attended the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program.

Bill Penney of Calhoun County attended the 2012 NFPA Electrical Safety in the Workplace Compliant Class and Basic Electrical Troubleshooting Class and the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program.

Curtis Gosnell of Calhoun County attended the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program.

Michael Tompkins of Calhoun County attended the 2012 NFPA Electrical Safety in the Workplace Compliant Class and Basic Electrical Troubleshooting Class and TWUA - Special Fabrications.

Herb Wittliff of Calhoun County attended the TWUA Golden Crescent Storm Water Prep and TWUA - Special Fabrications.

Scott Kolbe of Canyon Hydro attended Coaching the Lift Truck Operator 2.

Wilfred Korth, Jr., of Coletto Creek Recreation attended the Texas Dept. of Agriculture Pesticide Applicator Continuing Education.

Jason Lewis of Coletto Creek Recreation attended the Certified Park and Recreation Professional and the Texas Dept. of Agriculture Pesticide Applicator Continuing Education.

Marlon McAdams of Coletto Creek Reservoir attended the 2012 NFPA Electrical Safety in the Workplace Compliant Class and Basic Electrical Troubleshooting Class.

Alan Schneider of Coletto Creek Reservoir attended the Texas Dept. of Agriculture Pesticide Applicator Continuing Education.

John Urban of Coletto Creek Reservoir attended the Texas Dept. of Agriculture Pesticide Applicator Continuing Education.

Barbara Gunn of General attended the SAHRMA Conference.

Daphne Harder of General attended the SAHRMA Conference.

Billy Imhoff of General attended Coaching the Lift Truck Operator 2.

Yolanda Pierce of General attended How to Create and Deliver Exceptional Powerpoint Presentations.

Wallis Gudgell of Hydro attended Coaching the Lift Truck Operator 2.

Juan Juarez of Hydro attended Coaching the Lift Truck Operator 2.

Manual Lopez of Hydro attended Coaching the Lift Truck Operator 2.

Richard Maxwell, Jr., of Hydro attended Coaching the Lift Truck Operator 2.

Jeffrey McKee of Hydro attended the Lab Professionals Stakeholder Work Group.

Clint Retzloff of Hydro attended Coaching the Lift Truck Operator 2.

Charles Schnitz attended Coaching the Lift Truck Operator 2.

Michael Schultze attended Coaching the Lift Truck Operator 2.

Rodney Voss of Hydro attended Coaching the Lift Truck Operator 2.

Kimberly Helmke attended the Texas Watershed Steward.

Jennifer Sanchez attended the Texas Watershed Steward.

David Garcia of Port Lavaca attended the 2012 NFPA Electrical Safety in the Workplace Compliant Class and Basic Electrical Troubleshooting Class.

Joey Kisiah of Port Lavaca attended the TWUA Golden Crescent Storm Water Prep and TWUA - Special Fabrications.

Ronnie Parenica of Port Lavaca attended the TWUA Golden Crescent Storm Water Prep and TWUA - Special Fabrications.

Stephanie Shelly of Port Lavaca attended Water Utility Safety and TWUA - Special Fabrications.

Brian Lyssy of RUD attended TEEX - Basic Wastewater Operations.

Ed Boettner of Shadow Creek attended the 2012 NFPA Electrical Safety in the Workplace Compliant Class and Basic Electrical Troubleshooting Class.

Fred Hernandez of Shadow Creek attended the 2012 NFPA Electrical Safety in the Workplace Compliant Class and Basic Electrical Troubleshooting Class.

Darel Ball of Water Resources attended the Public Drinking Water Conference.

Debbie Magin of Water Resources attended the Disaster Management for Water and Wastewater Utilities.

Elizabeth Sedlacek of Water Resources attended the Texas Watershed Steward program.

Michael Urrutia of Water Resources attended the Public Drinking Water Conference.

Hunter Duncan of Western Canyon attended TEEX - Customer Service Inspector.

Christopher Harder of Western Canyon attended the 2012 NFPA Electrical Safety in the Workplace Compliant Class and Basic Electrical Troubleshooting Class.

Derek Schedlbauer of Western Canyon attended Surface Water Production II.



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Mark Your Calendar

- Jan. 1, 2013
New Year's Day Holiday
GBRA Offices Closed
- Jan. 16, 2013
GBRA Board Meeting
River Annex Bldg., Seguin, TX
<http://www.gbra.org/board/meetings.aspx>
- Jan. 24-25, 2013
2013 TRWA/TWCA Water Law Conference
Omni Austin Downtown, Austin, TX
http://www.twca.org/meetings/other/2013-Water_Laws_Conference.pdf
Registration: (512) 472-7216
- Feb. 20, 2013
GBRA Board Meeting
River Annex Bldg., Seguin, TX
<http://www.gbra.org/board/meetings.aspx>
- Feb. 25-28, 2013
AMTA/AWWA 2013 Membrane Technology
Conference and Expo
Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, TX
Contact: (772) 463-0820
- Mar. 6-8, 2013
TWCA Annual Convention
Sheraton Austin Hotel, Austin, TX
<http://www.twca.org/meetings.html>
- Mar. 10-13, 2013
AWWA Utility Management Conference™
Renaissance Phoenix Glendale Hotel, Glendale, AZ
Contact: (800) 926-7337
- Mar. 20, 2013
GBRA Board Meeting
River Annex Bldg., Seguin, TX
<http://www.gbra.org/board/meetings.aspx>
- Mar. 29, 2013
Good Friday Holiday
GBRA Offices Closed

Photo by LaMarriol Smith

