

GBRA River Run

A publication of the GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY Summer 2010

A photograph showing a flooded road. In the foreground, the water is murky and turbulent. In the background, a road leads up a hill, with several cars visible. On the right side of the road, there is a green sign that reads "GUADALUPE RIVER". On the left side, there is a road sign with a red border and a white background, which is partially obscured by the flood. The surrounding area is lush with green trees and vegetation.

***RAIN BOMB
CAUSES FLOOD***

Exclusive Flood Photos



Trust Accredited



Volunteers Shine

From the GM

Public Support Crucial to Securing Water Supplies

Even now, during difficult economic times, the State of Texas is looking good. People are still “getting here as fast as they can” and our business environment is healthier than nearly anywhere else in the nation. But, looming on the horizon, not that far away is a crisis that cannot be avoided unless we all start thinking in a new way about water.

Obviously, with more people and more business in Texas, we need more water. But, as state agencies and elected officials work to plan for our future water needs, obstacles are damming up our water supply. In Region L alone where there are 20.5 counties trying to come together to plan for their future water needs, the cold, hard fact is that the last major water reservoir project completed in the area was Canyon Reservoir in 1964 – 46 years ago. The last major water reservoir project completed in the entire state was Jim Chapman Reservoir in 1991, nearly 20 years ago.

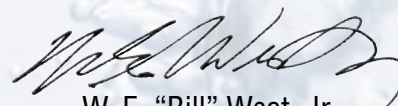


Why? Why has the state gone nearly 20 years without doing anything to provide for more water for Texas? I can tell you about why we haven't been able to provide for water for the future in the Guadalupe River Basin in nearly 50 years. Two good examples are projects we are working on now – the Simsboro and Carrizo projects. The Simsboro project could provide 30,000 acre-feet of water and the Carrizo project could provide 25,000 acre-feet of water.

Developing these projects requires negotiating through the regulations of groundwater districts, leasing contracts, lawsuits, and costs associated with delivery. Add to those difficulties in obtaining permits, securing reservoir sites and dealing with the public's concerns about moving water from one area to another – from where there is water and low populations to where high populations require more water.

The pitfalls that are probably most recognizable are the long-standing traditional ones – sites for new reservoirs almost always are controversial and moving water from one location to another brings up questions of whose water is it? These two politically charged obstacles have brought the State of Texas to the brink of disaster.

There are only two roads before us – we must look beyond our own backyards to the welfare of the larger community or we must look to new options – probably more expensive options like desalination. What we cannot do is nothing. Those charged with planning for the future need your guidance and support. Which road should we take? We are open to your suggestions, but we cannot continue to simply do nothing. Texas must have water for the future – where will it come from? Speak up and tell us, your legislators, your city officials, and your groundwater districts. We need your input and your support. For sustainability and economic viability, we must make sure Texas always has enough water.


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

Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority

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GBRA River Run

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Front cover photo: by Teresa VanBooven
Back cover photo: by Clifford J. Barbour

FIELD & OFFICE

GBRA Earns Envision Central Texas Community Stewardship Award

Helping to lead an outstanding watershed partnership program placed Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority staff front and center recently to receive a community award. GBRA was chosen as the winner in the Raising Public Awareness Category for its Taking Charge of Water Quality in the Plum Creek Watershed project.

The award, presented by Envision Central Texas (ECT), was the result of a cooperative project (jointly administered by GBRA and AgriLife Extension) that was funded through a Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Clean Water Act grant.

"I think the ECT award recognizes GBRA's and AgriLife's efforts to develop and implement programs that benefit the targeted public areas in a myriad of ways," Debbie Magin, GBRA's director of Water Quality said.

Equally important, explained GBRA's Education Coordinator Cinde Thomas-Jimenez, is that, "This reinforces the public's continued support for and participation in this program to restore the health of this watershed."

Envision Central Texas is a grass-roots nonprofit organization whose goal is to address the tremendous growth pressures on the central Texas region, including Hays and Caldwell counties. Composed of a diverse group of citizens, including neighborhood, environmental, business leaders and policy makers, ECT members address growth with the interests of the region's citizens in mind. Challenges of interest include land use,

transportation and the environment. ECT presents Community Stewardship Awards annually.

The Plum Creek project was recognized because of its outreach events and trainings, and the creation of innovative materials for use in presenting information to diverse audiences. Topics included wastewater treatment systems, septic and aerobic systems, Fats, Oils and Greases (FOG) and Stormwater management.



Photo by Sally Campbell



GBRA Publications Gain Awards

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority's (GBRA) publications recently earned six creative design awards — the most ever for GBRA publications in a single year.

The International Academy of the Visual Arts presented a 2010 Award of Distinction to GBRA for its annual report, *Flowing Solutions*, for the fiscal year ending Aug. 31, 2009. That same report also earned Water Environment Association of Texas' (WEAT) highest honor, the Watermark Award, was a 2010 Gold Winner from Hermes Creative Awards, and received a 2010 American Inhouse Design Award from Graphic Design USA.

WEAT bestowed the Watermark Award on the *GBRA River Run Magazine*, which also collected a Platinum Award from Hermes.

"Our staff works hard to continually improve GBRA's publications and other printed materials. Getting this kind of recognition shows that our efforts are being noticed," LaMarriol Smith, GBRA's manager of Communications and Education, said.

Belize Team Takes Texas Water Safari... *"World's toughest boat race"*

by Tammy Beutnagel

Since 1963, the Texas Water Safari or the "World's Toughest Canoe Race" has had thousands of driven men and women paddle 260 miles on the Guadalupe River in the middle of the Texas summer.

On July 10, the teams received a grand send-off by team captains, friends and family at San Marcos' Spring Lake. Racers ranged in ages from 14 to 74 and traveled from 14 U.S. states, the United Kingdom, and Belize.

Doesn't sound too hard? Think again! No motorized boats or two-way radio communications are allowed between racers and team captains, and racers only have 100 hours to complete the race-so stopping to rest is an urge racers have to fight.

Then, after unlimited hot hours of paddling, racers can expect sun burn, insect and snake bites, heat exhaustion, cramped muscles, dehydration and even hallucinations.

This year's teams had an extra challenge to face-gale force winds. "Many boats got off course and racers became disoriented," said GBRA Manager of Economic Development, Tommie Rhoad. Only 50 of the original 93 boats crossed the finish line at Seadrift, Texas.

First-place finishers for four classifications follow:

1st Place Unlimited Team:

Andrew Stephens, Amado Cruz, Daniel Cruz, Andrew Soles, Sam Ritchie, Efrain Cruz, and team captain, William Russell

34 hours and 40 minutes

1st Place Solo Team:

Vance Sherrod and team captain, Sandy Sherrod

52 hours and 5 minutes

1st Place Women's Team:

Debbie Richardson, Janie Glos, Ginsie Stauss and team captain, Renee Coffman

70 hours and 29 minutes

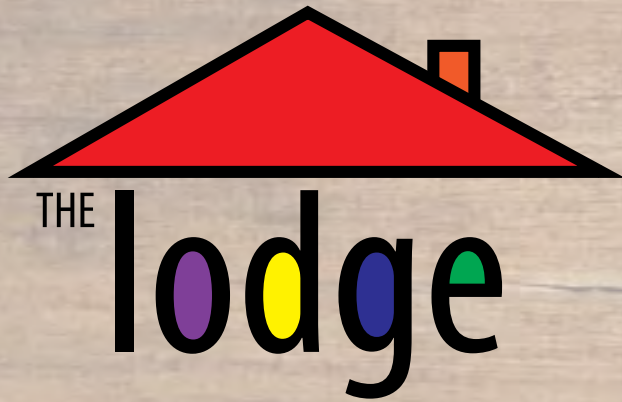
1st Place Women's Solo Team:

Samantha Hilker and team captain, Mollie Binion

80 hours and 50 minutes



Photos by LaMarriol Smith



Volunteers Aid

GUADALUPE COUNTY CHILDRENS SHELTER

About 45 Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) employees and their family members worked as volunteers Saturday, May 15, to help bring the opening of Guadalupe County's first children's shelter to fruition.

The Lodge Children's Shelter, located on FM 1117, ultimately will serve as a shelter for children who have been displaced from their homes by Child Protective Services due to violence, neglect, or other abuse.

Each year, GBRA employees undertake a project within its 10-county statutory district as a community service and part of the agency's Volunteer Program. This component of the program is called "Our Day to Shine."

In a letter from Jennifer Ficke, founder and president of The Lodge, to GBRA staff she said, "Your staff was amazing! ... Thank you for your labor, support, leadership and kind words. It will all be remembered and embraced for many years."

Employees participating in Our Day to Shine spend a full work day at the selected volunteer project performing a variety of duties, including painting, electrical and plumbing repairs, light construction and even some landscaping. Often, such projects require preparatory work and a few employees begin working several days earlier to ensure a smooth process for the entire group.

Although the selected project was in Guadalupe County, GBRA employees from throughout the 10-county district participated, including some from as far away as Port Lavaca (Calhoun County) near the Gulf Coast and Victoria (Victoria County).

To find out more about The Lodge or how to support it, call (830) 372-KIDS or visit the website at www.childrenslodge.org.



Photo by LaMarriol Smith



Photo by LaMarriol Smith

Children's Shelter



Photos by Connie Rothe





Photo by Tammy Beutnagel

GFOA Recognizes GBRA Budget and Accountant

Recently, officials of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada bestowed the “Distinguished Budget Presentation Award” to the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority for its budget. When that award is granted to an entity, a “Certificate of Recognition for Budget Presentation” also is presented to the individual or department designated as being primarily responsible for

having achieved the award — in this case, it was presented to GBRA's Accounting Assistant II, Jeannine M. Herrmann.

“Obviously, the entire Accounting staff works hard to maintain the highest standards and present accurate budgetary information for this agency. I feel these awards are reflective of those efforts, and I’m very pleased for Jeannine to receive the GFOA’s certificate recognizing her achievements,” GBRA’s Executive Manager of Finance and Administration Alvin Schuerg, said.

Herrmann began working for GBRA in November 1997 as an accounting assistant — a position that immediately placed her in the midst of GBRA’s budgetary process. Then in 2004, she was promoted to accounting assistant I, continuing her ever-meticulous work to ensure accuracy in all of the financial reporting areas for which she is responsible.

The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving more than 17,600 government finance professionals throughout North America. The GFOA’s Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards Program is the only national awards program in governmental budgeting.

Plum Creek Stewardship is Recognized Model

There is little case to be made that the Plum Creek watershed — one of the major watersheds in the Guadalupe River Basin — is “special.” But when discussions turn to water quality monitoring in Texas, Plum Creek is likely the most frequently discussed watershed in the state, largely due to ongoing water quality stewardship efforts.

Routine monitoring data from 1998 indicated high nutrient concentrations in some segments of the watershed and in 2002, the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ) officials cited E.coli bacteria levels as a concern. By 2004, the data indicated that Plum Creek no longer supported the designated use for human contact recreation. In addition, the high nutrient levels had spread throughout the watershed. The geographically diverse watershed is about 400 square miles in size and 52 miles long.

It became apparent that something had to be done to address water quality problems in the watershed. Historically, the TCEQ would step in, develop and implement a Total Maximum Daily Load program. However, a new approach — the development of a stakeholder driven watershed planning process — was considered and ultimately chosen. In 2005, a special advisory committee of the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board selected Plum Creek for a voluntary effort to improve water quality, and engaged the Texas Agri-Life Extension Service as a partner. The Plum Creek Watershed Partnership was formed to guide the planning process and address the bacteria and nutrient concerns in the stream.

Led by a Steering Committee that included Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) staff, the partnership worked with citizens, businesses and officials in the watershed to restore the health of Plum Creek. The tenacious efforts of stakeholders resulted in the final 2008 Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan — a first in the state to be Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) accepted.

One big success story for GBRA was leading the way with the Outreach and Education workgroup. GBRA was awarded a \$150,000 grant from TCEQ. This grant funded a large portion of the outreach activities conducted in the Plum Creek Watershed. Many of the resources developed through this project were made available for adaptation in other watersheds across the state.

- ◆ A Watershed Protection brochure
- ◆ Online training focusing on Wastewater Treatment Plants
- ◆ Online training focusing on Septic Systems and Aerobic Treatment systems
- ◆ Online training focusing on problems with Fats, Oil, and Greases (FOG)
- ◆ Online training focusing best management practices for Stormwater for Municipal operations
- ◆ Identification of and Cleaning Illegal Dumpsites
- ◆ Conduct Non-Point Source Pollution (NPS) Training Workshops for Local Officials
- ◆ Conduct NPS Pollution Training Workshops for OSSF owners and agents

Plum Creek water quality efforts continue, but some progress has been made. Data collected after the two-year drought is being analyzed. Stakeholders are encouraged that this year Plum Creek has been removed in TCEQ’s “draft” 303-d List of Impaired Water Bodies.

To learn more about the Plum Creek Watershed Protection program, visit <http://www.gbra.org/PlumCreek/Default.aspx>.

Canyon Park Estates WWTP Expanded

An 80,000-gallon-per-day (gpd) expansion to the Canyon Park Estates Wastewater Treatment Plant, operated by the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority, was recently completed and became operational in July 2010.

The full treatment capacity of the expanded plant, which primarily serves the Silverleaf Resort community, is 180,000 gpd. The plant expansion was constructed to meet a more stringent discharge permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Silverleaf Resort, Inc., paid approximately \$1.7 million for the expansion in preparation for construction of additional properties in its resort community. The contractor for the project was Cunningham Construction.

The GBRA also is in the process of making improvements to the original plant facilities.

In 2008, Canyon Park Estates WWTP was recognized by the Water Environment Association of Texas (WEAT) as the Wastewater Treatment Plant of the Year in Category 1. GBRA's Rural Utilities Division operates the plant.



Photo by LaMarri Smith

Coletto Park Makes "2010 Best of Best"

Readers of the *Victoria Advocate* recently selected GBRA's Coletto Creek Park and Reservoir a 2010 Best of the Best award winner for best lake.

The *Advocate* conducts an annual survey whereby readers vote on area favorites – from live music venues to historic monuments.

Coletto Creek's Chief Ranger Wilfred Korth explained, "I believe we're voted best because we usually have fairly clear and blue water. Additionally, the lake and park is unique in that the land around it is not in agricultural production. And Coletto's park staff works very hard to keep the grounds around the lake well groomed."



Photo by Wilfred Korth



New Developments in Lawsuit

A lawsuit filed in March alleging that state management of the Guadalupe and San Antonio rivers has harmed the whooping cranes that winter at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge has been "stayed" by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans.

The suit by an organization called The Aransas Project (TAP) against the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) accused the agency of violating the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) by not allowing enough fresh water to reach the coastal marshes and ultimately causing a "take" of whooping cranes.

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) immediately filed to intervene as defendants in the lawsuit, and on April 23, U.S. District Court Judge Janis Graham Jack issued an order granting GBRA's motion to intervene. Forty-eight other entities filed amicus briefs with the court supporting the defendants.

In addition to GBRA, Union Carbide, the San Antonio Water System (SAWS), the San Antonio River Authority (SARA), the Texas Chemical Council, the Texas Farm Bureau / American Farm Bureau Federation, and CPS Energy also filed at different times for defendant intervener status. Judge Jack granted the motion to intervene by the Texas Chemical Council, but denied the motions of the other entities.

The entities that were denied motions to intervene appealed the decision to the Fifth Circuit Court and requested the court to stay the original case until a ruling had been made on the appeal to intervene. On Aug. 12, the Fifth Circuit Court granted the stay on the case in the U.S. District Court.



DEADLINE LOOMS OVER LONG-TERM PLAN FOR AQUIFER SPECIES

by Joel Williams

They haven't always agreed, but stakeholders" from throughout the region have continued working over the past three years toward the goal of developing a long-term plan to protect species that depend on the Edwards Aquifer.

Decision time has arrived, said Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program (EARIP) Program Manager Robert Gulley.

The time has come to take all of those competing interests and forge an agreement, in order to meet a deadline set by the Texas Legislature. In May 2007, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 3, which directed the Edwards Aquifer Authority and various other agencies to participate in the EARIP and to prepare a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved plan by 2012, to take effect by 2013.

The group will provide input for a USFWS "Habitat Conservation Plan" for enhancing the well-being of eight species — fountain darter, San Marcos salamander, San Marcos gambusia, Texas blind salamander, Peck's cave amphipod, Comal Springs dryopid beetle, Comal Springs riffle beetle and Texas wild rice — listed as either threatened or endangered, which depend directly on water in or discharged from the Edwards Aquifer.

Central to the EARIP's work are Comal and San Marcos springs, which issue from the Edwards Aquifer. The two springs feed the Comal and San Marcos rivers, tributaries to the Guadalupe River, which reaches down to the Texas Gulf Coast. During drought, those springs provide an increased percentage of the declining water in those rivers. However, spring flow declines during drought, or as in the case of the "drought of record" of 1947-57, can dry up completely, as Comal Springs did for several months in 1956.

The EARIP stakeholders will propose ways to manage the aquifer and spring systems to preserve the listed species at the Comal and San Marcos spring. They began operating

from the premise, stated in a background piece on the EARIP website, that "The primary threat to the aquifer-dependent listed species is the intermittent loss of habitat from reduced spring flows. Spring flow loss is the combined result of naturally fluctuating rainfall patterns, regional intermittent pumping, and temporal drawdown of the aquifer."

"We're at a point that at the end of the summer, we need to have the elements of the plan developed," Gulley said.

Meetings scheduled for Sept. 9-10, at the Civic Center in Schertz and a follow-up session, if needed, Sept. 23-24, will be crucial for the group tasked with balancing aquifer water use and supply with the needs of the threatened and endangered species. Details about the meetings are available online at: <http://earip.tamu.edu/EARIPMeetings/Sep0910/08-10-10%20Final%20Background%20Memorandum.pdf>.

Gulley believes the group is on track to get the job done, if it can agree at the September meetings on what the plan should include, and how to pay for it. Estimates for various proposed solutions have run into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Gulley sees these basic options for protecting the species during drought:

- Management solutions, such as a "dry-year option," in which farmers would be paid not to exercise all of their aquifer pumping rights during critical drought;
- Engineered solutions, such as storing water in another aquifer and injecting it near the springs when needed;
- Pumping cuts; or
- Some combination of the options.

"Successful completion of the program document will help to ensure a stable water supply, implement measures that contribute to the listed species, and minimize the risk of

federal court litigation regarding the use of the aquifer," Gulley recently wrote in a letter to a local official.

He believes that the stakeholders need to agree on the basic framework of the plan two years before the Sept. 1, 2012, deadline, because it will take about a year to develop the "program document," including a draft environmental impact statement as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. Then, he believes it could take another year for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to review the document, which could include some back and forth between Washington and Texas.

"We will be providing technical assistance throughout the process and providing comment," said Adam Zerrenner, field supervisor for the USFWS' Austin Ecological Services Field Office, who is overseeing the EARIP. "The EARIP is doing an outstanding job. They have proven their ability to work effectively together, to look at the challenges of protecting the species and finding a solution to protect the species and to balance that with the needs for people."

EARIP's stakeholders represent a variety of interests from the Hill Country to the Gulf Coast, including water utilities, cities, groundwater conservation districts, agricultural users, industrial users, environmental organizations, individuals, river authorities (including the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority) and state and federal agencies.

In April, the EARIP held seven public "scoping meetings" throughout the region to seek citizen input on the plan.

"This fall, we have to agree on the elements of the plan," said Todd Votteler, the GBRA's executive manager of intergovernmental relations and policy.

While he did not know how the plan would end up, Votteler said, “Thus far, the peer-reviewed research developed during the EARIP indicates a substantial quantity of water is going to have to be developed and pumping is going to have to be severely cut back during drought.”

“Should we analyze spring flow levels that represent ideal conditions, or lower spring flows that, combined with other management do a pretty good job of protecting the species?” Calvin Finch, director of special projects and regional initiatives for the San Antonio Water System (SAWS), asked in a recent interview. “SAWS is less comfortable with pumping reductions than it is with other solutions that would protect the species, be less expensive and protect the economy of the region.”

SAWS is the largest single user of Edwards Aquifer water as the primary source of water for the nation’s seventh-largest city.

The EARIP’s Science Subcommittee is providing extensive data on the various species and how they likely would be affected at different spring flow levels. It is considering factors such as the rising water temperature during periods of low flow, the amount of dissolved oxygen and carbon dioxide in the water under various scenarios and the effects on plants and animals, the effects of recreational use on species, among an abundance of other data.

Other research has included data showing an interrelation between distant areas of the

southward toward San Marcos moves north toward Barton Springs.

The Science Subcommittee recommended that the spring flows never be allowed to drop below certain levels, and concluded that some deep reductions in pumping would be necessary during drought to protect the species.

“We need to be cautious and do our work and use informed decision-making based on the best available science, but in the end, the habitat conservation plan will be a negotiated settlement,” said Thomas Hardy, chief science officer at the River Systems Institute at Texas State University, who was developing a biological report to present in September.

Scenarios he was analyzing include the effects of allowing spring flow to drop to as low as 30 cubic feet per second, the minimum that the Science Subcommittee cited for Comal Springs. Even if that were enough to sustain species such as the fountain darter and the riffle beetle in the short-term, how would the elevated water temperature affect their long-term survival and reproduction? How would the reduced flow affect plants? If plants died, how would their decay affect the oxygen levels in the water and the animals needing that oxygen?

“How close to the edge are you willing to push the biology toward problems before you say you don’t want to go over the edge of the cliff?” Hardy asked.

The May 2010 EARIP meeting was one of the most challenging for the stakeholders,

particularly over the question of which levels of spring flow to analyze for biological impact and which engineered solutions to consider to provide those spring flows.

Some left that meeting wondering if an agreement would be possible.

But after they met again in June and continued talking, it was considered an important milestone for the EARIP. The San Antonio Express-News headline on June 16 read: “Solution for Edwards Aquifer not dead.”

“I continue to be amazed by the fact that all of us have stuck together working on these tough issues,” said Finch of SAWS.

Other considerations include possible restrictions on recreation in some areas, especially in the San Marcos River, where recreational use of the river can harm the endangered Texas wild rice plants.

Glenn Longley, director of the Edwards Aquifer Research Center at Texas State University, recommended at the EARIP meeting in July that the plan protect the dozens of additional species recently proposed for Endangered Species Act listing, “so the RIP would not one day have to go through this process again.”

“The next thing is how to pay for it,” Finch said.

With some cost estimates for providing long-term protection of the species exceeding \$1 billion, Hardy of Texas State anticipates the question of cost versus benefit to come up at the September meetings.

“With all the uncertainty, when you can go to the coast and desalinate water for the same cost, why wouldn’t you?” he asked.

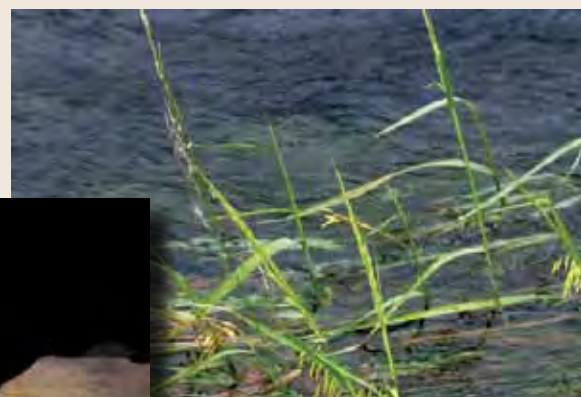


Fountain Darter

aquifer, including San Marcos Springs and Barton Springs in Austin, indicating that activity in one area can affect other areas. During critical drought, according to the study by HDR Engineering, water that would flow



Texas Blind Salamander



Texas Wild Rice

RAIN BOMB CAUSES FLOOD

by Tammy Beutnagel

Residents of Comal and Guadalupe counties felt the wrath of the powerful Guadalupe River on June 9, 2010 when storms brought more than 10 inches of rain.

Extreme river flows reached record highs in the basin, including the Comal River reaching flows of 31,000 cubic feet per second (cfs), the Guadalupe River at Gonzales reaching 23,900 cfs, and Lake Dunlap peaking at 50,000 cfs.

David Welsch, GBRA executive manager of Business Development and Resource Management, said he could not remember such high flows since those of the July 2002 and October 1998 floods which reached 73,000 cfs and 140,000 cfs respectively.

Severe structure damage occurred to approximately 125 homes in New Braunfels

and to more than 150 homes in Guadalupe County.

GBRA officials opened additional phone lines at its main office to provide continuous updates for incoming calls from the public, city and county officials, and emergency management coordinators, and other staff disseminated free flood packets to walk-in customers. GBRA hydro crews worked around the clock operating spillways to pass high flows through the systems of lakes Dunlap, McQueeney, Placid (TP-4), Meadow (Nolte), Gonzales (H-4), and Wood (H-5).

Welsch and other staff worked extensively with lake association representatives and home owners, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department staff, city, county and area officials after the flood to help restore the conditions of the lakes by surveying damage,

seeking federal funding assistance, and initiating and coordinating clean-up plans.

"The cleanup was a remarkable effort," Welsch explained, adding, "Cooperation with the lake associations — Preserve Lake Dunlap Association, Friends of Lake McQueeney, Citizens United for Lake Placid, Friends of Lake Wood and representatives from Gonzales and Meadow lakes — was essential to restoring the lakes in a timely manner."

Below is a timeline of lake events that occurred:

- ◆ June 10 – GBRA General Manager Bill West issued an action restricting use of the hydro lakes, provided conditional use for homeowners only to retrieve property or remove obstructions.
- ◆ June 17 – GBRA hydro crews began lowering lakes Placid and McQueeney for inspections and debris assessment. Crews assisted with locating and identifying submerged debris.
- ◆ June 30 – Tiered access and restriction plans were imposed on lakes McQueeney, Meadow (Nolte), Gonzales (H-4), Wood (H-5) and Placid from the Placid dam to Interstate Highway 10.
- ◆ July 10 – Lake Dunlap opened with some restrictions and a tiered access plan was implemented.
- ◆ July 16 – GBRA officials amended restrictions on all hydro lakes, opening the lakes to most uses. Restrictions continue to prohibit towing of inflatable objects and other water toys on the lakes through Sept. 16, 2010.



Photo by Jean



Photo by Kris Gant



Photo by Gary Spence



Photo by Connie Rothe



Photo by Debbie Brown



Photo by Teresa VanBooven



Photo by Tommy Hill



Photo by Gary Spence

Where *are they now?*

Fred Blumberg

by Kellen Schuerg



Photo by Kellen Schuerg

How many graduate students are personally called up by the general manager of a company and offered a job? Very few! Fred Blumberg was one of those lucky ones.

While an undergraduate at Texas A&M University, Blumberg was required to write a paper on a water agency, and as a native from Seguin, he chose to feature the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority. Blumberg got an interview with then-GBRA General Manager, Robert Vahrenkamp, and researched each

division of the organization. In 1974, the previous college paper he had written on GBRA, led Blumberg to his first position with the river authority when an opening had come up at the Victoria Wastewater Treatment Plant. General Manager John Specht offered Blumberg the job.

After accepting the position of reservoir planner, Blumberg was quickly put to work planning and constructing the Coletto Creek Reservoir and Dam. Blumberg was a key part of overseeing the Coletto project and stayed with the venture for eight years, before transferring to the Seguin main office in 1982. Here, he took on a series of titles starting with assistant operations manager and was then promoted to operations manager, before reaching the position of deputy general manager in 1995, under present day General Manager, Bill West.

During this time, Blumberg managed operations of the river authority's main office, including the accounting department and regional water quality laboratory. Other responsibilities included water rights, permitting, water resource distribution, and project planning.

One thing that Blumberg found especially rewarding at GBRA was his involvement in implementing a safety program for the company. According to Blumberg, a serious work injury occurred to a GBRA employee in the early 1980s — a time when not enough attention was focused on work safety. This event led Blumberg and GBRA to set goals and work towards better safety records. Today, GBRA continues to hold regular safety training classes and once a month safety meetings. Blumberg said he applauds Bryan Serold, John Smith, Debbie Magin, Allen

Ognoskie, and many other GBRA managers and staff for their continuous dedication to promoting a safe work place. "Without employee support and involvement, the safety program would not have caught on as well as it did," said Blumberg.

Blumberg recalled as one of his special memories of GBRA a Christmas party he and his family attended at the Rio Cibolo Ranch. No one expected the party to be cut short because a foot of water made its way into the building from massive rainstorm that evening. Blumberg also noted a GBRA party held at the Aumont Hotel on Austin Street as another special memory.

Currently working as a consultant for Malcolm Pirnie, one of the largest firms in the United States that focuses exclusively on environmental issues, Blumberg also enjoys traveling to Big Bend National Park twice a year with his family. He and his wife, Sue, also run a bed and breakfast in Seguin called Cottontail Creek Ranch. The couple enjoys their two sons, Matt and Kevin, their spouses and a granddaughter, London.

Blumberg said he enjoyed the time he spent at GBRA, calling it "the most diverse water agency in the state."

Started at GBRA: 1974

Retired at GBRA: 2007

Fred Blumberg can be reached at (830)379-1693 or email him at info@ccrbb.com.

employee anniversaries

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

May

5/24/2010 Ernest Luna, San Marcos WTP — New Hire
 5/4/2009 Clint Retzlaff, Coleta Recreation — 1 yr
 5/19/2008 Joey Kisiah, Port Lavaca WTP — 2 yrs
 5/19/2008 Jaynellen Ladd, Water Resources — 2 yrs
 5/19/2008 Bruce Wasinger, General — 2 yrs
 5/11/2007 Denise Aleman, General — 3 yrs
 5/18/2007 Hunter Duncan, Western Canyon WTP — 3 yrs
 5/2/2005 Norma Harvey, General — 5 yrs
 5/12/2003 Cynthia Thomas-Jimenez, General — 7 yrs
 5/1/2001 Yolanda Pierce, General — 9 yrs
 5/7/1993 Dennis Gunter, Victoria WWTP — 17 yrs
 5/1/1989 Leroy Garza, San Marcos WTP — 21 yrs
 5/19/1987 Michael Urrutia, Western Canyon WTP — 23 yrs
 5/31/1983 Alan Zolnosky, Coleta Recreation — 27 yrs
 5/4/1981 Alvin Schuerg, General — 29 yrs
 5/5/1980 James King, Hydro — 30 yrs
 5/2/1978 Joseph Downey, Luling WTP — 32 yrs
 5/10/1976 Thomas Hill, Water Resources — 34 yrs
 5/17/1976 Juan Juarez, Hydro — 34 yrs

June

6/15/2009 Allen Lawson, Western Canyon WTP — 1 yr
 6/29/2009 Stacy Frentzen, Lab — 1 yr
 6/30/2004 Daphne Harder, General — 6 yrs
 6/2/2003 Tommie Rhoad, Water Resources — 7 yrs
 6/23/2003 Teresa Van Booven, Water Resources — 7 yrs
 6/21/2001 Janet Thome, General — 9 yrs
 6/1/2000 Todd Votteler, General — 10 yrs
 6/7/1999 Tamra Beutnagel, General — 11 yrs
 6/10/1986 Sammy Salas, Luling WTP — 24 yrs
 6/1/1983 Carl Korth, Coleta Recreation — 27 yrs
 6/27/1977 Jeffrey McKee, Hydro — 33 yrs
 6/1/1976 David Weaver, Victoria WWTP — 34 yrs
 6/25/1973 David Welsch, Water Resources — 37 yrs

July

7/19/2010 Melinda Craig, Lab — New Hire
 7/27/2009 Donald Carpenter, Luling WTP — 1 yr
 7/5/2007 Clarissa Frnka, Lab — 3 yrs
 7/5/2006 Timothy Hill, Western Canyon WTP — 4 yrs
 7/28/2003 Lee Gudgell, Water Resources — 7 yrs
 7/5/2002 Carlton Hoefling, Victoria WWTP — 8 yrs
 7/2/1984 Allen Ognoskie, Hydro — 26 yrs
 7/2/1982 David Kenda, Hydro — 28 yrs
 7/10/1978 Joel Heideke, RUD — 32 yrs
 7/6/1976 Debbie Magin, Water Resources — 34 yrs

August

8/17/2009 James Wall, San Marcos WTP — 1 yr
 8/24/2009 James Irby, Coleta Recreation — 1 yr
 8/15/2008 Allan Smith, Buda WWTP — 2 yrs
 8/18/2008 Jeffery Hebert, Western Canyon WTP — 2 yrs
 8/27/2007 Emmylou Roberts, Lab — 3 yrs
 8/5/2002 Josephine Longoria, Lab — 8 yrs
 8/5/2002 Larry Shahan, San Marcos WTP — 8 yrs
 8/11/1995 Billy Imhoff, General — 15 yrs
 8/29/1994 Felix Cortinas, Luling — 16 yrs
 8/5/1991 John Urban, Coleta Reservoir — 19 yrs
 8/15/1990 Angel Castillo, Lockhart WWTP — 20 yrs
 8/7/1989 Scott Kolbe, Canyon Hydro — 21 yrs
 8/18/1975 Richard Maxwell, Hydro — 35 yrs
 8/25/1975 Christy Dietert, General — 35 yrs

September

9/16/2008 Kylie McNabb, Lab — 2 yrs
 9/28/2001 Gerardo Rodriguez, Water Resources — 9 yrs
 9/1/2000 Brian Lyssy, Lab — 10 yrs
 9/10/1999 Ryan Boedeker, Canal RWSS — 11 yrs
 9/14/1998 Susan Cochran, Water Resources — 12 yrs
 9/2/1992 Jason Eeds, Lockhart WWTP — 18 yrs
 9/15/1992 Ronnie Parenica, Port Lavaca WTP — 18 yrs
 9/18/1992 David Dodd, Calhoun Canal — 18 yrs
 9/3/1991 Stephanie Shelly, Port Lavaca WTP — 19 yrs
 9/1/1988 Eduardo Montana, Lockhart WWTP — 22 yrs
 9/3/1974 Frank Tompkins, Victoria WWTP — 36 yrs
 9/11/1967 Roberto Nieto, Hydro — 43 yrs

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

Cricket Dietert



Photo by LaMarriol Smith

Photo from GBRA Archives

THE STORY BEHIND THE LAW BOOKS

by Tammy Beutnagel

If a really good book was defined as a book that helped people achieve success while rendering aid to others, the series of Southwestern Reporter law books would be a prime example.

First published in 1868, these law books gave summaries of numerous appellate court cases and jury decisions made from cases in Texas, Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee.

In 2008, Bennie Bock II offered his historical collection of these books to GBRA General Manager Bill West. West did not have to think twice before accepting Bock's offer. He explained, "Those 700 volumes were once owned by Edward M. Cape, 'the founding father of GBRA.'"

Cape wrote the state act authorizing the river authority. He also obtained a permit from the Texas Board of Water Engineers for the development of the Canyon Dam and Guadalupe River master plans. He became general manager and general counsel of GBRA in 1938.

Cape made many trips to Washington D.C. to help GBRA get Canyon financed," said West. "Cape was truly the founding father of GBRA."

Cape was admitted to the State Bar of Texas, the American Bar Association in 1912. Throughout his career, Cape tried hundreds of cases and won every civil suit while owning the law books.

In 1960 Cape retired as General Manager and in 1966 moved from his homestead in San Marcos to a nursing facility in Austin. It was that same year Canyon Lake was dedicated.

Many practicing attorneys have said the Southwestern Reporter law books were the most significant reference tools one could own. Maybe that is why former GBRA board member, Ben Bock, Sr., took his son Bennie Bock, II, to look at buying the law books from Cape's daughter, Mary Louise Thorton. Bennie

Bock said some of the volumes were found still lying open on Cape's desk in his San Marcos law office.

Thorton sold the books to Bock at a bargain price of \$1.00 each. He was honored to have his very own copies of this collection and no more endless lines to wait in at the law libraries to check out just one volume. Throughout time, Bock realized he had purchased much more than just an infamous man's law library. He felt he had purchased a piece of history.

"I used the Southwestern Reporters in my New Braunfels law practice for 41 years and as Texas State Representative," said Bock. "And although I purchased the books from Cape's daughter, I always felt a keen sense of trusteeship to him every time I picked one up. Cape became my silent mentor."

Cape and Bock had more than practicing law in common. They both owned the same prestigious collection of law books. Today this same set, with 'Edward M. Cape' embossed on many of the spines, can be found in Bruce Wasinger's office, where he serves as GBRA's legal counsel.

While receiving his juris doctorate degree from Washburn Law School in Kansas (1977), and a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Fort Hays State University in Kansas (1974), Wasinger remembers using Southwestern Reporters. "I'm the last generation of lawyers that did

not use computers," said Wasinger. "Now you can purchase these books on discs through the internet."

In Wasinger's office, the first 50 issues are stored in an antique wood and glass bookshelf donated by Robert Thorton, former Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust board member, and grandson to Edward M. Cape.

Bennie Bock II



Photo by Connie Rothe



Ed Cape

Photo GBRA Archives

GBRA *Training & Licenses*

Gary Asbury of General attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Ed Boettner of Shadow Creek completed Managing Your (FOG) Fats, Roots, Oils, and Grease, and TEEX DEM Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Technician training.

Angel Castillo, Jr. of Lockhart WWTP attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training and TEEX DEM Hazardous Materials Technician Refresher training.

Jason Davidson of RUD TEEX DEM Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Technician

Curtis Davis of Victoria WWTP undertook Hazardous Materials Technician Refresher training, Confined Space Safety training, Water Resources AWWA Disinfection By-products Webinar, United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training, and training for Water Well and Pump Performance.

Jason Eeds of Lockhart WWTP attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training and TEEX DEM Hazardous Materials Technician Refresher training.

Clarissa Frnka of the Lab participated in the Webinar Disinfection By-Products, Right-to-Know training, and Metrohm.

Richard Gaona of Calhoun Canal attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

David Garcia of Port Lavaca WTP attended the Annual Hurricane Conference.

Leroy Garza of San Marcos WTP attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Michael Gerdes of RUD completed the TEEX DEM Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Technician course.

Richard Gonzales of Lockhart WTP attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training and TEEX DEM Hazardous Materials Technician Refresher training.

Lorenzo Gonzales, Jr. of Victoria WWTP Hazardous Materials Technician Refresher training Confined Space Safety training.

Curtis Gosnell of Calhoun Canal attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Ronald Gosnell of the Canal RWSS attended the Annual Hurricane Conference.

Wallis Gudgell of Western Canyon WTP attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Barbara Gunn of General completed training for Effectively Handling Employee Complaints.

Dennis Gunter of Victoria WWTP attended Hazardous Materials Technician Refresher training.

Daphne Harder of General completed Effectively Handling Employee Complaints.

Jeffery Hebert of Western Canyon WTP attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Michael Helmke of Hydro attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Roland Henry, Jr. of Hydro attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Fred Hernandez of Shadow Creek obtained his "D" Wastewater License and attended trainings for Trenching and Shoring and TEEX DEM Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Technician.

Greg Holt of Hydro attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Juan Juarez of Hydro attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

David Kenda of Hydro attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Joey Kisiah of Port Lavaca WTP completed TRWA Safety training.

Carl Korth of Coletto Reservoir attended the Annual Hurricane Conference.

Wilfred Korth, Jr. of Coletto Recreation attended the Texas Illegal Dumping Resource Center.

Allen Lawson of Western Canyon WTP attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Jose Leal, Jr. of Lockhart WTP attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training and Water Well and Pump Performance training.

Chris Lewis of General attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Josephine Longoria of the Lab participated in the Webinar Disinfection By-Products, Right-to-Know training, and Alamo Chapter training and the TOC Theory Shimadzu Laboratory Topics: Old and New Seminar.

Brian Lyssy Lab attended Right-to-Know training.

David Maltony of Hydro attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

John Manchack, Jr. of Hydro attended the Dam Safety Workshop.

Steven Maricle of Hydro attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Marlon McAdams of Coletto Reservoir attended the Annual Hurricane Conference.

Shane McAdams of Coletto Reservoir attended the Annual Hurricane Conference.

Kylie McNabb of the Lab attended Right-to-Know training.

James Medrano of Hydro attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Eduardo Montana of Lockhart WWTP completed the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training and TEEX DEM

Hazardous Materials Technician Refresher training.

John Moryl of Canyon Hydro attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training and the Dam Safety Workshop.

Reagan Ploetz of Hydro attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Emmylou Roberts of the Lab participated in the Webinar Disinfection By-Products, the Webinar Think Reliability, Procedures not Followed Part 2, Right-to-Know training and Metrohm.

Alan Schneider of Coletto Reservoir attended the Annual Hurricane Conference.

Michael Schultze of Hydro attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Allan Smith of Buda WWTP completed the TEEX DEM Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Technician training.

John Urban of Coletto Reservoir attended the Annual Hurricane Conference.

Michael Urrutia of Water Resources attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Teresa Van Booven of Water Resources attended Texas Watershed Planning short course.

Juan Vasquez of Western Canyon WTP attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training.

Dennis Walker of Buda WWTP attended the United Rentals Trenching and Shoring training and TEEX DEM Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Technician training.

David Weaver of Victoria WWTP completed Hazardous Materials Technician Refresher training and Confined Space Safety training.

Herbert Wittliff of Calhoun Canal attended the Annual Hurricane Conference.

William Young of Victoria WWTP completed Hazardous Materials Technician Refresher training.

The information for the trainings and licenses section was compiled by Daphne Harder, Human Resources Department



Henry "Dolly" Mikesh, Jr. Dies

GBRA's oldest retiree, Henry "Dolly" Mikesh, Jr. died July 10, 2010, at the age of 98.

During his career, Mikesh was promoted to head operator at Lake Gonzales (H-4) and moved his wife, Viola, and their three children from the city of Gonzales to live next door to the H-4 powerhouse.

In 1965, Mikesh moved his family to Seguin when he was promoted as gate construction supervisor. He assisted in the operations of hydroelectric lakes; H-4, Placid, Nolte, McQueeney, and Lake Wood. During his last years at GBRA, Mikesh oversaw all gate repairs at lakes Nolte and Placid dams. After 40 years of employment, Mikesh retired from GBRA's Hydro Division in December of 1976.



THE TRUST

GBR Trust Garner National Accreditation

Photo by Janet Thome



(L-R) Todd Votteler and Roger Welder

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, announced in August that the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust (GBR Trust) was awarded accredited status, making the GBR Trust the first accredited land trust in the state of Texas.

“Accredited land trusts meet national quality standards for protecting important natural

places and working lands forever,” said Commission Executive Director Tammara Van Ryn. “The accreditation seal lets the public know that the accredited land trust has undergone an extensive, external review of the governance and management of its organization and the systems and policies it uses to protect land.”

“Accredited status demonstrates our commitment to permanent land conservation,” says Janaé Reneaud, Executive Director. “Our land trust is a stronger organization today having gone through the rigorous accreditation program.”

Questions and Answers about the Accreditation Process

Q: What does the accreditation seal mean to GBR Trust and the public?

A: The accreditation seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation. It recognizes organizations for meeting national standards for excellence, upholding the public trust and ensuring that conservation efforts are permanent. The accreditation seal provides the assurance of quality and permanence of land conservation, landowners and supporters are looking for and publicly recognize a land trust’s ability to protect important natural places and working lands forever.

Q: Why did you go through the accreditation process if it was so challenging?

A: The answer is easy—for you—the landowners, donors, and supporters! Accreditation will increase public awareness, provide confidence in the GBR Trust as landowners consider with what land trust to work, and enable the GBR Trust to better preserve the land in perpetuity. Accreditation provides recognition that the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust is engaged in the long-term protection of the land for the public’s interest. The process gave the GBR Trust the opportunity to review and implement policies that will help streamline their operations and lead to more effective land conservation.

Q: What was it like going through the accreditation process?

A: The accreditation process has been a long and laborious process for a small staff, volunteers and a volunteer Board of Trustees. The work was tedious and overwhelming, but the process provided an examination of our organization as we have never done before.

Q: What is the significance of being the first accredited land trust in Texas?

A: Roger Welder, GBR Trust Board President, stated being an accredited organization shows that the GBR Trust is a professional and transparent organization that is working to put the best product forward for our landowners and supporters. It also shows that we are leading the way in Texas for meeting the national standards for excellence.

Attaining national accreditation through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission gives the GBR Trust the right to bear this seal on its publications and printed materials.



SAFETY & WELLNESS

Reducing the Risk of Falls

Falls are serious workplace issues and are the one of the most common causes of injuries on the job.

Often times, workplace falls are not reported because they are perceived as minor or embarrassing incidents.

According to National Safety Council literature, falls are the second leading cause of death in the workplace and account for almost 15 percent of occupational deaths. Falls also are the leading cause of non-fatal workplace injuries. The following are some ways to reduce the risk of falls in the workplace and at home:

- Keep aisles, stairs and walkways clutter free
- Use lights when walking in the dark even in familiar places
- Take one stair at a time and use handrails
- Scan ahead when walking
- Watch your foot placement on slippery surfaces
- Post proper warning signage after mopping, buffing or waxing floors
- Don't text message, talk on the phone, or read when walking
- Ensure safe angles when using ladders
- Report falls to prevent future injuries



Ducks Unlimited, GBR Trust Forge Partnership

A partnership can accomplish amazing work in the field of wildlife habitat restoration.

In the winter of 2008, a landowner in Calhoun County donated a conservation easement on part of his land to the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust. A few months later, Ducks Unlimited (DU) officials approached GBR Trust staff to discuss working together to use the value of the donated easement for restoration work in coastal counties, as the value of the conservation easement represented “conservation value” that could be leveraged to obtain grant funding for conservation work.

The landowner, DU and the GBR Trust collaborated and submitted two grant applications to the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA).

The first grant, in the amount of \$1 million, was awarded in March 2009. It facilitates more than 3,200 acres of private lands, wetland

restoration and enhancement along the Texas Coast through the Texas Prairie Wetlands Project. The grant also will provide for wetland enhancement work at Mad Island Wildlife Management Area in Matagorda County and the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge in Cameron County.

A second grant of \$1 million is undergoing the review process, and if approved, will provide for 3,000 acres of private lands wetland restoration and enhancement. That grant could also facilitate a topographical survey and 25 acres of wetland enhancement on the GBR Trust Preserve in Calhoun County.

Successful conservation on a landscape scale is a collective effort that is possible only with the involvement and commitment of dedicated partners. However, one person can make a difference, and in this case, the desire and effort of one landowner to preserve his land, united 13 conservation partners that provided for more than 7,600 acres of conservation work throughout the Texas Coast.





Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority
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Mark Your Calendar

Sept. 11, 1010

KIDFISH Lake Wood
Gonzales, TX

<http://www.kidfish.com>

Sept. 12-15, 2010

25th Annual WaterReuse Symposium
Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C.

<http://www.watereuse.org/conferences/symposium/25>

Sept. 15, 2010

GBRA Board Meeting
River Annex Bldg., Seguin, TX

Oct. 13-15, 2010

Texas Water Conservation Association Fall Meeting
Crowne Plaza Riverwalk, San Antonio, TX
<http://www.twca.org/meetings.html>

Oct. 9, 2010

GBRA Pecan Fest
Nolte Island, Seguin, TX

Oct. 20, 2010

GBRA Board Meeting
River Annex Bldg., Seguin, TX

Nov. 1-3, 2010

Texas AWWA, Water Utility Management Institute
Hawthorn Suites Hotel, Arlington, TX
<http://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventId=884416>

Nov. 10-12, 2010

National Water Resources Association, 79th Annual Conference
Hotel Del Coronado, San Diego, CA
<http://www.nwra.org/upcoming.php>

Nov. 13-17, 2010

Fifth National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine
Habitat Restoration
Galveston Island Convention Center, Galveston, TX
<https://www.estuaries.org/conference/>

Nov. 17, 2010

GBRA Board Meeting
River Annex Bldg., Seguin, TX

July 4, 2010, at Coletto Creek Park

Photo by Clifford J. Barbour

