Section 1: Purpose and Organization of the Plan

Contents

Purpose

Ever since the early settlers were drawn to the picturesque Guadalupe River Basin, the region has been plagued by cycles of drought and flooding and other disasters. As C. H. Spink writes in his letter of 1936,

> "That is the way these cycles work. There will always be a drought more severe than any of record, and likewise there will always be a flood greater than any so record, so be prepared."

That was the case in the week around Independence Day, 2002, when Central Texas experienced torrential rains totaling 2-3 feet and causing major flooding. Nine fatalities were reported and some 48,000 homes were damaged. Extensive evacuations and water rescues were conducted. At least 5,000 people were instructed to evacuate their homes -- many more fled voluntarily. As many as 25 shelters were opened to accommodate residents displaced from their homes. Numerous flood-related power and telephone outages were reported. Several water treatment plants were inundated and rendered inoperable and there was extensive impact to livestock and agricultural equipment. The Governor indicated damages might be as high as $1 billion. During this event millions of gallons of water cascaded over the spillway at Canyon Dam and into river-side homes.

In that time of crisis, communities all along the Guadalupe River Basin pulled together. Local emergency personnel, elected officials and various government agencies, the media, businesses and organizations worked around the clock to provide critical communications and services to protect lives and property. After the waters receded, consistent with its mission and goals, the Guadalupe-

Blanco River Authority (GBRA or "the Authority") brought together cities and counties in the Basin to work together on ways of reducing future damage to life and property from all hazards.

"Yes, I know about the drought in Texas. I keep up on things back there through my Fort Worth office and the technical magazines. Right here I want to issue a warning. As soon as this dry spell breaks, look out for the damndest flood that ever hit the Guadalupe. That is the way those cycles work. There will always be a drought more severe than any of record, and likewise there will always be a flood greater than any of record, so be prepared."

Excerpt from a letter from C. H. Spink, October 15, 1936

The mission of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority is to protect, conserve, reclaim and steward the resources of a ten-county District in order to ensure and promote quality of life for those they serve. One of the goals of the Authority is to ensure (1) a supply of quality water for both immediate and long term needs of the District by development of all feasible alternatives; and (2) development of flood management measures.

Consistent with that mission, GBRA took the lead in sponsoring the development of a comprehensive Hazard Mitigation Plan for the cities and counties in a seven-county area. Although GBRA's District covers a ten-County area, the 26 jurisdictions listed in Table 1-2 are included in this Plan along with GBRA.

The Plan is intended to serve as a basis for future funding that may become available from state or federal grants and technical assistance programs. It will enable the participating jurisdictions and GBRA to take advantage of mitigation grant opportunities as soon as they arise.

Potential funding sources for implementation are identified for each proposed mitigation action to be taken, and include general revenues, bonds, and grants. Participating jurisdictions will seek to obtain the necessary funding to implement the mitigation actions set forth. In the era of increased demands and constrained resources at all levels of government, however, the lack of resources – especially from external sources – may hamper the ability of the jurisdictions to implement some mitigation actions identified in the Plan or to implement them within the timeframe specified.

Seven counties are participating in this hazard mitigation planning effort (Kendall, Caldwell, Gonzales, DeWitt, Victoria, Calhoun, and Refugio) along with GBRA. To give a comprehensive overview of the Guadalupe River Basin in its entirety, however, some background information is also included on Hays, Comal, and Guadalupe Counties.

TABLE 1-1.   Jurisdictions included in the
Hazard Mitigation Action Plan for the Guadalupe River Basin

Upper Basin	Middle Basin	Lower Basin

Kendall County
   City of Boerne
	Caldwell County
	   City of Lockhart
	   City of Luling
	   City of Martindale
	DeWitt County
	   City of Cuero
	   City of Nordheim
	   City of Yoakum
	   City of Yorktown
	Gonzales County
	   City of Gonzales
	   City of Nixon
	   City of Waelder
		Calhoun County
		   City of Point Comfort
		   City of Port Lavaca
		   City of Seadrift
		Refugio County
		   City of Austwell
		   City of Bayside
		   Town of Refugio
		   City of Woodsboro
		Victoria County
		   City of Victoria

For purposes of this Plan, GBRA is also included as a Special District, with mitigation actions specific to GBRA.

Hazard mitigation is any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from all hazards. This Hazard Mitigation Action Plan ("Plan") was prepared by H2O Partners, Inc. of Austin, Texas on behalf of the River Authority and the twenty-six participating jurisdictions. It is intended as a blueprint for the future. It is aimed at making the Guadalupe River Basin more disaster-resistant by reducing or eliminating the long-term risks to loss of life and property damage from the full range of disasters. This Plan is designed to help build sustainable communities that, when confronted by natural or man-caused disasters, will sustain fewer losses and recover more quickly. It is also intended to:

- minimize disruption to Basin communities following a disaster;

- streamline disaster recovery by articulating actions to be taken before a disaster strikes, to reduce or eliminate future damage;

- serve as a basis for future funding that may become available through grant and technical assistance programs offered by state or Federal governments. The Plan will enable Basin communities to take advantage of rapidly developing mitigation grant opportunities as they arise; and

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- ensure that Basin cities and counties maintain their eligibility for the full range of future Federal disaster relief. After November 1, 2004, certain forms of Federal mitigation assistance for projects will be available only to cities and counties that have a FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan in place.

Organization

The next two sections of this Plan, "The Planning Process" and "The Basin at a Glance," provide background. Section 2 addresses how the Plan was prepared and who was involved in planning. Section 3 profiles the area's geography, population, economy, land use, government, and disaster declaration history.

Section 4 identifies the major natural and man-made hazards that have affected and may again affect the Basin and describes the people and property at risk from these hazards. Section 5 conveys the vision statement, mitigation goals, and objectives that guide the Plan. The goals are general guidelines that articulate a desired end state. They are expressed as policy statements of global visions. Objectives are specific, measurable, and define the strategies or implementation steps to attain the identified goals.

Sections 5 through 16 discuss each of the natural and man-caused hazards. The Plan addresses why each hazard is a threat and profiles each hazard in terms of its severity of impact, frequency of occurrence, hours of warning time, and existing warning systems. If the hazard has a geographic boundary, it is identified and mapped if possible. Data on the property and number of people at risk from each hazard are presented, along with the history of hazard events in the Basin. Finally, potential dollar losses are presented.

Section 18 discusses previously implemented mitigation actions. These include Federal projects such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Public Assistance Projects, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Projects, and other Federal mitigation projects; and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' studies, plans, and projects. It also includes plans, studies and projects of the Texas Water Development Board, and local plans, ordinances, and inspection and permitting processes.

Section 19 contains action plans to mitigate the hazards identified in Sections 5 to16. Section 19 contains Basin-wide mitigation action plans to be implemented collectively by the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and the participating jurisdictions. It also includes mitigation actions specific to GBRA. Section 20 contains mitigation action plans for each city and county to undertake within their individual jurisdictions. The mitigation action plans describe each mitigation action, the hazard addressed, the estimated costs, benefits, organization responsible for overseeing implementation,

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implementation schedule, objectives the action is designed to achieve, overall priority, and potential funding sources.

Appendix A defines acronyms used in this Plan. Appendix B gives detailed information about fifty-four potential Federal and state sources that may help to fund implementation of the mitigation actions. Information is also given about the programs offered by potential funding sources, including the authority for the program, source of funds, purpose, eligible activities, conditions, hazards covered, matching requirements, application deadlines, and points of contact for further information. Appendix C reports the results of a web-based Hazard Survey to elicit information from the public on issues of concern about hazard mitigation. Appendix D identifies members of the hazard mitigation team who developed this Plan. Appendix E includes the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Review Crosswalk for FEMA Region VI and the State of Texas. Appendix F contains the Resolutions of the GBRA Board of Directors and of the jurisdictional authorities approving this Plan (forthcoming upon adoption).