



NEWS

GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY
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GBRA to lower area lakes for flood 'reconnaissance'

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SEGUIN-The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) in cooperation with Guadalupe County, the City of Seguin, the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife, the General Land Office and local lake-wide homeowners' associations will lower Lakes Dunlap, McQueeney, Placid and Nolte from four to six feet effective 7:00 a.m. on Saturday January 23.

During the 'reconnaissance' effort, authorized personnel will evaluate the lakes for water safety, identify obstructions, mark water hazards where possible and determine the potential for state or federal funding to remove debris and obstructions, said GBRA director of project development David Welsch.

To insure public safety, the GBRA Board of Directors restricted the use of motor-powered watercraft on the hydro lakes from November 18, 1998 through February 15, 1999. Welsch said next week's reconnaissance is part of the process that will eventually lead to reopening the lakes for public use.

During the reconnaissance and lake lowering period, only authorized persons with watercraft displaying a limited use permit issued by GBRA will be allowed on the lakes, said Welsch.

Lowering of the lakes will begin with Lake Nolte at 7 p.m. Thursday, January 21 and proceed upriver to Lake Placid, Lake McQueeney and Lake Dunlap. During this period, lake flows will be approximately 2,600 cubic feet per second (cfs). Welsch said this rate presents strong currents but will not increase elevations in any of the lakes during the reconnaissance project. Canyon Reservoir releases will continue to be in the range of 300-500 cfs. In case of heavy rainfall or other severe weather, the event will be rescheduled for the following weekend.

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“Lake residents may want to secure their boats in lifts or remove them from the water beginning Thursday, January 21,” said Welsch. “We also encourage property owners to inspect their shorelines, boat docks and retaining walls for future repairs, perform neighborhood cleanup activities and photograph obstructions and damage that would normally be underwater.”

The refilling process will begin at Lake Dunlap and proceed downriver, with lakes returning to normal levels as follows:

Dunlap	1:00 p.m. Sunday, January 24
McQueeney	7:00 p.m. Monday, January 25
Placid	1:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 26
Nolte	1:00 a.m. Wednesday, January 27

Welsch said the Action Plan Committee of the Lake Management Group, with the assistance of GBRA, has spent several weeks developing the process for Saturday’s lake reconnaissance.

The City of Seguin, Springs Hill Water Supply Corporation and the Canyon Regional Water Authority have also been notified regarding the lake lowerings and reconnaissance.

During the reconnaissance, a team leader will coordinate efforts on each lake, including the potential use of an air boat, photography, and support personnel and equipment. A global position finder (gps) will be used to fix the latitude and longitude of major obstructions, and buoys will be installed as visual markers of their location. “It is unlawful to remove or damage these buoys,” said Welsch.

After evaluating the conditions at each lake, consideration will be given to another lake lowering process before spring to remove major obstructions, mark additional debris and allow shoreline cleanup by landowners.

Results of the reconnaissance findings will be helpful in making recommendations to the GBRA Board of Directors regarding future use of the lakes relating to public safety.

According to GBRA general manager Bill West, the amount of funding available for flood debris removal and the specific areas that will qualify must still be determined. “We have been in contact with National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) officials to determine the availability of funding and will make a joint application with

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Guadalupe County officials for local sponsorship of debris removal. A local sponsor must provide 25% matching funds for any grant money received, and the extent of funding and areas that qualify for cleanup are determined by NRCS after reviewing the application.”

West said cleanups on other segments of the Guadalupe and San Marcos Rivers will be coordinated separately.

Early reports indicate that Lakes H-4 and H-5 in Gonzales County are in relatively good shape regarding obstruction and debris. That information, plus the difficulty involved in regulating flows for all six Hydro Lakes at one time, led to the decision to concentrate the reconnaissance effort on the upper four lakes in Guadalupe County.

“Based on our experience with these lakes, we will immediately evaluate Lakes H-4 and H-5 with the goal of returning all lakes to public recreation use as quickly as possible,” said Welsch.

Questions about individual lake efforts should be addressed to the following representatives of local lake homeowners associations:

Preserve Lake Dunlap Association	E. J. Arnold	606-1648
Friends of Lake McQueeney	Peggy McKanna	303-7993
Citizens United for Lake Placid	Robert Stuart	303-3309
Lake Nolte (Nolte Homeowners)	Raquel Galle	379-0100

For general information, contact David Welsch or Allen Ognoskie at GBRA at (830) 379-5822.

Once the findings have been gathered and reviewed, a public meeting will be announced to present the results and recommendations, and to receive public input. This is expected to occur within two weeks after the reconnaissance project.