



# NEWS

GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY  
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## **NRCS Flood Debris Removal Project “On Track”**

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SEGUIN-Contractors hired to remove and dispose of flood debris from four lakes from New Braunfels through Seguin are making good progress since beginning work on May 5.

“Barring weather-related delays or other unforeseen circumstances, the contractors should complete the water-related portion of their work in time to meet the goal of opening the Guadalupe River from upper Lake Dunlap through Lake Nolte (Meadow Lake) to the public by Memorial Day weekend” said David Welsch, director of project development for the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority.

The NRCS project is removing natural debris deposited in the river by the flood of October 1998. Contractors are separating the debris into several groups, including dry materials that can be burned according to Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) rules and regulations and non-burnable items that will be hauled to landfills or other approved sites.

According to Welsch, before any burning could take place GBRA had to obtain authorization from TNRCC to conduct outdoor burning of flood debris in accordance with current state regulations, locate appropriate sites and review burn requirements with the contractors.

“All local burning will continue to take place at approved sites outside the city limits of Seguin,” said Welsch. “We are receiving excellent cooperation from everyone involved in the process.”

Welsch said GBRA has also made some changes to burn procedures as a result of a citizen complaint to TNRCC last weekend. “NRCS debris removal work takes place Monday through Saturday, but contractors are allowed to do private cleanup work on Sundays. It appears that a contractor noticed some items that did not belong with

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debris that was being burned and removed them to the non-burn pile, which accidentally caught fire later. This was the incident that was reported. We assisted TNRCC with their inspection of the complaint and will be implementing their recommendations as well as adding some of our own," said Welsch.

GBRA is providing on-site inspectors and will continue to meet with contractors and monitor their burn procedures. Other changes include burning further away from the water, improvements in debris sorting methods and increased supervision of burns near homes and recreation areas.

Area lakes were lowered in January to conduct a debris reconnaissance, and the portion of the river to be cleaned was divided into seven segments for contract bidding purposes. At their April 21 board meeting, GBRA directors awarded contracts to Mid-Gulf Industrial of Houston for Lakes Dunlap and McQueeney; DRC Incorporated of Mobile, Alabama for the river portions below Lake Dunlap and Lake Nolte; U. S. Demolition, Inc. of Houston for Lake Placid; Rimrock Enterprises, Inc. of Austin for the river portion from Lake Placid to Glen Cove; and Regency Construction, Inc. of Slidell, Louisiana for the area from Glen Cove to Lake Nolte.

Welsch said GBRA has requested input from the various lake homeowners' associations as to whether the lakes should be kept lower for a period of time following inspection of the contractors' debris removal work in order to allow shoreline repairs by homeowners, or whether they should be opened for immediate use following the cleanup.

"We'll know more in the next week as we track the contractors' progress and get feedback from the homeowners' associations," said Welsch. "We appreciate the public's patience and cooperation during this long and complicated process to obtain NRCS approval. We are anxious to finish removing debris from this area so that it can be opened for public recreation and use as soon as possible."

The approximately \$1.2-million debris removal project is funded through a Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) program that provides up to 75 percent of the project cost, with the remaining 25 percent coming from local sponsors. Local commitments include \$50,000 from the City of Seguin, \$50,000 from the City of New Braunfels, a pledge of up to \$400,000 from Guadalupe County, and \$100,000 plus project administration responsibility from GBRA.