



NEWS

GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY
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GBRA begins replacement of second fabridam bag at Salt Water Barrier

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SEGUIN-Tuesday, October 5, 1999. On Monday, October 11 the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority will begin replacing the last of two inflatable rubber fabridam 'bags' at the Guadalupe River Diversion Dam and Salt Water Barrier, according to GBRA manager of water resources operations Bryan Serold. The first fabridam, located on the Refugio County side of the barrier, was replaced in December 1997.

The second fabridam bag is located on the Calhoun County side of the Salt Water Barrier near Tivoli at river mile 10, between Calhoun and Refugio Counties. GBRA will place steel stop logs on the upstream and downstream sides of the existing fabridam so that water inside the structure can be pumped out before the new bag is installed. Weather permitting, the project will take four to five weeks, said Serold.

The Calhoun County side of the Salt Water Barrier will be closed to boating traffic during installation of the second bag. The Refugio County side of the barrier will remain open during this time. However, diversion of all river flow through the Refugio County side will create swift and dangerous currents that can pose a potential hazard to boaters attempting to navigate through the barrier.

Boaters are warned to exercise extreme caution when passing through the open portion of the Salt Water Barrier structure, and should pay close attention to all the warning signs, lights and other devices that are in place. "GBRA is recommending that all boats stay clear of the barrier until installation of the new bag is complete," said Serold.

The new fabridam was designed by N. M. Imbertson & Associates, Inc. of Burbank, California and manufactured by Sumitomo Electric Industries, Limited in Osaka, Japan.

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GBRA begins replacing second fabridam bag
October 5, 1999
Page 2 of 2.

The Salt Water Barrier was constructed in 1965 by GBRA and is designed to allow river flows to pass through under normal conditions. The structure is an important part of the GBRA Water Resource Division's diversion system that delivers raw water from the Guadalupe River for industrial, municipal and agricultural uses in Calhoun County. The barrier consists of two 50-foot long nylon and rubber inflatable fabridam bags mounted on a concrete platform. When not in operation, which is about 90% of the time, the bags are deflated and lie flat on the bottom of the river.

According to Serold, the river's normal elevation and flow rate keep salt water at the coast, where it belongs. However, when river levels and flows are extremely low, or in the event of a hurricane and high tides, it is possible for salt water to move upstream. If it enters the main diversion canal located just upstream of the barrier, salt water could contaminate sources of municipal and industrial water supply. To prevent this, the fabridam bags are inflated with river water, forming a barrier to protect the area's water.