NEWS- DRAFT

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GBRA and Southwest Texas State University pursue Clean Rivers Program water quality studies

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SEGUIN-

The transfer of program administration for the Texas Watch water quality monitoring program from the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) to Southwest Texas State University (SWT) has created opportunities for cooperative studies with the university, according to Debbie Magin, director of water quality services for the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority.

GBRA has been an official Texas Watch Partner since 1991, when the Texas Legislature enacted the Clean Rivers Program to study historic and current water quality conditions in river and coastal basins throughout the state in order to prevent pollution and protect water quality. River authorities and other agencies contract to conduct on-going water quality assessments and develop programs to meet future water quality needs.

“Texas Watch encourages individuals and groups to participate in local water quality monitoring by teaching them to collect and test water from sample sites in their communities,” said Magin. “The data collected by these dedicated volunteers is returned to GBRA’s Regional Laboratory where it is combined with data from throughout the river basin and delivered to SWT for review and analysis with other information from around the state.”

Magin said GBRA will continue to conduct training sessions for volunteers, including school science classes and organizations in the Guadalupe River Basin, and is also excited about several cooperative studies currently in process with SWT.

One project involves a joint study between GBRA and the Edwards Aquifer Research Data Center (EARDC), located on the SWT campus in San Marcos to determine if cryptosporidium and giardia [are

present] [can be detected] in …… These micro-organisms are usually removed during the water treatment disinfection process but

Another project involves an evaluation of the GBRA hydroelectric lakes (which ones?) as part of a 'pilot' water quality management study sponsored by GBRA, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, TNRCC and the Texas Water Development Board.

This Instream Flow and Incremental Methodology (IFIM) study will examine flow patterns, modeling and productivity at various sites throughout the Guadalupe River Basin through the year 2000. …… Dr. Al Grover, Professor of _____ at SWT is studying Lakes _____ and _____ to determine……..

"We hope to ……, said Magin, which will benefit ……

Magin said GBRA has a long history of working to protect water quality in the Guadalupe River Basin. "In 1970, we were asked by the State of Texas to conduct a Public Law 84-660 3(C) project known as the Guadalupe River Basin Water Quality Management Study. This project, which was completed in 1972, was the first basin-wide water quality analysis completed in the United States."

The GBRA Regional Laboratory, located in the Seguin administrative office, was created in 1972 as a direct result of the study, which demonstrated the need for a central facility that could perform vital water quality services.

Today, the Regional Laboratory it is a state-of-the-art facility equipped with a variety of equipment including a Perkin-Elmer 5100ZL Graphite Furnace/Flame Atomic Absorption Unit to test water for the presence of lead and 14 other heavy metals, and a Techman-Dohrmann Total Organic Carbon Analyzer.

The Laboratory conducts chemical and bacteriological analysis and testing of potable water, wastewater, and environmental samples for cities, water districts, industries, consulting firms and private individuals. It also offers technical assistance and support for water and wastewater plants operated by GBRA.

According to Magin, GBRA intends to continue its participation in water quality planning initiatives and monitoring programs. "We are proud of our strong working relationships with federal, state and local government agencies, including a major cooperative venture among river authorities, state agencies, environmental, and fishing interests that resulted in the creation of House Bill 3079, passed by the 1999 Texas Legislature.

This legislation directs the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, TNRCC and the Texas Department of Agriculture to draft a state-wide aquatic vegetation management plan. In addition to establishing a state plan, HB 3079 designates local entities, including river authorities, as local management coordinators that must be notified about any aquatic management control measures implemented in their basin.

GBRA recently adopted its own policy guidelines governing the treatment of nuisance aquatic vegetation in lakes and reservoirs operated by GBRA to protect water access, quality, and public health while balancing the needs of a healthy aquatic ecosystem. The guidelines include a Board Policy, a staff Management Directive and a 1999 vegetation management plan for GBRA's Coleto Creek Reservoir.

Regional Laboratory staff also completed a two-year Clean Rivers Program study by testing three sample sites on the Guadalupe River to determine the possible impacts of poultry operations on water quality. The final results showed only a slight elevation in chemicals normally associated with poultry production and determined that this difference was not significant enough to create any concerns for public health.

Water recreation and public health are also an important part of GBRA's overall testing program. "We provide an important service by conducting sampling at ____ sites in the Guadalupe River Basin to develop a water quality index based on parameters that have an impact on contact recreation," said Magin. "In addition, we are expanding our public information effort with links to water quality data, including CRP _____, that will be available very shortly on GBRA's website at www.gbra.org.

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