



NEWS

GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY
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GBRA and GRTU reach Agreement on Canyon Reservoir Permit Amendment

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 17, 2001

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) Board of Directors met in executive session in an emergency called meeting in Seguin at 4 p.m. today. The Board voted in open session to approve a settlement agreement with Guadalupe River Trout Unlimited (GRTU). GRTU approved the agreement at a separate meeting later this evening.

Basically, the agreement provides for minimum daily releases from Canyon Reservoir ‘for each day during the months of May, June, July, August and September of each calendar year during the term of this Contract.’ These releases will only be made “if Canyon Reservoir reaches an elevation greater than 909 feet mean sea level (msl) for any length of time prior to that day during the period between January 1 and September 30 of that year.”

According to GBRA general manager Bill West, “if Mother Nature does not cooperate and the Reservoir elevation is below 909 msl, then these releases will not be made.”

GBRA and GRTU also approved a Joint Motion for Remand to TNRCC that will be presented tomorrow to Administrative Law Judge Mike Rogan of the State Office of Hearing Examiners (SOAH). The motion will return GBRA’s pending Canyon Reservoir Permit Amendment to the jurisdiction of TNRCC Commissioners, who will then be able to consider and approve the amendment that GBRA has been pursuing since it was filed in August 1997.

TNRCC’s staff review of the proposed permit amendment resulted in TNRCC establishing minimum reservoir release rates to support existing aquatic life and habitats. However, GRTU requested party status and higher release rates during hot weather months to guarantee survival of non-native trout stocked below Canyon Dam. The trout are stocked to provide a fly-fishing recreational venue.

More-more-more

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At a TNRCC hearing on May 9, 2001 to consider GBRA's permit amendment, Commissioners denied party status to all except GRTU, requested GRTU and GBRA to try to reach an agreement, and continued the hearing until June 20. At that time, since GBRA and GRTU were still negotiating and had not reached an agreement, Commissioners voted to send the issue to the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) for resolution.

"Since that time, GBRA and GRTU have worked diligently to reach an agreement that would satisfy both parties' concerns while protecting the integrity of the permit amendment," said West. "We are delighted to have been able to accomplish this goal. We look forward to receiving TNRCC approval of the Canyon permit amendment so that we can move forward with the Western Canyon Water Project to bring water to the people and communities who need it."

West said the amendment will increase Canyon Reservoir's permitted delivery amount from 50,000 acre-feet per year to 90,000 acre-feet per year. It is needed now to meet the current and future needs of water-short areas that presently rely on the Edwards or Trinity Aquifers and to supply water to rapidly-growing portions of this region.

This amendment also provides the supply source for several vital regional water supply projects that will benefit numerous entities including the cities of Boerne, Fair Oaks Ranch, Bulverde, New Braunfels, San Marcos, Kyle and Buda.

"The additional water from this amendment has also been an integral part of the last two State Water Plans prepared by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), and is a key element of the Region L Water Plan and the new State Water Plan," said West.

"Canyon Reservoir is the only firm yield water storage and supply structure in the 21-county Region L water planning area," West said. "This permit is so important because it is the first project in the new State Water Plan to reach the permit stage of implementation. It will set the precedent for all future projects that will come before TNRCC for permitting."