NEWS

GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY
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Canyon Seasonal Pool Special Study approved by GBRA Board

Fulfills commitment to Comal County by GBRA

NOTE: Corrections per David Welsch – use this for new release content.

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SEGUIN – Recreation downstream of Canyon Reservoir could benefit from additional water, depending on the results of a Seasonal Pool Special Study to be conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and GBRA.

The GBRA Board of Directors gave its approval today to fund the $120,000 study that is expected to take approximately one year to complete. The study will look at the feasibility, environmental impact, cost and effects of allowing Canyon Reservoir to hold additional water above its normal conservation level of 909 feet elevation mean sea level (msl) during the spring and summer, beginning on April 15 and ending September 12.

The study is one result of the Guadalupe-San Antonio River Basin Reconnaissance Study that was conducted after the October 1998 flood to address a number of potential projects identified by elected officials and other entities.

"We are excited about this effort for several reasons," said GBRA general manager Bill West. "First, we are fulfilling a commitment made to Comal County to conduct this study, ~~as part of their agreement last summer to withdraw opposition to GBRA's Canyon Permit amendment application.~~ In addition, a permanent revision to the Reservoir's flood operating procedures would eliminate the need to negotiate annual agreements with the Corps. It would also provide assurance that water would be available for summer recreation as long as there are early season inflows to allow the storage of water in the reservoir flood pool."

The river stretch below Canyon Dam extending into New Braunfels is one of the most heavily-recreated areas in Texas. Dozens of river-related businesses depend upon adequate flows for tubing, rafting and other activities, and are a significant economic indicator for the local economy.

Local interests have long supported a change to the Corps' operating regulations that would allow additional water to be retained in the Reservoir. For several years, GBRA has participated in ~~a~~ joint ~~study~~ efforts with the Corps, Comal County Commissioners Court and the Water Oriented Recreation District (WORD) to determine the feasibility of such a request.

Last summer, a temporary agreement with the Corps was in effect from April through Labor Day and was contingent upon additional water being available from winter rainfall. ~~During this period, participants in earlier studies reorganized into the Comal Water Committee.~~ Its goal was to ~~extend the amount of water in the seasonal variance for the longest time possible while also providing good release rates for~~ temporarily reserve one or two feet of water in the Reservoir's flood pool for release during the summer months to enhance recreation.

~~The group was chaired by Comal County Judge Danny Scheel with members from Comal County, New Braunfels Utilities, the New Braunfels and Canyon Lake Chambers of Commerce, WORD and the Corps of Engineers. GBRA director of project development David Welsch and chief engineer Tommy Hill were also members of the committee.~~

Canyon Dam and Reservoir is a ~~dual~~ multi-purpose project that provides flood control protection and a dependable source of water to the Guadalupe River Basin. It was completed in 1964 as a cooperative project between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and GBRA, with joint financing between the federal government and GBRA.

The flood control pool and its releases (elevation 909 to 943 feet msl) are managed by the Corps of Engineers. This portion of the reservoir is normally kept empty to capture inflows from heavy rainfall events. Releases are made as soon as possible at rates that will not contribute to downstream flooding.

The conservation pool (elevation 909 msl and below) is managed by GBRA. This water is the sole source of supply for many cities, industries and agricultural producers and provides others with a firm water source during drought.

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