NEWS

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GBRA contracts with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to study Cibolo Creek Watershed

Flood control benefits part of study

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SEGUIN –Directors of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) today approved their agency's participation in the first phase of a three-part Cibolo Creek Watershed Feasibility Study to be conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

GBRA will contribute $169,350 toward the joint project that will also be co-sponsored by the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) and the San Antonio Water System (SAWS). According to GBRA general manager West, if all three study phases are undertaken, GBRA, SAWS and SARA will contribute approximately $2.8-million to the project.

"This is an ideal project for a cooperative study and represents a win-win situation for everyone," said West. "The Cibolo watershed is a dividing line between the Guadalupe and San Antonio river basins. Not only does it contribute to flooding in portions of Bexar and Guadalupe Counties, but it is also a source of significant recharge for the Edwards and/or Trinity Aquifers. The more we know about this watershed, the better we can protect our regional water resources."

Following the 1998 flood, the Corps-Fort Worth district conducted the Guadalupe/San Antonio River Reconnaissance Study to identify potential flood prevention projects that could reduce damages from future flood events. The Cibolo Creek Study was recommended for full evaluation and potential implementation.

The study approach will emphasize 'holistic management' because the Cibolo watershed is a unique combination of rural, suburban and urban elements. It will address overall water resources evaluation, including ecosystem restoration, ash juniper control, recreation, water supply, flood damage reduction and watershed management. Specific work program activities

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will include researching existing hydrologic data and Federal Emergency Management Agency reports for the area; assessing local floodplain management plans under the National Flood Insurance Program; collecting information on current and future physical conditions and land use plans; identifying best management practices "BMP's" to enhance base stream flow and groundwater recharge; and multi-agency partnering to address multi-jurisdictional planning.

This project will complement ongoing efforts with the Seco Creek Project and the Honey Creek State Natural Area.

West said the study will examine the relationship between ground and surface water in the Texas Hill Country, including key infiltration and recharge zones for the Trinity and Edwards Aquifers. The possibility of a combined retention and aquifer recharge dam will also be explored.

"Because of the very fractured geology in this area, it is possible that the Trinity and Edwards Aquifers may be interconnected in some areas. It is vitally important to determine the dynamics of recharge and which aquifer, or possibly both, benefit or are affected, said West."

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