



# NEWS

GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY  
933 EAST COURT STREET SEGUIN, TEXAS 78155 FAX [830] 379-9718

## Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and Aransas National Wildlife Refuge sign supplemental water supply agreement for Myrtle Foester-Whitmire Unit and receive wetlands grant

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, March 30 2005

Contact: Todd Votteler, [830] 379-5822, email [tvotteler@gbra.org](mailto:tvotteler@gbra.org)

Austwell - The executive director of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust (Trust), Todd Votteler, announced today that the Trust, Aransas National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) and the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) have received a \$45,000 grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the Myrtle Foester-Whitmire Unit supplemental water project. It is estimated that in some years, the Whitmire Unit has been used by up to 20% of the waterfowl that winter along the Texas Gulf Coast.

"It is very gratifying to have the USFWS acknowledge the value of this project with a grant," said Votteler. "Establishing a firm water supply for the Whitmire Unit of the Refuge helps us meet our mission of positive stewardship for natural resources and enhances the Calhoun County Canal System, which is a valuable economic development resource. The grant will help us rehabilitate the canals and laterals and control invasive aquatic species that are degrading the habitat within the Whitmire Unit. This is part of the ongoing partnership between the Trust, the Refuge and the GBRA and we look forward to continuing to work together to the benefit of the natural resources and the economy of the area."

"The partnership between the Refuge, GBRA, and the GBRA Trust will provide benefits to the Whitmire Unit of Aransas NWR for years to come," said Refuge Manager Troy Littrell. "I am thrilled to hear that the Trust was awarded this grant and I look forward to working with our new partners to enhance the habitat on this unit of the Refuge."

The announcement was made at the Trust board meeting held at the Refuge in Austwell, Texas. The grant announcement followed the signing of a water supply contract to provide supplemental water to enhance the wetland habitat of the Whitmire Unit. The contract was signed by Bill West, GBRA general manager and Troy Littrell, Refuge manager. "The contract ensures that this Unit of the Refuge will have a firm water supply over the next 5 years and I look forward to working with our partners to extend the commitment well beyond that," said Littrell.

The Trust board also heard presentations from Littrell on the Myrtle Foester-Whitmire Unit, and from Tom Stehn, the whooping crane coordinator for the USFWS, on the 2004-2005 whooping crane population wintering at the Refuge.

At the invitation of the USFWS, the Trust board members also had the opportunity to tour the Refuge to observe the whooping cranes.

“The presentations on the Whitmire Unit and the whooping crane population at Aransas were very informative,” said Pamela Hodges, president of the Trust. “They added so much to the tour that followed and it was such a thrill to have the opportunity to see the whooping cranes in this environment. We were so pleased to hear that the number of cranes wintering here reached a record count of 217 this year – probably the highest number in the last 100 years. It means the wild population has doubled in 18 years.”

In other business a new brochure outlining the various options available for Texas landowners seeking to protect rural property along the Guadalupe River and its tributaries was distributed to the board members and is available from the Trust. Those interested in attending the workshop or obtaining a brochure can contact the Trust at (800) 413-4130 or through [www.gbrtrust.org](http://www.gbrtrust.org).