



Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority
933 E. Court Street, Seguin TX 78155
www.gbra.org

Page 1 of 2
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GBRA and The Aransas Project Collaborate with White Paper for the Benefit of the Guadalupe River System

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AUSTIN — Two entities that spent years in litigation over Guadalupe River water use and how it affects the wintering population of the endangered whooping cranes are finding common ground and today announced that they are collaborating on a white paper. This white paper, between the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) and The Aransas Project (TAP), will bring the two parties together to address human and environmental issues for the benefit of the Guadalupe River system, including San Antonio Bay and Estuary, and to secure funding for studies related to this endeavor.

GBRA General Manager Bill West, Jr., and Jim Blackburn, a TAP board member and former attorney of record for the group, are coming together to formally execute the white paper today to show that both organizations will act in good faith to research and develop effective solutions for the unique Guadalupe River system.

A white paper generally is an authoritative and informative type of document that is used to advocate a particular position or solution for a problem. The importance of this white paper is that it culminates the end of an era of mistrust by providing a way forward on shared stewardship interests and the continued recovery of the majestic whooping crane.

“GBRA and TAP have many differences that were demonstrated in a bitter, long-running lawsuit. But both sides recognize that we are going to have to rise above the fray and start making ‘real’ progress on the issues that affect the Guadalupe River system,” West said, adding, “This white paper represents that commitment to find viable solutions for our mutual interests.”

Blackburn said, “TAP is committed to working with GBRA to find a path forward. This is a difficult step for each of us.” But, he added, “We are used to fighting and distrusting one another. We are now working to develop trust and a positive working relationship.”

Both West and Blackburn want to ensure that stakeholders are able to contribute to the discourse and be involved in the process. Because of that, specific plans for constituent engagement and grant pursuits are being developed for the white paper.

A copy of the white paper will be available from GBRA's news release page of its website.

BACKGROUND:

In March 2010, TAP, using the federal Endangered Species Act, sued the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) in U.S. District Court in Corpus Christi alleging mismanagement of the Guadalupe and San Antonio rivers harmed the whooping cranes that winter at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. GBRA filed to join the case as intervener defendants. In March 2013, the federal judge over the case ruled in favor of TAP. In a June 30, 2014 decision, a United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit panel agreed with defendants that the plaintiff failed to prove its case. After the Fifth Circuit in December 2014 denied a Petition for Rehearing En Banc requested by TAP attorneys, the U.S. Supreme Court decided not to hear the case. As a result, defendants in the case prevailed.

GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY

News releases and other relevant information are regularly posted to GBRA's website, www.gbra.org, on Twitter “@GBRATX”



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Page 2 of 2
February 24, 2016

and on Facebook at the page “GBRA of Texas.”

The GBRA was established by the Texas Legislature in 1933 as a water conservation and reclamation district. GBRA provides stewardship for the water resources in its 10-county statutory district, which begins near the headwaters of the Guadalupe and Blanco rivers, ends at San Antonio Bay, and includes Kendall, Comal, Hays, Caldwell, Guadalupe, Gonzales, DeWitt, Victoria, Calhoun, and Refugio counties.

THE ARANSAS PROJECT

The Aransas Project is alliance of citizens, organizations, businesses and municipalities who want responsible water management of the Guadalupe River Basin to ensure freshwater flows from the Hill Country all the way to the bays. Eco systems that support area fishing tourism, and the winter habitat of the endangered whooping cranes.