

# The Future of San Antonio Bay:

*Could a  
Stakeholder-based,  
Collaborative,  
Non-Regulatory,  
Management Program  
Make a Difference?*

# **Presentation to the Southeast and South Central Texas Regional Watershed Coordination Steering Committee**



By

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# San Antonio Bay System (Guadalupe/San Antonio Estuary)

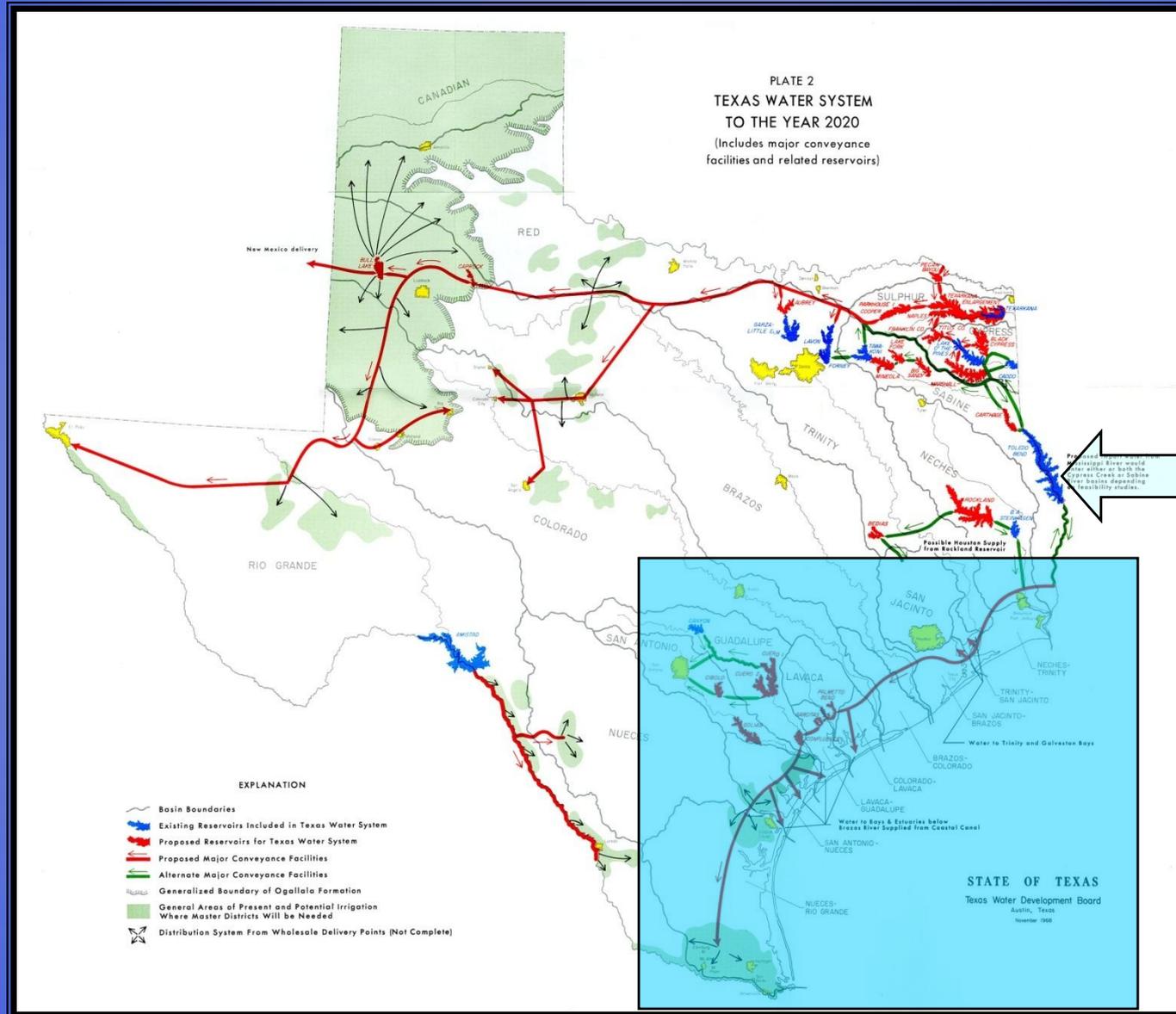


Wikimapia: Courtesy of Norman Boyd, TPWD

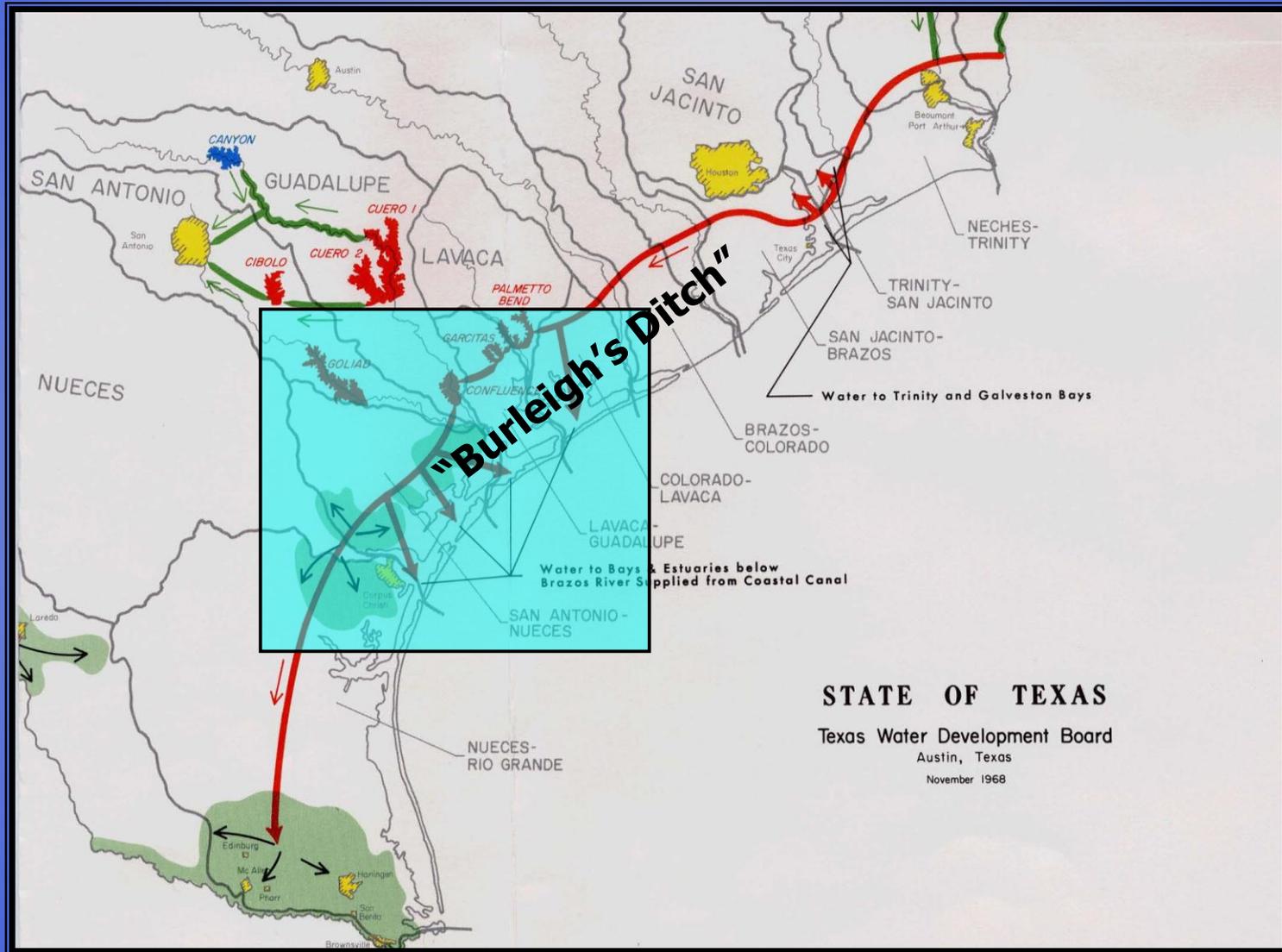
# Some Historical Notes on Estuary Management Initiatives in Texas

- 1968 Texas Water Plan:
  - Included a plan to provide additional 2.5 million acre-feet per year of fresh water for Bays and Estuaries (B&E) in the State Water Plan, including delivery of water via the proposed “Coastal Canal” system
  - Plan turned down, by a narrow margin, at the statewide bond election required to finance the projects

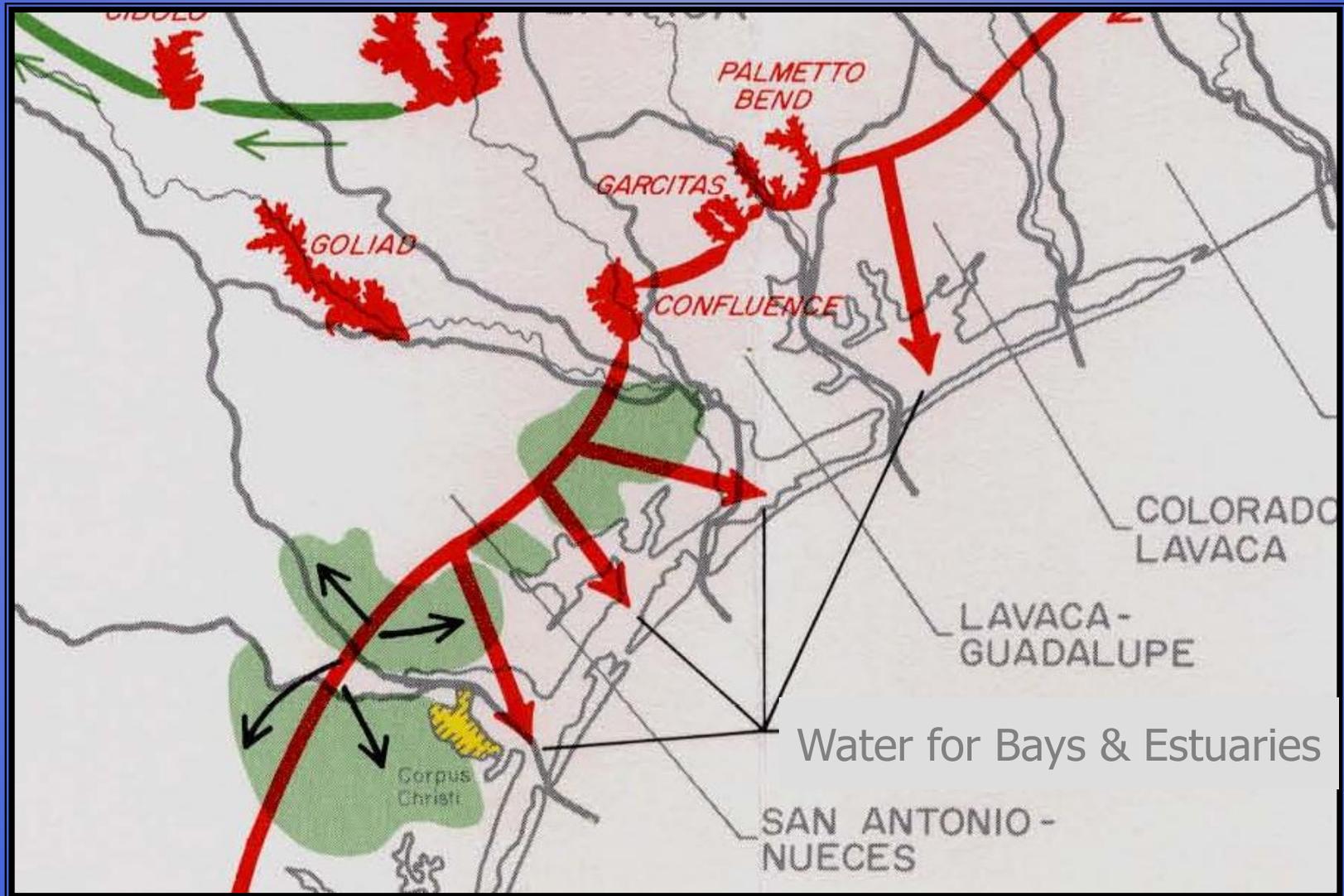
# 1968: The Proposed "Texas Water System"



# Proposed Transfers – Coastal Canal System



# 1968 Water Plan -- Proposed Transfers For Bays & Estuaries



# 1970's: Developing (but not implementing) a Coastal Zone Management Plan for Texas

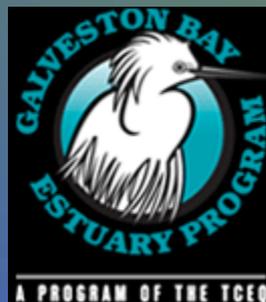
- Texas accepts millions in Federal funds to undertake a comprehensive coastal zone management (CZM) planning program
- By 1978, plan was ready to be submitted to NOAA for approval, positioning Texas to receive further federal financial assistance in the implementation phase
- Governor Dolph Briscoe decided not to submit Texas' CZM Plan for federal review and approval because he felt it infringed on private property rights of coastal landowners
- Governor Bill Clements revised the plan, but ultimately tabled it, where it languished til the 1990's

# 1980's: TX Legislature Moves to Protect Estuaries

- HB2, 69<sup>th</sup> Tx Legislature (1985), amended the Texas Water Code to provide authority for the State to include special condition in new water rights permit in order to protect B&E inflows to maintain an ecologically sound environment
- Also authorized joint studies by TPWD and TWDB to determine the amounts of freshwater necessary to support an ecologically sound environment

# 1990's: A CZM Program and Two National Estuary Programs for TX

- Texas submits and, in 1996, NOAA approves, a Coastal Management Plan (“the Texas Coastal Program”)
- Texas submits nominations to EPA for National Estuary Programs in Galveston Bay and Corpus Christi Bay – both programs are approved and funded (EPA and TNRCC)
- Results in two active NEP's: Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP) and Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program (CBBEP) by the end of the 90's



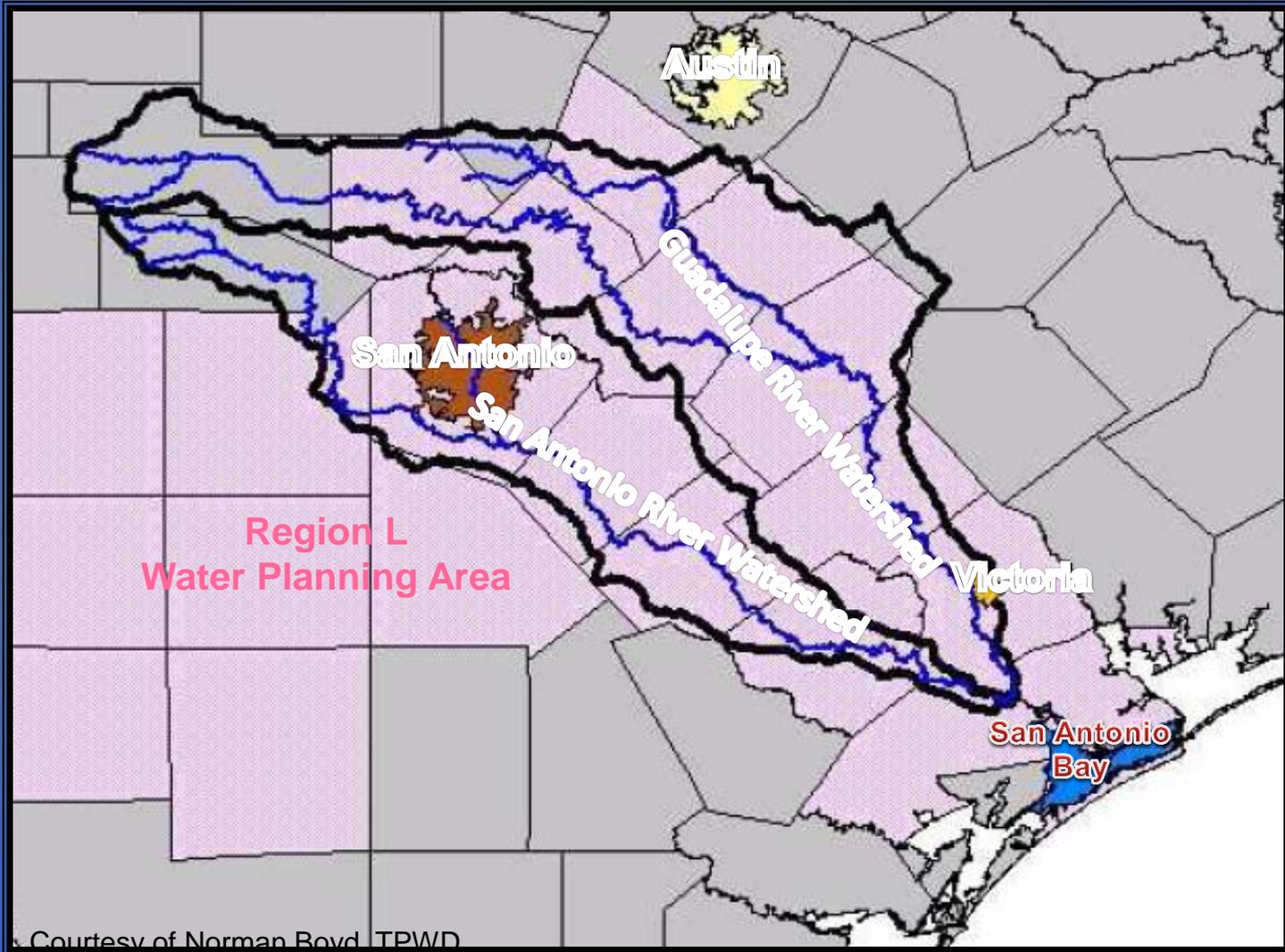
# National Estuary Programs

- Established by EPA, under Section 320 of the CWA, as a means of maintaining water quality in estuaries
- Utilize local, stakeholder driven collaborative processes to develop and implement a “Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (CCMP) for each NEP;
- CCMP uses science to inform decision-making
- Success of NEP’s is partly due to the program’s ability to develop long term, sustainable funding strategies



# San Antonio Bay

## A large contributing watershed

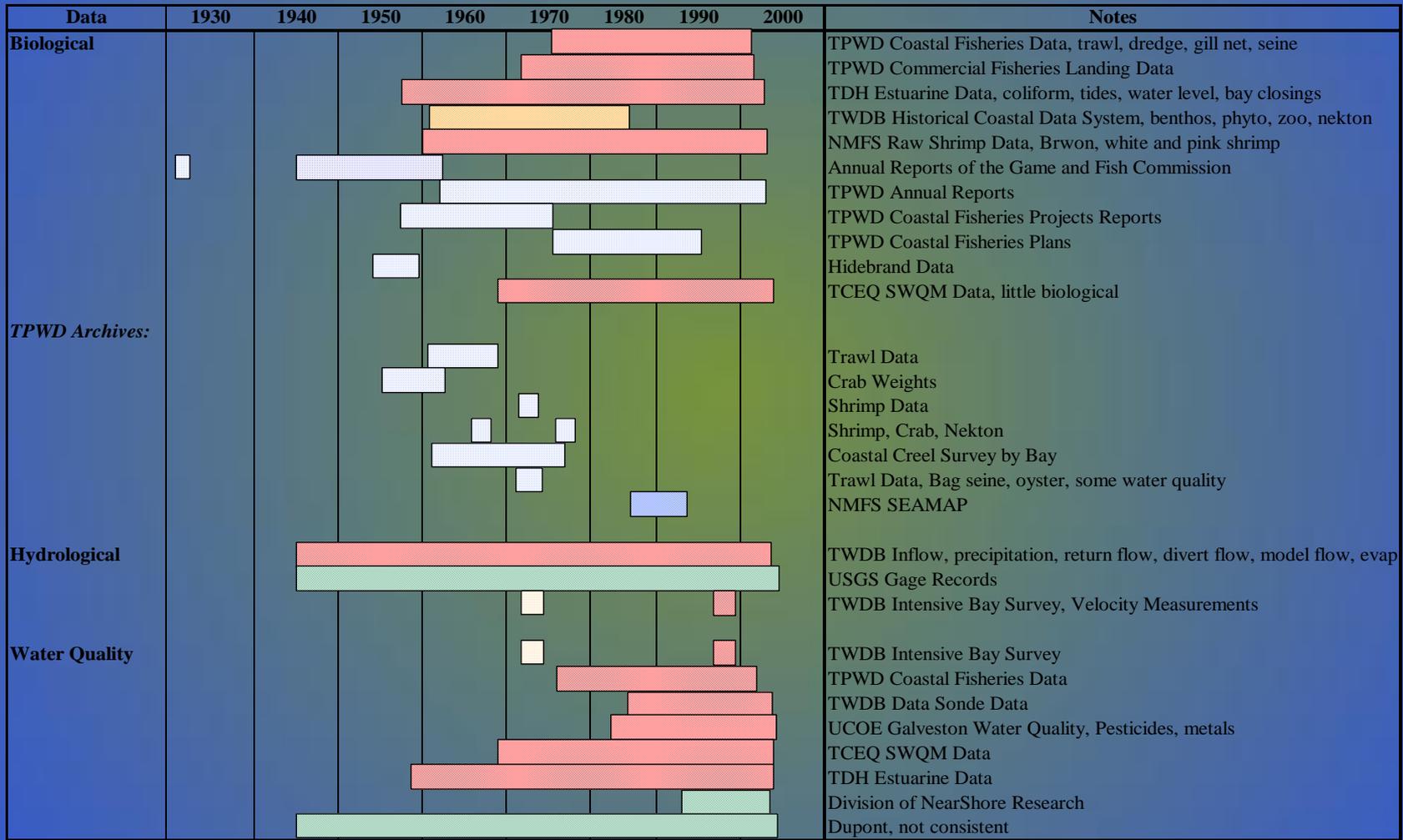


Courtesy of Norman Boyd, TPWD

# San Antonio Bay: What are the Issues?

- **Maintaining/Improving a “Sound Ecological Environment”**
  - **Freshwater Inflows: Quantity and Timing**
  - **Habitat Loss: Wetlands Protection & Restoration**
  - **Endangered Species**
  - **Water Quality/Circulation/Exchange**
  - **Living Resources: Entire Food Chain**
  - **Human Health: Pathogens and Toxic Substances**
  - **NPS Control**
- **Maintaining/Improving Ecosystem Functions**
  - **i. e., Nutrient Cycling, Food Production**
- **Maintaining/Improving Human Uses**
  - **Commercial & Recreational Fishing**
  - **Public Access Points**
  - **Agriculture & Shoreline Development**
  - **Maritime Commerce: Dredging and Beneficial Uses**

# Summary of Available Data for the San Antonio Bay System



# San Antonio Bay Partnership: What are the Challenges?

- Scope?
  - Need to “Swim Up Stream” in management scope because activities throughout the watershed impact the San Antonio Bay System
  - “Tidewaters to Headwaters” Approach: appealing in concept, but complex in reality
- Funding?
  - Not likely to be included in the NEP
  - State funding is being sought, but no assurance it will be available or sufficient
- Stakeholder Focus?
  - Numerous other planning programs underway, competing for stakeholder time and attention (i.e., SB1 RWPG, SB3 BBASC, EARIP)
  - May require getting some projects implemented even while planning is still on-going

- For More Information:
  - See Our Website ([www.SABayPartnership.org](http://www.SABayPartnership.org))
  - Come to our next Stakeholder Meeting
    - June 24, 2010 at the University of Houston-Victoria
  - Contact James Dodson
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    - 361-649-1518