



# TEXAS STATE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

## Program News and Activities

MARCH 2015

The TSSWCB produces this monthly update of the agency's activities as an informational service to local Soil and Water Conservation District Directors. I hope you find this information helpful, and if you have any questions about specific programs or projects please don't hesitate to call your local field representative or our state headquarters.

**REX ISOM**  
Executive Director

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### UPCOMING STATE BOARD WORK SESSION AND MEETING

The State Board has tentatively scheduled a Work Session on **Wednesday, May 20, 2015** and a formal State Board Meeting on **Thursday, May 21, 2015 in Temple**. More information is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/boardmeetings>, or by contacting Karen Preece at (254) 773-2250, ext. 245 or [kpreece@tsswcb.texas.gov](mailto:kpreece@tsswcb.texas.gov).

### SPECIAL PROJECTS

#### **2015 Annual Meeting of District Directors**

Mark your calendars for October 26-28, 2015 and plan on attending the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual State Meeting held in Corpus Christi.

#### **2015 Stewardship Week**

NACD has set stewardship week for April 26, 2015 through May 3, 2015. The Soil and Water Stewardship Committee will continue to work with other agricultural and conservation organizations to expand the message of Stewardship Week to a larger audience in our state. As we feel that the message is still relevant, we will be re-releasing our publication entitled "Land Stewardship: Providing Water For Texans." This one page document discusses and promotes voluntary conservation and the benefits that it supplies our

great state with. Please feel free to share this publication on your district's website, through social media, or with your local newspapers. If you need this document again please contact Loren Warrick at [lwarrick@tsswcb.texas.gov](mailto:lwarrick@tsswcb.texas.gov)

The Soil and Water Stewardship Committee would love to hear what your district will be doing for Stewardship Week. We are also here to assist your district with outreach ideas and opportunities. Please contact Tony Franklin, our staff advisor, at [tfranklin@tsswcb.texas.gov](mailto:tfranklin@tsswcb.texas.gov) with any questions or comments, and he will get in touch with us.

### **Program Development Workshop**

The February 24-25 Program Development Workshop turned out to be the largest attended training session held to date by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board despite the snow and icy conditions that prevailed in certain geographic areas of the state.

Ninety-Nine district directors, district employees and select district conservationists preregistered for the training. Due to some hazardous winter weather only seventy-one attended.

### **Regional Wildlife Contests**

Following various local and area wildlife contests, the dates for the 2015 Regional WAY contests are as follows:

Region 1: April 14—Mill Iron Ranch located east of Wellington in Collingsworth County.

Region 2: April 21—ASU Management, Instruction and Research Center, San Angelo.

Region 3: April 16—Welder Wildlife Foundation, Sinton, TX.

Region 5: April 15—Location yet to be determined.

### **Wildlife Conservation Camp**

The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society invites high school students to the best week of their

summer! The 22nd annual Wildlife Conservation Camp will be held July 26-August 1, 2015 at the Texas Tech University Center in Junction, Texas. High school students that have completed the 9th-12th grades can apply at [www.wildlifecamp.tx.org](http://www.wildlifecamp.tx.org) and applications are due May 1st.

Campers will experience hands-on activities led by wildlife professionals, which include wildlife and plant identification, hunting as a management tool, species diversity, conservation ethics, wildlife capture and survey techniques, wildlife tracking, predator-prey dynamics, white-tailed deer management, fishing, hunter safety, shooting skills, and much more.

The week-long camp is especially recommended for high school students who are considering a career in wildlife management or natural sciences. Students will develop an appreciation for the outdoors through a priceless experience that they will carry with them forever.

The Texas Tech University Center offers on-site lodging and dining facilities located on the banks of the South Llano River. The Center and Llano River Field Station boast a plethora of native wildlife, including mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds. Campers will have the opportunity to view and study these animals.

The camp fee is \$300 which covers lodging, meals, materials, and transportation during camp. Contact your local Farm Bureau for possible sponsorships.

### **Board Member Elections**

April 1st is the deadline for submitting Board Member Election Delegate and Alternate Form TSSWCB-43.

Areas 1, III, and V for odd number years.

Areas II, and IV for even number years.

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## POULTRY WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

Due to highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreak in several Mid-West states, TSSWCB, NRCS, TCEQ, and EPA have stated they will not be routinely entering poultry farms until after May 1 unless essential situations occur that require farm entry. Tight bio-security protocols will be followed if farm entry becomes necessary prior to May 1. This is a precautionary measure only, as no flu cases have yet been discovered in Texas.

TSSWCB poultry staff will be attending NRCS poultry training in Mt. Pleasant on March 31-April 1, 2015 and in Nacogdoches on April 8-9, 2015.

TSSWCB Regional Managers will be attending an EPA CAFO Workshop May 4-6, 2015.

All poultry staff continues to update existing WQMPs, develop new WQMPs for new and proposed poultry operations, conduct CAFO inspections on 20% of existing large poultry farms, conduct status reviews of all poultry WQMPs, and assist producers in obtaining incentive funding for installing approved practices on their farms.

For more information on Poultry WQMPs, please visit <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/poultry> or contact the Poultry Program Office at (936) 462-7020.

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## WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRAM

With the enactment of Senate Bill 503 in 1993, the Texas Legislature designated the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) the lead agency in the state for the abatement, management, and prevention of nonpoint source pollution from agricultural or silvicultural sources. Additionally, the Legislature authorized the agency to administer a certified water quality management plan (WQMP) program, complete with a cost-share program to incentivize

participation and offset the cost of implementing soil and water land improvement measures, for lands within the state. While the TSSWCB makes the program available on a statewide basis, the State Board approves priorities based on activity and geography to target the cost-share incentive funding to the areas of the state that exhibit the most need for nonpoint source pollution abatement.

The purpose of cost-share funding is to provide an incentive to landowners or operators to install soil and water conservation land improvement measures consistent with the purpose of controlling erosion, conserving water, and/or protecting water quality. Rule requires this be done in accordance with a water quality management plan certified by the State Board.

At the beginning of each month the regional offices conduct a ranking exercise to rank all Requests for Cost-Share Incentive Funding. Regional office staff are working with those producers who ranked out, to develop a certified WQMP. Once the WQMP is certified an application for Cost-Share Incentive funding is completed. This application obligates funding to that producer to be used to implement Best Management Practices.

More information on the *Water Quality Management Plan Program* is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/en/wqmp>

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## TEXAS NONPOINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires states to develop a program to protect the quality of water resources from the adverse effects of nonpoint source (NPS) water pollution. The *Texas NPS Management Program* is the State's comprehensive strategy for addressing NPS pollution. The program publication is updated every five years. The most recent revision was submitted by the Governor in June 2012 and thusly approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The *Texas NPS*

*Management Program* is jointly administered by the TSSWCB and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Implementation of the *Texas NPS Management Program* involves partnerships among many organizations. With the extent and variety of NPS issues across Texas, cooperation across political boundaries is essential. SWCDs are vital partners in working with landowners to implement best management practices (BMPs) that prevent and abate agricultural and silvicultural NPS water pollution.

More information on the *Texas NPS Management Program* is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/managementprogram>.

## Nonpoint Source Grant Program

### **FY2010 – FY2014 CWA §319(h) Grant Status**

There are currently 34 on-going §319(h) grant-funded projects addressing a wide array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Unliquidated federal funds for these 34 on-going projects total approximately \$9.8 million and are primarily being used to implement BMPs to abate NPS pollution from animal feeding operations, grazing livestock operations and row crop operations; provide technical assistance through SWCDs for the development of WQMPs; provide financial incentives for implementing certain BMPs prescribed in WQMPs; support various targeted educational programs; develop and implement Watershed Protection Plans (WPP); and implement the NPS portion of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plans (I-Plan).

### **FY2013 – FY2015 State Grant Status**

There are currently 25 on-going projects addressing an array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Unliquidated state funds for these 25 on-going projects total approximately \$2.7 million and are primarily being used to implement agricultural NPS components of TMDL I-Plans; conduct Recreational Use Attainability Analyses (RUAA); support increased analytical infrastructure at public bacterial source tracking (BST) laboratories; demonstrate innovative BMPs on animal feeding operations and grazing lands;

and collect and analyze water quality data for watersheds with impaired waterbodies.

## Water Quality Planning and Implementation

### **Texas Clean Rivers Program**

The Texas Clean Rivers Program (CRP) is a state fee-funded program for water quality monitoring, assessment, and public outreach administered by the TCEQ. CRP is a collaboration of 15 partner agencies who conduct water quality monitoring and assessment in the 23 river and coastal basins and associated bays and estuaries in Texas.

Each river or coastal basin is assigned to one of the designated CRP partner agencies. Each CRP partner agency has an established steering committee to set monitoring and assessment priorities within its basin. These committees bring together the diverse interests in each basin and are designed to allow local concerns to be addressed through regional solutions.

The Texas Water Code requires the TCEQ and CRP partner agencies to coordinate monitoring and assessment activities with local SWCDs through the TSSWCB.

The data generated by CRP partner agencies is used to identify significant long-term water quality trends and characterize water quality conditions. Each CRP partner agency develops and publishes an annual Basin Highlights Report and a five-year Basin Summary Report. The TCEQ also uses CRP-generated data in the biennial assessment conducted for the Texas Integrated Report.

On February 17, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a Clean Rivers Program Water Quality Advisory Committee Meeting for the Lower Colorado River Authority in Wharton. This meeting was held to update basin stakeholders on the state of the Colorado River, Matagorda Bay and other waterbodies' water quality and other related issues in the basin. Caney Creek and Tres Palacios River are two streams with upcoming water quality improvement projects planned. Also, an update on freshwater inflows into Matagorda Bay and research on Blue Suckers was presented to the group. More

information may be found at [www.lcra.org/water/quality/texas-clean-rivers-program/](http://www.lcra.org/water/quality/texas-clean-rivers-program/).

More information on CRP is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/clean-rivers/index.html>.

### **Galveston Bay Estuary Program**

Galveston Bay is an estuary of national importance and, through the federal CWA §320, is included in the National Estuary Program administered by the EPA. The Galveston Bay Council (GBC) is the stakeholder advisory group that coordinates the implementation of the *Galveston Bay Plan*, which is a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan developed under the auspices of the National Estuary Program. The TSSWCB is a named member of the Galveston Bay Council.

On March 5, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a Galveston Bay Council Water and Sediment Quality Subcommittee meeting in Houston. This meeting was held to discuss ideas for WSQ projects to help implement the Galveston Bay Plan. Also, updates on projects around the bay were given, including WPPs and TMDLs.

On March 9, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a Galveston Bay Council Budget & Priorities Subcommittee meeting in Houston. This meeting was held to discuss all GBC subcommittee bylaws, the upcoming State of the Bay Symposium, the FY 2016 workplan, and an assessment of implementation around Galveston Bay since 1995.

More information is available at <http://www.gbep.state.tx.us/>. The implementation of the *Galveston Bay Plan* affects agricultural and silvicultural operations in watersheds that drain to the Galveston Bay complex in Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, Harris and Liberty Counties.

### **Coastal Bend, Bays and Estuaries Program**

The 75 miles of estuarine environment along the Texas Coastal Bend, including Aransas Bay, Corpus Christi Bay, Baffin Bay and the Upper Laguna Madre, are of national importance and, through the federal CWA §320, are included in

the National Estuary Program administered by the EPA. The Bays Council is the stakeholder advisory group that coordinates the implementation of the *Coastal Bend Bays Plan*, which is a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan developed under the auspices of the National Estuary Program. The TSSWCB is a named member of the Water and Sediment Quality Implementation Team.

On March 4, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended the Water and Sediment Quality Implementation Team meeting for the Coastal Bend, Bays and Estuaries Program in Corpus Christi. This meeting was held to review and discuss project ideas for their FY2015 workplan. These project ideas are then turned into proposals for consideration of the team and then the top proposals are moved to the Bays Council for approval.

More information is available at <http://www.cbbep.org/>. The implementation of the *Coastal Bend Bays Plan* affects agricultural operations in watersheds that drain to these estuaries in Refugio, Bee, McMullen, Live Oak, Jim Wells, Duval, Brooks, Kenedy, Kleberg, Nueces, San Patricio, and Aransas Counties.

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

The Southeast and South Central Texas Regional Watershed Coordination Steering Committee (WCSC) is composed of about two dozen water quality monitoring and improvement partners, including other state and federal agencies, river authorities, national estuary programs and councils of governments. The WCSC is tasked with providing guidance to TSSWCB SRM staff on watershed planning activities in 47 counties across southeast and south central Texas.

On March 12, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] hosted a bi-annual WCSC meeting in Columbus. This meeting featured a presentation on the Mill Creek WPP in Austin and Washington Counties. Also, an update on the implementation of the Geronimo Creek WPP in Comal and Guadalupe Counties was provided.

More information, including meeting materials, is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/cwp>.

## STATE DISTRICT III

### Arroyo Colorado

Impairment: Bacteria, Dissolved Oxygen  
Concerns: Nutrients, Sediment  
Mechanism: WPP, UAA  
Lead: TCEQ  
Project: "Implementing Best Management Practices to Reduce Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution in Support of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan", TSSWCB-Harlingen Regional Office; Federal \$183,741  
Project: "Bacterial Source Tracking to Support Adaptive Management of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan", Texas Water Resources Institute/Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources; Federal \$465,555/ External \$178,333  
Project: "Education Programs Focused on Stakeholder Needs to Address Agricultural NPS in the Arroyo Colorado Watershed", Texas Water Resources Institute; State \$83,027

On February 19, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Ashley Wendt] and Harlingen Regional Office staff [Ronnie Ramirez] attended an Arroyo Colorado Ag Issues Workgroup Meeting, Southmost SWCD #319 meeting and Arroyo Colorado Steering Committee Meeting in San Benito, Harlingen and Weslaco, respectively. The Ag Issues Workgroup and Steering Committee meetings focused on gathering crucial information from attendees that is necessary to updating the Arroyo Colorado WPP. Also, an update on the educational project was provided, which centered upon promotion of the Soil Testing Campaign.

More information is available at <http://www.arroyocolorado.org/>. This WPP affects farming operations in the Arroyo Colorado watershed in Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties.

### Lower Nueces River

Impairment: Total Dissolved Solids  
Concern: Chlorophyll-a, Nutrients, Sediment  
Mechanism: WPP  
Lead: TSSWCB  
Projects: "Development of the Lower Nueces River Watershed Protection Plan", Nueces River Authority; Federal \$309,727/External \$248,968

On March 3, 2015, SRM staff [Jana Lloyd, Liza Marshall and Brian Koch] attended the Lower Nueces River Watershed Partnership Stakeholder meeting in Corpus Christi. The meeting focused on reviewing the first draft chapter of the WPP. Discussion was held on the final report and management plan for the large debris survey, update on the hyacinth survey and selection of a subcommittee for the hyacinth survey management plan.

More information, including the draft *Source Water Protection Plan*, is available at <http://www.nuecesriverpartnership.org/>. This WPP has the potential to affect livestock and farming operations in the Lower Nueces River watershed below Lake Corpus Christi in Jim Wells, Nueces, and San Patricio Counties.

### Mill Creek

Impairment: Bacteria  
Mechanism: WPP  
Lead: TSSWCB  
Project: "Data Collection and Development of Essential Components for the Mill Creek Watershed Protection Plan" Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service; State \$299,955  
Project: "Phase 2: Development of a Watershed Protection Plan for Mill Creek" Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service; State \$208,542

On February 23, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Jana Lloyd, Liza Marshall] attended a Mill Creek Watershed Partnership meeting in Bleiberville. The meeting focused on the outline of the Mill Creek WPP and reviewing the first three draft chapters of the WPP. Other topics discussed include determining pollutant load reduction needs and sources of pollutants.

More information is available at <http://millcreek.tamu.edu/>. This WPP affects livestock and farming operations in the Mill Creek watershed in Austin and Washington Counties.

## STATE DISTRICT IV

### Cedar Bayou

Impairment: Bacteria  
Concerns: Macroinvertebrate Community, Dissolved Oxygen, Nutrients  
Mechanism: WPP  
Lead: TSSWCB  
Project: "Development of a Watershed Protection Plan for Cedar Bayou", Houston-Galveston Area Council; Federal \$804,000/ External \$353,876

On February 21, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Ashley Wendt] attended a Rain Barrel Workshop in Baytown. The workshop was hosted by the Galveston Bay Foundation in coordination with the Cedar Bayou Watershed Partnership and sponsored by LyondellBasell and the Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Attendees were able to learn about water quality basics specific to the Galveston Bay system and low impact development practices including rain water harvesting. They were also able to take home their own rain barrel. More workshops like this one are being held across the Galveston Bay watershed area. More information is available at <http://galvbay.org/how-we-protect-the-bay/in-our-communities/rain-barrel-program/>.

On March 6, 11, and 17, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Ashley Wendt, Brian Koch] attended the Harris County SWCD #442, Trinity Bay SWCD #434, and Lower Trinity SWCD #435 meetings in Houston, Winnie and Moss Hill, respectively. SRM staff discussed a project with the district directors that would provide funding for technical and financial assistance to landowners in the watershed.

More information is available at <http://www.cedarbayouwatershed.com>. This WPP affects farming and livestock operations in the Cedar Bayou watershed in Harris, Liberty, and Chambers Counties.

## STATEWIDE PROJECTS (NOT WATERSHED SPECIFIC)

Project: "Statewide Delivery of the Texas Well Owner Network", Texas Water Resources Institute; Federal \$478,135/External \$318,831

A Texas Well Owner Network training took place in Round Rock on February 19, 2015. Over 45 people attended the training that was sponsored by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Water Resource Institute and TSSWCB. The training was focused on helping private well owners care for their wells and water quality issues in the San Gabriel River watershed. Topics covered included: aquifers in Texas, private water well basics, onsite wastewater treatment, water quality and quantity, and protecting your water supply. Water quality analysis was also performed on water well samples brought in by training attendees. More information on the Texas Well Owner Network Program is available at <http://twon.tamu.edu/>.

Project: "Statewide Delivery of Riparian and Stream Ecosystem Education Program", Texas Water Resources Institute/Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources; Federal \$317,486/External \$207,973

On February 27, 2015, a Riparian and Stream Ecosystem Workshop was held for the Dickinson Bayou watershed. Over 70 people attended the workshop that was sponsored by the Texas Water Resource Institute, TSSWCB and the Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources. The training focused on water quality issues including the key role riparian areas play in helping improve and protect water quality in the area. Topics covered included: the definition of a watershed and riparian area, riparian vegetation ratings, how to photo monitor, and local resources for landowners. The training also involved a field tour which provided a chance to see a recovering riparian area and evaluate the vegetation within it. For more information on the Riparian and Stream

ecosystem educational program, please visit <http://twri.tamu.edu/>.

On March 12, 2015, a Riparian and Stream Ecosystem Workshop was held for the Leon River watershed. Over 35 people attended the workshop that was sponsored by the Texas Water Resource Institute, TSSWCB and the Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources. The training focused on water quality issues including the key role riparian areas play in helping improve and protect water quality in the area. Topics covered included: the definition of a watershed and riparian area, riparian vegetation ratings, how to photo monitor, and local resources for landowners. The training also involved a field tour which provided a chance to see a recovering riparian area and evaluate the vegetation within it. For more information on the Riparian and Stream ecosystem educational program, please visit <http://twri.tamu.edu/>.

### Upcoming Public Meetings

- March 30, 2015 – Mill Creek Watershed Partnership Meeting (Bleiberville)
- March 30, RUAA Public Meeting (Silverton)
- March 31, 2015 – RUAA Public Meeting (Memphis)
- March 31, 2015 – On-site Sewage Facility Workshop, Double Bayou (Double Bayou)
- April 1, 2015 – Houston- Galveston Area Council Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) (Houston)
- April 1, 2015 – RUAA Public Meeting (Childress)
- April 1, 2015 – Riparian and Stream Ecosystem Workshop (San Antonio)
- April 2, 2015 – Brazos River Authority CRP SCM (Waco)
- April 2, 2015 – Lower Colorado River Authority CRP Coordinated Monitoring Meeting (CMM) (Austin)
- April 7, 2015 – Lower Nueces Watershed Partnership Meeting (Corpus Christi)
- April 7, 2015 – Houston-Galveston Area Council CRP CMM (Houston)
- April 7, 2015 – International Boundary Water Commission (IBWC), Middle Rio Grande CRP CMM (Laredo)
- April 8, 2015 – IBWC, Lower Rio Grande CRP CMM (Harlingen)
- April 14, 2015 – San Antonio River Authority CRP CMM (San Antonio)
- April 14, 2015 – Northeast Texas Municipal Water District CRP SCM and CMM (Hughes Springs)
- April 15, 2015 – Galveston Bay Council Meeting (Houston)
- April 16, 2015 – Brazos River Authority CRP CMM (Waco)
- April 21, 2015 – Texas Watershed Steward Workshop, Tres Palacios (Palacios)
- April 21, 2015 – Double Bayou Watershed Partnership Meeting (Double Bayou)
- April 23, 2015 – Nueces River Authority CRP CMM (Corpus Christi)
- April 27, 2015 - Mill Creek Watershed Partnership Meeting (Bleiberville)

### Upcoming Public Meetings

- April 27, 2015 – Sabine River Authority CRP SCM and CMM (Emory)
- April 28, 2015 – Sabine River Authority CRP SCM and CMM (Longview)
- April 29, 2015 – Sabine River Authority CRP SCM and CMM (Orange)
- April 30, 2015 – Trinity River Authority CRP CMM (Arlington)

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## WATER SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

In order to help meet the State's critical water conservation needs and ensure availability of water supplies, the TSSWCB administers the WSEP to increase available surface and ground water supplies through the targeted control of brush species that are detrimental to water conservation (e.g., juniper, mesquite, saltcedar). The 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature continued funding for the WSEP by providing \$2,135,413 in general revenue funds for FY2015.

WSEP staff activities (from February 27, 2015 to March 25, 2015):

- WSEP staff assisted SWCD Directors with WSEP issues at board meetings for the Pedernales SWCD #218.
- WSEP staff assisted Conservation Planners in the Upper Guadalupe River, Pedernales River, Frio River, Upper Nueces River, and Edwards Aquifer projects and worked with landowners in several project watersheds to develop cost-share contracts.
- WSEP staff worked with project applicants to assess unobligated funds from the FY2015 project cost-share allocations in order to consider reallocation of FY2015 grant funding to maximize expenditure of WSEP funds during the fiscal year.

- WSEP staff attended the following Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) Regional Water Planning Group (RWPG) meetings to discuss WSEP issues: Region K (March 11, 2015; Austin). Additional information on the regional water planning process is available at <http://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/rwp/>.
- On March 13, 2015, Senator Carlos Uresti (District 19) introduced legislation (SB 1734) in Austin that would require the TSSWCB to develop and implement a program to eradicate Carrizo cane (*Arundo donax*) along the Rio Grande. This bill would implement the Governor's legislative priority for border security. Carrizo cane is an invasive, non-native species that impedes and conceals the detection of criminal actors and restricts law enforcement officers' access to riverbanks. While this bill supports border security, Carrizo cane is also a noxious brush species that consumes water to a degree that is detrimental to water conservation. As such, Carrizo cane is a species of interest to the WSEP and is eligible for inclusion in the program.
- In order to provide recommendations to the agency and guide the decisions of the State Board in implementing the Legislative directives for the WSEP, the TSSWCB established a Science Advisory Committee of technical experts. Since early 2012, TSSWCB has worked with this Committee to discuss how best to implement changes to the WSEP. Due primarily to public comments received on the *State Water Supply Enhancement Plan*, membership of the Science Advisory Committee has expanded since it was initially established. Current members serving on the Science Advisory Committee include:
  - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service – Dr. Alyson McDonald
  - Texas Department of Agriculture – Dr. David Villarreal
  - Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research at

- Tarleton State University – Dr. Larry Hauck
    - Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – Chad Norris (Anne Rogers, alternate)
    - Texas Tech University – Dr. Ken Rainwater (Dr. Tom Arsuffi, alternate)
    - Texas Water Development Board – Dr. Ruben Solis (Dr. Yujuin Yang, alternate)
    - USDA Agricultural Research Service – Dr. Daren Harmel
    - USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Dr. Ken Spaeth (Jeff Goodwin, alternate)
    - U.S. Geological Survey – Dr. George Ozuna (Dr. Ryan Banta, alternate)
  - Edwards Aquifer – Sabinal River (Bandera SWCD 229) – \$12,780.00
  - Annandale Ranch (Aquifer Group) – \$189.71
  - Lake Travis / Pedernales River (Pedernales SWCD 218) – \$84,585.00
  - Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer (Gonzales County SWCD 338) – \$57,475.00
  - Lake Nimitz / Upper Guadalupe River (Kerr County SWCD 217) – \$132.50
- On March 25, 2015, WSEP staff attended the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Board meeting in Kerrville to discuss WSEP issues. A presentation on the WSEP was given by TSSWCB staff at the meeting.
- More information on the WSEP is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/brushcontrol>.
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- ## FLOOD CONTROL DAM PROGRAMS
- The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) is appropriated general revenue by the Texas Legislature to provide grants to the sponsors of flood control dams for operation, maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation. The TSSWCB administers an Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Grant Program and a Structural Repair Grant Program, both of which are administered according to rules adopted by the State Board in 31TAC529. The rules for these programs specify which flood control dams are eligible for funding, the entities that are eligible to apply and receive funding, and the conditions under which a grant must be administered, matched, and reported.
- For FY2013, \$2,050,997 was allocated to 69 dam sponsors to conduct O&M activities on flood control dams through June 30, 2015. To date there is a balance of \$340,984 that still needs to be spent before the June 2015 deadline.

For FY2015, \$1,000,000 was allocated to 69 dam sponsors to conduct O&M activities on flood control dams through June 30, 2017. To date there is a balance of \$933,637 that still needs to be spent before the June 2017 deadline.

The TSSWCB has contracted with the Dalworth SWCD to conduct a major repair on Mountain Creek, Site 10, in Ellis County using \$5,600,000 of FY2014 funds.

The TSSWCB has also contracted with the McCulloch SWCD to conduct repairs on Deep Creek, Site 8, in McCulloch County using \$362,000 of FY2015 funds. On February 5, 2015 a site showing was held to go over the bid items to be performed and answer any questions potential bidders had. Bids were opened by the district on March 5th. The district is working with the selected contractor to get a contract in place.

TSSWCB has signed ten Project Agreements with NRCS for \$13 million in federal rehabilitation funding for planning, design, and construction on 15 dams. TSSWCB has contracted for engineering services on these dams.

The TSSWCB has contracted with M&E Consultants to develop a rehabilitation plan for Lower Running Water Draw Site 4 in Hale County.

The TSSWCB has contracted with the City of McKinney and the San Antonio River Authority to provide state funds to assist sponsors with the local share of rehabilitation costs on 5 dams.

For more information on these programs, please visit the TSSWCB's website at:  
<http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/en/floodcontrol>

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*Monthly Program News and Activities* is published by the TSSWCB for use by Texas SWCD Directors. If you have any questions regarding its contents, or have information you would like to see in a future issue, please call (254) 773-2250.



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Established in 1939, the TSSWCB administers Texas' soil and water conservation law and delivers coordinated natural resource conservation programs to agricultural producers through the State's 216 individual SWCDs. The agency is governed by a seven-member State Board composed of two Governor appointees and five individuals elected from across Texas by 1,080 Directors of local SWCDs. The TSSWCB is the lead state agency for planning, implementing, and managing programs for preventing and abating agricultural and silvicultural (forestry) nonpoint sources of water pollution; administers a water supply enhancement program through the targeted control of brush species in areas in need of water conservation; provides operation, maintenance, and structural repair grant funds to local government sponsors of the State's network of 2,000 flood control dams; and facilitates the Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee.

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