



Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board

Quarterly Program Update: Summer 2019

Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board to Receive \$150 Million for Flood Control Dam Infrastructure Projects

Projects to repair and rehabilitate flood control structures across Texas will now be funded thanks to a \$150 million appropriations bill legislators passed this session. The Governor signed the bill into law on June 6, 2019. These structures serve as a critical protection for our state's infrastructure, private property, and lives. The State appropriated the funds to the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) to administer through grants to the local sponsors of Flood Control Dams, including Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs).

“The primary purpose of these Flood Control Dams is to protect lives and property by reducing the velocity of floodwaters, thereby reducing flows to a safer rate,” said Barry Mahler, TSSWCB Chairman.

The Texas Legislature also addressed statewide flooding issues with the passage of Senate Bill 8, authored by Senator Charles Perry, which creates the first State Flood Plan for Texas. Partnering with the Texas Water Development Board, TSSWCB will incorporate earthen dams as part of the bigger picture for flood mitigation strategies, establishing a ten-year plan to have all high-hazard dams meeting high-hazard safety standards.

Senator Perry has been an advocate for addressing the State's earthen dam funding saying, “The funding of the earthen dam program is a responsible, and proactive measure to ensuring the safety of the citizens of the state as we continue to grow into areas which once had little development.”

Currently there are 2,041 dams which were originally built by the United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) through federal programs in Texas with the understanding that local sponsors would supply operation and maintenance. Local sponsors include Soil and Water Conservation Districts (a subdivision of state government), cities, counties, water control improvement districts, river authorities, and other special purpose districts.

“TSSWCB recognizes the monumental importance in the upkeep of flood control structures and is proud that the Legislature chose to make a significant investment to safeguard a critical element of the State's infrastructure,” said Rex Isom, TSSWCB Executive Director and current Chairman of the National Watershed Coalition.

There are 622 dams that are classified as high hazard, meaning there is a potential loss of life if the dam fails; however, only 123 of these meet high hazard criteria. That means that currently 499 dams need rehabilitation and upgrade to meet safety criteria that will adequately protect lives downstream totaling over \$1.5 billion, including anticipated federal and local match over a ten-year period.

Program Updates

• BUDGET & ACCOUNTING

District Director Mileage & Per Diem

-July 1st is the deadline for submitting FY 2019 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Quarter claims.

-September 30th is the deadline for submitting FY 2019 4th Quarter claims and the return of unused advance funds.

Matching Funds

-August 31st is the deadline for FY 2019 regular and supplemental claims.

Technical Service Provider (Administrative Assistance Grant)

-September 30th is the deadline for submitting claims for the FY 2019 NRCS Technical Service Provider (Administrative Assistance Grant).

Conservation Implementation (TA)

-September 30th is the deadline for FY 2019 regular and supplemental claims.

Conservation Activity Program (CAP)

-September 30th is the deadline for submitting FY 2019 Conservation Activity (CAP) claims.

SWCD Information Technology Assistance

-September 30th is the deadline for submitting SWCD Information Technology Assistance (data service reimbursement) claims.

Financial Statements

-September 1st is the deadline for submitting the FY 2019 Financial Statement/Audit Notification Form.

Important Dates and Deadlines for Calendar Year 2019 is also available on the SWCD Resources page of the TSSWCB website.

• COMMUNICATIONS

2019 ANNUAL MEETING OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT DIRECTORS

The 2019 Annual Meeting will be held October 27-30, 2019 at the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort in San Antonio. The hotel room block and pre-registration will open on August 1st. For more information visit: <https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/annual-meeting-swcd-directors> or contact Molly Christensen at mchristensen@tsswcb.texas.gov.

• WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRAM

With the enactment of Senate Bill 503 (73rd Regular Session - Sims / Counts) 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. For FY2019 as of June 14, 163 WQMPs have been certified on 73,133 total acres.

• NONPOINT SOURCE GRANT PROGRAM

2018 Annual Report on Managing Nonpoint Source Water Pollution in Texas

The 2018 Annual Report on managing nonpoint source pollution in Texas is jointly published by the TSSWCB and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and is a culmination of the State's efforts to ensure and improve the quality of water in Texas. The report highlights the State's efforts during fiscal year 2018 to collect data, assess water quality, implement projects that reduce or prevent nonpoint source pollution, and educate and involve the public to improve and maintain the quality of water resources for current and future generations of Texans. The report is available for download at <https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/programs/texas-nonpoint-source-management-program>.

Program Updates Continued

• FLOOD CONTROL PROGRAM

The State Board approved \$5,460,430 for flood control grants for Fiscal Year 2019, including \$1,000,000 for dam operation and maintenance (O&M) grants. On January 17, 2019 the board approved an additional \$2,000,000 for O&M grants. Most of these funds have been obligated. However, additional O&M proposals may be submitted for potential funding before August 31 with end-of-year funds. Proposals not funded before August 31 may be funded in FY 2020. Work on funded proposals must be completed within 90 days of Purchase Order date. Agreements have been signed with sponsors for three state funded dam repairs and these projects are currently under construction. Approximately \$2.7 million is being allocated for construction and engineering services on these projects in fiscal year 2019. Designs are near completion on an additional 12 dam repairs and TSSWCB is currently working with sponsors to execute agreements for construction. Applications for additional dam repair may be submitted if sponsors are ready to fund the local 5% share of the projects. TSSWCB received a supplemental appropriation of \$150 million for fiscal year 2019 for dam repair and rehabilitation. Staff are currently contacting sponsors to verify interest in dam repair or rehabilitation/upgrade to meet high hazard criteria. Currently, \$67 million is needed to repair about 200 flood control program dams in Texas, and \$1.5 Billion is needed to upgrade and rehabilitate about 500 high hazard dams where downstream urban development has resulted in public safety issues.

• WATER SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The Water Supply Enhancement Program was de-funded for 2020-21.

• CARRIZO CANE ERADICATION PROGRAM

Approximately 3,046 acres of Carrizo Cane were treated in FY19.

• HUMAN RESOURCES

TSSWCB currently has four positions open, an Engineer III in Temple, two Natural Resources Specialists III in Temple, and a Natural Resources Specialist III in Mt. Pleasant. For more information visit: www.tsswcb.texas.gov/contact-us/employment

• 86TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAP-UP

The 86th Texas Legislative Session ended on May 27, 2019. A summary of legislation that will impact the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board is included below.

- HB1 – Authored by Representative Zerwas, the General Appropriations Bill appropriates \$43,587,317 of state funds to the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and includes an additional \$30.5 million in federal funds for the 2020-2021 biennium. The Water Supply Enhancement Program was de-funded for 2020-21. WSEP funds were re-purposed to the Water Quality Management Plan and Flood Control programs for the biennium.

- SB500 – Authored by Senator Nelson, this supplemental appropriation bill states that in addition to amounts previously appropriated for the state fiscal biennium ending August 31, 2019, Senate Bill 500 appropriated \$150,000,000 from the economic stabilization fund to the Soil and Water Conservation Board for the two-year period beginning on the June 6, 2019. The funds are to be used for Flood Control Infrastructure projects; repairs, rehabilitations, and upgrades.

- SB8 – This Bill, authored by Senator Charles Perry, directs Texas Water Development Board, in cooperation with Texas Commission on Environmental Quality; Texas Department of Agriculture; General Land Office; Division of Emergency Management; and TSSWCB to adopt guideline principles for the state flood plan and to review and update plan every five years. It will also amend Chapter 201, Ag. Code to require the board to prepare and adopt a 10-year dam repair and maintenance plan and update it every 10 years.

- SB563 – Authored by Senator Charles Perry, this bill will require any state agency that uses or disburses federal money for flood research, planning, or mitigation projects to report on a quarterly basis to Texas Water Development Board.