

Water Report

Coastal Bend Regional Water Planning Group
 Website: nueces-ra.tamucc.edu

No. 5 • September 2000

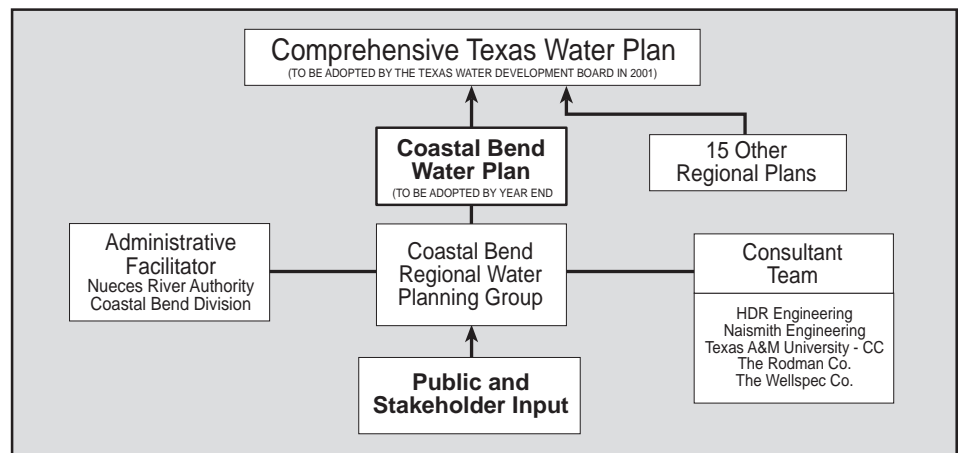
Public hearing set for Sept. 28 on initial regional water supply plan

The Coastal Bend Regional Water Planning Group (RWPG) will hold a public hearing to receive oral and written comments from the public on the Initially Prepared Regional Water Plan for the Coastal Bend.

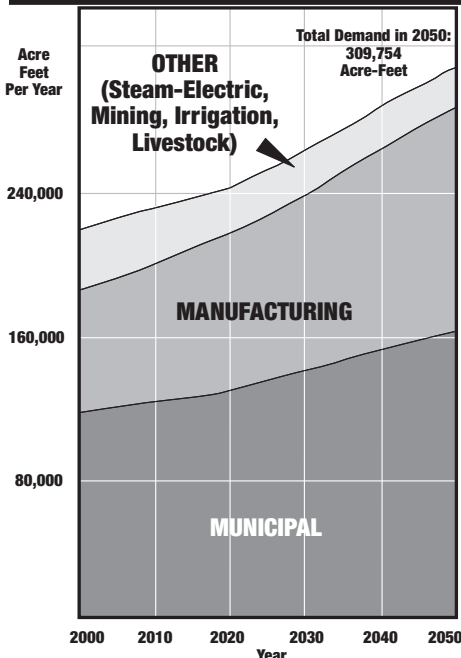
The hearing will be at 6 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 28, in the Texas A&M Extension Center located three miles west of Corpus Christi International Airport on Highway 44. Written comments can be submitted to the RWPG until Sept. 30th.

All public comments will then be considered in revising the plan. The RWPG must adopt the final plan before the end of the year.

The RWPG was established at the direction of Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) enacted by the Legislature in 1997. The legislation specified that long-range water plans be



Projected Water Demand For Coastal Bend Region



developed for regions of Texas and provided that future regulatory and financing decisions of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission and the Texas Water Development Board be consistent with approved regional water plans.

The SB 1 program is a "bottom up" water planning process in which local groups develop plans to meet the specific needs in their region. Sixteen regional planning groups made up of members appointed by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) have been working on plans around the state. They have been mapping out ways to conserve water supplies, meet future water needs and respond to future droughts.

Each regional plan projects population growth and water demand, evaluates water supply options and recommends a specific water supply plan for communities facing a current or future water supply shortfall.

During 2001, the TWDB will incorporate all the regional plans into a comprehensive state water plan with specific strategies for the next 30 years, and more general proposals for a planning period of 50 years.

Coastal Bend RWPG Members

The 19 members of the Coastal Bend Regional Water Planning Group were appointed to represent a wide range of stakeholder interests and act as a steering and decision-making body.

Members were appointed to represent specific interest categories. They are:

Agriculture - Bobby Nedbalek, Fausto Yturria

Counties - Judge Josephine Miller

Electric Generating Utilities - W. Greg Carter (CPL); Scott Murray (resigned); Gonzalo Sandoval (resigned)

Environmental - Dr. Jennifer Prouty

Industry - Jerry Kane; Robert Kunkel

Municipalities - Dr. David McNichols; Billy Dick; Arnold Cantu (resigned)

Public - Ben Figueroa

Port Authorities - Bernard Paulson

River Authorities - Ariel Garcia

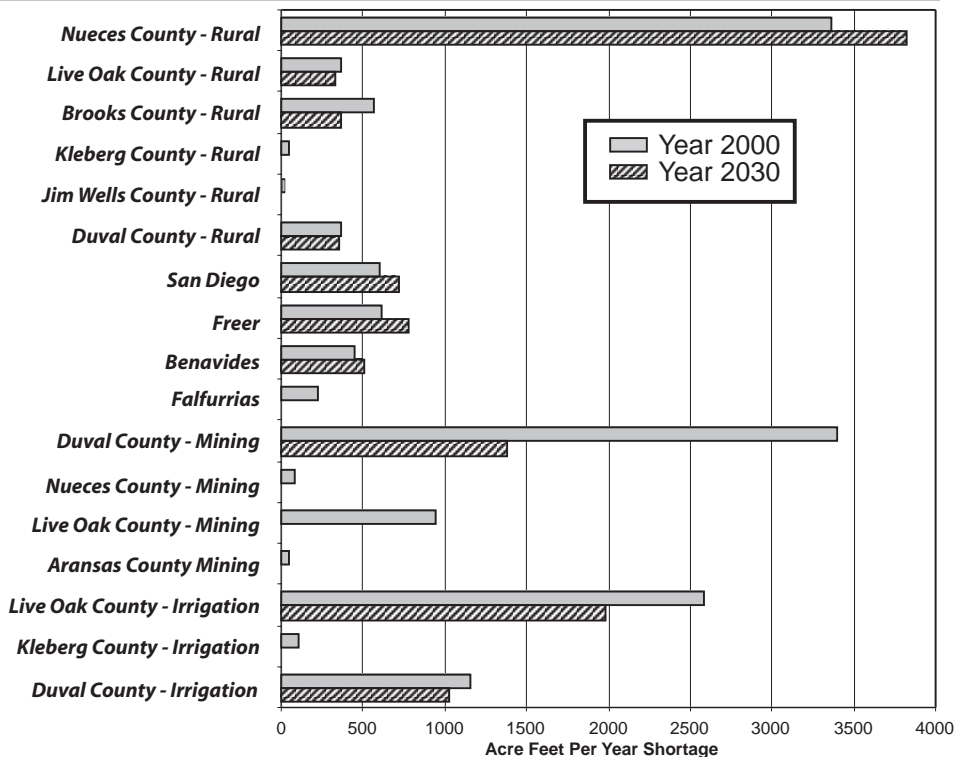
Small Business - Dr. Patrick Hubert; Bernie Delaune

Water Districts - Scott Bledsoe

Water Utilities - Carola Serrato

San Patricio County Judge Miller and Mr. Kane serve as co-chairs.

Projected Water Shortages Thru 2030



Groundwater Strategies

The RWPG identified 20 individual cities and water user groups that showed unmet needs during drought periods at some point during the 50-year planning period.

The process of looking at the region community by community has identified some localized future shortages in towns and rural areas now depending on groundwater.

Shortages of drinking water quality have surfaced or are expected during the next few decades in parts of Nueces, Brooks, Live Oak, Duval and Jim Wells Counties, and the communities of Benavides, Freer, San Diego and Premont.

The Plan provides specific findings for each community and user group. It concludes that some of these shortages can be addressed by overdrafting the Gulf Coast Aquifer for a limited period. Other shortfalls could be met with voluntary reallocation of groundwater currently designated for mining and irrigation uses.

In some areas there is plentiful groundwater but the quality is below drinking water standards. The Plan proposes the possible future construction of small desalination plants to process brackish groundwater and

provide potable water for Freer, Benavides, Orange Grove and George West.

Still other communities may find that the best long-term solution is to build pipeline connections to a nearby town or the regional surface water system. This strategy is suggested for some unserved portions of Nueces, San Patricio, Jim Wells, Brooks, Kleberg, Kenedy and Duval Counties.

Surface Water Strategies

Demand projections indicate that the communities and industrial users currently served by the Lake Corpus Christi-Choke Canyon-Texana surface water system have adequate supplies in place for the next 25 to 30 years. Approximately 50,000 acre feet per year of additional water supply will be needed by the system's customers by 2050. For planning purposes, the RWPG has allocated all of this shortfall to future manufacturing demand in Nueces and San Patricio Counties.

The Plan evaluates a dozen optional management strategies for satisfying this future demand on the region's surface water supplies. Several of these options involve water supply system modifications that would make more water available from existing sources by reducing natural losses. For example, a

proposed pipeline between Choke Canyon Reservoir and Lake Corpus Christi would provide the opportunity to achieve significant water conservation by eliminating channel losses as water makes its way along 63 miles of the Frio and Nueces Rivers.

The quality of water in the Nueces River at Calallen is substantially lower than when it is released from Lake Corpus Christi. High concentrations of dissolved minerals enter the river below Wesley Seale Dam. This results in high levels of bromides which sometimes exceed drinking water standards. It also results in increased industrial water demand due to accelerated buildup of minerals in industrial cooling facilities. Significant conservation may be achieved by reducing levels of dissolved minerals.

Other management strategy options considered include development of Lake Texana - Stage 2, removing sediment from Lake Corpus Christi, production from wells at Campbellton, and development of groundwater wells in Refugio County with a connection to the Mary Rhodes Pipeline.

The RWPG work program included an extensive review of seawater desalination which has become increasingly viable. While the Coastal Bend has acquired adequate surface water supplies for the next several decades, other planning regions are proposing desalination as a possible interregional supply alternative that could involve the Coastal Bend.

Recommendations

The RWPG supports strategies for increased conservation and reuse of existing supplies throughout the region.

To meet the eventual need for additional surface water, the Plan suggests a combination of strategies including: conservation by the public; conservation by heavy industry; additional interruptible water from Lake Texana; an aquifer storage and recovery program; and addition of a pipeline to access Colorado River water.

This new pipeline would extend from near Bay City to the north end of the Mary Rhodes Pipeline. It would allow delivery of the 35,000 acre feet per year of water purchased from the Garwood Irrigation Company by the City of Corpus Christi acting on behalf of all system customers. The Mary Rhodes Pipeline was built with more than enough capacity to carry this water to the Coastal Bend when it is needed.

Where You Can See A Copy of the Plan

Copies of the two-volume Initially Prepared Regional Water Plan for the Coastal Bend (Region N) are available for public review at the following convenient locations:

- Corpus Christi Main Library
- Alice Public Library
- Aransas County Library
- Beeville Library
- Brooks County Library
- Kingsville Library
- Live Oak County Library
- San Diego Public Library
- Sinton Public Library
- The county clerk's office in each of the following counties: Aransas, Bee, Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Live Oak, McMullen, Nueces and San Patricio.

Ordering a Copy

Copies of the Initially Prepared Plan may be ordered, at buyers expense, from Ridgway's, 822 Leopard, Corpus Christi, Tx 78401, phone (361) 882-7471.

Notice of Public Hearing on Regional Water Plan

6 p.m. • Thursday, Sept. 28, 2000

TAMU Extension Center Auditorium

10345 Highway 44 at Clarkwood

(3 miles west of Corpus Christi International Airport)

How to Get More Information & Websites You Can Visit

Administrative support for the Coastal Bend RWPG is being provided by the Nueces River Authority's Coastal Bend Division which is located on the campus of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. For more information about this program contact James Dodson at:

361-825-3193; fax 361-825-3195; or
e-mail: jdodson@falcon.tamucc.edu

There are a growing number of websites available to keep the public informed on water supply, water quality, conservation and education efforts. These include:

www.twdb.state.tx.us
nueces-ra.tamucc.edu
www.texaswater.org
www.tnrcc.state.tx.us
www.twri.tamu.edu
www.ci.corpus-christi.tx.us/services/water.html

COASTAL BEND

Water  Report

The **Coastal Bend Water Report** is published by the Coastal Bend Regional Water Planning Group which is developing a regional plan that will be incorporated into a comprehensive state water plan to be adopted by the Texas Water Development Board in 2001.

Prepared by The Bohman Company

COASTAL BEND REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP

c/o Nueces River Authority • Coastal Bend Division
6300 Ocean Drive, NRC Suite 3100
Corpus Christi, Texas 78412