

BRAZOS RIVER CONSERVATION COALITION HOOD COUNTY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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Issue No. 8

May 13, 2007

Membership Meeting Report

The May 8th membership meeting was attended by 28 members and guests. Of the guests in attendance, 13 enrolled as members. Victoria Sykes, an aide to representative Chet Edwards attended the meeting. Hood County News reporter, Debbie Schneider was there, too.

The guest speaker, Lee Overstreet, presented a very entertaining program that featured a nostalgic look back at the Brazos to before the lake was developed. A PowerPoint presentation featured a series of photographs of old Granbury and the Brazos River punctuated by personal reminiscences of a childhood in rural Hood County. Commenting on the first noticeable change that came with construction of the lake he said the big, old trees that were felled caused a sense of loss. That loss was later compensated for by the beauty of the expansive view of the lake and its recreational enjoyment. Lee's son Brady, who recently joined his dad's realty agency, participated in the presentation with technical assistance and participation in the Q and A session.

Mr. Overstreet's family goes back three generations and has been involved in the growth and development of Hood County and Granbury in particular. Most recently the family has seen the original homestead become the location for Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Staples and Beall's.

Discussing the area's population growth he said that while the total growth rate has been around 4% annually the school population has grown only at about 1%. The suggestion is that the growth is spurred largely by the influx of older families with adult children.

The Q and A session brought questions about the impact of the construction of large marinas on fishing. It was opined that some fish species were adversely affected while others thrive in the shelter of the marinas. When the question of the lakes murkiness was raised we were reminded that Lake Granbury has always be classified a "dirty" lake. Although over the years visibility has reduced from several feet to a foot or so. It was pointed out that the debris resulting from the recent rains has largely flushed away by natural flow.

In response to a suggestion that the BRCC produce a pamphlet outlining good lakeside stewardship, Mr. Overstreet said he felt confident that local realtors would cooperate in its distribution to home buyers. The project is being considered.

Josh Rosenfeld reported on several meeting that he attended since the last membership meeting. Details are reported in the Chairman's Report farther down the newsletter.

Upcoming Membership Meetings Announcement

At the June membership meeting we will hear from William O'Quin. He is the local agent for the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation District. Mr. O'Quin will address the nature of the department's activities in Hood County and various aspects of soil conservation and erosion.

In July we will be addressed by Denny Kleber and representatives of the group developing the salt extraction wells in the Salt Fork branch of the Brazos. This is an issue that is expected to get much of the BRCC's attention and support if it is determined to be feasible. **PLAN TO ATTEND THIS IMPORTANT MEETING** on July 10th. The project could have very significant impact on improved water quality in the Brazos by vastly reducing the river's salinity levels.

Chairman's Report

Chapter Advocacy and Information Gathering at BRCC Related Meetings in April 2007

Report by Josh Rosenfeld, Co-Chairman

1. Granbury Water & Environmental Quality/Governmental Affairs Committee at the Chamber of Commerce Office, Monday, April 23:

1. House Bill 4052 has been introduced by Phil King (Parker Co.) to establish an Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District for Hood, Montague, Parker and Wise Counties. The Committee decided to issue a resolution in support of the bill.
2. Discussed a Barnett Shale Symposium given by Robert Mace of the Groundwater Development Board. Conclusion is that Barnett Shale aquifer water usage is minor compared to urban usage (20% vs. 80% of aquifer draw). In 2000, 34% of total usage for Hood Co. came from aquifer and 66% from surface water.
3. Debris in lake is largely a natural phenomenon and will resolve itself in most cases. It may become a safety issue this summer.

2. Republican Women of Hood County at Annex 1 Meeting Room, Wednesday, April 25:

Speakers: Kent Rindy (BRA Regional Manager) and David Southern, Mayor of Granbury. Gary Turner, BRA Assistant Project Manager for Lake Granbury, was also there. He mentioned that BRCC (?) had requested some cleanup supplies which are at the BRA office.

Subject: BRA Lake Granbury Boating Capacity Study - Results and Recommendations and Mayor's Viewpoint.

Kent Rindy reported that the study is based on

- a) Surveys
- b) Boat Count
- c) Stakeholder Focus Groups.

He said it is not aimed at stopping development but at avoiding conflicts. Divided lake into 4 groupings based on combined impact of conflict and congestion. Identifies areas where further development (boat slips) are not recommended. It recommends:

- establishing no-wake zones
- continued installation lighted buoys
- obstacle identification and selective reduction of public safety hazards (stumps, etc)
- setting standards for docks and retaining walls (these exist in PK but not in Granbury)
- improvements on BRA public use areas
- continue cut-through canal moratorium until the Watershed Protection Project is finished (2010).

The Mayor disagreed with some conclusions of the study. He suggested that the boat usage data is skewed since many weekend boaters are non-residents, yet the restrictions punish residents by restricting development of their shoreline. He also doesn't agree with the moratorium on development until 2010. He says the delay will create more smaller lot developments with septic systems in unincorporated parts of the lake.

- He agrees that stumps should be removed in some areas to improve traffic flow and safety.
- The city is working to improve canals by using flow-through construction and considering aeration.
- The city is forcing smaller lots to connect to a sewage treatment system rather than using septic.
- At some time in the future, nitrates and phosphorus (nutrients) will be removed from effluent.
- The old desalination plant is being replaced.

3. SQFQ meeting on their plan to de-activate salt springs and decrease salinity in the Brazos Basin, Glen Rose Courthouse, April 27:

SQFQ (Salt Fork Water Quality Corp.) is a non-profit community corporation established in Stonewall County. This introductory meeting explained the rationale and current status of a project to dry up the salt springs that provide up to 60% of the salt content (over 1,000 tons per day) to Lakes Possum Kingdom, Granbury and Whitney. The brine currently flowing at the surface would be produced from wells to deplete the salt-bearing aquifer and dry up the springs. The brine would then be pumped through a pipeline to an evaporation area to produce "some commercial brine and 300 tons per day of pure sodium chloride (halite). These sales would finance the operation and eventually yield a profit once any financing charges were paid off. The feasibility study for the project has largely been funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the BRA. The geological and geochemical basis for the project seems to be sound and, once in place, a marked improvement in Brazos River and lake water quality would be seen in 3 to 5 years once the salt already on the surface is flushed away.

There are environmental issues in the form of two minnow species that might be threatened as the salt content of the headwaters decline to levels where predators would survive. The study team feels that this issue can be surmounted and is in discussions with the Fish and Game people to find a solution.

Financing is needed to establish the project (\$50 to 55 Million) for wells, pipeline and salt treatment. This will be obtained mainly through federal and state grants. Once the initial financing is paid off, the project should be self-supporting and, since significant savings can be expected by end users who will have reduced water treatment costs, a small user fee might be included in the proposed Senate Bill S.B. 3 (Water Bill) to help the project along.

When asked how BRCC could help get this project going, we were told to monitor the progress of S.B. 3 and talk to our representatives about it.

Another public meeting will be scheduled soon to continue promoting this important initiative.

4. Phone conversation on April 25 with Margo Peel, Commandant of the Lake Granbury Coast Guard Auxiliary concerning debris in the lake:

The Coast Guard auxiliary continues to patrol the lake and report unsafe conditions to the proper authorities. Patrols take place at least once a week.

Membership Growth

Membership Committee chairperson, JoAnn Matthews, reports that as of May 9th the chapter stands at 198 members. Recent recruitment efforts have been very successful. Josh Rosenfeld is scheduled to speak at several community organizations in the coming weeks and it is expected that more recruits will sign-up at those functions. Contact JoAnn Matthews at ja_matthews@charter.net. (It starts ja_matthews)

Research News

*The following are excerpts from the Texas Water Resources Institute news letter **New Waves** reporting on updates to Lake Granbury projects and announcing two research grants that may affect Lake Granbury.*

TWRI's Lake Granbury project updated

Scientists involved with TWRI's [Water Quality Program for Lake Granbury](#), Texas project recently gave updates to **Rep. Chet Edwards** and others about the project's progress. The project is investigating golden algae and their toxic blooms that kill fish as well as educating stakeholders about the lake's water quality issues.

Leslie Schwierzke and **George Gable** of Texas A&M's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences gave a quick overview of the golden algae research portion of the project. They explained that researchers are using a custom-designed, boat-mounted dataflow unit to sample the lake's water. The unit continuously samples the water as the boat moves along the lake, measuring certain parameters thought to affect the toxic blooms.

Dr. Bruce Lesikar, Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering professor and Extension specialist, gave an update on the project's water quality education program and stakeholder involvement. Several stakeholder meetings and educational seminars have been given in the Lake Granbury area and more are scheduled for the near future. He said landowners around the lake are interested in an open dialog of what the most appropriate actions will be to improve the lake's water quality. He said more on-site investigations of the septic systems around the lake are needed.

2007-2008 TWRI grant recipients announced

Texas Water Resources Institute has selected 10 water-related research projects to fund during 2007-2008 from a pool of 20 submitted proposals. Graduate students in collaboration with faculty members at Texas A&M University, The University of Texas at Austin, Texas Tech University, Baylor University and Rice University developed the projects, which will explore a wide assortment of topics.

TWRI funds the grants as part of the National Institutes for Water Research annual research program that is Congressionally funded through the U.S. Geological Survey. Students are able to support their research projects and education through this federal program. As a result, TWRI will publish articles and reports about the progress of these studies and their benefit to Texas water resources.

Students and their projects are:

- **Kendra Johnson Reibschleager** (advisor: **Raghupathy Karthikeyan**), Texas A&M, "Bacterial impairment assessment for Lake Granbury watershed"
- **Theodore Valenti** (advisor: **Bryan Brooks**), Baylor University, "Water quality influences on ionizable contaminants in the Brazos River Basin: Implications for water resource management of urbanizing watersheds"

To subscribe to the "New Waves" mailing list, [click here](#).

Important Websites and E-mail Addresses

U. S. CONGRESS

Senator Kay Bailey-Hutchinson:

<http://hutchison.senate.gov> (e-mail via website)

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