

BRAZOS RIVER CONSERVATION COALITION HOOD COUNTY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 10

July 13, 2007

July 12, 2007 BRCC Public Meeting

On Tuesday, July 12th, the BRCC Hood Chapter held its regular monthly meeting in the Langdon Center Concert Hall. Among the 55 or so people in attendance were Mayor David Southern and Councilwoman Janell Morris. The guest speakers were representatives of the Salt Fork Water Quality Corporation, Judge Bobby McGough, Kleber Denny and Paul Price.

Judge McGough said the serious water quality problem in the Brazos River Basin is caused by about 1100 tons of chlorides that daily enter the Salt Fork of the Brazos River from naturally occurring salt springs and runoff from the salt flats the springs have created. The source of the salt springs is a huge salt deposit and aquifer in Stonewall and Kent counties that is a remnant of the sea that once inundated central North America, the remains of which is now the Gulf of Mexico. The brine content of the salt springs is about seven times that of ocean water. The BRA, the City of Granbury and other water users have to spend significant amounts of money to treat the river water to meet drinking water standards or make it suitable for industrial uses.

Mr. Kleber Denny said the SFWQC plans to drill a series of shallow brine wells into the salt springs and continuously pump at a rate sufficient to lower the artesian pressure of the underlying saline aquifer to the point that the springs will cease to flow. Their research indicates that the process would lower the saline levels in Lake Granbury to about 40 percent of current levels. That, he said, is drinking water quality level. In addition to the wells the project will include about 40 miles of pipeline that will carry the brine to a processing and distribution center at a railhead site. He said that they expect that the process will be complete in three years and that the reduction in the saline level in Lake Granbury would be achieved within three to five years after that. He also said that the salt quality and the salt concentration of the spring water makes it highly desirable for use by oil and gas drillers and commercial salt processors. The SFWQC is negotiating the sale of some of the salt wells production.

The Salt Fork Water Quality Corp. was described as a non-profit government corporation and is presently operating on state and Federal grants. It is possible that downstream water users may be assessed a fee to offset some of the project's operating cost but it is expected that the fee will be less than the savings from reduced water treatment expenses. However it is expected that the economic value of the salt and brine production will support the continuing operation the wells and processing facility

Brazos River water users can expect to benefit from the project through reduced water treatment costs and lower dam facility maintenance costs. Recreational users and river/lakeside residents can expect to benefit by reduced damage to property when the highly corrosive saline levels are

reduced. It is speculated that reducing the saline levels will reduce the number and intensity of golden algae blooms and related fish kills.

On a different subject, the meeting was also addressed briefly by Dan Opdyke, PhD. from Texas Parks and Wildlife. He advised that the Brazos G Regional Water Board is seeking persons to fill two vacancies on the board. One position requires a background in environmental activity and the other small business experience. See more on this in the Co-Chairman's Report below.

Upcoming Meetings

There will not be a meeting of the BRCC - Hood Chapter in August. Efforts continue to get State Senator Kip Averitt to speak at the chapter's September Meeting. Becky Dixon is working to make it happen.

The BRCC - Hood Chapter **Board of Directors** will meet on Saturday, July 28. The agenda has not yet been set. Consideration of the chapter's official position on the SFWQC project will likely be an agenda item. Members wishing to submit items for consideration by the board should contact [Josh Rosenfeld](#) or [Billy Teels](#) before Monday, July 23

Co-Chairman's Report By Josh Rosenfeld

Report on the June 20, 2007 Brazos G Regional Water Board public meeting in Waco.

To explain what the Brazos G Regional Water Board is, the following paragraphs are copied from the organization's website at: www.brazosgwater.org/288.html

The June 20th meeting agenda is also on the Region G website.

*"In accordance with Senate Bill 1 passed during the 75th Texas Legislative Session, the **Texas Water Development Board** (TWDB) in Austin was authorized to divide the state into **16 regional water planning areas**. The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) is one of the regional planning groups established by the TWDB to develop a regional water plan. Brazos G has been working since 1998 to develop a comprehensive regional water plan for its **37-County planning area**, which extends generally along the Brazos River from Kent, Stonewall and Knox Counties in the Northwest to Washington and Lee Counties in the Southeast.*

*Initially appointed by the TWDB, the **regional water planning group members** represent 11 water user groups which are subject to the Open Meetings Act and member approved **Bylaws**. Brazos G selected the **Brazos River Authority** as the political subdivision charged with the day-to-day administration and **HDR Engineering, Inc.** as the lead consulting firm.*

The regional water plans provide for the orderly development, management, and conservation of water resources, and include drought preparation and response. The goal of the planning process is to assure that sufficient water will be available at a reasonable cost to ensure public health, safety and welfare, further economic development and protect agricultural and natural resources."

The Board meets quarterly to exchange information among the various public entities that are charged with studying and managing the surface and ground water in the Brazos G area, and to take appropriate action.

The Board is seeking applicants for two vacant positions. One position requires expertise in environmental development and the other in small business. Final selection will be in October/November, 2007. August 3rd is the deadline to apply. Notice of this solicitation and the application form are available on the Region G website.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Report:

S.B. 3 was recently passed by the Texas Senate after 6 attempts. TPW considers this omnibus bill to be a success on water related issues. It addresses the following:

- Environmental Decision Making
- Water Conservation
- Reservoir Designations
- The Edwards Aquifer
- Water Project Funding Procedures

The Texas Water Development Board reported on other relevant results from the recent legislative session and discussed general funding for regional planning (\$5 to 7 million), plan implementation (\$46 million), financial assistance programs for grass roots projects (including economically distressed areas with generous pay terms; i.e. low interest and some forgiveness) \$56 million.

HDR (Consulting Firm) reported on funded and pending TWDB projects.

High priority projects include:

- Impact of the recent drought
- Nolan County water management (Sweetwater, TX)
- Help for small systems trying to meet requirements
- Water management plan for Johnson County
- Water management plan for McClennan County where present supplies will be exceeded by 2050.
- (Pending) Effects of sedimentation on water supply \$118,000
- (Not funded yet but may be approved in the future) Salinity in the Brazos river \$148,000

There were several other reports on local issues within the area covered by Region G. My overall impression is that the critical water situation in Texas due to rapid growth and poor management practices has been recognized at all government levels with appropriate action being taken considering the geographic, political and jurisdictional complexities of the watershed. I was impressed by the emphasis in decision making on data gathering and technical analysis, and the input of grass roots stake holders. The challenge is to move ahead while balancing all of these different interests and organizations. The Region G Board of Directors is at the heart of this process.

Membership Report

Membership Committee Chair, Jo Ann Matthews, has been busy signing up new members at various activities. The recent talk by Josh Rosenfeld at the Pecan Plantation Wednesday Breakfast resulted in 15 new members. The chapter membership now stands at 259

Important Websites and E-mail Addresses

U. S. CONGRESS

Senator Kay Bailey-Hutchinson:

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

Senator John Cornyn:

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

Representative Chet Edwards:

Chris.kelly@mail.house.gov

STATE ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

BRA-Tiffany Morgan:

www.brazos.org

tiffanym@brazos.org

HOOD COUNTY

Judge Rash:

knace@co.hood.tx.us

County Environmental Health Office:

James McAusland, Director

jmcausland@co.hood.tx.us

TEXAS LEGISLATURE

State Senator Kip Averitt:

becky.dixon@senate.state.tx.us

State Representative Jim Keffer

trent.thomas@house.state.tx.us

Texas Commission on

Environmental Quality (TCEQ)

www.state.tx.us

fespino@tceq.state.tx.us

Commissioner Dick Roan:

joviex@charter.net

County Extension Agent:

Marty Vahlenkamp

hood-tx@tamu.edu

Published by:

Jack D'Amario, Chairman

Programs and Publicity Committee

jndamario@alltel.net

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