

Section 8

Recommendations for Unique Stream Segments, Unique Reservoir Sites, and Other Legislative Recommendations

8.1 Recommendations Concerning River and Stream Segments Having Unique Ecological Value

Regional water planning groups are given the option of designating stream segments having “unique ecological value” within their planning areas. Five criteria are utilized to identify such segments:

1. Biological Function:
 - Quantity (acreage or areal extent of habitat), and
 - Quality (biodiversity, age, uniqueness).
2. Hydrologic Function:
 - Water Quality,
 - Flood Attenuation and Flow Stabilization, and
 - Groundwater Recharge and Discharge.
3. Occurrence of Riparian Conservation Areas.
4. Occurrence of High Water Quality, Exceptional Aquatic Life or High Aesthetic Value.
5. Occurrence of Threatened or Endangered Species and/or Unique Communities.

In 2000, Hicks & Company prepared a report for the Brazos G RWPG identifying 19 stream segments within the Brazos G Area meeting one or more of the criteria¹. The Hicks analysis identified 11 segments that had already been identified by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 2000, plus an additional eight segments. A copy of the Hicks & Company report is posted on the Brazos G website (www.brazosgwater.org). In 2002, the TPWD updated its list with an additional four segments. Table 8-1 lists those stream segments identified in the Hicks & Company report and by TPWD as candidates for designation.

The Brazos G RWPG has chosen not to designate any stream segments as having unique ecological value.

¹ Hicks & Company, *River and Stream Segments of Unique Ecological Value in the Brazos G Regional Water Planning Area*, Final Report, prepared for the Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group, August 2000.

Table 8-1.
**Stream Segments in the Brazos G Regional Water Planning Area Identified as Candidates
for Designation as Unique Stream Segments**

Candidate Stream Segment	Source of Original Identification	Year Identified
Brazos River – Bosque, Johnson, Somervell & Hood Counties	TPWD	2000
Brazos River – Palo Pinto County	TPWD	2000
Clear Fork of the Brazos River – Stephens County	Hicks & Company	2000
Colony Creek – Eastland County	TPWD	2000
Colorado River – Lampasas County	TPWD	2000
Cow Bayou – Falls & McLennan Counties	TPWD	2000
East & Middle Yegua Creeks – Lee & Burleson Counties	Hicks & Company	2000
Lake Creek – Grimes County	TPWD	2000
Lampasas River – Lampasas & Hamilton Counties	Hicks & Company	2000
Leon River – Coryell & Bell Counties	Hicks & Company	2000
Little River – Milam & Bell Counties	TPWD	2000
Navasota River – Brazos & Grimes Counties	Hicks & Company	2000
Navasota River – Robertson & Leon Counties	Hicks & Company	2000
Neils Creek – Bosque County	TPWD	2000
Nolan River – Johnson & Hill Counties	Hicks & Company	2000
North Bosque River – McLennan County	Hicks & Company	2000
Paluxy River – Somervell, Hood, & Erath Counties	TPWD	2000
Steele Creek – Bosque County	TPWD	2000
Willis Creek – Williamson County	TPWD	2000
Double Mountain Fork Brazos River – from the confluence with Salt Fork Brazos River upstream to the Kent/Garza County Line	TPWD	2002
North Fork Double Mountain Brazos River – from the confluence with Double Mountain Fork Brazos River upstream to the Kent/Garza County Line	TPWD	2002
Salt Fork Brazos River – from Knox/Baylor County Line upstream to the Kent/Garza County Line	TPWD	2002
San Gabriel River – from the confluence with the Little River upstream to Granger Lake Dam	TPWD	2002

8.2 Recommendations Concerning Sites Uniquely Suited for Reservoirs

The Brazos G RWPG has chosen to identify the following three sites as uniquely suited for reservoir construction. Each of these sites is associated with a recommended water management strategy in the 2011 Plan, and local entities have requested these sites be identified as unique reservoir sites.

- Cedar Ridge Reservoir,
- Millers Creek Reservoir Augmentation (downstream dam site), and
- Coryell County Off-Channel Reservoir

8.3 Legislative and Policy Recommendations

The Brazos G RWPG established a Water Policy Workgroup to discuss various issues concerning State water policy and to formulate proposed positions for the planning group to consider for recommendation to the TWDB and the Texas Legislature. For the 2006 Plan, the Brazos G RWPG formulated recommendations for several legislative and water policy positions. For the 2011 Plan, these policy recommendations were revisited by the Water Policy Workgroup, and specific revised recommendations were offered to the full planning group for consideration.

The Brazos G RWPG offers the following specific recommendations concerning State water policy to the TWDB and the Texas Legislature. Issue number refers to a larger list of topics considered by the Brazos G RWPG for the 2006 Plan. Only those issues for which the Brazos G RWPG has formulated a recommendation are included here.

Issue #1: Interaction of State Agencies with Regional Water Planning Groups

“The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) recognizes that all State agencies involved in planning and/or permitting regional water projects need to act consistently with the current statewide water plan and to work cooperatively with Regional Water Planning Groups that are considering significant new regional water projects requiring State agency input and/or permits.”

Issue #2: Coordination between Regional Water Planning Groups and Groundwater Conservation Districts

“The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) is committed to working cooperatively with Groundwater Conservation Districts (GCDs) when developing the Regional

Plan. The GCDs are requested to review water demand, population projections, and water availability numbers for their respective Districts and comment accordingly.

Brazos G recognizes, pursuant to HB 1763, that GCDs are statutorily required to determine the amount of groundwater that is available for use in the Regional Water Plan. HB 1763, passed by the 79th Texas Legislature (2005) outlines a process by which all GCDs within the 16 Groundwater Management Areas (GMAs) work together to determine Desired Future Conditions (DFCs) for all aquifers within the GMA. DFCs are then researched by the TWDB and a Managed Available Groundwater (MAG) figures are supplied to the GMA and its member GCDs. MAG is the amount of water that GCDs may permit and expect to maintain/achieve their DFCs.

Regional water plans are required to use MAG as available groundwater if the GMA process is completed by January 2008. Some GMAs and their member GCDs may not finish the GMA planning process by January 2008 since the statutory deadline in HB 1763 is September of 2010. Brazos G has committed to use the MAGs in the current planning cycle provided that they are available before 10/1/2008. In those cases where the MAG is not available on 10/1/2008, Brazos G will use the draft MAG if the process is almost complete; use applicable TWDB Groundwater Availability Models (GAMs) for the Carrizo-Wilcox and Trinity Aquifers; and previous estimates from the 2006 Plan.

The use of DFCs to take a long term view of the health of aquifers and MAG to allow the use of groundwater for beneficial purposes without depleting aquifers is consistent with Brazos G's historical policy that does not allow the adoption of water management strategies that will substantially deplete the aquifers.

If there are differences between the Brazos G and a GCD that cannot be worked out, Brazos G may use the process outlined in HB 1763 to petition against the adoption of a disputed DFC. However, the coordination process outlined in HB 1763 is ongoing and continuing as GCDs work to set DFCs and work with the Regional Water Planning Groups, as they develop the Regional Plan.”

Issue #3: System Operation of Water Facilities

“The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) recognizes the inherent benefit of system operations of existing water supply sources and recommends that State water planning as well as permitting continue to promote such water management strategies.

System operation involves coordinated operation of two or more water supply sources (including surface water reservoirs and run-of-river diversions, as well as groundwater aquifers) such that the system yield is greater than the sum of the individual sources.

System operation provides several significant benefits to the State, including: better utilization of existing infrastructure; efficient use of water supplies to meet needs; delay or avoidance of expensive new water supply infrastructure; and reduced environmental impact potentially occurring due to major new projects.”

Issue #4: Interbasin Transfers of Surface Water

“The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group recognizes that Interbasin Transfers have been a critical component of water management in Region G. The Texas Water Development Board projects that the State’s population may double in the next 50 years. IBTs will be a necessary component of the water management strategies.”

Issue #5: Rule of Capture

“While the Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) recognizes that the Rule of Capture has a history of over 100 years in Texas, Brazos G also recognizes the advances in science and changes in water marketing that now face us.

Brazos G recognizes that the State groundwater supply is being threatened and, in many instances landowners risk loss due to depletion by unlimited pumping by their neighbors.

Local control through checks and balances can most effectively and fairly regulate usage. When the public chooses, Groundwater Conservation Districts are the appropriate mechanisms to provide local control of groundwater. The State should continue to develop policy and legislation to fairly protect both historic use and future sustainability.”

Issue #7: Conjunctive Use of Groundwater and Surface Water

“The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) recognizes conjunctive use as an important management strategy. Conjunctive use is the systematic utilization of groundwater with surface water to optimize the combined yield from both sources. Conjunctive use seeks to maximize the advantages and minimize the disadvantages of each source when both are utilized together. As conjunctive use projects are recognized, they should be included as management

strategies for the regional water plan. Brazos G encourages development of alternative conjunctive use projects, including aquifer storage and recovery operations, as needed.”

Issue #8: Integrating Water Quality and Water Supply Considerations

“The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) continues to support existing efforts of regulatory agencies to protect current and future sources of drinking water, including both groundwater and surface water supplies. Brazos G, as well as the regulatory agencies, is committed to ensuring both the quality and quantity of water for our constituents. Furthermore, Brazos G encourage all governmental agencies, when making regulatory or permitting decisions or influencing decisions regarding land and resource use, to give preference to alternatives to protect or enhance the quality of water so that such water resources may be utilized for beneficial use. As a planning group, protecting and enhancing these resources and sustaining our supply will always be among Brazos G’s priority commitments.”

Issue #9: Reuse/Return Flow

“The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) recognizes that return flows should be managed by direct and indirect reuse where applicable. The reuse of return flows should also be coordinated with the appropriate agencies. Furthermore, Brazos G recommends considering the impact of reuse of return flows on instream flows.”

Issue #10: Watershed Planning/Source Water Protection

“The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) will promote water development policies that support efforts to protect both groundwater and surface water sources by encouraging sound practices that will not adversely affect water supply or quality. We support other agencies and organizations in their efforts to encourage responsible land management and will oppose any practice or action in our watersheds or recharge zones that could adversely affect our water resources. Maintaining our watershed health, economic sustainability and community viability are all critical elements in our water planning efforts. Sensible stewardship of the areas adjacent to and around river basins, sensitive sub-basins, aquifers and re-charge zones is essential for maintaining these resources. Through source water protection, Texas can promote equitable costs for present and future water sources.”

Issue #11: Education

“Research indicates that there is a strong relationship between knowledge of water sources and a willingness to conserve. Conservation is the most cost-effective means of securing the future water supply. The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) believes strongly that water education is important and supports public awareness programs such as the Texas Water Development Board’s Water IQ: Know Your Water campaign.”

Issue #13: Retail Customer Water Pricing

“The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) recognizes that water management strategy planning includes having the most positive effect on retail water customer pricing balanced with maintaining a long-term reliable plan. Optimizing retail water pricing with a long-term source may include an interbasin transfer when it is determined to be in the best interest of the ratepayers.

Brazos G encourages retail water providers to seriously consider implementing an inclining block rate structure that would be consistent with best management practices for conserving water. By using this methodology, a properly designed rate allows a consistent price signal to the ratepayer, without over earnings to the utility. This increasingly favored approach heightens the interest in water conservation to the end users.”

Issue #15: Effects of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) on Water Supply Systems

“The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) recognizes the difficulty in meeting the standards of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act for some water supply systems. Accordingly, Brazos G encourages the regionalization of these systems, and/or education and proactive planning. This approach would prevent these systems from being a burden to the State.”

Issue #19: Inter-Regional Cooperation/Inter-Regional Water Sharing

“The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) will be proactive in communication and interaction with neighboring regional water planning groups on water issues of mutual concern.”

Issue #20: Plan Implementation / Funding

“The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G) recognizes the need for a funding mechanism to implement the state water plan. Brazos G encourages legislative action to effect infrastructure funding.”