

**Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group
Water Policy Committee – 2011 Regional Water Plan, Phase II**

Purpose

The Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group (Brazos G RWPG) Water Policy Committee considers and makes recommendations as necessary to the Brazos G Group to complete requirements identified in the regional water planning scope of work. The scope of work and associated tasks reflect regional water planning guidelines established by the Texas Water Development Board.

Tasks

Develop Recommendations Regarding Unique Stream Segments and/or Reservoir Sites

- Based on work performed by the Brazos G RWPG engineering consultant, the Water Policy Committee will consider selection and documentation of any unique stream segments and/or unique reservoir sites to recommend to Brazos G RWPG for inclusion in the 2011 Plan.

Regulatory, Administrative, Legislative Recommendations & Regional Policy Issues

- The Water Policy Committee will consider regional policy issues and develop recommendations for regulatory, administrative, and legislative rule changes for submittal to appropriate entities by Brazos G RWPG.

Report to Legislature on Water Infrastructure Funding Recommendations

- The Brazos G RWPG consultant will perform a survey and develop funding recommendations based on the Water Management Strategies included in the 2011 Plan; follow-up on responses, summarize the responses, and document in accordance with TWDB guidance.
- The Water Policy Committee will receive and consider the survey results and present them to the Brazos G RWPG.
- The Water Policy Committee will consider development of recommendations regarding the proposed role of the State in financing projects identified in the 2011 Plan.

Planning Guidelines

Unique Stream Segments

Planning groups may recommend all or parts of river and stream segments in their respective regions as having “unique ecological values”. To recommend a designation, planning groups must justify it based on the following criteria:

- biological function measured as stream segments displaying significant habitat value including both quantity and quality considering degrees of biodiversity, age, and uniqueness including terrestrial, wetland, aquatic, or estuarine habitats;
- hydrologic function measured as stream segments fringed by habitats that perform valuable hydrologic functions relating to water quality, flood attenuation, flow stabilization, or groundwater recharge and discharge;
- riparian conservation areas measured as stream segments fringed by significant areas in public ownership including state and federal refuges, wildlife management areas, preserves, parks, mitigation areas, or other areas held by governmental organizations for conservation purposes, or stream segments fringed by other areas managed for conservation purposes under governmentally approved conservation plans;
- high water quality, exceptional aquatic life, high aesthetic value and spring resources that are significant due to unique or critical habitats and exceptional aquatic life uses dependent on or associated with high water quality; or
- threatened or endangered species and unique communities defined as sites along streams where water development projects would have significant detrimental effects on state or

federally listed threatened and endangered species, and sites along streams significant due to the presence of unique, exemplary, or unusually extensive natural communities.

Planning groups seeking a designation should forward a recommendation package to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, who will in turn provide a written evaluation of the proposal within 30 days. Packages should contain a description of a site's location along with maps, photographs, and documentation with supporting literature and data that characterizes a site's unique ecological value. Adopted regional water plans should include, if available, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's written evaluation.

If the Texas Legislature designates a stream or river segment as unique; or if a planning group recommends that a stream or river segment be classified as unique, each planning group must quantitatively assess how recommended water management strategies in a regional plan would affect flows deemed important (by planning groups) to the stream or river segment in question. Furthermore, assessments should describe how a regional plan would affect the unique features cited by a region as the impetus for a legislative designation.

Unique Reservoir Sites

Planning groups may recommend sites for reservoir construction that have "unique value" by including a description of the site, reasons for the unique designation and expected beneficiaries of water supplies developed at a given site. The following criteria should be used to determine if a site is unique:

- site specific reservoir development is recommended as a specific water management strategy or as an alternative long-term scenario in an adopted regional water plan; or
- factors such as location, hydrologic, geologic, topographic, water availability, water quality, environmental, cultural, and current development characteristics make a site uniquely suited for either reservoir development to provide water supply for the current planning period; or where it might reasonably be needed to meet water needs beyond the 50-year planning period.

Regulatory, Administrative, and Legislative Recommendations

Planning groups may compile regulatory, administrative, or legislative recommendations that will facilitate the orderly development, management, and conservation of water resources in Texas, and will help the state prepare for and respond to droughts. In addition, they may develop information regarding the potential impacts of recommendations enacted into law once proposed changes are in effect.

Reporting of Financing Mechanisms for Water Management Strategies

Planning groups will assess how local governments, regional authorities, and other political subdivisions would finance the implementation of water management strategies via a formal survey administered by TWDB and executed by each planning group. TWDB will develop a survey instrument and methodology. Each planning group will conduct a survey and report findings to TWDB. TWDB will provide additional instructions and documentation describing the survey methodology and formats for reporting resultant data.