

# **2013 Watermaster Evaluation Trinity and San Jacinto Areas**

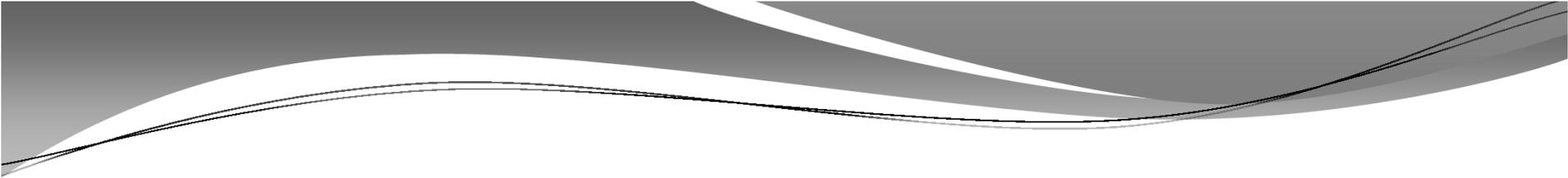
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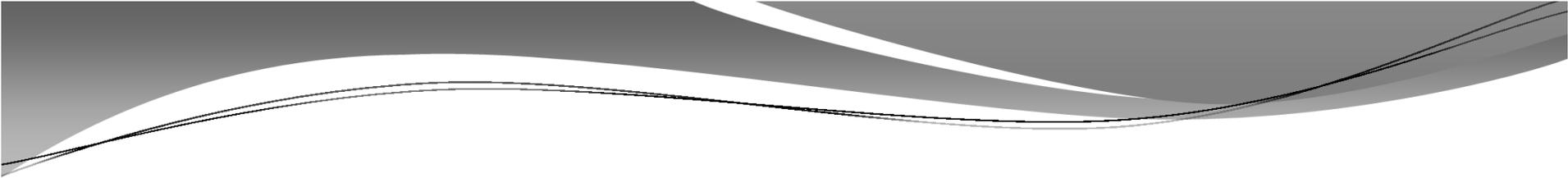
# Why are we here?

- Statutory requirement to evaluate each basin that does not have a watermaster program at least once every five years.
- Report the findings and make recommendations to the Commission.
- Findings and recommendations are to be included in the Biennial Report to the Legislature.



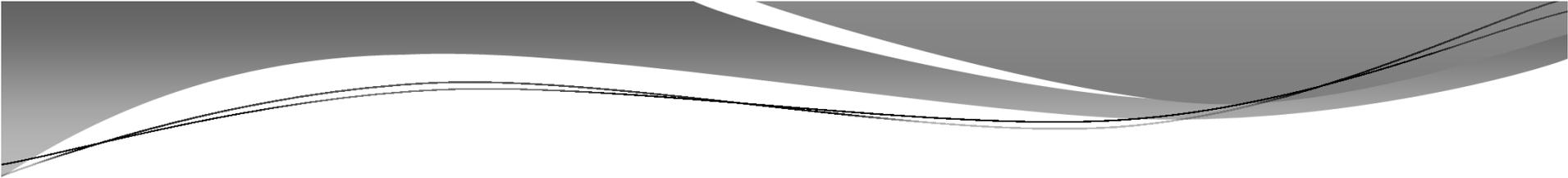
# Ways a Watermaster May be Established

- The Executive Director (ED) may appoint a watermaster to an established water division.
- A watermaster may be court appointed.
- The Commission may appoint a watermaster on its own motion if senior water rights have been threatened.
- Twenty-five (25) or more water right holders in a river basin or segment of a river basin may petition for a hearing on whether a watermaster should be appointed.



# Functions of a Watermaster

- Allocate water between water right holders on the basis of seniority
- Allocate water to maximize beneficial use
- Minimize the potential impairment of senior water rights
- Prevent waste or use in excess of quantities to which water right holders are entitled



# Functions of a Watermaster

- Monitoring stream flows, reservoir levels, and water use
- Archive data
- Investigate complaints
- Respond quickly
- Report in real time

# Evaluation Criteria

- In September 2011, the Commission established the following criteria to be considered during the evaluation process:
  - Has there been a court order to create a watermaster?
  - Have there been petitions requesting a watermaster?
  - Have senior water rights been threatened, based on either the history of senior calls or water shortages within the basin or the number of water right complaints received on an annual basis in each basin?

# What are Senior Water Rights?

- “First in Time, First in Right”
  - Oldest (senior) water rights must be satisfied before the later (junior) water rights.
  - The priority date of a water right establishes that place in line of junior and senior water rights.

# How Does a Priority Call Happen?

- If a water right is not getting the water they need which is authorized under their permit, they may make a priority call.
- The TCEQ will evaluate the call and make a determination as to whether or not suspending water rights will provide additional water that can be beneficially used.
- If the agency determines that suspensions would provide the water right with additional water, then junior water rights that are suspended will be notified.



# Evaluation

- No court orders for the basins under consideration.
- No active or approved petitions.
- No history of threatened water rights or water shortages, other than certain cities being on watering restrictions due to enacting their drought contingency plans.

# Evaluation – Options

- Option 1 – No Watermaster Recommended for any of the 4 basins under consideration.
- Option 2 – A watermaster program to include all 4 basins under consideration.
- Option 3 – A watermaster program to include only the Trinity River Basin and the Trinity-San Jacinto Coastal Basin.
- Option 4 – A watermaster program to include only the San Jacinto River Basin and the San Jacinto-Brazos Coastal Basin.

# Administration Costs

- Statutory requirement that a water right holder in a Watermaster area is required to pay an annual assessment fee.
- Each account will have base fee, plus a fee based on permitted amounts and use.

# Examples of Costs

- Estimated operating costs for implementing a watermaster program in all 4 basins would be approximately \$548,962.85 for the first year, and \$403,770.59 for each year thereafter.
- The municipal cost per acre-foot (AF) in the current South Texas Program is \$0.20 per acre-foot of authorization.
  - One AF is 325,851 gallons.
- An irrigator would pay 80% of the municipal rate, or \$0.16 per acre foot.

# Feedback Requested

Comments must be Received at TCEQ By:  
**Friday, June 14, 2013 @ 5:00 p.m.**

**Mail comments to:**

TCEQ, Water Availability Division  
Watermaster Section, MC 160  
P.O. Box 13087  
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

**Or e-mail comments to:**

[watermaster@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:watermaster@tceq.texas.gov)



# More Information?

- Amy Settemeyer, Watermaster Section Manager  
(512) 239-2588
- Cindy Hooper, Watermaster Program Liaison  
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- Michael Redda, Watermaster Program Liaison  
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