

Water Rights Advisory Work Group – June 2, 2015

**Introductions** – Sonia Crawford

New Staff Announcement

**Water Rights Compliance Assurance Team**

Jacob Horn – Contractor

**Permitting Team**

Calvin Clary – Project Manager

Brent Rougeau – Project Manager

Carmen Cardenas – Project Manager

**Watermaster Team**

Kate Litchen - Intern

**Water Right Section Update** – Ron Ellis

Legislative Session Summary

- House Bill (HB) 655 – Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)

Most regulations are no longer under Texas Water Code (TWC) Chapter 11, but can be found under Chapters 27 and 36.

There are Class V injection well requirements for the ASR well. This is a new and more streamlined approach with no pilot program required. ASR will now be easier to use for existing water rights. This bill has passed legislature and is with the Governor.

- HB1016 is a designation of certain regional stream segments as having unique ecological value. This bill is effective September 1<sup>st</sup>.
- HB1042 re-designates Lake Ringgold as a unique reservoir site. This bill has been signed.
- HB2031 is a broad desalination bill which created TWC Chapter 18. The bill gives water rights a permitting process for using water for desalination and also defines a new water quality process for discharge of brine waste in the desalination process. It also creates an exemption for water rights if the diversion point is more than three miles offshore and if the salinity is 20,000 ppl or greater. Permits can also still be acquired under TWC Chapter 11 for desalination. This bill is with the Governor.
- HB4097 is also a desalination bill that is specific to industrial use water. This bill is with the Governor.
- Senate Bill 551 requires legislative recommendations be included in the biennial report from the Water Conservation Advisory Council.

### **Watermaster Update – Cindy Hooper**

- Currently the watermaster section is fully staffed.
- The new Brazos Watermaster program officially started June 1, 2015 which means that any diverters within the programs jurisdiction must submit declarations of intent to divert water, once they have had meters and pumps certified by watermaster staff.
- Staff is in the middle of the fourth year of evaluations of river basins that do not currently have a watermaster, to determine if one is needed. Stakeholder meetings are being held in the Red River and Canadian River Basins.
- Staff is currently working on the FY2016 budget assessments for all four watermaster programs.

### **Commission Actions Update – Robin Smith**

- March 24, 2015 the Commission approved an emergency order for the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) which allowed LCRA to suspend releases of stored water to irrigators downstream. The order expires June 18, 2015.
- May 15, 2015 the LCRA filed another application for an emergency order to suspend any releases to the downstream irrigators. If the Executive Director issues an order the Commission will be considering it in the near future.
- The Brazos River Authorities application, for the system operation of the reservoirs in the Brazos River and an additional amount of water for appropriation, was remanded back to the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) and the hearing was completed several months ago. A proposal for decision should be complete by July 18<sup>th</sup>.
- The Bois D'arc application, for a new reservoir on Bois D'arc Creek in north Texas close to Bonham, has a hearing scheduled in Austin for July 6-July 16<sup>th</sup>.
- The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority application, for an off-channel reservoir, has gone to preliminary hearing. There was a briefing concerning affected person status. A schedule has not been set for this hearing yet.

### **Closing – Sonia Crawford**

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday September 1, 2015 at 10:00am in the Agenda room.

- Comments and topics for discussion can be emailed to Sarah Henderson at [sarah.henderson@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:sarah.henderson@tceq.texas.gov) or Sonia Crawford at [sonia.crawford@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:sonia.crawford@tceq.texas.gov)