Texas Commission On Environmental Quality

South Texas Watermaster Program
Topics for Today

- Watermaster Program Information
- Water Right Information
- Staff Duties
- Drought
Watermaster Program
Information
What Does The Watermaster Program Do?

Manage, monitor, archive, and enforce surface water rights based on priority.
Watermaster Authority

Texas Water Code
Chapter 11 Water Rights
Beginning at Section 11.326

Title 30 Texas Admin Code
Watermaster Duties in Chapter 304
Water Rights in Chapters 295 & 297
Currently Three Programs In Texas

Rio Grande
South Texas
Concho River
Benefits Of Watermaster Program

- Hands on monitoring of surface water rights
  - Non-watermaster areas of the state are on an honor system
- Ability to enforce priority system of surface water rights
  - Results in protection of exempt Domestic & Livestock rights
    - Priority over all appropriated water rights
- Unlike most of the other TCEQ programs
  - Main focus is Water Quantity
- Archive diversion data of surface water
Facts About The South Texas Watermaster Program

- Covers all or parts of 50 counties
- Overlaps 6 TCEQ regional offices
- Comprised of 7 river basins
- Approximately 1,200 appropriated water rights and certificates of adjudication
- STWM budget of approximately $550,000
- Program is funded solely by appropriated water right holders
Watermaster Advisory Committees

- Created by legislature in 1998
- Advise and oversee watermaster issues and budgets
- Currently 12 members on the South Texas Watermaster Advisory Committee
- Committee made up of cross section of water rights holders
Water Right Information
Surface Water Right Permits

- Certificates Of Adjudication
- Water Right Permits
  - Special Conditions
  - Restrictions
- Term Permits
- Temporary Permits
Water Use Types

- Municipal
- Irrigation
- Industrial
- Agricultural
- Mining
- Game Preserves
- Public Parks
- Multi-use
- Recreation
- Hydro Electric

- All Use types have equal value.
Staff Duties
2009 Work Totals

- Sites – 10,016
- Calls – 2,415
- Nov’s/ Inquiries – 95
- Meetings – 510
- Miles Driven – 127,248
South Texas

Large Area

Diverse Issues
South Texas Issues / Violations

- Diverting water illegally
- Illegally impounding state water
- Failure to call in declarations of intent to divert/failure to call before diverting
- Not reporting ownership changes
- No meter or not repairing meters in a timely manner
Drought
Drought Resource Information

- US Drought Monitor
- National Weather Service
- USGS Staff Gauges
- Deputy Observations and Measurements
- Concerned Citizens
Watermaster Drought Response

- Monthly drought report of area
- Notification to agency of possible restrictions
- Warning letters to water right holders in advance of possible curtailments
- Notifying news media to disseminate drought information
Watermaster Drought Response

- Assurance of priority system
- Monitoring diversions and frequency of use
- Possible 24 hour surveillance
Making It Work

- Co-operation and understanding of public, appropriated water right holders, exempt D & L users, and government officials

- We all have a vested interest in protecting and conserving our water
Contact Information

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1-800-733-2733
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