

# 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

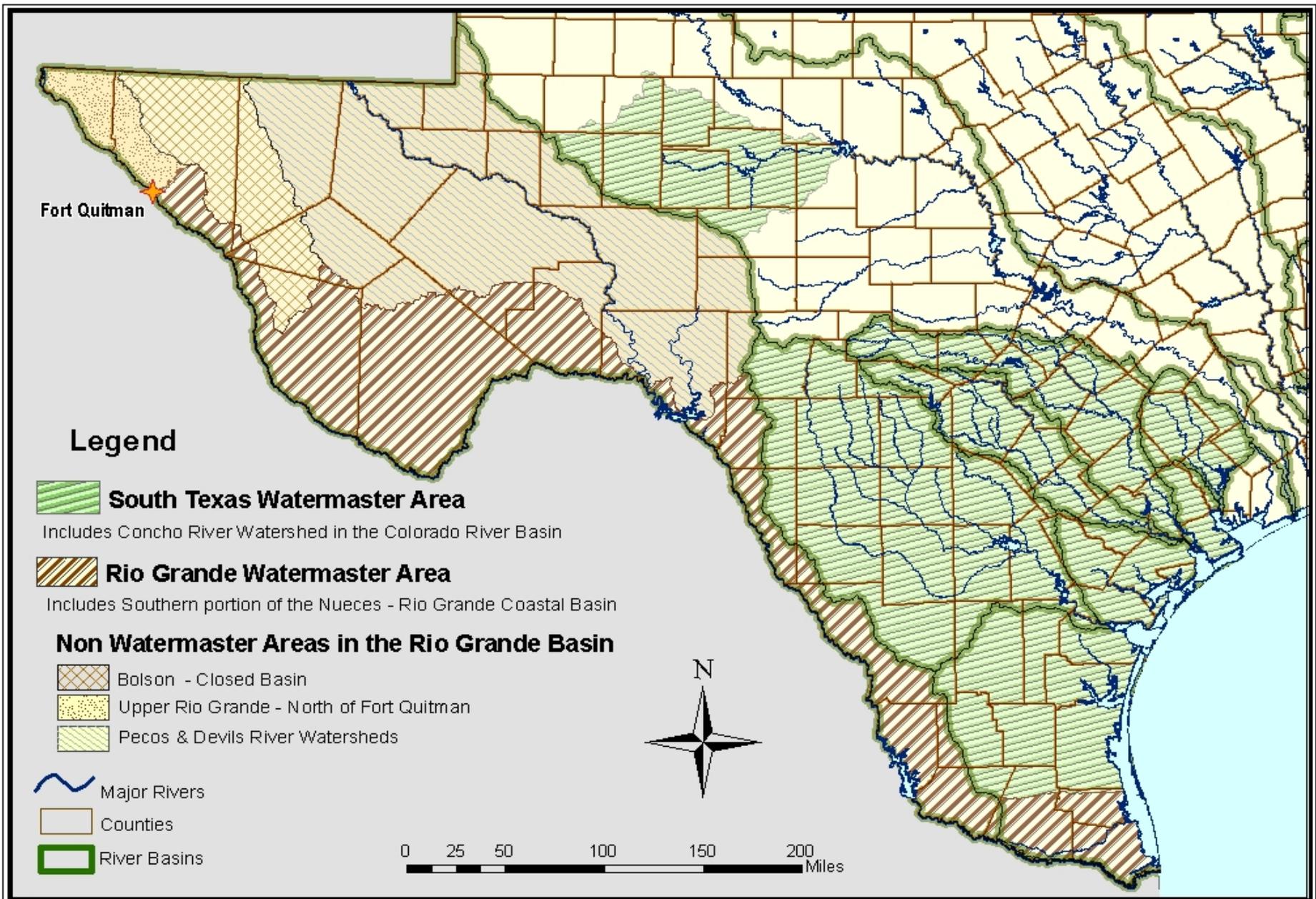
- Hands on monitoring of surface water rights
  - Non-watermaster areas of the state are on an honor system
- Ability to enforce priority system of surface water rights
  - Results in protection of exempt Domestic & Livestock rights
    - Priority over all appropriated water rights
- Unlike most of the 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





# TEXAS WATERMASTER AREAS

# 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 right 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



DENVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE















05/18/2010



09/29/2008

# South Texas

Large Area  
Diverse Issues









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04/12/77



# 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







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PHOTO COURTESY GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY



PHOTO COURTESY GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY



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# 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

South Texas Watermaster's Office

1-800-733-2733

1-210-403-4041

