

Key Elements Of LCRA-SAWS Water Project-Part Two

By Ron Gertson

This is the second part of a series of articles by Ron Gertson on the plan Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) and San Antonio Water System (SAWS) to meet water needs in the region and to provide water to San Antonio in the future.

The impetus for the LCRA-SAWS Water Project (LSWP) is to meet projected water shortages in our basin (primarily in irrigation) while also helping meet shortages in Region L (The San Antonio area) thereby saving off potential water grabs. Project funding is to be provided entirely by SAWS.

This rather complicated project is designed to accomplish its purposes through a number of critical components, which I briefly described below.

Groundwater

Growing irrigation shortages in Region K (the Colorado River basin) are to be met by supplementing surface water with groundwater pumped into the irrigation canals during low river flow.

The LCRA irrigation districts provide for the water needs of over half of the rice production in Colorado, Wharton and Matagorda Counties.

Rice production brings a gross income of roughly \$80 million to these three counties.

Without the LSWP these traditional irrigation needs could go unmet by as much as 50 percent in major droughts.

Groundwater will be covered in more detail in a future article.

Key Question: What is the impact of the proposed pumping on local groundwater levels and what amount of impact, if any, is deemed acceptable?

Conservation

The LSWP proposes to conserve as much as 118,000 acre-feet of irrigation water annually.

Conservation would include precision leveling, multiple inlet, regulating reservoirs and automation of major canal structures for more precise and efficient water use and delivery.

Development of rice varieties that would use less water would

add to conservation.

Varietal development has already begun through a partnership between the LCRA and TAES.

Key Question: What is the result if the projected conservation is not achieved?

Off-Channel Reservoirs

Off-channel reservoirs are anticipated to provide a large chunk of reliable water by capturing flows that exceed those deemed necessary for maintaining the environment of the river and bay system.

Key Questions: What are the environmental impacts of removing this water from the river? Can reservoir sites be acquired without widespread use of eminent domain?

Environmental Concerns

The LSWP is required by state law to "ensure that the beneficial inflows remaining after any water diversions will be adequate to maintain the ecological health and productivity of the Matagorda Bay system" and that the project "will provide for instream flows no less

protective than those included in the district's Water Management Plan for the Lower Colorado River Basin, as approved by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission." (HB1629)

Key Question: What happens if during implementation of this project the TCEQ (formerly TNRCC) raises the environmental flow requirements thereby decreasing the over-all amount of water the project can make available for other uses.

Lake Levels

The LSWP must also result in an increase in the average levels of Lake Buchanan and Lake Travis in comparison to what the levels would be without the project.

Key Question: Can this be accomplished without decreasing the water available for downstream uses?

Permitting

Major components of the LSWP require permits and permit amendments of various kinds.

The ability to gain the necessary permits will dramatically impact the amount of water the LSWP will produce.

The permitting process will provide the public excellent opportunities to be heard regarding to the merits of each permit sought.

Question: What will be the impact of amended permits if the project is not implemented?

Studies

The \$42 million worth of studies authorized by the LSWP should go along way toward answering the myriad of unanswered questions.

The LSWP calls for a seven year study period, and we are about to enter the fifth year.

Studies are being conducted

by third party consultants regarding the environment, engineering, agricultural conservation, groundwater for agriculture and socio-economic impacts.

Study findings and advisory committee meeting schedules can be found on-line at: www.lcra.org/lswp/.

Tremendous knowledge will be gained from these studies that will bolster the LCRA's ability to responsibly manage the precious Colorado River.

The next article in the series will be a detailed look at proposed surface water development.

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Treatment For Childhood Ear Infections

Ear infections occur very commonly during childhood, particularly in the first 2 to 4 years of life. Children who are bottle-fed, attend daycare, or are exposed to cigarette smoke may be at an increased risk of an ear infection. Otitis media is the medical term for middle ear inflammation. Acute otitis media is an ear infection in which fluid, or pus, accumulates in the middle ear. Symptoms of this type of ear infection include ear drum redness, pain, and fever. Irritability, decreased appetite, trouble sleeping, and mild temporary hearing loss are other signs of a possible ear infection.

Middle ear infections sometimes resolve within 2 to 3 days without medical treatment. However, antibiotics may be prescribed for 5 to 10 days of treatment, depending on the individual child. Antibiotics will not get rid of fluid in the ear and will only minimally reduce pain. For these reasons, along with many others, doctors may recommend pain relieving medications and wait to see if the infection resolves in a few days before prescribing antibiotics. Nonprescription pain relievers and fever reducers, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen, may be given to alleviate the discomfort associated with an ear infection. Antibiotics are more likely to be prescribed for children with more severe or recurrent ear infections.

Power Unlimited Holds Softball Tournament



Blue Eagles emerged as the winners of Power Unlimited's first community co-ed softball tournament. Blue Eagles team members are: Stacy Lowe, Paulette Lowe, Emelda Stredrick, Sonya Clayton, Kerronda Johnson, Veronica Woods, Eric Guthrie, Adrian Farrow, Ulab Johnson, Jeremy Ramirez (Tournament MVP), Vett Davidson, George Castillo and Jesus Ortiz. Team captains were Ike Clayton and Alex Ramirez.



6-Deep sponsored by Eagle Lake Funeral Home came in second place. Pictured above are team members of 6-Deep: Mark Salazar, Stephanie Flores, Theresa Cooper, Mycal Coper, Sandra Flowers, Chad Sundermann, Mary Jo Spanihel, Dana Pagel, Bobby Wied, Shelly Wied, Steve Navarro and Antonio Castillo. Not pictured are Kim Rodriguez and Darrell Pagel. Team captain was Barry Shepard.

Fall registration is underway and games begin on Oct. 14.

Confederate Daughters Meet Sept. 7

The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) Shropshire-Upton Chapter met September 7, in the home of Millycent Cordes. The meeting was called to order by President Katherine Benson.

Third Vice President Milly Cordes along with her daughter, Jayne Easteling, and her grandchildren attended the Children of the Confederacy Convention in Charleston, South Carolina.

The Chapter awarded a \$400 Scholarship to John Wooten.

Recorder of Crosses Sarah Uzzi presented the National Defense Medal to Sabra Allen in behalf of her son, Chief Petty Officer William Fred Allen of the US Coast Guard. Chaplain Evelyn Barrett led members in a memorial service for Murle Rhodes. Cordes and Historian Kitty Benson presented the Jefferson Davis Historical Gold Medal to Arlis Trebig for her efforts to preserve Confederate History and in honor of her 12 Confederate ancestors

who were awarded Military Crosses.

The 110th Texas Division of the State Convention will be held at the Marriott Galleria, Houston October 5 to October 8. Delegates attending are Cordes, Uzzi and Benson.

Uzzi is a candidate for State Historian. Members enjoyed a program given by Mary Lynn Skinner on the novel entitled "The Widow of the South" by Robert Hicks.

Blinn Offers Quick Books Course

A two-part course on Quick-Books 2005 Pro Edition will be presented by the Small Business Development Center at Blinn College.

The course begins on Oct. 24 and concludes on Oct. 26. It will be held from 6-9 each night in Room 121 in the Bob Bullock Building at the corner of College Ave. and Prairie Lea St. on the Brenham campus.

The cost is \$50 per person and pre-registration is required.

The course will be taught by Shirley Beum of Seidel Schroeder & Co. Topics will include setting up a new company, accounts

receivable and payable, financial reporting and payroll.

To register or to receive more information call the SBDC office in Brenham at 979-830-4137 or the Sealy campus at 979-627-7560 or email carol.doersom@blinn.edu.

The SBDC at Blinn College is a business consulting and training center that is part of the Univer-

sity of Houston Small Business Development Center Network, which serves 32 counties in Southeast Texas. The center provides free one-on-one consulting and low-cost training seminars.

The center at Blinn College serves Austin, Colorado and Washington counties.

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