

TO: Board Members

THROUGH: Jeff Walker, Executive Administrator
Joe Reynolds, Interim General Counsel
Jessica Zuba, Deputy Executive Administrator, WSI

FROM: Reem Zoun, Director, Flood Planning

DATE: March 30, 2020

SUBJECT: Proposed Flood Planning Region Boundaries

ACTION REQUESTED

Consider approval of proposed flood planning regions to implement new flood planning requirements of Senate Bill 8.

BACKGROUND

Senate Bill 8 of the 86th Legislature, Regular Session establishes the framework for the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to institute flood planning across the state. Texas Water Code §16.061 requires the TWDB to prepare and adopt a comprehensive state flood plan not later than September 1, 2024, and every five years after. Further, Texas Water Code §16.062 requires the TWDB to designate flood planning regions, designate representatives from each flood planning region to serve as the initial regional flood planning group, provide technical and financial support for the regional flood planning groups, and adopt guidance principles for regional and state flood planning. In addition, Senate Bill 500 provides funding for both regional flood planning activities as well as flood science initiatives, including base level engineering, that will support development of the regional and state flood plans.

As a first step in the process of implementing regional and state flood planning, TWDB staff went on a “listening tour” comprising workshops in 14 cities across Texas and two webinars to receive public input on how the TWDB should undertake its new responsibilities to best serve the needs of communities. In addition to the workshops and webinars, written public comments were accepted via email throughout the month of August.

<p style="text-align: center;">Our Mission</p> <p>To provide leadership, information, education, and support for planning, financial assistance, and outreach for the conservation and responsible development of water for Texas</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Board Members</p> <p>Peter M. Lake, Chairman Kathleen Jackson, Board Member Brooke T. Paup, Board Member</p> <p>Jeff Walker, Executive Administrator</p>
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This preliminary public feedback was considered when the Executive Administrator (EA) proposed the publishing of an initial Flood Planning Region boundaries map to solicit further input through a public comment period. The Board approved this action at its December 5, 2019, Board meeting and following the meeting, a proposed Flood Planning Region boundaries map was posted on the TWDB website and in the Texas Register on January 17, 2020, to solicit public comments. Written public comments were received through February 3, 2020, and the Board also received oral comments at its January 30, 2020, Board meeting. The EA considered all public comments received regarding the proposed boundaries. The input received during the public comment period was thoughtful and constructive, and resulted in changes to boundaries.

KEY ISSUES

The Executive Administrator (EA) proposes 15 flood planning regions (see Attachment) to implement regional and state flood planning.

In developing these proposed flood planning regions, coastal basins were combined with adjacent major river basins based on the potential to be influenced by interbasin flooding, ongoing coastal management efforts, and the stream contribution to bays. Smaller river basins were combined with larger basins based on similar types of flooding, relatively small populations, and practical administrative constraints limiting the number of regions that can be adequately supported.

In designating flood planning regions, Texas Water Code § 16.062(b) allows the TWDB to divide river basins to avoid having an impracticably large area for efficient planning. In considering public comments received on the previously proposed boundaries, the EA determined that the benefits of splitting some larger river basins into two flood planning regions would outweigh the risks of the potential for conflicts between upstream and downstream regions.

The divisions of larger river basins as shown in the Attachment were located based on the diverse conditions across their large area including geography, rainfall, topography, and land use patterns and to address some of the logistical and membership concerns that have been expressed by stakeholders.

Based on stakeholder input received between January 17th and February 3th, 2020, six changes were made to the previously proposed flood planning region boundary map.

- The Canadian-Red, the Brazos, the Colorado, and the Rio Grande river basins were each subdivided into two flood planning regions,
- The Austin Oyster Creek subbasin was moved from the former San Jacinto planning region to the Lower Brazos flood planning region, and
- The San Bernard subbasin was moved from the previous Brazos flood planning region to the Lower Colorado-Lavaca flood planning region.

The above methodology and changes resulted in the following 15 flood planning regions and their associated boundaries per the attached boundary map. The recommended region names include both a number and an associated basin title and are as follows:

- 1 - Canadian - Upper Red*
- 2 - Lower Red – Sulphur - Cypress*
- 3 - Trinity*
- 4 - Sabine*
- 5 - Neches*
- 6 - San Jacinto*
- 7 - Upper Brazos*
- 8 - Lower Brazos*
- 9 – Upper Colorado*
- 10 - Lower Colorado-Lavaca*
- 11 - Guadalupe*
- 12 - San Antonio*
- 13 - Nueces*
- 14 - Upper Rio Grande*
- 15 - Lower Rio Grande*

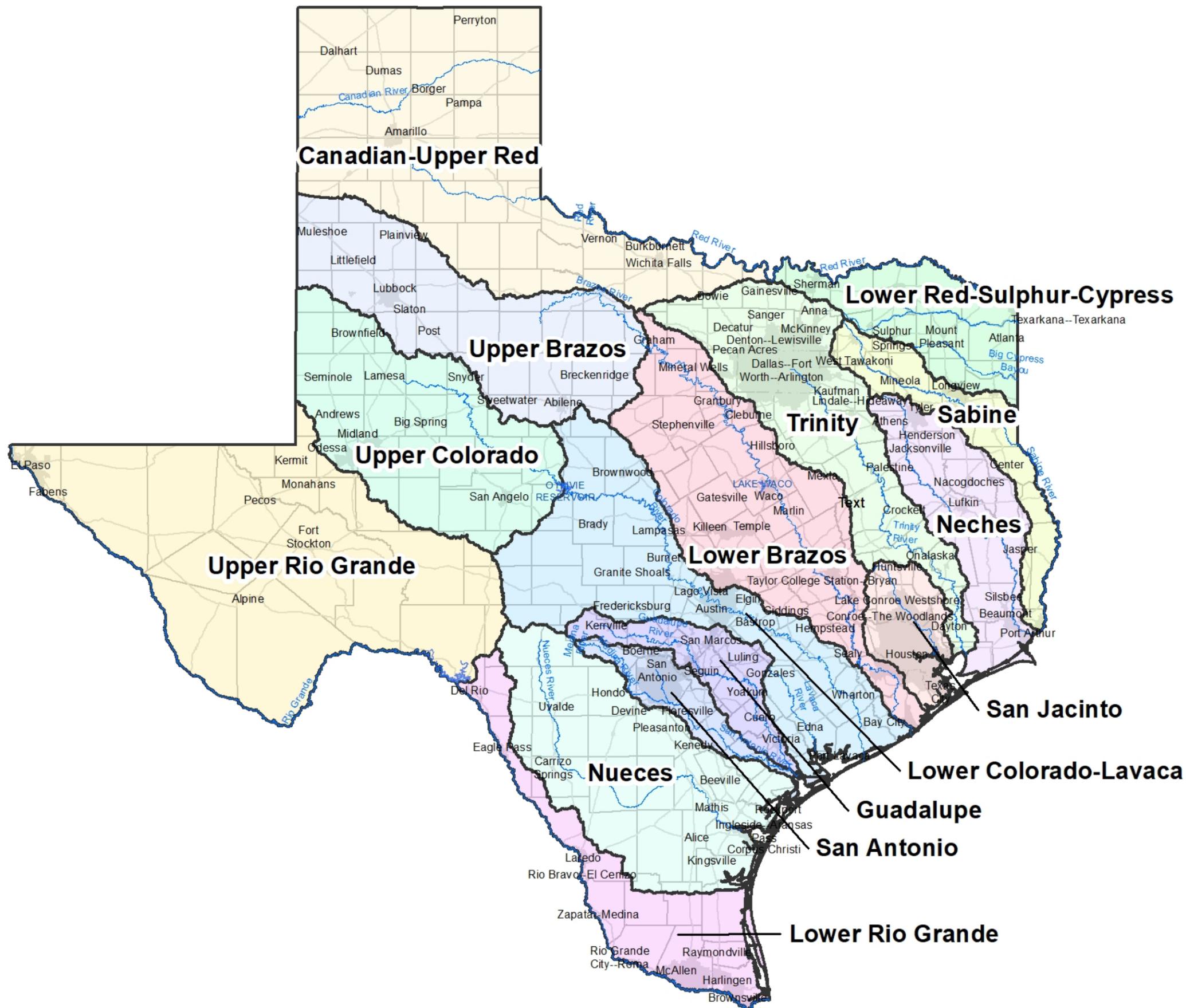
Once the final regional flood planning administrative rules are adopted by the Board, the EA will initiate a process to openly solicit potential representatives to serve as the initial flood planning group members for each region. That process will rely on these boundaries and the initial flood planning group membership requirements as set forth in the final, adopted regional flood planning administrative rules.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Administrator recommends Board designation of the flood planning regions, their boundaries, and their associated names.

Attachment: Recommended Flood Planning Region Boundaries

Flood Planning Region Boundaries



Legend

- Major Roadways
- Major Rivers
- Major Reservoirs
- Flood Planning Region Boundaries
- Canadian-Upper Red
- Guadalupe
- Lower Brazos
- Lower Colorado-Lavaca
- Lower Red-Sulphur-Cypress
- Lower Rio Grande
- Neches
- Nueces
- Sabine
- San Antonio
- San Jacinto
- Trinity
- Upper Brazos
- Upper Colorado
- Upper Rio Grande
- County Boundaries
- Urbanized Areas



