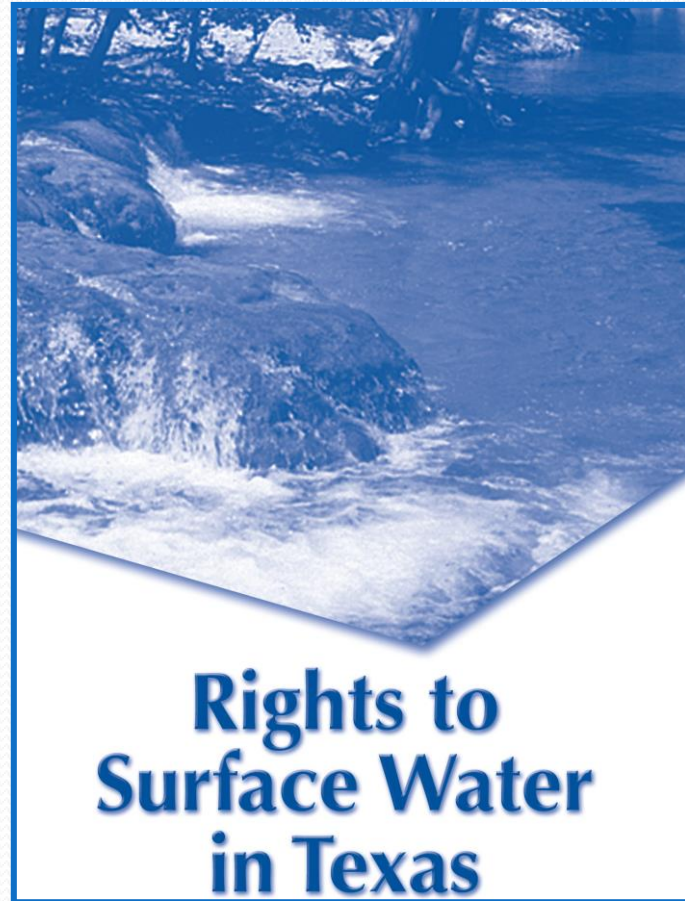


Brazos Watermaster Program

Cindy Hooper, P.G.
TCEQ, Watermaster Section

Managing Water Rights in Texas

TCEQ manages surface water rights in Texas through Authorizations and Permitting, as well as Enforcement



Watermaster Programs

- Watermasters ensure compliance by monitoring stream flows, reservoir levels, water use, and coordinating diversions.
- Current Watermaster Programs in Texas:
 - Rio Grande Watermaster
 - South Texas Watermaster
 - Concho River Watermaster
 - *Newly Established - Brazos Watermaster*

Watermaster Programs

- Funded with annual fees paid by the water right holders within the program jurisdiction.
 - Annual fees/budget must be reviewed by WAC and approved by the Commission.
- Hands-on monitoring of surface water rights
- Ability to enforce priority system of surface water rights resulting in protection of domestic and livestock rights and senior water rights.
- Ability to quickly respond to complaints and inquiries.
- Ability to facilitate negotiations between concerned parties to ensure equitable distribution of water (Run of the River systems).

Outside of Watermaster Areas

- Surface Water Managed by TCEQ Regional Offices
 - Active water management
 - Addressing diversions outside of a watermaster area
 - Issuing temporary water rights permits
 - Responding to priority calls
 - Training staff

Establishing the New Program

Petition by Water Right Holders

- On January 10, 2013, the Executive Director received a petition from 37 water right holders on the Brazos River asking for the appointment of a Watermaster.
- On February 13, 2013, the Commission referred the petition to the State Office of Administrative Hearings for a complete administrative hearing and recommendation to the Commissioners for consideration.
- SOAH hearing was completed in late 2013.

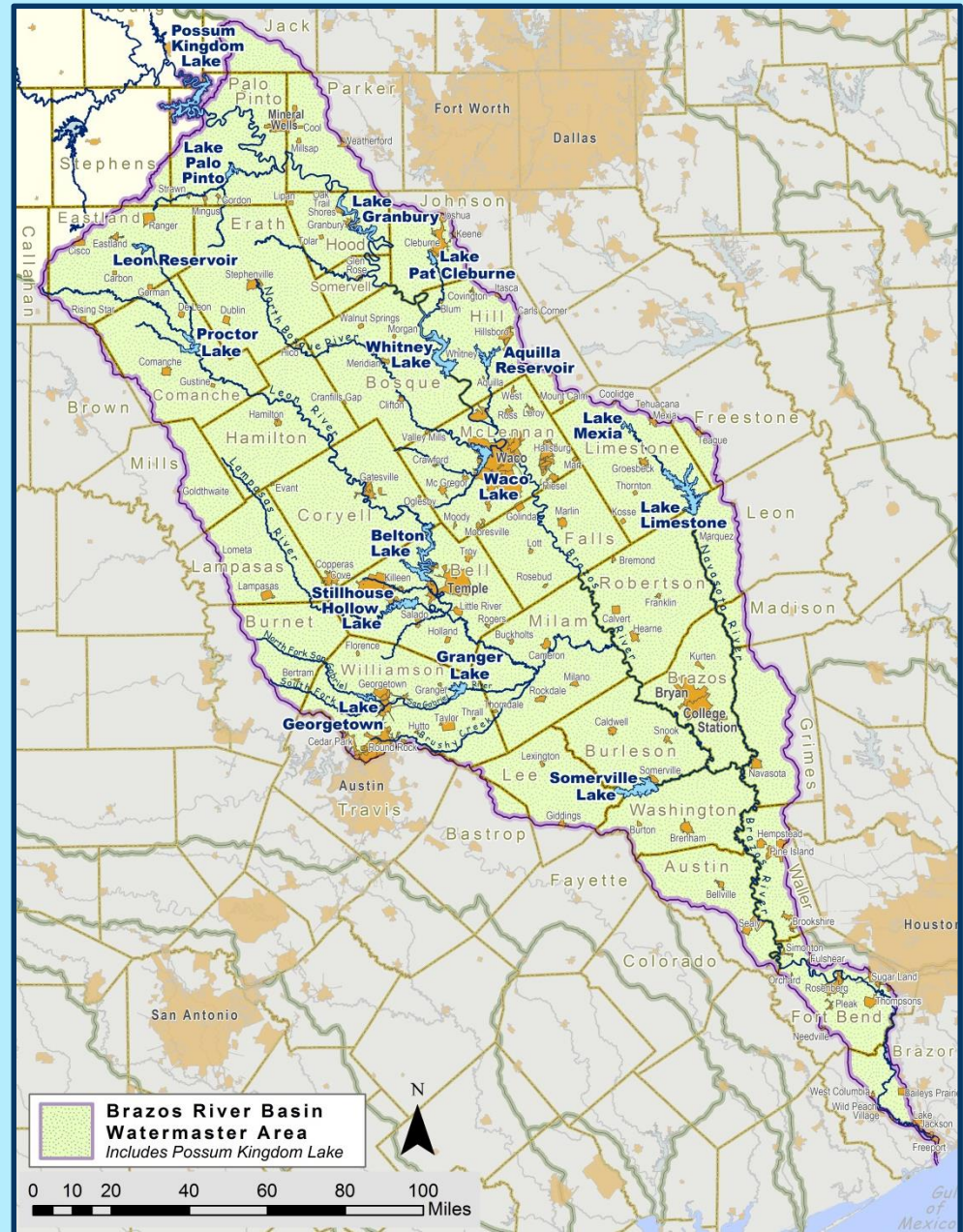
Establishing the Brazos Watermaster

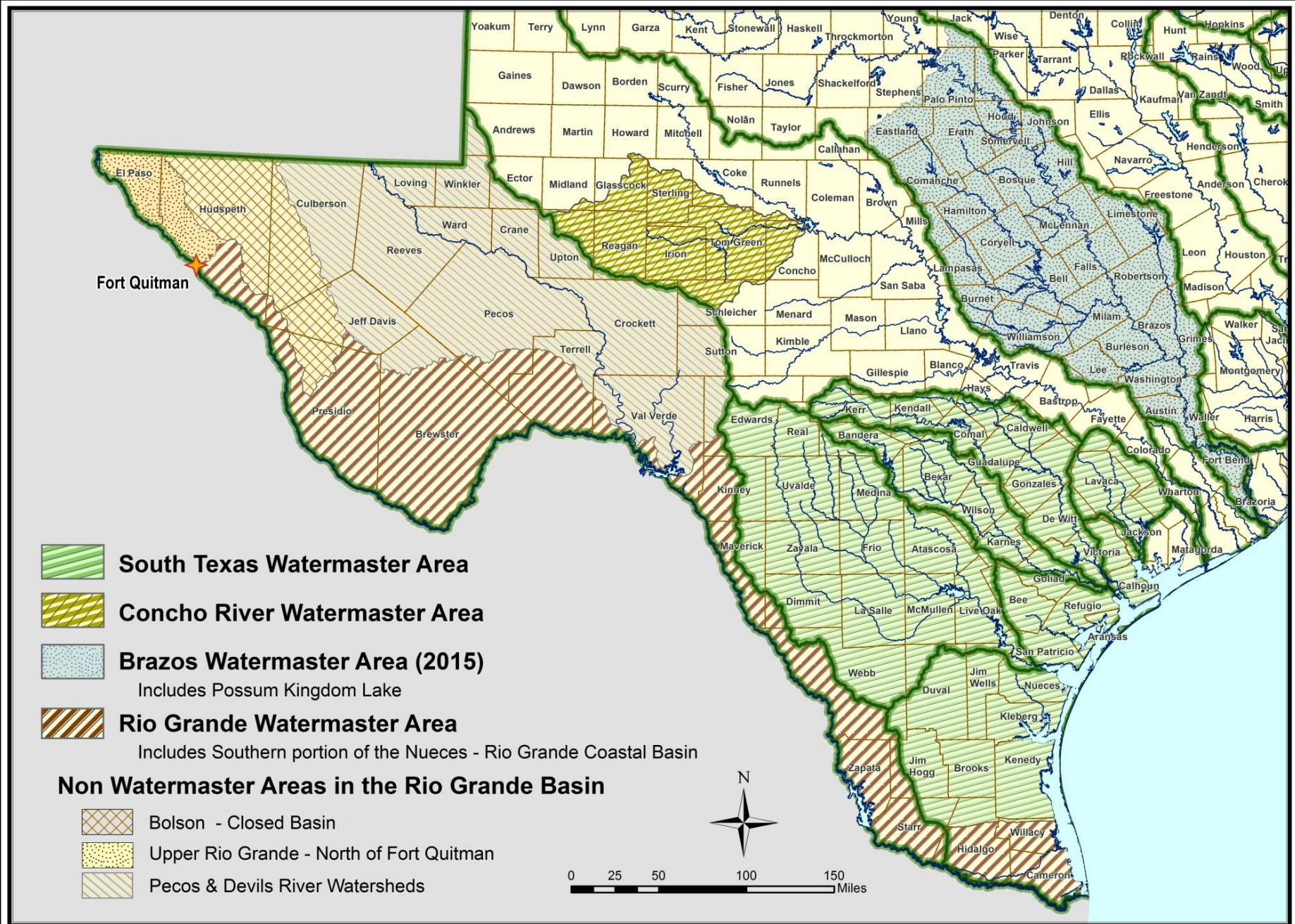
- ❖ On April 21, 2014, TCEQ Commissioners issued an order requiring a watermaster for the portion of the Brazos River Basin below and including Lake Possum Kingdom.
- ❖ Full implementation on June 1, 2015.

Brazos Watermaster Area Map

Counties included:

Archer, Austin, Bastrop, Bell,
Bosque, Brazoria, Brazos,
Brown, Burleson, Burnet,
Callahan, Comanche, Coryell,
Eastland, Erath, Falls, Fayette,
Fort Bend, Freestone, Grimes,
Hale, Hamilton, Hill, Hood,
Jack, Johnson, Lampasas, Lee,
Leon, Limestone, Madison,
McLennan, Milam, Mills,
Mitchell, Palo Pinto, Parker,
Robertson, Somervell,
Stephens, Travis, Waller,
Washington, and Williamson





Texas Watermaster Areas

Current Status of New Program

- ❖ Stakeholder Meetings Held in Fall to Provide Information and Answer Questions
- ❖ Received Nominations for WAC members
- ❖ Hired Brazos Watermaster Staff:
 - Watermaster
 - Administrative Assistant
 - Watermaster Specialists (5)
- ❖ Appointed 15 members to the WAC.

Next Steps

- ❖ **April 2, 2015** – Initial WAC meeting in Waco.
- ❖ **April and May 2015** – Staff meeting water right holders, verifying meters, and training.
- ❖ **By June 2015** – Texas Watermaster Accounting System (TxWAS) Development to incorporate the Brazos Watermaster program.
 - This process will include entering all water rights into the system once development is complete.

Budget Timeline

- ❖ **March through May 2015** – Develop Fiscal Year 2016 budget.
- ❖ **June 1, 2015** – Brazos Watermaster program begins.
- ❖ **June through July 2015** – Hold WAC meeting and finalize the budget.
- ❖ **September 2015** – Present FY 2016 budget to Commission.
- ❖ **October/November 2015** – Generate and mail bills to Brazos water right holders.

Watermaster Information and Requirements

Applicable Regulations

- ❖ *Statute:* Texas Water Code, Chapter 11
- ❖ *Rules:* 30 TAC Chapter 304

Duties of the Brazos Watermaster

- ❖ Allocate water in accordance with the adjudicated water rights.
- ❖ Monitor stream flow, reservoir levels, and water use within the basin daily.
- ❖ Enforce compliance with water rights and respond to complaints.
- ❖ Determine whether a diversion would remove water that rightfully belongs to another user.
- ❖ When streamflows diminish, allocate available water among the water right holders according to users' priority date.
- ❖ Establish a watermaster advisory committee.

Requirements for Diverters

- ❖ Measuring Devices
- ❖ Notifications – Declarations of Intent (DOI)
- ❖ Reporting Requirements
- ❖ Costs
 - ❖ Annual Assessment
 - ❖ Meters

Compliance with the Rules

- ❖ Enforcement authority
 - ❖ Notices of Violation
 - ❖ Notices of Enforcement
 - ❖ Field Citations

Watermaster Advisory Committee

- ❖ Nine to 15 members
 - ❖ Water right holders or representatives of water right holders
- ❖ Meet at least once a year to discuss annual budget.
 - ❖ First Meeting April 2, 2015
 - ❖ Budget Meeting July 2015 (tentative)

Brazos Watermaster Staff Locations

❖ **Waco – TCEQ Regional Office**

- ❖ Watermaster
- ❖ Administrative Assistant
- ❖ Two Watermaster Deputies

❖ **Stephenville – TCEQ Regional Office**

- ❖ Two Watermaster Deputies

❖ **Lake Jackson area**

- ❖ One Watermaster Deputy

Contact Information

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