



For Immediate Release

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**BRAZOS RIVER AUTHORITY TO BEGIN USING
AIR CANNONS FOR WILDLIFE CONTROL**

December 2, 2008 – Waco, Texas -- Beginning December 8, the Brazos River Authority will begin the use of air cannons at the Possum Kingdom Lake dam as a means of wildlife control. The decision comes as a result of the health hazard posed by the increasing number of birds that roost in the area.

For many years, the Morris Sheppard Dam has been the home of numerous Black Vultures. The numbers of birds has risen dramatically with hundreds now roosting in and around the dam.

The air cannon is a sound producing device that does not fire any projectile. The device is considered a humane and safe method of deterring this federally protected bird from remaining in the area. Auditory scare devices such as the cannon have been successful in controlling nuisance wildlife throughout the country and worldwide.

The BRA chose to begin use of the air cannons due to the large amount of waste produced by the birds.

“The sheer number of birds has created a health and safety concern for dam workers,” said Tiffany Morgan, Environmental Services Manager for the BRA. “The vultures’ fecal matter and vomit have covered everything from equipment to the dam structure itself.

“The droppings can cause health concerns such as contamination of the lake and river water,” Morgan added. “The dried droppings also create a hazardous dust that may be inhaled by those in the area.”

In addition to health and safety, property damage has become a concern. Reports include damage to windshield wiper blades and car door seals as well as ruined paint. According to Texas Parks and Wildlife, this behavior is not uncommon for black vultures. The birds are also known to destroy and sometimes consume asphalt, rubber roofing materials, vehicle and boat upholstery, window caulking and even artificial flowers at cemeteries.

The BRA will be operating two propane powered air cannons around the dam beginning Monday, December 8. The cannons will sound every 20 minutes from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays and 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekends and holidays. Timing of the blasts may be altered after the trial period for effectiveness.

For additional information, please contact the Public Information Offices at 254-761-3100 or 888-922-6272.

About the Brazos River Authority

The Brazos River Authority, with headquarters in Waco, is the oldest river authority in Texas. Created by the Texas Legislature in 1929, the Authority's 42,000 square-mile territory includes all or part of 70 counties; extending from the Texas-New Mexico border west of Lubbock to the Gulf of Mexico near Freeport.

The Authority built, owns, and operates three reservoirs (Lakes Possum Kingdom, Granbury, and Limestone). In addition to these water supply reservoirs, the Authority contracts with the Corps of Engineers for the water supply storage space at eight federal multi-purpose flood control and water conservation reservoirs (Lakes Whitney, Belton, Proctor, Somerville, Stillhouse Hollow, Granger, Georgetown and Aquilla).

The Brazos River Authority owns and operates a regional wastewater system for the cities of Temple-Belton. The Authority also operates wastewater treatment plants for the cities of Georgetown, Dime Box, Clute-Richwood and Sugar Land. Through an alliance with the Lower Colorado River Authority, the Brazos River Authority operates wastewater treatment plants at Brushy Creek Regional Wastewater System in Round Rock, the city of Hutto and the city of Liberty Hill.

The Authority owns and operates water treatment systems at Lake Granbury (which supplies potable water to wholesale customers in Hood and Johnson Counties), and the City of Taylor. The Authority also operates a potable water treatment plant for the City of Dime Box. A water treatment plant for the City of Leander is operated by the Brazos River Authority through an alliance with the Lower Colorado River Authority.

The Authority also engages in water quality monitoring activities throughout the Brazos River basin. As a member of the Texas Clean River Program, the Authority samples and tests water from 157 locations throughout the basin on either a monthly or quarterly basis.

For further information on the Brazos River Authority, please contact Judi Pierce, Public Information Officer at 254-761-3103.