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BRAZOS RIVER AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO CONSIDER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGREEMENT WITH PALO PINTO COUNTY

Waco, Texas – January 31, 2023 – Visitors to Possum Kingdom Lake may soon see another type of uniform responding to calls and patrolling the water supply reservoir.

The Brazos River Authority Board of Directors was presented with options for a potential interlocal agreement with the Palo Pinto County Sheriff's Office for collaboration in providing a safe and secure environment for the public and BRA's critical infrastructure at their regular bimonthly meeting on January 30 in Waco.

The move comes as the result of an internal study by the BRA prompted by difficulty in filling and maintaining employees in lake ranger positions at Possum Kingdom Lake. After considering several options and types of agreements, including temporary or contract-provided officers, the BRA chose to explore a partnership with the county similar to those held under past agreements.

The BRA began employing guards and park or lake rangers in the early 1940s. Since then, several agreements between the Brazos River Authority and Palo Pinto County for sheriff's deputy support existed, with the first agreement forged in 1966.

Unlike the BRA's other two reservoirs – Lakes Granbury and Limestone – Possum Kingdom Lake sees a substantial number of visitors and is in a much more rural location primarily located within Palo Pinto County's jurisdiction. The proposed agreement is modeled after ventures by other river authorities, water districts and similar organizations.

If approved by the BRA Board and Palo Pinto County Commissions, the agreement would allow the county to take over the law enforcement needs of the reservoir, including patrols of the Morris Sheppard Dam's critical infrastructure. The consolidation would eliminate duplication of effort and costs while better facilitating the coordination of resources and response to multi-jurisdictional incidents. The agreement would also provide the county with two additional deputies during the off-season when lake traffic and concerns are slower.

If the proposed interlocal is executed, the county will provide no less than two full-time deputies to patrol and respond to calls on Possum Kingdom Lake and associated BRA property, with more on holidays that generate larger crowds. In exchange, the Interlocal Agreement contemplates that the BRA will pay the county a sum to be determined once a final draft of the Interlocal is complete. The BRA would also convey to the county two patrol vehicles and a patrol boat.

The BRA Board of Directors anticipates consideration of a resolution for the potential interlocal agreement at their regular bimonthly meeting in March.

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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 BRA built, owns, and operates three reservoirs (Lakes Possum Kingdom, Granbury, and Limestone). In addition to these water supply reservoirs, the BRA 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 operates a regional wastewater system for the cities of Temple-Belton. The BRA also operates wastewater treatment plants for the cities of Clute-Richwood, Sugar Land, and Hutto. The BRA owns and operates a potable water treatment system, the East Williamson County Regional Water System, for the City of Taylor.

The BRA engages in water quality monitoring activities throughout the Brazos River basin. As a member of the Texas Clean River Program, the BRA samples and tests water from more than 100 locations throughout the basin on either a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. For further information on the Brazos River Authority, please contact Judi Pierce, Public Information Officer at 254-761-3103.