

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Suzanne Scott 1-866-345-7272

Kay F. Floyd 1-210-824-7387

A DRAFT OF THE PHASE I GROUNDWATER STUDY PRESENTED TO THE PROJECT PARTNERS FOR THE LOWER GUADALUPE WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

SAN ANTONIO - The Boards of Directors of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA), the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) and the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) received a presentation on a draft of the Phase I Groundwater Study on September 18, 2003 for the Lower Guadalupe Water Supply Project (LGWSP) from LBG-Guyton Associates, professional groundwater and environmental engineers.

As part of the approved State Water Plan, the LGWSP is under development to provide a new, additional source of water to meet the future needs for Bexar County and the surrounding region beginning in 2011. The Project also will protect spring flows at the Comal and San Marcos Springs and preserve inflows to the San Antonio-Guadalupe bays and estuary system.

The water for the Project will come from a number of different sources including surface water from existing, uncommitted water rights owned by GBRA, unappropriated flows from the river downstream of the confluence of the San Antonio and Guadalupe Rivers, groundwater from the Gulf Coast Aquifer System and other viable sources. The entire Project will provide a reliable supply of at least 94,500 acre-feet of water per year to the region.

LBG-Guyton was commissioned to determine whether pumping from the Gulf Coast Aquifer System could be a supplemental source of water supply for the LGWSP. The study involved computer analyses of both the quantity and quality of water in the aquifer system, proposed cost estimates to develop the supply, studied impacts related to brackish water intrusion and land subsidence, and offered recommendations for implementation of a test drilling phase.

According to W. John Seifert, Jr., a principal with LBG-Guyton Houston, "Findings in the draft of the Phase I groundwater study are being reviewed by the partner entities and will be shared with groundwater districts, citizen and community groups, elected officials and the general public. Once this process of Phase I is complete, the report will be finalized." Seifert adds that the report recommends that a Phase II involving test-drilling be conducted to refine the findings and the estimates of the Phase I study.

LBG-Guyton reported there is potential for groundwater development in Goliad, Refugio and Victoria Counties. According to the report:

" Previous studies have estimated that the Gulf Coast Aquifer System in the study area contains about 110,000,000 to 120,000,000 acre-feet of good quality ground water in storage in Goliad and Refugio Counties.

" In addition, approximately 165,000,000 acre-feet of water that is fresh to slightly saline is estimated to be in storage in DeWitt and Victoria Counties.

" Recharge to the Gulf Coast Aquifer System has been estimated at 60,700 and 83,700 acre-feet per year within the five-county area.

As a supplemental supply, it is estimated that the total amount of groundwater needed for the Project would average 14,200 acre-feet per year. Because the main source of water would come from surface water, groundwater usage would range from zero in some years, to a maximum of 41,400 acre-feet per year in peak years, in a repeat of the historical drought of record.

Conceptual level studies also were performed in Wilson County on the Carrizo-Wilcox and Queen City Aquifers. The report identified a possible supplemental source from the Carrizo-Wilcox and Queen City Aquifers for the Project. According to the computer model simulation, a withdrawal of approximately 10,000 to 15,000 acre-feet per year could be feasible in the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer and a few thousand from the Queen City Aquifer in the central to western part of Wilson County.

"Today is the initial release of the study. SARA, GBRA and SAWS will be seeking input from all types of community organizations and technical groups to get their comments on this study. In addition, we will be working closely with the region's groundwater districts in the area to comply with their groundwater pumping policies, guidelines and permit requirements," says Gregory E. Rothe, general manager for the San Antonio River Authority.

LBG-Guyton Associates, with offices in Austin and Houston, has more than 48 years of groundwater resource experience and the firm has completed more than 6,000 groundwater projects for clients in and outside of the U.S. For the LGWSP study, the firm worked in association with HDR Engineering, Inc. and Fugro South, Inc.

For more information, an executive summary of the draft of the Phase I groundwater study can be viewed on the Lower Guadalupe Water Supply Project website, www.lgwsp.org.