

## TCEQ, stakeholders disagree on water

By Colin McDonald, San Antonio Express-News

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The amount of water that should be left in the San Antonio, Guadalupe and Colorado river basins to maintain their health and the bays they feed will be based on proposed rules published today by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in the Texas Register.

For the two legislatively appointed stakeholder groups that spent the past year and half working on compromises between the science-based environmental needs of the basins and the growing demand for water, the proposed rules are a disappointment, leaving less water in the rivers than they recommended, according to the chairs of the groups.

“We urge them to take the critical step of strengthening the rules to safeguard fish and wildlife populations — and the jobs that depend on them — for future generations of Texans,” said Myron Hess, a lawyer for the National Wildlife Federation and co-chair of committee representing the Colorado basin.

The committee representing the San Antonio and Guadalupe rivers invited the TCEQ to their meeting in Seguin on Thursday to explain how it had arrived at its rules.

For Suzanne Scott, the general manager of the San Antonio River Authority and chair of that committee, one of the biggest concerns was that the proposed rules were allowing more water to be taken from the Guadalupe River than from the San Antonio.

“It has to be balanced,” she said

The biggest example of the rules proposed by the TCEQ differing from those of the stakeholder groups was in the amount of water allowed to reach San Antonio Bay.

The San Antonio-Guadalupe stakeholders recommended that the total flow from July to September be allowed to fall below 50,000 acre-feet only 18 times every 100 years.

The TCEQ proposed those flows could occur 28 times.

For the Guadalupe Blanco River Authority, which has two proposed water projects on the Guadalupe, the proposed rules were welcomed.

“These recommendations more closely follow our recommendations,” said GBRA general manager Bill West

The TCEQ representatives explained that they did not follow the recommendations of the stakeholders, which represented industrial, recreational, environmental and business interests, because they had balanced the needs of humans and nature.

“At the end of the day this is going to be published in the register and you will be able to comment,” said Kellye Rila, director of the TCEQ's water availability division. “And the commission takes all comments very seriously.”

A 30-day comment period begins today. To see or make a comment on the proposed rules visit [www.sos.state.tx.us/texreg](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/texreg)

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Read more: <http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/environment/article/TCEQ-stakeholders-disagree-on-water-3478485.php#ixzz1rvSFVrxD>

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