

## CWIC Water News

*A publication of the Colorado Water Issues Committee*

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This newsletter is provided to keep you informed of actions taken by the Colorado Water Issues Committee on behalf of the committee's constituents - the rice producers and related industries that depend on water from the Colorado River. The CWIC has been proactive on your behalf and reports the following for your information:

- ✚ **CWIC Attorney on Board** - As previously reported CWIC has retained noted water attorney Edmund McCarthy Jr. to monitor LCRA staff and Board actions and to advise the CWIC on matters that could potentially affect water availability. We are pleased to be able to have him ready to advise and represent us as issues may dictate.
  
- ✚ **May LCRA Board Address** - CWIC members Jack Johnson, Laurance Armour and Ronald Gertson and CWIC advisor Robby Cook attended the May LCRA Water Operations Committee meeting of the LCRA Board of Directors. Gertson addressed the Board on behalf of the CWIC (comments attached) with the goal of educating the Board about the CWIC and advocating for conservation combined with new water development to keep pace with growing firm water demands.
  
- ✚ **May Water Modeling Staff Meeting** - Gertson met with James Kowis and Ron Anderson of LCRA and Dr. Jordan Furnans of Intera to discuss the availability and use of the various computerized river models that LCRA may draw upon during the upcoming Water Management Plan revision process. Dr. Furnans was present as CWIC's technical consultant on modeling. An understanding was gained regarding the Water Availability Model that would be most heavily relied upon and it was relayed that work was being done to prepare the model for the WMP revision process.
  
- ✚ **CWIC Consultant Preps on Model** - CWIC engaged Intera's services, specifically Dr. Furnans, to acquire the Water Availability Model from LCRA and to become familiar with it in order to aid CWIC as the revision process moves forward. Dr. Furnans prepared and delivered a report for CWIC in which he detailed the past and potential future means by which LCRA determines its Combined Firm Yield (CFY). This CFY is critical because it establishes the quantity of water that LCRA can sell on a "firm" basis annually. Irrigation customers use a combination of water from the Colorado River, including run-of-river water available through the water rights associated with each irrigation district and interruptible stored water which is released from the highland lakes system to meet the irrigation demands left unmet by the amount of run-of-river water available on a daily basis. The interruptible stored water is what is left

after the demands of the firm customers are met, so the higher the demand for firm water the greater the chance that interruptible customers will be interrupted or curtailed as lake levels decline.

- ✚ **Water Management Plan Revision Process Begins** -LCRA has begun assembling key stakeholders to serve on the advisory panel to the WMP revision and has requested that each irrigation operation select one member and one alternate to serve. The members and alternates selected are as follows: Lakeside - Robby Cook, alt. Ronald Gertson; Garwood- Ralph Savino, alt. Jeff Dugie; Pierce Ranch - Laurance Armour III, alt. Joe Crane; Gulf Coast - Haskell Simon, alt. GW Franzen. These gentlemen will be our representatives on this group and will have a busy meeting schedule beginning in July for a period of 12 to 14 months. Other stakeholders on the group will be representing industry, golf courses, municipalities, City of Austin, Lake Buchanan , Lake Travis, Texas Parks and Wildlife and various environmental groups.
  
- ✚ **Kowis Leading WMP Revision** - James Kowis will be taking the leading role on behalf of LCRA in this process. Mr. Kowis has expressed his intention to attempt to make the WMP a more adaptive management tool so that such frequent revisions will not be as necessary in the future. It is certainly our hope that while accomplishing this goal a fair balance between firm and interruptible customers can be more readily maintained for a greater length of time.
  
- ✚ **Staff Directed to Develop Water Supply Resource Options for Irrigation Customers** - LCRA staff have been directed by their Board to develop water supply options to maintain reliability of irrigation water. While the previously undertaken Water Supply Resource Plan expected to be completed soon sets out some priorities for maintaining and developing firm water supplies, it falls short of addressing the needs of interruptible irrigation customers. Board and staff recognize this shortage and have committed to developing and studying supply options for the interruptible customers. Items discussed and anticipated to be included in such a plan include: off-channel reservoirs including the Baylor Creek site, low water channel dams similar to the Bay City inflatable dam, various conservation projects, and groundwater storage and recovery projects. It is recognized that a great deal of water enters the river below the current series of dams that cannot be utilized due to the lack of structures for doing so. Studies will need to be undertaken to assess the yield, cost, feasibility and environmental impacts of each strategy to be considered. Any project undertaken will likely require the financial assistance of multiple agencies and entities.
  
- ✚ **Public Outreach Campaign Undertaken** - The CWIC has established a relationship with the public relations firm LRPR of Austin to develop and

institute a public education and outreach campaign for the purpose of bettering the rice industry's image particularly among decision-makers and members of the public in the up-stream counties. The recent drought highlighted the generally negative perception of the rice industry held by much of the public who live and work in the highland lakes areas. This perception is largely a result of the blame placed on rice production for the reduction of lake levels that normally occurs during irrigation season and that reaches extremes during droughts like we experienced in 2009. It is the committee's goal to put a "face" on the industry, so to speak, and to tell the positive stories of conservation and environmental stewardship that our industry has been so diligently accomplishing. This is a long-term project that will extend beyond the limits of our currently available funds.

✚ **Financial Goals Set** - Your CWIC has set as a goal to stretch our currently available funds through the Water Management Plan revision that is expected to be coming to a close around July, 2011. By doing this we can circumvent the need to request funds from constituents for the 2010 crop year. We anticipate then requesting additional funds in the fall of 2011. There are still perhaps some of you who are just now learning of our existence and who would desire to contribute to our efforts. Our original request was for rice producers who depend on Colorado River water to contribute one dollar for each acre they irrigated with Colorado River water in 2009. Additionally several business and industry partners have made generous donations. There is no doubt that we could accomplish more if we had more. We are limiting our public outreach campaign due to funding constraints. We have a wish list in this area that we will undertake as additional funds become available, so if you have yet to give, please know that your giving will make possible a worthy endeavor on behalf of our industry.

Rice Office Managers: Please forward and make available to your constituents as you see fit. Thank you.

The above material is authored and provided by Ronald Gertson as Chairman of the Colorado Water Issues Committee (CWIC) of the Texas Rice Producers Legislative Group. Intended recipients include rice producers and related industry representatives concerned about the continued availability of water for agriculture from the Colorado River. Activities undertaken by CWIC are made possible by donations to the TRPLG Water Issues Fund.

Donations may be tax deductible (check with your accountant) and may be sent to:

**TRPLG Water Issues**  
**c/o First National Bank**  
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