

Rio Grande/Rio Grande Estuary & the Lower Laguna Madre Area

Timeline for the Environmental Flows Allocation Process

Date	Basin/Bay	Action
09/01/07	All	Senate Bill 3 and House Bill 3 take effect, beginning the Environmental Flows Allocation Process.
Before 11/01/07	All	The Environmental Flows Advisory Group is created.
Before 11/01/07	All	The Texas Environmental Flows Science Advisory Committee is created.
By 11/01/07	All	The Environmental Flows Advisory Group defines the geographical extend of the river basins/bay system area for the purposes of developing environmental flow regime recommendations.
By 9/01/09	Rio Grande/Rio Grande Estuary & the Lower Laguna Madre Area	The Environmental Flows Advisory Group appoints the Bay/Basin Stakeholder Group.
Timing TBD	Rio Grande/Rio Grande Estuary & the Lower Laguna Madre Area	The Bay/Basin Stakeholder Group appoints the Bay/Basin Expert Science Team.
Timing TBD	Rio Grande/Rio Grande Estuary & the Lower Laguna Madre Area	The Bay/Basin Expert Science Team uses best available science to develop its recommendations for an environmental flow regime to protect a sound ecological environment. The Team submits these recommendations to the Bay/Basin Stakeholder Group (and to the Environmental Flow Advisory Group and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality). These recommendations are solely science-based.
Timing TBD	Rio Grande/Rio Grande Estuary & the Lower Laguna Madre Area	The Bay/Basin Stakeholder Group considers the Bay/Basin Expert Science Team's recommended environmental flow regime, the associated policy considerations, and strategies to meet the flow recommendations. The Stakeholder Group submits its comments and recommendations to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. These are a composite of science- and policy-based recommendations.
Timing TBD	Rio Grande/Rio Grande Estuary & the Lower Laguna Madre Area	The Bay/Basin Stakeholder Group, with assistance from the Bay/Basin Expert Science Team, prepares and submits a work plan to address adaptive management (periodic review of the bay/basin environmental flow analyses, regime recommendations, standards and strategies to meet those standards).
Timing TBD	Rio Grande/Rio Grande Estuary & the Lower Laguna Madre Area	The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality adopts the environmental flow standards for the Rio Grande/Rio Grande Estuary & the Lower Laguna Madre Area.

Environmental Flows Allocation Process

Timeline Definitions

Senate Bill 3 and House Bill 3

SB3 and HB3 were passed by the 80th Texas Legislature and took effect September 1, 2007. Article 1 of SB3 and HB3 addresses Environmental Flows, creating the Environmental Flows Allocation Process. For bill text:

www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/80R/billtext/pdf/SB00003F.pdf or
www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/80R/billtext/pdf/HB00003F.pdf

Environmental Flows Allocation Process

The Environmental Flows Allocation Process was created by the 80th Texas Legislature's passage of Senate Bill 3 and House Bill 3 in 2007. This process will address two key components:

a) how much water needs to flow in Texas rivers and into bays to maintain a sound ecological environment, and b) how to ensure that much flow is protected.

Environmental Flows Advisory Group

This group creates the [Texas Environmental Flows Science Advisory Group](#) and the seven [Bay/Basin Stakeholder Groups](#). In addition to interacting with these groups, the EF Advisory Group may make comments to [TCEQ](#) about the various flows recommendations. They will also define the scope of the bay/basin areas. This will be a nine member group made up of three senators, three members of the house of representatives, one [TCEQ](#) commissioner, one Texas Water Development Board board member, and one Texas Parks and Wildlife Commissioner. Members will be appointed by the governor, Lt. governor and speaker of the house.

Texas Environmental Flows Science Advisory Committee

This Committee provides science-based recommendations to state agency staff regarding ongoing studies and, through a liaison member, works with [Bay/Basin Expert Science Teams](#) to ensure consistent application of scientific principles.

This is a five to nine member committee that is appointed by the [Environmental Flows Advisory Group](#).

Geographical extent of the river basins/bay system area

By November 1, 2007, the Environmental Flows Advisory Group is to define the geographical extent of each river basin/bay system area in the state for the purpose of the Environmental Flows Allocation Process.

Environmental Flow Regime

This is a schedule of flow quantities that reflects seasonal and yearly fluctuations that typically would vary geographically, by specific location in a watershed, and that are shown to be adequate to support a sound ecological environment and maintain the productivity, extent, and persistence of key aquatic habitats in and along the affected water bodies.

Bay/Basin Stakeholder Group

Seventeen stakeholder categories will be represented by the citizens on this group, each with an interest in environmental flows in their designated bay/basin area. The Stakeholder Group provides flows recommendations, based on considerations of both science and policy, directly to TCEQ and also to the Environmental Flows Advisory Group. For more details about these Groups or to sign up to get involved, see www.texaswatermatters.org/bay_basin_stakeholder.htm

Bay/Basin Expert Science Team

This team works with technical support from state agencies and academic institutions to develop environmental flows recommendations based solely on the best available science. Recommendations are presented to Bay/Basin Stakeholder Group, Environmental Flows Advisory Group, and TCEQ. These recommendations will be the first building block the Stakeholder Group uses in coming up with its environmental flow recommendations that will consider both science and policy. For more details about these Science Teams or to sign up to get involved, see

www.texaswatermatters.org/bay_basin_expert.htm

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

The state agency responsible for developing the legal environmental flow standards and set-asides for each Bay/Basin area through a public rule-making process at the end of that area's Environmental Flows Allocation Process.

<http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/>

Adaptive Management

Adaptive management is a structured, iterative process of decision-making in the face of uncertainty, with the goal of reducing uncertainty over time through systems monitoring. This approach embraces flexibility and adaptation.