

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SJRA Announces New Leadership Role in Regional Flood Management**

On Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott challenged the San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) to identify how it could be part of a regional, flood management solution and how a funding mechanism could be developed to support that effort.

In response to the Governor's charge, the Board of Directors and leadership team of the SJRA have decided to create a new flood management division and begin implementing flood mitigation activities, a role that is outside the norm for river authorities in Texas.

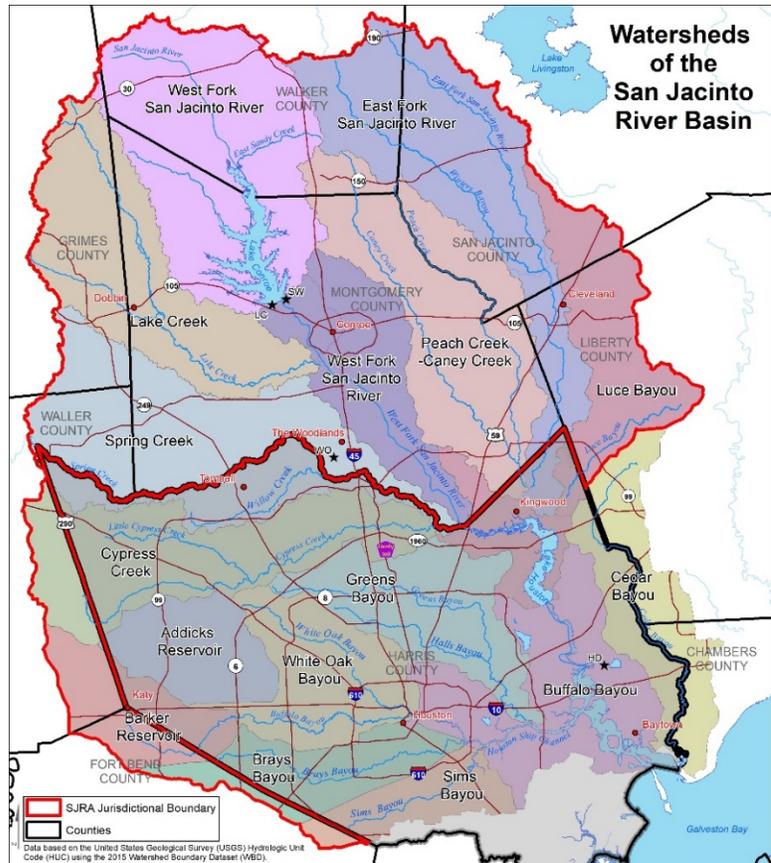
River authorities are authorized by the legislature to take on a long list of activities to meet the particular needs within their watershed, which may include flood management activities. Since river authorities typically do not have the power to levy taxes, such activities must be funded by contracts with customers. River authorities have not traditionally taken on flood management responsibilities because of the practical difficulties of contracting with the public at large to fund those activities. By contrast, local flood management agencies in Texas (such as flood control districts), are typically tax-funded and organized to protect the property and lives of the citizens within their taxing jurisdiction.

SJRA's leadership team is determined to identify new funding strategies so that real solutions can be developed and implemented. General Manager, Jace Houston, commented, "I am very excited to announce this new undertaking! With the support of the Governor's office and funding partnerships with federal, state, and local entities, I believe together we can implement regional solutions while minimizing the impact on local taxpayers."

Mr. Houston noted the history associated with the challenge of regional flood management, "The Harris County Flood Control District has been the only agency in our region with the power and funding to tackle flooding on a comprehensive, regional level, but it only covers Harris County. This has left a tremendous gap in implementing real solutions. The last attempt to fill this gap was in the mid-1980s when voters rejected an effort to create a Montgomery County Flood Control District. This time we hope to leverage federal funds and other partnerships to minimize any impact on local taxpayers; but if there is no will on the part of the public or our local, state, and federal partners to support and fund these activities, then they won't happen."

Governor Abbott expressed support for SJRA's initiative in response to his challenge. "It has been a trying time for these communities as they work through the unprecedented destruction caused by Hurricane Harvey. We need all local, state, and federal partners to work together and create bold, creative solutions. I appreciate the SJRA's willingness to be part of the solution, and I look forward to our continued partnership in making Texas more resilient to future flood events."

The SJRA Board of Directors and staff look forward to taking on a leadership role and partnering with the HCFCD to deliver effective solutions and create real benefits for the region.



For additional information and further announcements, visit our website at [www.sjra.net](http://www.sjra.net).