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Lake Conroe and Lake Houston Community Leaders Reach Compromise on Lake Lowering; Including Agreement to Collaborate on Regional Flood Mitigation

Conroe, Texas—The Lake Conroe and Lake Houston communities have taken a significant step forward in achieving meaningful, flood mitigation planning by compromising on a near-term strategy for the water levels of their respective reservoirs.

The stakeholder group's recommendations were presented to the San Jacinto River Authority's (SJRA) Board of Directors today at their board meeting. The group's recommendations include a new set of temporary water-level strategies for Lake Conroe and Lake Houston, along with an agreement to work together on other regional solutions including advocacy and education.

The goal of the stakeholder group was to find a solution they could agree with for temporary lake lowering so that they could work together to support other long-term solutions that are critical to the region as a whole.

Stakeholder Agreement

Lake Conroe	Lake Houston
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create 6 inches of capacity in April and May• Create 1 foot of capacity in August and September• Houston can call for additional lowering prior to a major storm event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create 1 foot of capacity if rainfall is predicted to exceed 3 inches within 24 hours• Houston can call for additional lowering for larger storm events
<p>Advocacy and Education – Both upstream and downstream communities agreed to work together to support numerous regional strategies to improve flood mitigation and resiliency. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional flood mitigation infrastructure projects• Land use regulation to reduce runoff from new development• Public education regarding current and future mitigation projects, sediment removal, and active storm management.• Preventing construction in areas designed to be inundated during reservoir operations.	

Since 2018, the SJRA and the City of Houston have collaborated on a temporary flood mitigation strategy of lowering Lake Conroe and Lake Houston at certain times of year to create additional storage capacity to catch rainfall during storms. The program has generated division between upstream and downstream communities over the perceived burdens and benefits of the program.

Achieving meaningful results in terms of flood mitigation requires numerous strategies in addition to lake level monitoring. Large infrastructure projects (detention reservoirs and improving drainage channels), regulatory changes (enhanced building codes and increased flood plain management), land use controls (including best practices for sand and gravel operations), wetland protection, and preservation of natural areas along streams and rivers are all important strategies to consider.

“All of these strategies are complicated and expensive, and achieving success will require communities to work together,” said SJRA General Manager Jace Houston. “The stakeholder group realizes the region must pull together not only financial resources, but also the support of community leaders to see real results. We appreciate their dedication over a number of weeks of meetings and their thoughtful recommendation to the SJRA Board of Directors.”

The stakeholder group, as a condition of agreement to the new changes, will review the lowering program annually in November and make recommendations for any further changes to be implemented in the following year.

The new compromise proposal will be presented to the City of Houston in the coming weeks.

One of the major river authorities in Texas, SJRA's mission is to develop, conserve, and protect the water resources of the San Jacinto River basin. Covering all or part of seven counties, the organization's jurisdiction includes the entire San Jacinto River watershed, excluding Harris County. For additional information on SJRA visit our website at www.sjra.net, like SJRA on Facebook [@SanJacintoRiverAuthority](https://www.facebook.com/SanJacintoRiverAuthority), or follow us on Twitter [@SJRA_1937](https://twitter.com/SJRA_1937), or find us on Instagram [@SanJacintoRiverAuthoritySJRA](https://www.instagram.com/SanJacintoRiverAuthoritySJRA).

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