



SJRA Board of Directors Recommends Renewing Flood Mitigation Strategy

Conroe, Texas—San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) Board of Directors last week approved a recommendation to the City of Houston (COH) to continue a temporary flood mitigation program at Lake Conroe. The board's vote proposed extending the initiative through December 2022 and serves as a recommendation to the City of Houston who owns the majority of the water rights in Lake Conroe.

At the special board meeting, over 100 constituents voiced their opinions on the initiative to reduce water level in Lake Conroe on a seasonal basis to create extra capacity to catch rainfall and storm water runoff. During the meeting SJRA Director of Water Resources and Flood Management, Chuck Gilman, gave a presentation to the board that included 20 years of rainfall and lake level data for consideration.

After approximately five hours of presentation, public comment, and board discussion, the SJRA Board of Directors approved the following recommendation to the COH regarding the operation of Lake Conroe:

- Spring strategy: Beginning April 1, release only an amount of water from Lake Conroe to create a one foot capacity to catch rainfall and storm runoff (from 201' mean sea level to 200' msl). Recapture of lake level beginning June 1.
- Fall strategy: Beginning August 1, release only an amount of water from Lake Conroe to create a one foot capacity to catch rainfall and storm runoff (from 201' msl to 200' msl). After September 1, increase capacity an additional six inches (from 200' msl to 199.5' msl). If a named storm is predicted to impact our region, the COH may initiate an additional release of six inches (to 199' msl) by notifying SJRA in writing of their call for release. Recapture beginning October 1.
- All releases come from the COH's 2/3 share of permitted water supply in Lake Conroe at the city's request. SJRA staff to coordinate with COH staff on the details and timing of any releases.
- If the lake level of Lake Conroe has already dropped to the target elevation due to natural evaporation, no releases should be made.

The strategy of temporarily creating capacity in Lake Conroe on a seasonal basis began in 2018 to provide flood mitigation benefits for regional downstream constituents in both Montgomery County and Harris County by catching rainfall and runoff in Lake Conroe.

The COH supports the strategy. Mayor Sylvester Turner notified SJRA the day before the special board meeting that the city wished to extend the initiative until the completion of additional dredging and construction of flood gates on the Lake Houston Spillway.

Lake Conroe was built in the 1970s as a partnership between COH, SJRA, and the Texas Water Development Board as a water supply reservoir for the region. COH owns 2/3 of the water rights in Lake Conroe; SJRA owns 1/3. The City of Houston may call for the release of water from Lake Conroe for the city's use at any time. Upon release, the city's water flows down the west fork of the San Jacinto River eventually ending up in Lake Houston for use by Houston.

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), 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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