

LOWER RIO GRANDE FLOOD PLANNING REGION

The Lower Rio Grande River Basin (Flood Planning Region #15) covers the largest land area of any basin in Texas. Known as "Big River" in Spanish, the Rio Grande River has its headwaters in Colorado, flowing through New Mexico, and confluencing with the Rio Concho in Mexico. The river itself forms the international boundary between Mexico and the United States in the state of Texas. With an extremely arid climate, the Lower Rio Grande Basin has a substantially low watershed yield from year to year. Other streams of note within the basin are the Devils River, Pecos River, Arroyo Colorado, Mud and Pinto Creeks. This region apports surface water between New Mexico and Texas through the Pecos River Compact. Similarly, surface water from the Rio Grande is apportioned between Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas through the Rio Grande Compact, and across international boundaries through the United States and Mexico Water Treaty of 1944. Balmorhea Lake, Falcon International Reservoir, Amistad International Reservoir, and San Esteban Lake are a few of the water bodies located in this basin.

The basin has an estimated population of 2,009,253. Major population centers include the Cities of Brownsville, Del Rio, Harlingen, McAllen, and Weslaco. A total of 14 counties, or portions of counties are included within the Lower Rio Grande Basin. The Lower Rio Grande Region also boasts several stakeholders like Basin/River/Watershed Authorities, Water Supply and Utility Districts, as well as International Agencies. A projected 61% increase in population for the basin is expected by 2050. This growth could potentially expose additional people and property to increased flooding during major flood events.

The Lower Rio Grande Region is directly exposed to hurricane events in the south and tropical storms, depression, or related events (hail, high winds, etc.) in the north. Intense, localized thunderstorms and frontal-type storms in spring and summer cause most of the flooding in this region.

The Regional Flood Plan for the Lower Rio Grande Basin will be incorporated into the first State Flood Plan, along with the regional plans from the other fourteen regions across the state. This plan's goal is to identify mitigation actions for reducing flood risks within the basin. The Regional Flood Planning Group will work closely with communities and regional stakeholders to better understand local flood risk, mitigation efforts, and other topics for region-wide discussions about increasing resilience to flooding. It will be the responsibility of the Lower Rio Grande Flood Planning Group to update this plan every five years, ensuring that flood mitigation goals, strategies and projects address the current needs of the basin.

14 Counties, or a portion of each, are included in this basin

~15% of the basin is within the 1% annual chance flood event

43,000 Sq. miles Total Basin Area

FLOOD-RELATED PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATIONS (1953 – MAR 2020)

31 Major Disaster Declarations

6 Emergency Declarations

Over 25% of Disaster Declarations and 50% of Emergency Declarations have occurred within the region since 2008

FLOOD EVENTS (1996-2019)

Over 125+ major flood events have occurred in the last 20 years with significant losses to life and property.

FEMA FLOOD CLAIMS (1984 – JAN 2021)

132 Flood Claims

\$197.7 M Flood Claims Paid

ANTICIPATED POPULATION GROWTH

61% forecasted increase in population between 2020 and 2050

AGRICULTURAL FLOOD LOSSES

Significant historical flood losses, most recently 2015 and 2016

