

Texas Floodplain Policy, Gaps, and the Path Forward

Water for People and the Environment
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Annalisa Peace and Rachel Hanes
Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance



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Non-profit dedicated to the protection and preservation of the Edwards and Trinity aquifers, their springs, watersheds, and the Texas Hill Country that sustains them.



01

Overview

Floodplain management in Texas

Overview of TX Floodplain Management

- Cities
 - Home rule cities have greater authority and flexibility in enacting floodplain, watershed, and development ordinances and regulations
- Counties
 - Counties are limited by the state in their ability to enact ordinances but can enact flood damage prevention ordinances
- Regions
 - River basin regions participate in the State Flood Plan process
- State
 - State agencies oversee the State Flood Plan process





02

Flood Planning

State Flood Plan and Regional Flood Planning Groups

Flood Planning Process

State Flood Concerns:

- 1 in 6 Texans live or work in a flood hazard area
- 9 multi-billion dollar flood events in Texas between 1980 and 2024
- At least 11,395 low water crossings
- 1,361,643 statewide flood infrastructure features (natural and manmade)
- At least 189,875 miles of rivers and tributaries
- High population density in flood prone areas + increased risk due to ongoing development and changing climate

State Flood Planning Process:

- 2019 State Flood Assessment by TWDB highlighted significant flood risk
- Legislature created flood planning process, charged TWDB with designating flood planning regions by river basin, convening memberships, and administering funding
- 15 regional flood planning groups (RFPGs) composed of local stakeholders
- Develop regional flood plans every five years that together form the State Flood Plan



03 Legislative Developments

Recent legislative successes and missed opportunities

Legislative Successes (Bills Passed)

HB 1

Prohibits camp buildings in the floodplain, with penalties for camps

SB 1

Bans residential camps in the floodplain and defines floodway in H/S code

SB 3

Provides programs and funds for early warning systems

SB 5 (partial)

Provides funds for disaster relief, early warning systems, camp safety regs, & meteorological stations

SB 18

Streamlines floodwater dams permitting requirements

Legislative Misses (Bills Failed)

HB 2

Outlined and required major improvements to state and local gov response to disasters

HB 3

Provide resources to local govts to upgrade disaster responses and ensure coordination

SB 2

Outlined and required major improvements to state and local gov response to disasters

SB 5 (partial)

SB 5 passed, but with funding for local government communications improvements stripped out

Legislative Misses (Bills Failed)

HB 108/ SB 45

Allow counties to establish drainage utilities and regulate land use for flood mgmt

HB 125

Allow counties to fully regulate stormwater management and implement permit requirements

HB 117

Allow counties to regulate impervious cover for flood management in unincorporated areas

HB 225

Allow counties to implement higher building codes and standards in unincorporated areas



04

Policy Gaps

Gaps in floodplain management and flood policy

Policy Gaps



- Limited county authority
- Weak state building codes and standards
- State focus on mitigation and response
- Limited state focus on resilience and prevention
- Limited implementation of nature based solutions



05

Opportunities

Policy opportunities for improving floodplain management

Policy Opportunities

- Adopt statewide flood standards and encourage higher standards (incentivize participation in FEMA Community Rating System)
- Allow counties to adopt more stringent building codes and standards
- Adopt higher statewide building codes
- Allow counties to regulate impervious cover and meet stormwater permitting requirements
- Grant counties authority to collect drainage fees to fund flood mitigation
- Allocate dedicated funding for flood mitigation and prevention efforts, flood planning, and flood science efforts
- Allocate dedicated funding for community technical and financial assistance
- Allow TWDB to weigh in on FEMA map exclusion requests
- Encourage the use of nature based solutions and green stormwater infra

The background features several abstract, organic shapes in shades of teal and light blue. These shapes are scattered across the frame, with some appearing as solid colors and others as lighter, more ethereal washes. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on fluid, wave-like forms.

\$54,500,000,000

Estimated cost of complete implementation of the
2024 State Flood Plan



06

Wrap-Up

Questions and contacts

Contacts

GEAA

<https://aquiferalliance.org>


Annalisa Peace

annalisa@aquiferalliance.org

Rachel Hanes

rachel@aquiferalliance.org

Thanks!



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