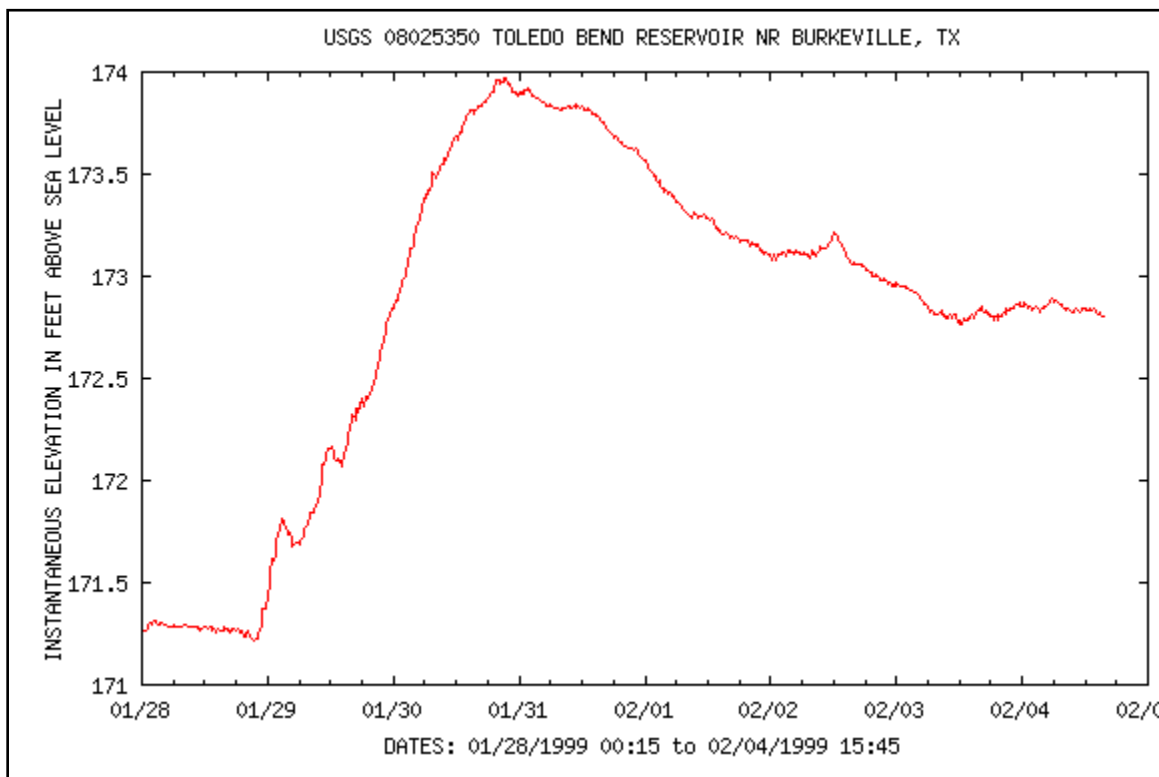


# The February 1999 Sabine River Flood

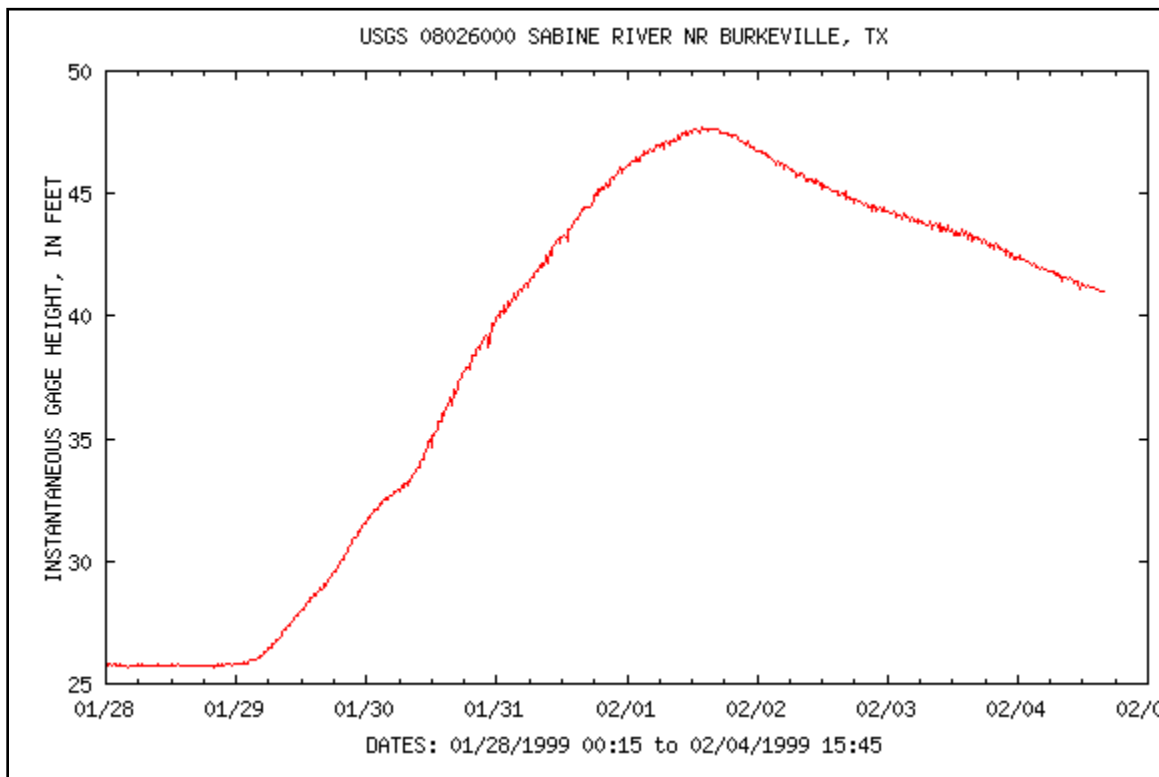
On January 29th and 30th 1999 a slow moving storm system dumped 3 to 11 inches of rain across Northeast Texas and Northwest Louisiana. Much of this rain fell over the upper Sabine River basin which resulted in significant rises in river levels along the Sabine River.

The lower Sabine River is largely controlled by the Toledo Bend Reservoir which is managed by the Sabine River Authority. Once the Toledo Bend Reservoir reaches 172.50 feet MSL the spillway gates are generally opened. Toledo Bend Reservoir reached 172.50 feet at 8:30 pm on January 29, 1999 and crested at 173.92 feet on January 31, 1999.



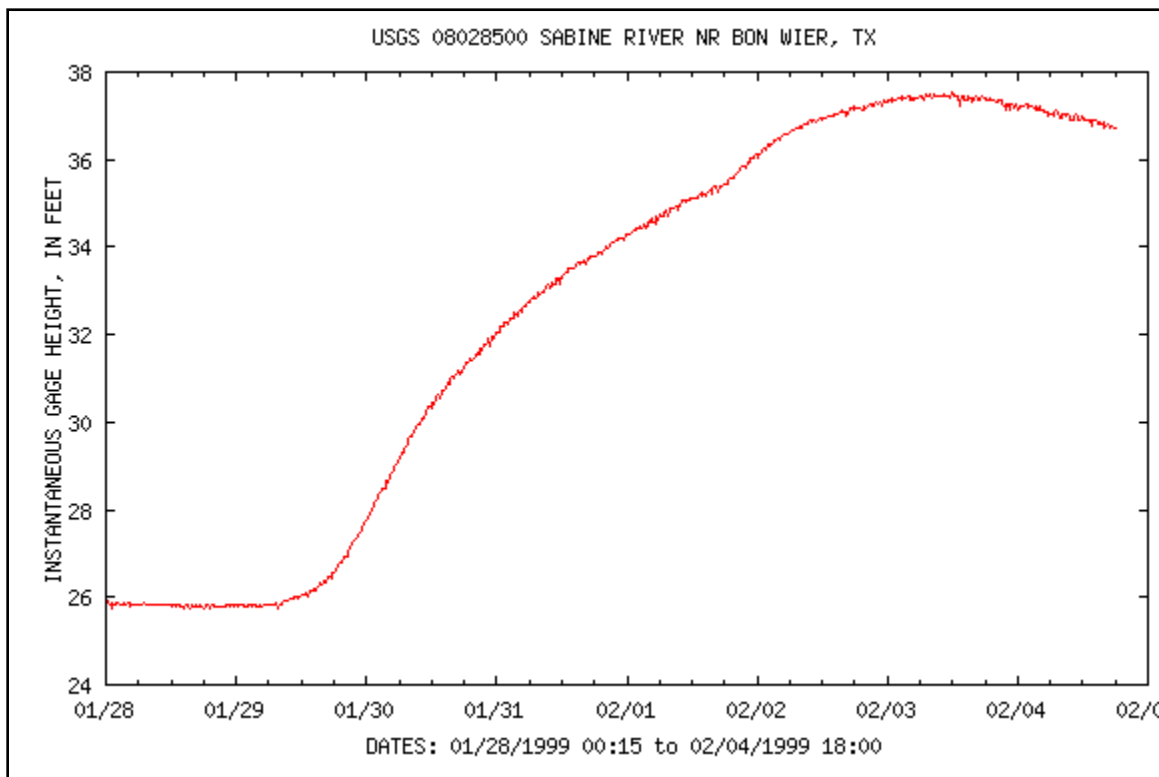
To relieve pressure from the Toledo Bend dam, the spillway gates were opened to release water from the reservoir. This would have an immediate impact on river levels downstream of the dam.

The first river gage location below Toledo Bend dam is located on the TX Highway 63 bridge over the Sabine river near the town of Burkeville, Texas.



River levels at Burkeville began to rise rapidly on January 30th with the river cresting at 47.66 ft on February 1st. Flood stage at Burkeville is 43 feet. Many families had to be evacuated from their homes which were flooded.

The next river gaging location is located near the towns of Bon Wier, Texas and Merryville, Louisiana on the Highway 190 bridge over the Sabine river.



River levels began to rise on January 30th at Bon Wier before cresting at 37.52 feet on February 3rd. Flood stage at Bon Wier is 30 feet. Once again many families were forced from their homes due to the rising water.

The pictures below were taken near Bon Wier, Texas on the afternoon of February 2nd when the river was at 37.00 feet, 7 feet above flood stage.

*Flooding near Bon Wier, TX*



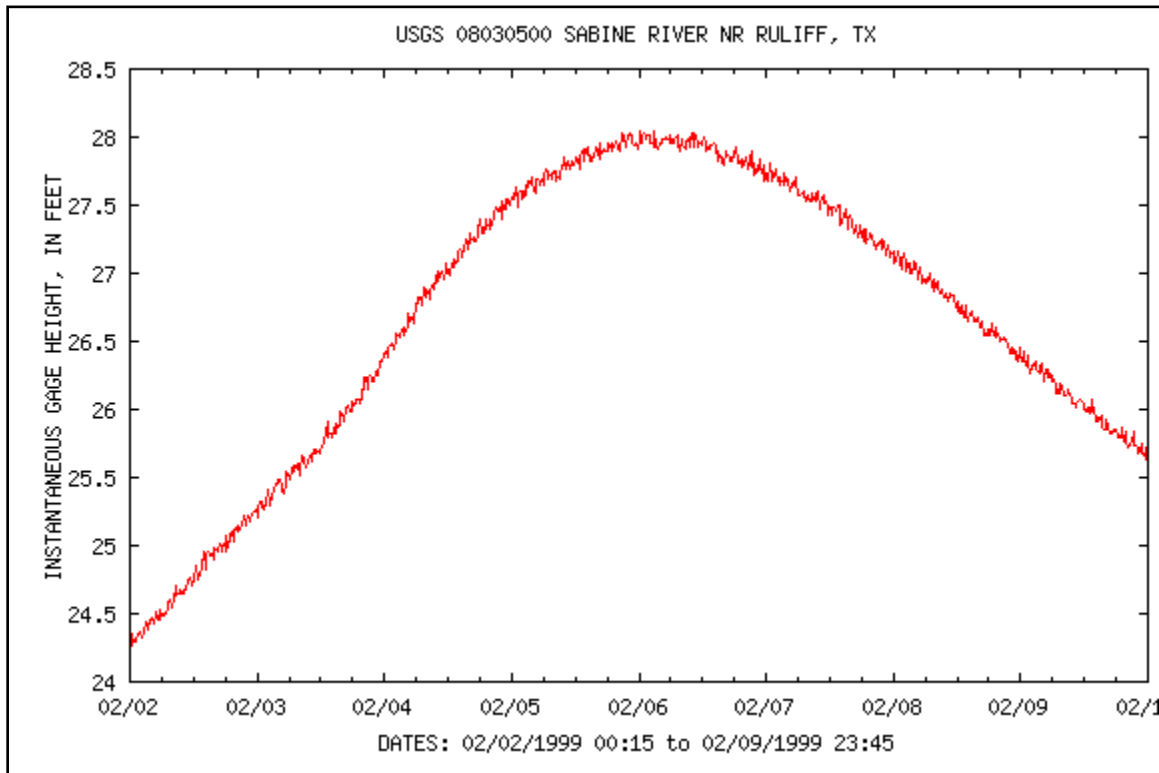
*Flooding near Bon Wier, TX*



*Flooding near Bon Wier, TX*



The next river gage downstream of Bon Wier is near Deweyville, Texas on the Highway 12 bridge over the Sabine River.



The river levels at Deweyville began to rise on February 2nd and crested on February 6th at 28.04 feet. Flood stage at Deweyville is 24 feet. Numerous homes were inundated with water. Evacuations were ordered for locations near the river in the Deweyville area.

The images below were taken on the afternoon of February 3rd when the stage at Deweyville was 25.8 feet.

*Flooding near Deweyville, TX*





At Orange, Texas the river crested at 4.19 feet on February 7th. Flood stage is 4 feet. This only produced minor flooding of lowlands near the river.

On Sunday February 7th, Louisiana Governor, Mike Foster, declared a state of emergency for Beauregard, Calcasieu and Vernon Parishes, each of which incurred major flood damage. At least 30 homes were damaged in Beauregard Parish and more than 30 homes in Vernon Parish were severely damaged.

Many have compared this Sabine River flood to the floods of May and July of 1989. Below is a table comparing the crests of the three floods.

	<b>Feb 1999 Flood</b>	<b>Jul 1989 Flood</b>	<b>May 1989 Flood</b>
<b>Burkeville</b>	47.66 ft	46.82 ft	47.50 ft
<b>Bon Wier</b>	37.52 ft	38.98 ft	37.73 ft
<b>Deweyville</b>	28.04 ft	29.24 ft	27.90 ft

All graphs contained in this report are courtesy of the United States Geological Survey in Texas.