

Clean Rivers Program
Lower Colorado River Basin
Steering Committee Meeting Notes
April 29, 2009
Matagorda Harbor

David Cowan (LCRA) welcomed those attending the meeting and explained that there would be a short meeting before boarding the research vessel Karma for a tour of the intercoastal waterway and the remainder of the program.

Mr. Cowan updated attendees on the recent Coordinated Monitoring meeting held in Austin and explained that LCRA is moving its sites on Caney Creek and the Tres Palacios River to different sites on those water bodies. Since data from the original sites, which were shared with the TCEQ regional office, have shown elevated bacteria levels, the decision was made for TCEQ to continue monitoring at the original sites and LCRA to move to provide better spatial coverage. Clean Rivers monitoring in these and other water bodies in the state can be viewed at <http://cms.lcra.org/>.

A question was asked regarding the source of funding for the Clean Rivers Program (CRP). Mr. Cowan explained that the funding comes from wastewater fees and water use fees. The money is distributed by TCEQ based on the number and size of wastewater discharges. Due to the number of permits in the region, the Houston/Galveston area receives the largest amount of funding, while a rural area with fewer wastewater dischargers receives less money from the state. Mr. Cowan explained that LCRA provides approximately 50% matching funds for the CRP program conducted in the LCRA service area.

Winston Denton (Texas Parks & Wildlife) made a brief presentation on harmful algal blooms. Mr. Denton discussed the occurrence of golden algae in Texas lakes. Golden algae, which were first observed in Texas in 1980, can be found all around the world. Blooms cause water to turn golden-orange color and release a toxin which can result in fish kills. Golden algae have been associated with fish kills in the upper Brazos River basin and the upper Colorado River basins. Recently it has been found in stock ponds and small lakes in coastal regions of Texas. Additional information regarding harmful algal blooms can be found on the [TPWD website](#).

The next part of the meeting was conducted by Willie Younger (Texas Sea Grant). After a brief discussion on the ecology of Matagorda Bay, the meeting moved to the research vessel Karma. While aboard the Karma participants learned of the history of the Bay and its importance to the economy and ecology of Texas. In addition to hearing about the ecology of the Bay, participants were able to see some of the species of crab and fish that inhabit the bay and estuaries along the Texas coast

The Karma returned to the Matagorda Harbor and the meeting was dismissed at 1:15 p.m.

Attendees:

Willie Younger, Texas Sea Grant
Leroy Dettling, Commissioner, Wharton County
Steven Mitchell, Texas Parks & Wildlife
Winston Denton, Texas Parks & Wildlife
Jim Gann, Steering Committee Member
Leon Cranek, Steering Committee Member
Steve Box, Environmental Stewardship
Ed Polasek, Steering Committee Member
Haskell Simon, Steering Committee Member
Dennis Mueck, NRCS
Stephen Deiss, NRCS
Patricia Wise, TCEQ
Robin Cypher, TCEQ
Donna Clendennen, LCRA
David Cowan, LCRA
Brian Koch, TSSWCB
Harold Graf, Wharton County SWCD
Shirley Grunert