

Clean Rivers Program
Matagorda Basin Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Bay City, Texas
November 8, 2006

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Steering Committee Meeting convened at 9:00 am on November 8, 2006 at the Bay City Civic Center in Bay City, Texas. David Cowan, the LCRA Clean Rivers Program Coordinator (CRP) welcomed the group, went over the agenda, and began stakeholder introductions. He introduced David Williams with the LCRA Water Resource Protection (WRP) Educational Outreach program to facilitate the meeting and stay in close contact with stakeholders.

Clean Rivers Updates

Patricia Wise with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) provided updates on the 2006 Water Quality Inventory assessing the past five years of water quality data. The draft version will be available for public comment in early spring of next year.

David Cowan described the ongoing preparation for the five-year Colorado River Basin Summary Report, to be published online sometime next year. Mr. Cowan asked for feedback on this new electronic format. The group response was positive, and several committee members suggested that the report be as interactive as possible with links to data sources and local volunteer opportunities. Previous Basin Highlights and Summary Reports will be mailed out to new Steering Committee members upon request.

Patricia Wise gave information on the Statewide Stakeholder Meeting held in October. Various organizations were represented, including the TCEQ, LCRA, and Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board. Goals for the Clean Rivers Program were revisited.

Comments & Questions

Q: Betsy Terrel with the LCRA asked if the Basin Summary Report would available in two languages. So far the issue is undecided, but a good suggestion.

Comment: Roberta Ripke wanted to discuss the Hu-Mar TCEQ Superfund site near Palacios and its possible effects on groundwater quality. The topic was discussed at length. David Williams will follow up in the coming weeks and contact TCEQ for an update on future action regarding the Hu-Mar site. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/remediation/superfund/state/humar.html>

Comment: David Cowan addressed the Conoco-Phillips plant decision to relocate their discharge from the Colorado River basin to the Brazos coastal basin because of less stringent selenium requirements. Effects of discharge removal on Caney Creek and its tributaries were studied and an additional monitoring site on Linville Bayou is being considered. Muriel Tipps requested water quality data on Caney Creek before and after the discharge relocation for the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned for a short break.

Caney Creek Use Attainability Analysis

Lori Hamilton with the TCEQ spoke on the UAA conducted on Caney Creek. The creek is on the 303 (d) list of impaired streams for dissolved oxygen and bacteria. This study was only conducted for dissolved oxygen

levels. The results of the UAA found that overall, the creek has good flows, but further evaluations of water chemistry data are needed.

Comments & Questions

Q: Betsy Terrel asked if the TCEQ scoring rubric for water quality standards was available. It can be found on the TCEQ website.

Matagorda Bay Freshwater Inflow Needs Study (FINS)

Angela Rodriguez with the LCRA gave a presentation on the freshwater inflows to West Matagorda Bay. The study was conducted to better understand relationships between the volume and seasonal timing of freshwater inflows to biological productivity in the bay. The last study was done in 1997. Results included a recommendation for more water flowing into the bay from May-June compared to earlier estimates. The FINS study can be found online at <http://www.lcra.org/water/inflows.html>

Questions & Comments

Comment: Roberta Ripke asked to receive data on the salinity levels for colonial organism blooms.

Comment: Steve Box pointed out that the rainfall data used for the study did not take current drought conditions into effect. Ms. Rodriguez explained that the rainfall data used was only meant to represent average conditions and not current drought conditions.

Lunch was provided from 12:30 – 1:00

Update on the Anti-Dumping Campaign

David Cowan discussed illegal dumping issues along the Colorado River and current grant funded efforts to combat the problem including public education, outreach and possible enforcement activities. He showed portions of the Colorado River Aerial Survey and described the creation of an advisory panel tasked with the prioritization of the 324 dump sites.

Comments & Questions

Comment: Steve Box noted that there should be information on legal dump sites available to the public.

Comment: Mr. Gonzales emphasized the importance of public and youth educational campaigns as the only way to change human behavior and suggested an attempt to tie dumping issues to economic development.

Regional Updates & Announcements

Carter Miska announced the creation of the Caney Creek Water Conservation Foundation, a non-profit corporation founded in April of 2004.

Richard Gonzales announced the second annual Tres Palacios Watershed Clean-Up will be held on February 24th, 2007. He asked for the committee members help in spreading the word about the event.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Natalie Bell

List of Attendees

Leon Cranek	Public
Ed Polasek	Public
Tim Ryan	Public
James (Jim) Gann	Matagorda County Drainage District #1
Stephen Tidwell	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Steve Box	Environmental Stewardship
Polly Hearn	Urban Design Consulting
Owen Bludau	Matagorda County Economic Development Corp.
Brian Koch	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
Winston Denton	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Billie Clays	Sargent Area Chamber of Commerce
Muriel Tipps	Sargent Area Chamber of Commerce
Roberta Ripke	Palacios Area Fund- Communities Foundation of Texas
Richard Gonzales	Gulf of Mexico Foundation
Carter Miska	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
Dennis Mueck	United States Department of Agriculture, NRCS
Patricia Wise	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Lori Hamilton	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Betsy Terrel	LCRA
David Cowan	LCRA
David Williams	LCRA
Angela Rodriguez	LCRA
Kim Mueller	LCRA
Natalie Bell	LCRA