

Middle Basin Steering Committee Meeting
May 21, 2003

Alicia Reinmund began the meeting with a history of the Clean Rivers Program (CRP) and the fee payers and the history of the fee methodology and the new methodology of consolidating fees.

Questions and Answers:

- Is there disparity between the fee payers amount and the actual amount CRP gets? With the consolidation of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) water quality fees, it will be hard to determine where Colorado River basin dollars are allocated. About \$18 million is collected every year from fee payers to implement all TCEQ water quality programs.
- Will this legislative session affect CRP? Legislation so far will not affect this program. There have been budget cuts to current contracts and the 2004 contract, but 2005 is being left the same. These budget cuts could affect monitoring. If monitoring is cut this will affect many other programs.

Linda Brookins with TCEQ stated that the State is getting more data from CRP partners due to cooperation of incorporating unpaid monitoring partners into basin QAPPs. Fifty percent of the data is TCEQ's and 50% is in kind from River Authorities and CRP partners.

Questions and Comments:

- Is there a document or flow chart to quantify the importance of the data and how it affects other programs? Meeting attendees felt the value or appreciation of data has been lost and that it needs to be conveyed in some way to instill support for CRP.

Discussion and presentation of 2004-2005 Work Plan

Alicia Reinmund discussed with meeting attendees each task as it was drafted for the TCEQ. Alicia presented the Web-based coordinated monitoring schedule and water quality ArcIMS site. Again, participants conveyed the need to inform all basin fee payers of the importance of the water quality data collected through Clean Rivers and why they should attend and become active steering committee members.

Questions and Comments:

- SC members find the web-based schedule very helpful, but maps would be nice.
- It would be great if on the web-site there was a link to other data repositories.
- Why isn't City of Austin data on the CRP data web-site?
- How can the City of Austin be paid?
- How can CRP educate the public, fee payers, and the steering committee members? The challenge is getting people involved if there is not a hot issue. The Concho River is an example of successful outreach.
- We could take CRP on the road to educate county commissioners.

Linda Brookins discussed the TCEQ's Clean Water Act 319 funds. She said that Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) doubled TCEQ's 319 funds five years ago. There is \$3,000,000. available. The EPA is more restrictive on 319 funds. They are more focused on impaired water bodies implementation plans. The deadline for project proposals is early fall. Barton Creek is a good location because it has a lot of creative ways to provide matching funds, and Linda Brookins asked the City of Austin to submit a 319 project for it. State Revolving Funds can be used for matching loans, not grants.

City of Bastrop

- Cecil Pennington with the City of Bastrop discussed the necessity for watershed protection/ preventative programs for Bastrop County. He said the growth will mean more reliability on surface water and less on groundwater. He said the new Municipal Utility Districts will have package plants.
- David Meesey with the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) brought up the funds that the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) and other entities received from the TWDB to develop a water and wastewater master plan for western Bastrop County.
- In addition to preventative maintenance and the stormwater masterplan public education and outreach opportunities were discussed.

CRP Outreach

- It is important for CRP to educate and update its fee payers regularly, in particular, the new members. The CRP partners should communicate what was cut from the workplan and what is not being done to the stakeholders.
- Linda Brookins thinks there are more opportunities to link CRP to Senate Bill 2. Water quality needs to be addressed in the New Regional Water Plans, and the SB2 plans need to look at the water quality impacts on a project. The CRP staff could go to the SB2 meetings and make a presentation to the SB2 group. The SB2 Region K meeting is on July 30.
- In addition, Stan Casey suggested meeting with communities, counties, and the legislature at the same time.

City of Smithville Video

Alicia Reinmund showed the video, "Small Town, Big Solution – Smithville, Texas". The video was a collaborative effort between numerous agencies and educators. Students played a key role in its final design. The video is a success story of multi-agency partnerships and increasing water quality and citizen involvement.

Onion Creek Water Quality (TMDL) Study

Andrew Sullivan, TCEQ TMDL team and Dr. Andrew Ernst, Texas A&M staff, presented the background and work completed to date on this water quality study. The following are the highlights of their presentation and the following discussion.

- In 2000 Onion Creek was added to the State's 303d list of impaired water bodies. In 2002 it was left on the list because there was not enough 24-hour data.
- The Onion Creek project has been ongoing for two years. For this study there are five water quality monitoring sites on Onion Creek and to date it has cost \$1.2 million.
- The QA requirements were more than what the EPA required.
- The D.O. average range is from 3.68 to 7.3, and the D.O. minimum is 3.47. Sites 12451 and 12456 have historical exceedences.
- There are three possible outcomes of this study; 1) removing Onion Creek from the 303d list, 2) performing a Use Attainability Analysis, or 3) conducting a full Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) study. It is expected that based upon the data collected to date, Onion creek will be removed from the Clean Water Act 303 d list.

Attendees:

Patricia Wise – Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
 Linda Brookins – Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
 Leila Gosselink – City of Austin
 Robert Botto – City of Austin
 Cindy Contreras – Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
 David Meeseey – Texas Water Development Board
 Stan Casey – Lower Colorado River Authority
 Karen Bondy – Lower Colorado River Authority
 Alicia Reinmund – Lower Colorado River Authority
 Bryan Cook – Lower Colorado River Authority
 Lisa Hatzenbuehler – Lower Colorado River Authority
 Dave Bass – Lower Colorado River Authority
 John Burch – Lower Colorado River Authority
 John McLeod – Lower Colorado River Authority
 Mary Etter – Lower Colorado River Authority
 Ken Manning – Lower Colorado River Authority
 Cecil Pennington - City of Bastrop
 Matt Woerndell – City of Bastrop Water and Wastewater Department