

LCRA Clean Rivers Program
Hill Country Water Quality Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
Sept. 18, 2014
Leonard Ranch
San Saba, Texas

LCRA Governmental Affairs Representative Steve Dyer and Upper Basin Regional Council Chair Scott Stevens welcomed the group and called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Twenty people attended. The meeting was held in conjunction with the Upper Basin Regional Council meeting.

David Cowan, LCRA Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Coordinator, began with an update of CRP activities. He explained that LCRA, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and Upper Colorado River Authority (UCRA) monitor 32 sites in the Hill Country Region. Cowan explained that six sites were dropped by the TCEQ San Angelo region, but that LCRA and UCRA added the dropped sites with funding from the TCEQ central office. Cowan reiterated the importance of maintaining long-term sampling data to help track changes in water quality.

Dyer asked for an update on bacteria levels in the San Saba River. Cowan explained that samples collected from the river at Hwy 16 continue to contain high levels of *E.coli*. The state standard is 126 colony-forming units (cfu). Based on the last TCEQ assessment, the average at that site was 196 cfu. Cowan said LCRA's monitoring program collects water quality samples according to a routine schedule, which means samples may be collected in the rain when bacteria levels are typically higher due to runoff. However the values have been consistently high since 2008, meaning that it is likely due to something other than runoff. Cowan also explained that samples from a site about 20 miles upstream of the Hwy 16 site were within state water quality standards. Samples from the upstream site had an average of 35 cfu. The group expressed support for finding the source(s) of bacteria and Cowan said he would follow-up with a proposal.

Post-meeting note: With input from TCEQ, LCRA is planning a special study to delineate possible bacteria sources. Six potential sites have been identified for additional sampling in 2015. Sampling could begin as soon as November. Input from the committee will be sought before finalizing the sampling plan.

For more information:

- Water quality monitoring schedule for all Clean Rivers Partners - <https://cms.lcra.org>
- Water quality monitoring locations and data - <http://waterquality.lcra.org>
- LCRA Clean Rivers Program - <http://www.lcra.org/water/quality/texas-clean-rivers-program/pages/default.aspx>
- Contact recreation and bacteria explained - <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs171/1109057043195/archive/1116837672455.html>

A question was asked about the impact of a truck stop being constructed on the banks of the North Llano River. Cowan responded that the LCRA was invited to a public meeting in Junction earlier in the month to present information on the LCRA Highland Lakes Watershed Ordinance. Dyer explained that LCRA did not have regulatory authority to address runoff outside of the Highland Lakes. A discussion about stormwater, underground storage tanks and TCEQ permitting ensued. Cowan said that LCRA maintains a routine monitoring site on the North Llano River near the facility.

Someone asked about the status of zebra mussels in the Colorado River basin. Cowan reported that last year they were found in Lake Belton, about 100 miles from the Highland Lakes. LCRA continues to monitor for adult zebra mussels and assisted Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) in selecting sites in the Highland Lakes to sample for detecting juvenile mussels. LCRA also continues to support and participate in TPWD's Clean Drain and Dry campaign which aims to prevent boaters from transporting the invasive species. Keep your fingers crossed.

Post meeting note: Zebra mussels were found in Lake Waco on Sept. 26. Read the TPWD press release: http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/releases/news_roundup/zebra_mussels/

A question was asked about the Environmental Protection Agency's initiative to expand the definition of "waters of the United States." Committee members discussed what this would mean for landowners with water on their property. The following Web pages explain the EPA's rule change.

- Explanation and Q&A from EPA website - <http://www2.epa.gov/uswaters/questions-and-answers-about-waters-us-proposal-pdf>
- New York Times article from March about concerns over changes to the EPA Rules - http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/13/us/politics/environmental-protection-agency-water-rules.html?_r=0

The CRP portion of the meeting concluded at 3:20 p.m.

Submitted by David Cowan

10/3/14