



LCRA WATER QUALITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

August 12, 2021
Online - Microsoft Teams Meeting

Welcome and Introductions

The Middle and Lower Basin meeting of the Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Colorado River Basin Water Quality Advisory Committee (WQAC) was held August 12, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. via Microsoft Teams. Lisa Benton, LCRA CRP project manager, welcomed the 35 attendees.

Clean Rivers Program Updates for Colorado River Basin – Lisa Benton, LCRA

Benton began the meeting with a tribute to Dave Bass, who was a valued and integral part of the LCRA Clean Rivers Program throughout his entire career before his passing in July of 2021. He is dearly missed and always remembered.

Benton then provided historical background information on the Clean Rivers Program and the roles of the various stakeholders, including the Upper Colorado River Authority (UCRA) and the City of Austin (CoA). She stressed the importance of data collection, quality assurance, and data management, and how the Water Quality Advisory Committee helps guide resources to gather and assess water quality information to identify and address water quality issues throughout the basin.

The Colorado River basin CRP program has \$816,694 allotted for the fiscal year (FY) 2020-2021 budget cycle (\$1,850,941 total for the extended 4-year contract from FY 2018-2021). Approximately 53% of the funds in the contract with Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) are used for monitoring water quality. 29% of the funds are contracted to UCRA for water quality monitoring in the upper basin, 17% towards personnel/labor, and approximately 1% for supplies and travel.

Benton then provided an update on the Texas Integrated Report and 303(d) List ("Integrated Report"), which is a statewide assessment of the status of water quality that uses data collected from the Clean Rivers Program. The 2020 Integrated Report was approved by the EPA on May 12, 2020.

In the Colorado River Basin, there were 137 water bodies evaluated for the 2020 Integrated Report. 89 of these had enough data to assess, and 20 of them were considered impaired for not meeting the Water Quality Standards for their designated use.

Benton then gave a recap of the Coordinated Monitoring Meeting, which is a meeting held each year to make sure all entities conducting water quality monitoring in the Colorado River basin are communicating and making efficient use of resources. For the coming fiscal year 2022, there will be 4 water bodies with additional monitoring efforts: Buckners Creek, Alum Creek, Gilleland Creek and Lake Austin. LCRA will also conduct biological monitoring at 2 sites this summer: Cummins Creek and Piney Creek.





Benton gave a brief update on the four native freshwater mussel species in the Colorado River basin that are under consideration for listing under the Endangered Species Act. A proposal decision is expected this fall. LCRA is currently discussing a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Lastly, Benton informed stakeholders that all of the Highland Lakes are now infested with zebra mussels. LCRA continues to monitor their spread and population dynamics.

Stream Diatom and Macroinvertebrate Community Thresholds in Response to Stressors of Concern in the Austin Metropolitan Area — Mateo Scoggins and Andrew Clamann, City of Austin Watershed Protection Department

The City of Austin contracted with Dr. Ryan S. King at Baylor University to conduct this research. The objective of this study was to evaluate diatom and macroinvertebrate assemblage responses to stressors (i.e. impervious cover, flow permanence, total phosphorus, total nitrogen, specific conductance). The goal was to establish criteria that are protective of the desired ecologic condition. The method utilized by this study was the Threshold Indicator Taxa Analysis (TITAN), which identifies taxa-specific and assemblage level change in frequency and abundance relative to each variable.

For more details on this study, please refer to the presentation (available here).

Algae in the Highland Lakes - Anthea Fredrickson, LCRA Water Quality Protection

Please view the presentation slides <u>here</u>. For the most up-to-date information on algae in the Highland Lakes, please visit lcra.org/algae.

Non-Profit Partner Updates

Presentations focused on 2020-2021 activities were provided by the following non-profit organizations working in the realm of water resource protection in the Colorado River basin:

- Austin Youth River Watch Chanel Davis
- Hill Country Alliance Daniel Oppenheimer
- Colorado River Alliance Adrienne Longenecker

For further information on their presentations, please view the links at https://www.lcra.org/water/quality/texas-clean-rivers-program/public-outreach/ under "Basin-Wide Virtual" meetings.