



**Upper Neches Basin Clean Rivers Program
Steering Committee Meeting**

May 19, 2011, 1:30 p.m.

Courtyard Marriott

2130 South First Street

Lufkin, Texas 75904

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began at 1:30 p.m. with Brian Sims, Angelina & Neches River Authority (ANRA) Environmental Division Manager welcoming all attendees. Introductions were made of all in attendance.

Overview of the Clean Rivers Program

Mr. Sims conducted a presentation with information on ANRA's functions within the basin and the Clean Rivers Program (CRP). ANRA has three main divisions consisting of General Administration, the Field Operations Division and the Environmental Division. The Environmental Division consists of three key programs which are the Clean Rivers Program (CRP), Control Zone Rayburn (CZR), and the Environmental Laboratory.

Mr. Sims discussed CRP objectives, funding, budget and work plan tasks. The CRP goal is to maintain and improve the quality of water within each river basin in Texas. The Upper Neches Basin partners with fifteen agencies working with the TCEQ to monitor and generate data necessary to identify and evaluate water quality issues.

He reviewed the CRP FY 2010-11 budget, followed by updates for FY 2012 -13, and ANRA's future goals and objectives. He stressed how important it is to have more public outreach and participation and involvement from stakeholders and steering committee members. Their input is vital in the success of the program especially in identifying and targeting sources of water quality concerns. Mr. Sims provided copies of the newly printed Upper Neches Basin Highlights Report 2011 to all attendees. The Basin Highlights report and the presentations presented during this meeting are available for review on our website at www.anra.org.

ANRA's Water Quality Monitoring Program

Monitoring within the Basin

Mr. Sims discussed the number of sites monitored within the Upper Neches Basin and the parameters for quarterly monitoring. There are three entities currently responsible for sampling within the basin; ANRA, City of Tyler and TCEQ. ANRA samples at 26 sites on a quarterly basis and monitors for field parameters, conventional parameters and bacteria. The presentation provided maps of the numbered segments, along with station number and description. The impaired segments were noted with the impairment listed for each. These maps showing monitoring stations and impairments will be available on ANRA's website under this presentation.

ANRA samples for bacteria, field and conventional parameters at 26 quarterly sites and 1 bimonthly site for bacteria. Mr. Sims noted that Sam Rayburn Reservoir is still listed as impaired for mercury in edible tissue and that several other sampling sites within the basin have bacterial impairments.

Updates from the Coordinated Monitoring Meeting

The Coordinated Monitoring Meeting for the Neches Basin was held on March 24, 2011. ANRA did not add or remove any sites for the upcoming FY 2012 schedule. There were two sites identified as needing changes; one on Lake Nacogdoches because of low water levels and site accessibility and the station at the Angelina River at SH 20, which will be relocated due to the installation of an effluent discharge outfall from Nacogdoches Power. The current location of the sampling site will be too close to the mixing zone of the effluent discharge and an attempt is being made to get landowner approval to sample upstream of the current site. The question was raised as to why move the site upstream and not sample downstream from the discharge site to ascertain the affect to water quality from this effluent discharge. In answer, this site is used to determine base line conditions of the water body for use in the water quality assessment and thus you would want it upstream of the known discharge area for a true accounting. Another targeted monitoring can be performed downstream to determine affects from the discharge at a later date. Additional resources were listed within the presentation which will be available on ANRA's website.

ANRA's Website, Data Management, and GIS

Overview of ANRA's website

Jeremiah Poling, Angelina & Neches River Authority, discussed ANRA's website and some of the additions that will be forthcoming. His goal is to add more information on the individual sampling sites that ANRA monitors. This would include more detailed description of the sites and segments and the monitoring performed at those sites.

Maps and other resources

In addition to more description of these sites there will be location maps and actual photographs. These photographs will provide 360° views of the sites. Some of these are currently on the website with more being added as time permits. It is possible that these 360° views can be incorporated into the recreational use attainability studies and could potentially be a useful tool.

ANRA's FY 2011 Basin Highlights Report

Every year ANRA publishes a Basin Highlights Report. The recently printed current Highlights Report was distributed among attendees and Mr. Sims stated that more are available upon request. Last year the Basin Summary Report was published; which is required every five years and provides more in depth data analysis, graphing and reports. The Highlights Report covers any changes that may have occurred since last year and discusses what might be causing the water quality issues.

Mr. Sims recessed for a short break at 2:20 p.m.

Overview of the Watershed Action Planning Process

Ms. Julie McEntire, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), provided an overview of the Watershed Action Planning Process (WAPP). The WAPP is a collaborative effort between the TCEQ, the Soil Board, the River Authorities and other interested stakeholders. The goal of the WAPP is to discuss, design and develop strategies that can be used to remove water bodies from the 303(d) list of impairments. Ms. McEntire discussed the different phases of the WAPP. The first phase was an internal meeting of the TCEQ held in February which identified preliminary categories and strategies. The second phase was the Coordinated Monitoring Meetings held in March and April. These meetings allowed for an exchange and coordination of information on the impaired water bodies. The third phase will be Partner Meetings which were originally going to be held in May and June but have been pushed back to later in the fall. The fourth phase will be Local Watershed Meetings involving stakeholders. This is a new process and there is sure to be aspects that will change and evolve over time.

Attoyac Bayou Watershed Protection Plan

Anthony Castilaw, Castilaw Environmental Services, discussed the impairments on the Attoyac Bayou which led to its inclusion on the 2004 Texas 303(d) List for not meeting bacteria standard. Action must be taken to improve water quality by 2017 or regulatory measures are likely to be implemented. Thus the Attoyac Bayou Project is working towards developing a Watershed Protection Plan (WPP). This is a voluntary plan developed by stakeholders. The project has progressed so that now there are 25 Steering Committee Members which act as leaders for the project. Other agencies involved bringing technical assistance to the project are the Texas Water Resources Institute, Texas AgriLife Research, SFAU, Pineywoods RC&D, ANRA and Castilaw

Environmental Services. Mr. Castilaw reviewed the project goal and tasks and showed the water quality sampling sites. Funding for the project is being provided through a Clean Water Act §319(h) Nonpoint Source Grant from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The next quarterly meeting will be held on June 16th at the Nacogdoches County Courthouse Annex.

Non-Point Source Pollution

Mr. Mitch Conine with the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) discussed portions of the Federal Clean Water Act requiring states to establish Water Quality Standards. The TSSWCB is the lead agency in Texas for planning, implementing and managing programs and practices for preventing and abating agricultural and silvicultural nonpoint sources of water pollution. They provide technical and financial assistance to landowners to develop and implement farm-level conservation plans on agricultural lands. Several Federal and State agencies that also help with addressing non-point source pollution and water quality in general were listed in his presentation. The TSSWCB is currently revising the Texas Nonpoint Source Management Program and it is expected to be released spring of 2012. This document is required by EPA and is reviewed and updated every five years.

Mr. Conine discussed the tools/steps that the TSSWCB uses to restore water quality and remove the impaired water body from the 303(d) List, including Use Attainability Analyses (UAAs), development/implementation of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), and Watershed Protection Plans (WPPs). Promotion of voluntary implementation of Best Management Practices (BMP's) by private landowners is key and technical assistance is available to assist them in developing Water Quality Management Plans (WQMPs). He noted that all poultry operations in the state are required to have WQMP's. Providing this technical assistance are members of the Texas Conservation Partnership consisting of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, NRCS, TSSWCB and Private Landowners. Other critical partners providing assistance are Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas AgriLife Research, Texas Forest Service and Texas Dept. of Agriculture. Financial Assistance is obtainable for certain conservation practices through State (TSSWCB) or Federal (NRCS) sources.

Invasive Species

Mr. Lucas Gregory with the Texas Water Resource Institute (TWRI) discussed aquatic invasive species, explaining that they are non-native species to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. They typically grow and reproduce rapidly over large areas taking advantage of favorable conditions and can have devastating economic impacts.

A couple of the worst and better known species is the Giant Salvinia and Zebra mussels. Giant Salvinia is particularly destructive due to the fact that it is so prolific. This floating fern can

double in size in 4 to 10 days, forming dense mats several feet thick. Texas Parks & Wildlife has been financing extensive educational campaigns to gain public assistance in combating these invasive species.

Mr. Gregory reviewed invasive species and the steps being taken to combat them within Caddo Lake, Lake Tyler East, Lake Sam Rayburn and B.A. Steinhagen Reservoir. TWRI is currently working on a Giant Salvinia Eradication Project on Caddo Lake. Scientists from across the state are involved in the effort to find control mechanisms for this species. There is ongoing collaboration with TPWD and other agencies to expand efforts and ensure that there is no duplication of work. One promising biological control that is being researched is the salvinia weevil. These weevils are being raised at a facility located on the Wildlife Refuge at Caddo Lake. Recently 45 thousand weevils were released on the lake and another 45 thousand are due to be released in another week. Photos were shown of the effects before and one month after the release. Mr. Gregory then discussed chemical control, both foliar and systemic treatments and the critical component of education. Informational links and contact information were provided in the presentation which will be posted on ANRA's website at www.anra.org.

E. coli and Nutrient Criteria

Mr. Peter Schaefer, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), discussed water quality management developments regarding nutrient criteria. The EPA mandated in 1998 that states were to have criteria established by 2004. This date was not met and lawsuits and countersuits have followed. Nutrient Criteria is difficult to develop for several reasons including a lack of clear "use-based" thresholds, responses to nutrients are highly variable, there is no consensus on how to derive criteria. The TCEQ submitted plans to the EPA in 2001 and 2006 for nutrient criteria. He provided examples of nutrient criteria for several reservoirs and noted that in 2010 nutrient criteria has been adopted for 75 reservoirs by the TCEQ but has yet to be approved by the EPA. The 2010 Standards Implementation Procedures established how these nutrient limits are calculated. The nutrient advisory committee will reconvene and review data and academic research.

Steering Committee Member Recommendations and Concerns

There were no recommendations or concerns from the Steering Committee Members.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

All presentations from this program will be made available on ANRA's web site at www.anra.org

Attendees:

Brian Sims, ANRA

Mike Parrish, ANRA

Jeremiah Poling, ANRA

Terri Belschner, ANRA

Teresa Scroggins, ANRA

Mitch Conine, Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board

Mark Cochran, Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board

Lucas Gregory, TWRI

Anthony Castilaw, Castilaw Environmental Services

Neil Boitnott, Castilaw Environmental Services

Peter Schaefer, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Julie McEntire, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Sarah Fuller, SFASU

Sean Pessarrra, SFASU

Samuel Acholem, SFASU

Matthew McBroom, SFASU

Sarah Schwab, SFASU

David LaRue, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Terry Corbett, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

