



MEETING MINUTES

UPPER NECHES RIVER BASIN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2013 1:30 PM
NACOGDOCHES COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX
201 W. MAIN STREET, NACOGDOCHES, TX 75961

Attendees:

Brian Sims	Angelina & Neches River Authority (ANRA)
Dyan Stanford	Angelina & Neches River Authority (ANRA)
Lori Hamilton	Angelina & Neches River Authority (ANRA)
Jeremiah Poling	Angelina & Neches River Authority (ANRA)
Lucas Gregory	Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI)
Matt Brown	Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI)
Allison Fischer	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
Mike Prater	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
Bart Dearborn	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sam Rayburn (USACE)
Anne Tindell	
Anthony Castilaw	Castilaw Environmental Services (CES)
Adam Whisenant	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD)

I. Welcome & Introductions

Mr. Brian Sims welcomed everyone to the meeting and began with a brief overview of the Angelina & Neches River Authority's (ANRA) jurisdiction and roles within the basin. He noted that ANRA covers 17 counties and is composed of three major divisions: General Administration, Field Operations Division, and Environmental Division. General Administration coordinates within ANRA as well as with outside entities. The Field Operations Division handles the operations of water/wastewater utilities, as well as operating a biosolids compost facility. The Environmental Division includes the Clean Rivers Program (CRP), Laboratory, and Control Zone Rayburn (CZR). CRP conducts ANRA's surface water quality monitoring program. The Laboratory provides chemical and bacteriological testing for of wastewater, drinking water, and surface water for municipalities, other government entities and programs, and private individuals. The

CZR is responsible for on-site sewage system permitting around Sam Rayburn and the unincorporated portion of San Augustine County.

II. Overview of the Clean Rivers Program

Mr. Sims provided a brief history of the Clean Rivers Program, explaining that CRP was established in 1991 by the legislature. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is responsible for the program which emphasizes collection of data. The Upper Neches Basin is split between ANRA and Lower Neches Valley Authority (LNVA). ANRA's portion of the \$659,532 budget is \$329,766. Previously ANRA had received \$349,164, so funding for the program has decreased by \$19,398 from the previous 2-year funding cycle. Many agencies, due to budget cuts, are reducing the number of sample sites; however, ANRA is adjusting salary allocations to allow for more sites to be sampled. Through this process some personnel time will be donated to the CRP from other programs and departments. The reallocation in personnel costs from 58% to 47%, will allow for the increase in the number of sample sites from 26 to 40 sites per quarter.

III. ANRA's Water Quality Monitoring Program

Mr. Sims explained the breakdown of the watersheds within the basin and then began to discuss how ANRA will be increasing the number of sites sampled. In 2012, the City of Tyler cancelled sampling at four sites, but TCEQ – Region 5 (Tyler) will be taking over sampling at those sites in the future. ANRA will be taking 2 sites from TCEQ – Region 5 at Lake Striker. ANRA will also be monitoring tributaries into Lake Striker that have a history of low pH levels, such as Bowles and Johnson Creek. ANRA will also be adding monitoring on Ayish Bayou and possibly Attoyac Bayou, now that sampling for the Attoyac Bayou Watershed Protection Plan project is completed. Consultations are also being conducted between ANRA and the City of Lufkin regarding sampling on Cedar Creek and Hurricane Creek within the city limits. ANRA is also considering sampling at Bayou Carizo, Atascoso Creek, Lake Naconiche, Naconiche Creek, and Kickapoo Creek. The final list of sample sites will be determined around mid-June. The process is lengthy because each site must be physically examined to determine if it is accessible for sampling.

ANRA was recently awarded a Federal Clean Water Act Section 319 grant to control non-point source pollution. It involves 40% matching from ANRA with a total budget of \$699,425. The project will involve mapping on-site sewage systems for Sam Rayburn and the unincorporated portions of San Augustine County, along with making electronic copies of all the permits and associated paperwork. The project will also provide funds to replace 23 failing systems within the Attoyac Bayou watershed over a span of three years.

Mr. Sims then asked if there were any questions at this point in the meeting, to which Mr. Adam Whisenant asked what can be done in regards to septic system replacements

since there are rural areas with camps within the project boundaries. Mr. Sims noted that most of the issues with septic systems are brought in through complaints by individuals. It was also noted that part of the project will include community input and education to inform the people of the availability of the program. Candidates will be evaluated to determine who should receive the systems, and replacement of the systems will not begin until 2015. The criteria has not been finalized as to how systems will be awarded, although complaint/compliance history, water usage, proximity to streams, etc., will be considered before making the final determinations. Mr. Anthony Castilaw then questioned if ANRA has the authority to fine individuals whose systems have ongoing issues. Mr. Sims noted that ANRA does not have authority to issue fines, but that issues can be taken before the Justice of the Peace for remedy.

IV. Overview of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards and Impaired Water Bodies in the Neches Basin

Ms. Lori Hamilton then presented information regarding the authority granted under the Clean Water Act, Texas Water Code, and Texas Administrative Code. She noted that the standards set usage and criteria and were last adopted in 2010. 2013 revisions have not yet been approved or made into rules as of this date. Ms. Hamilton then began to explain general criteria, toxic materials, and site specific uses and criteria. Ms. Hamilton discussed appendices A through G within the standards and finished with use attainability analysis.

The next focus from Ms. Hamilton's presentation involved implementation of the standards through three avenues: surface water quality monitoring programs, wastewater permitting, and TMDLs and Non-Point Source programs. She then moved into discussing the Texas Integrated Report and the 303(d) List of impaired water bodies. The Texas Integrated Report evaluated 1,214 water bodies, with 1,041 having sufficient data to assess. Of those water bodies, 45% had bacterial impairments. Ms. Hamilton finished her presentation by noting the water bodies on the 303(d) List within the upper and middle portions of the Neches River Basin.

Questions were received after Ms. Hamilton's presentation. Mr. Castilaw asked in what ways water bodies were being evaluated, to which Mr. Sims noted now they are just being sampled, but in the future sanitary surveys could be considered if funding is available. Mr. Whisenant questioned whether TCEQ – Region 10 (Beaumont) was doing any biological monitoring in Paper Mill Creek (Section 0615A). Mr. Sims replied that Beaumont has discussed it, but there are no resources available at this time to do it with the amount of time and personnel it requires. Mr. Jeremiah Poling also included that Region 10 has no set plan for it at this time.

V. Attoyac Bayou Watershed Protection Plan Update

Mr. Lucas Gregory provided an update regarding the Attoyac Bayou Watershed

Protection Plan. Mr. Gregory informed the group that one of the goals of the project was to collect additional data on the Attoyac Bayou. However, the drought that occurred during the time frame of the sampling did negatively affect the hydrology information. This additional data was to aid the stakeholders in making decisions on how to manage the watershed. The primary tasks of the project were to coordinate stakeholders, update Geographic Information Systems (GIS), conduct surface water quality monitoring, perform a Recreational Use Attainability Analysis (RUAA), perform bacterial source tracking, and to develop a watershed protection plan. Castilaw Environmental Services (CES) conducted the survey and updated GIS. Information was gathered on animal populations and monitoring stations, with the largest part of the project being to develop a land use / land cover layer. The land use helps determine what is going on within the watershed. The surface water quality monitoring activities involved collecting bi-weekly samples at ten locations within the watershed. Monitoring stations included five sites within the main stem of the bayou, as well as five tributaries. The routine field parameters tested were temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, and flow. *E. coli*, ammonia, nitrate-nitrite, total phosphorus, orthophosphorus, and total suspended solids were also analyzed by the ANRA Environmental Laboratory. Sampling was completed in August 2012.

Mr. Gregory then discussed what a load duration curve is and how it can be utilized within the project. His next topic involved the Spatially Explicit Load Enrichment Calculation Tool (SELECT). In this project, septic systems were determined to be the highest potential contributor, based upon a 50% failure rate. Mr. Castilaw mentioned that previously he had tested poultry litter, but could not get any bacteria to grow. Mr. Gregory agreed and noted that poultry percentages were lower than that of cattle and deer. Mr. Sims highlighted that a 50% failure rate is too high, but stated that many systems in that area are old, conventional, and not appropriate for the soil type. Mr. Gregory then restated that the SELECT tool is just a worst case scenario and that hopefully things are not that bad within the watershed.

With regards to the RUAA, Mr. Gregory informed the group that no recreation was directly observed during the study, but that evidence was found that recreation had occurred at some point. Bacterial source tracking was also utilized to determine sources of fecal contamination within water bodies. There were 113 samples tested, with 59 of them being identified and validated. 35 of those samples were related to domestic animals and livestock and the other 24 were wildlife. Mr. Sims then inquired as to those determined to be wildlife (non-avian), what was the split between those deemed deer and feral hogs? Mr. Gregory stated that in that grouping, 65% were deemed to be ruminants, which include deer and cattle, while 35% per deemed to be feral hogs.

Mr. Gregory then gave an update on the status of the Watershed Protection Plan. He noted that the first six chapters have been drafted and submitted for review. The remaining components will combine the results from the sampling along with stakeholder knowledge. The steering committee will then need to set goals, determine

needs, make recommendations, and setup milestones which will then be presented to the full watershed partnership. Mr. Gregory stated that the next meeting will be held on the evening of May 16, 2013, with the steering committee then meeting monthly over the next few months. There will then be a partnership meeting late summer, such as in August. The first draft of the Watershed Protection Plan will be completed Fall 2013, the final draft in Winter 2013, and then EPA Review will be done in the Spring of 2014. All of these projected time frames are tentative. Mr. Castilaw questioned as to how long the review period lasts once the EPA receives the final draft. Mr. Gregory noted the normal review period lately has lasted 45 days. Mr. Castilaw then asked about the RUAA, to which Mr. Gregory noted that the May 16th meeting is the first public review. A 45 day public comments period will pass and then it will be forwarded to TCEQ for comment and review. Mr. Castilaw wondered how the comment period would be advertised, whether it would involve the May 16th meeting, by word of mouth, or anything more. Mr. Gregory explained that yes those methods were being utilized, along with the information being published on the website. He then highlighted the partners and funding agency on the project before completing his presentation.

VI. ANRA's Draft FY 2013 Basin Highlights Report

Mr. Sims explained that previous Basin Highlight Reports were used as a program update, but that this year the report will be a Water Characterization Report. This year will only focus on water bodies that are on the 303(d) List. Within each segment discussed in the report there will be a description, hydrological characteristics, water quality issues, land use and natural characteristics, potential causes of water quality issues, potential stakeholders, recommended actions, maps, ongoing projects, major watershed events, and images. This year the report will focus on the Lower Angelina Sub-basin, which will include Sam Rayburn Reservoir, Attoyac Bayou, Ayish Bayou, and La Nana Bayou. Mr. Sims then showed an example of Ayish Bayou, illustrating what will be provided for each segment throughout the report. The final Basin Highlights Report will be available by the end of June on a disc or on ANRA's website. Print copies will be limited due to the cost of production.

VII. Steering Committee Member Recommendations and Concerns

There were no comments, concerns, or questions. The meeting was concluded at 3:30 p.m.

