MEETING MINUTES
ANGELINA & NECHES RIVER AUTHORITY
CLEAN RIVERS PROGRAM

UPPER NECHES RIVER BASIN
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2008
FREDONIA HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER
1:30 P.M.

I. Welcome & Introductions

Matt Romig welcomed everyone and introduced the Angelina & Neches River Authority (ANRA) staff and allowed the Steering Committee Members and guests in attendance to introduce themselves. The following is a list of the members and guests in attendance:

Jennifer Delk	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Austin
Shawna Simpson	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Austin
Patrick Roques	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Austin
R. Justin Daniel	City of Nacogdoches
Amanda Romig	City of Nacogdoches
Matthew McBroom	Stephen F. Austin State Univ.- College of Forestry
Jeff Lauman	Texas Railroad Commission, Kilgore
Art Crowe	TCEQ, Tyler Region
Mike Prater	TCEQ, Tyler Region
Ken Awtry	Piney Woods Resource Conservation & Development
Monty Shank	Upper Neches Rural Municipal Water Authority
Adam Whisenant	Texas Parks and Wildlife
Mark Cochran	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
Jack McCullough	Stephen F. Austin State University

The ANRA staff in attendance included Clean Rivers Project Manager, Matt Romig and General Manager, Kenneth Reneau. Other ANRA staff that attended were: Kelley Holcomb, Mike Parrish, and Christal Gill.

Matt Romig reviewed the meeting agenda and asked for any questions prior to beginning the presentation.

Mr. Romig provided an overview of the Texas Clean Rivers Program (CRP) which is a state-wide watershed management program. Maps showing the 23 river and coastal basins in Texas, ANRA's Upper Neches River Basin study area, and the designated stream segments in the basin were presented. The Clean Rivers Program video produced by the TCEQ in late 2007 was then shown to the group.

Mr. Romig gave recognition to the ANRA Environmental Laboratory which has conducted all routine sample analyses for the Clean Rivers Program (with the exception of chlorophyll-a and

metals) and other water quality monitoring programs in the basin since FY2004. The ANRA Laboratory is now compliant with and has applied for certification under the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Certification.

The City of Tyler got involved in the Clean Rivers Program in Sept. 2003 and they have been monitoring four stations in the upper basin around the City of Tyler. They bring samples to the ANRA laboratory on a quarterly basis. Since Tyler's monitoring program is included in ANRA's Upper Neches basin-wide Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), the data will entered into ANRA's database and submitted to the TCEQ along with other CRP data. This allows the data collected by the City of Tyler to be included in future state water quality inventories and basin assessment reports.

II. Work Plans and Allocation of Resources

Mr. Romig's presentation included a review of the FY 2008-09 CRP workplan and budget. The total FY 08-09 CRP contract amount is $349,164 and the CRP annual allocations were $174,582 for FY 2008 and $174,582 for FY 2009.

A CRP workplan summary was presented and included some the activities in each task. The following six tasks were discussed along with a brief review of the deliverables that will be completed in each task.

Task 1: Progress Reports, Cost Accounting Reports, Vouchers, TCEQ Fiscal Review

Task 2: Coordinated Monitoring Meeting, QAPP amendments, NELAC Status Report.

Task 3: Water Quality Monitoring - CRP quarterly monitoring includes 26 routine stations, 24-hour monitoring at 2 stations biannually and Bacteria and in-stream flow monitoring at 1 station 6 times per year.

Task 4: SWQM data files, web postings, coordinated monitoring schedule, TCEQ request forms.

Task 5: Data Analysis and Reporting - annual Basin Highlights Report

Task 6: Stakeholder Participation & Public Outreach - CRP steering committee meetings, Public outreach activities, volunteer monitoring activities, water quality presentations, and ANRA website postings and updates.

Mr. Romig briefly discussed the FY 2008-2009 CRP workplan and budget. The Neches River Basin is allocated $698,328 over the next two years. The funds are split evenly between ANRA and the LNVA (Lower Neches River Authority) in Beaumont.

III. Basin Highlights Report

The Draft 2008 Upper Neches Basin Highlights Report is an annual report which reviews the CRP activities in the basin, provides a status of the water quality in the basin, and includes an

update on water quality projects in the basin. A link to the report was e-mailed to the ANRA Steering Committee Members and posted to ANRA's website prior to the meeting, so it could be reviewed and any questions or comments could be discussed at the meeting. Several copies of the report were also made available at the meeting.

Mr. Romig talked about the different types of monitoring in the basin, and the parameters that are analyzed. Then he went on to talk about the water quality data review which takes up the majority of the report. The data review and water body rankings in the Draft report are based on the TCEQ's 2008 Water Quality Inventory and 303(d) List dated Dec. 21, 2007. Fish symbols are used to rank the water quality of each water body included in the 2008 assessment. If a water body received four fish, it was considered Exceptional, three fish is considered Good, two fish is Fair, and one fish is considered Poor.

IV. Basin-wide Water Quality Monitoring Assessment and Coordination

Mr. Romig provided an overview of the TCEQ's 2008 Water Quality Inventory and 303(d) List. Mr. Romig mentioned that the 2008 Water Quality Inventory and 303(d) List contains 1 new listing for elevated bacteria levels in the Neches River above Lake Palestine, 2 de-listings for Neches River below Lake Palestine (bacteria criteria met) and Lake Sam Rayburn (listed in error for low D.O.). Parameters for other listings in the basin include bacteria, pH concerns, metals in water, and depressed dissolved oxygen. ANRA will be conducting additional metals in water sampling during FY08-09. All impaired waterbodies are Category 5C with a D ranking which means additional data and information will be collected before a TMDL is scheduled.

Mr. Romig presented information on the basin monitoring activities. They include ANRA's monitoring programs, the City of Tyler monitoring program, and the TCEQ regional offices monitoring program (Tyler & Beaumont). ANRA's current FY 08 monitoring schedule includes 26 routine monitoring stations, 2 monitoring stations looking at bacteria and stream flow, and 2 stations being monitored over a 24-hour period. Maps were shown depicting the locations of these monitoring stations. A graphic was presented showing the parameters being monitored by ANRA and the City of Tyler. Mr. Romig presented another map showing all the stations being monitored in the basin. Then he went on to explain the coordinated monitoring schedule which lists the sampling locations, responsible agency, type of monitoring and parameter categories. He briefly discussed the types of monitoring on the schedule

The FY08 Coordinated Monitoring Schedule is available to view on the web (with Maps) at: http://cms.lcra.org

Mr. Romig also reported on the Continuous Water Quality Monitoring Stations in the basin. This includes a station that is now up and running on Lake Palestine. The station planned for the Upper Angelina River Arm of Sam Rayburn Reservoir is scheduled for installation in the summer of 2008.

V. Basin Objectives, Priorities, and Other Water Quality Issues

Mr. Romig discussed the invasive aquatic plant called Giant Salvinia which has been found on lakes Palestine and Sam Rayburn. Adam Whisenant with the Texas Parks and Wildlife also gave an update on the situation and what is being done to control it. Mr. Romig then showed a video on Giant Salvinia produce by the Texas Agrilife Extension Service.

Mr. Romig discussed a proposed grant funded project that ANRA has applied for with the Texas Water Development Board. This project will be a follow up study to one previously done by ANRA in 2001 evaluating the water quality within the Mud Creek watershed. This project would test for all of the routine parameters under the Clean Rivers Program as well as many other parameters to provide a more comprehensive look at the water quality in the Mud Creek watershed and what will eventually become Lake Columbia.

Mr. Matthew McBroom discussed a grant project that the Stephen F. Austin State Univ. and the Piney Woods RC&D has applied for. This water quality project would focus on bacteria in the Attoyac Bayou watershed and how it relates to the land use within the watershed. The Attoyac Bayou is currently listed on the state's 303(d) list for elevated bacteria levels.

Mr. Romig explained the need for input and feedback from the steering committee to determine the objectives and priorities for the basin. Mr. Bryant pointed out that it is very important for the steering committee members and stakeholders to make recommendations and requests to the staff at ANRA and TCEQ.

Mr. Romig asked for recommendations for new basin objectives and priorities to be emailed to him at mromig@anra.org or to call him at 936-633-6435

A recommendation was made by Mr. Jeff Lauman that the ANRA and other river authorities in the state apply to the EPA for a grant to take water samples for pharmaceutical drugs – 10 most common, for a "base line" study or database.

Mr. Daniel with the City of Nacogdoches agreed that this type of monitoring would be beneficial with the growing concern about pharmaceuticals being found in surface water and drinking water.

Mr. Lauman also praised ANRA's Clean Rivers Program for operating on such a tight budget and accomplishing the amount of work that is done on a relatively small amount of funding.

Mr. Lauman also presented a Spill Prevention Plan produced by Hyperion Co. The plan identifies 2 boom/oil pickup access points on the Neches River north of Hwy. 79, and 2 access points south of Hwy. 79. He said that anyone who would like to see the plan and/or make copies may contact him at the Rail Road Commission.

Mr. Romig brought up a comment e-mailed to him by Mr. Adrian Van Dellen (who was not able to attend the meeting) about identifying the source host of E. Coli bacteria found in surface water. Mr. Patrick Roques with the TCEQ said that this is somewhat possible to do, but is very difficult and varies from one part of the state to another.

There was also some discussion about trying to narrow in on some of the source areas of the high bacteria levels. Mr. Romig suggested that some of the monitoring may be focused on trying to pinpoint some of the source tributaries of areas from which high bacteria levels are found. **It was for this reason, that the LaNana Creek site at the south loop 224 crossing in Nacogdoches was dropped from the FY2009 monitoring schedule and a LaNana Creek site at the north loop 224 crossing in Nacogdoches was added in its place. This will allow for the monitoring of E.Coli bacteria in the creek before it goes through the city.**

Mr. Daniel with the City of Nacogdoches suggested that Lake Nacogdoches may also benefit from a continuous water quality monitoring station since the lake is a source of drinking water for the City of Nacogdoches.

Mr. Romig and Mr. Bryant thanked everyone for attending the meeting and providing their valuable input.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.