



MEETING MINUTES

UPPER NECHES RIVER BASIN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 23, 2016 1:00 PM
ANGELINA & NECHES RIVER AUTHORITY CENTRAL OFFICE
210 E. LUFKIN AVENUE, LUFKIN, TX 75901

Attendees:

Brian Sims	Angelina & Neches River Authority (ANRA)
Trey Reeves	Angelina & Neches River Authority (ANRA)
Jeremiah Poling	Angelina & Neches River Authority (ANRA)
Chuck Whitehead	Angelina & Neches River Authority (ANRA)
Dyan Stanford	Angelina & Neches River Authority (ANRA)
Cheryl Scott	Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU)
Matthew McBroom	Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU)
Lauren Pulliam	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
Randi Belz	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
Tommy Wheeler	Nacogdoches County
Ken Awtrey	Pineywoods RC&D
Michael Lynn	Gehirn Foundation
Adrian T. Van Dellen	Sentinels
Lucas Gregory	Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI)
Anthony Castilaw	Castilaw Environmental Services (CES)
Jeff Lauman	Texas Railroad Commission (RRC – Kilgore)
Adam Whisenant	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD)
Anne Tindell	

I. Welcome & Introductions

Mr. Brian Sims welcomed everyone to the meeting and began with a brief overview of what will be discussed on the agenda today. He explained the operations of Angelina & Neches River Authority (ANRA) and its structure.

II. Overview of the Clean Rivers Program

Mr. Sims provided a brief history of the Clean Rivers Program (CRP), noting its funding sources and purpose. He highlighted that ANRA recently made changes in the number of sites being sampled through their CRP.

III. ANRA's Water Quality Monitoring Program

Mr. Sims navigated online to the Coordinated Monitoring schedule for the Neches River Basin. ANRA currently monitors 40 sites and the parameters currently being tested were discussed. Mr. Sims noted ANRA's website, www.anra.org, and explained what is highlighted with regards to its CRP. One thing that ANRA is leading on pertains to photography used with CRP. ANRA is known for its panoramic photographs at each sample site, which allow for 360-degree viewing of the conditions at sample time related to each site.

Mr. Adrian Van Dellan asked if the CRP interfaces with volunteers. Mr. Sims responded that ANRA works with a group of volunteers around Lake Palestine, but they are not considerably active. Mr. Van Dellan stated he was previously associated with a group near the Lower Neches Valley Authority (LNVA). Mr. Van Dellan asked what happens with the data generated by the volunteer groups. Mr. Sims explained that the data cannot be used for assessment purposes, but it can be reviewed and utilized as a tool in the CRP. An example of a group that works around Houston was provided.

Mr. Michael Lynn asked if ANRA utilizes predictive modeling, but Mr. Sims responded that ANRA currently does not. Ms. Randi Belz noted that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) currently does not either. Mr. Matthew McBroom responded that Stephen F. Austin (SFA) has utilized it within their research project. Mr. Lucas Gregory stated that his projects are reactive, not proactive in nature.

IV. Update on ANRA's NPS Grant – Installation of On-Site Sewage Facilities in the Attoyac Bayou Watershed

Mr. Sims discussed ANRA's current Clean Water Act (CWA) grant and its link to water quality issues. One tool that ANRA utilizes involves a database that was created to house the information related to on-site sewage facilities. Mr. Jeff Lauman questioned if gray water can be disconnected from septic systems. Mr. Chuck Whitehead explained that it can be disconnected if it does not lead to a nuisance. Mr. Sims clarified that the disconnection would probably not be allowed around Lake Sam Rayburn. Mr. Van Dellan asked how far around the Lake ANRA has responsibility, to which Mr. Sims stated includes the 2,000 foot buffer zone. Mr. Van Dellan questioned if LNVA covers anything like this around Dam B, but Mr. Sims was unsure of the answer.

Mr. Sims explained that in relation to the CWA grant, ANRA has funding to replace 23

failing septic systems, with 18 having been awarded so far. Mr. Van Dellen asked if permitting is allowed for other types of systems. Mr. Sims noted that for ANRA's project, only aerobic systems are available. Mr. Ken Awtrey stated that the new project under Pineywoods RC&D will utilize the cheapest and best system for each project. Mr. Sims noted that 80% of soils in San Augustine County will not be approved for conventional systems due to the clay in the soil. Permitting will be possible for any system that meets state regulations.

Photos were shown of systems that have been found to be failing or having issues. Mr. Tommy Wheeler noted that in one instance, he found three homes that were discharging straight into the Attoyac, near the headwaters. Mr. Sims stated that ANRA's current CWA project is set to be finished in August 2016.

Mr. Van Dellen questioned how an on-site sewage facility qualifies as non-point source pollution. Mr. Sims explained that a treatment plant qualifies as point source as they discharge directly into a waterbody, but on-site sewage facilities are considered non-point source as they discharge to the surface of the ground and enter the waterbody through runoff.

V. **Implementing the Attoyac Bayou Watershed Protection Plan**

Mr. Gregory explained that the Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) was submitted back in July 2014, and was accepted in January 2015. Three Clean Water Act / Nonpoint Source Program grant proposals that implement portions of the WPP were submitted, of which all three are to be funded in the future. The first deals with implementation, facilitation, and monitoring. SFA will continue the monitoring began by ANRA, which will be done monthly for 2 years. ANRA will perform the testing of the samples. A new element involved with this first project is that sampling will be done both pre-and post-replacement of the on-site sewage facilities. Mr. Awtrey asked about testing at systems where there is no discharge, but Mr. Gregory explained the testing will take place at areas such as the spray nozzle. Education and outreach will also be a part of this project, which Mr. Sims noted ANRA's interest in being involved.

The second project involves septic remediation/repairs. Pineywoods RC&D will be the lead on the application portion of the project, which will last two years. This project involves cost matching for homeowners to replace failing septic systems. Another portion of this project will include collaboration on database information.

The last project will be to development management plans with agricultural land users. This project hopes to involve 15 plans. Mr. Awtrey asked if nutrient management plans related to poultry will be included. Mr. Gregory responded that most poultry farmers already have a plan like this in place, but it is a possibility. Mr. Van Dellen questioned who enforces on the poultry farmers, to which Mr. Gregory explained enforcement for them falls under the State Soil and Water Conservation Board. Mr. Sims asked how

many producers are in the Attoyac partnership, but Mr. Gregory was unsure.

VI. Current Status of the Texas Integrated Report (IR) for Clean Water Act Sections 305(b) and 303(d)

Ms. Lauren Pulliam discussed the Integrated Report process. Mr. Lauman asked what years are covered in the last report. Ms. Pulliam explained the last report covered 2005 – 2012. Mr. Van Dellen asked if the listings are going up or down, but Ms. Pulliam noted that it depends on the parameters being discussed. Mr. Sims asked if this is where changes for recreational use attainability analysis would occur, to which Ms. Pulliam agreed was correct.

VII. Open Discussion for Steering Committee Member Recommendations and Concerns

Mr. Lauman questioned if remediation, such as soil removal, occurs with failing septic systems. Mr. Wheeler noted that there have been times where the area has been treated with lime. Mr. Sims stated that it is not necessary to remove soil as you have to do with other spills (gasoline, oil, etc.). Mr. Awtrey agreed that the natural bacteria does a good job.

Mr. Wheeler highlighted his use of Pictometry software, which provides useful data and can be exported for use by others. Mr. McBroom agreed that he can get 1 – 2 foot contours also. Mr. Sims discussed issues with data sharing. Mr. Van Dellen discussed issues related to Paper Mill Creek.

Mr. Van Dellen questioned what percent of septic systems are functional vs. failing. Mr. Sims estimated 50 % failure rate. Failure rates in poverty areas are higher.

Issues with low pH on Lake Striker were discussed between those in attendance. Historical data was also discussed.

The meeting was closed at 2:40 p.m.