



TEXAS STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

Monthly Program News and Activities

311 North 5th Street, Temple, Texas (254) 773-2250

<http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us>

December 2007

The TSSWCB produces this monthly update of the agency's activities as an informational service to local soil and water conservation district directors. I hope you find this information helpful, and if you have any questions please don't hesitate to call your local Field Representative or our State Headquarters.

REX ISOM, Executive Director

Budgeting and Accounting

- **December 31 was the deadline for FY07**
 - **Approved Financial Statements**
 - **Audits**
- **Effective January 1**
 - **Technical Assistance rates increase to 15 dollars per hour**
 - **Director Mileage rates increase to 50.5 cents per mile**

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STATE BOARD WORK SESSIONS AND MEETINGS

Scheduled Work Sessions and Meetings

The State Board has tentatively scheduled a Board Work Session for 2:30 p.m., **Wednesday, January 16, 2008**, in the Hearings Room at the agency's state headquarters in Temple. A formal State Board Meeting is tentatively scheduled for 8:00 a.m. on **Thursday, January 17, 2008**, at the same location. For more information on State Board Work Sessions and Meetings, visit the agency's website at <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/boardmeetings>.

Notice of Public Hearing

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) will conduct a public hearing January 16, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. in Temple at the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board State Office Hearing Room, 311 North 5th Street to receive comments from the public and from soil and water conservation districts on the State Brush Plan. The public hearing is being held under authority of §203.051 and §203.052 of the Agriculture Code of Texas.

The Brush Plan may be reviewed and downloaded from the TSSWCB website, URL address <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us>.

Any interested person may appear and offer comments, either orally or in writing; however, questioning of those making presentations will be reserved exclusively to the presiding officer as may be necessary to ensure a complete record. While any person with pertinent comments will be granted an opportunity to present them during the course of the hearing, the presiding officer reserves the right to restrict testimony in terms of time and repetitive content. Organizations, associations, or groups are encouraged to present their commonly held views and identical or similar comments through a representative member when possible. Comments on the proposed plan should include appropriate sections, subsections, page numbers, paragraphs, and etc. for proper reference. Any suggestions or requests for alternative language or other revisions to the proposed plan should be submitted in written form. Presentations must remain pertinent to the issues being discussed. A person may not assign a portion of his or her time to another speaker. Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this hearing and who may need auxiliary aids or services such as interpreters for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired, readers, large print or Braille, are requested to contact Dawn Heitman, Public Information / Human Resources Office, 311 North 5th Street, Temple, Texas 76501, (254) 773-2250 Ext. 227 at least two working days prior to the hearing so that appropriate services can be provided.

Written comments on the proposed plan may be submitted to Rex Isom, Executive Director, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, P.O. Box 658, Temple, Texas 76503.

Adopted Minutes

Minutes from the September 20, 2007, State Board Meeting were approved on November 29, 2007, and are available on the agency website at <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/boardmeetings/minutes/2000-2007#2007>. Minutes from the November 29, 2007, State Board Meeting will be considered

for approval at the meeting tentatively scheduled for January 17, 2008.

For more information on past and pending State Board Work Sessions and Meetings, please visit the agency's website at <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/boardmeetings>, or contact Vicki Davis at (254) 773-2250, ext. 253.

BUDGET AND ACCOUNTING

December 31st is the deadline for FY 2007:

- Financial Statements to be approved
- Audits

Technical Assistance:

Effective for expenses incurred after January 1, 2008, the new maximum reimbursable pay rate for Technical Assistance will be 15 dollars per hour.

Director Mileage and Per Diem:

The TSSWCB has increased the Fiscal Year 2008 Director Mileage and Per Diem allocation from \$325,000 to \$408,000. The allocation increase is for Fiscal Year 2008 only. **The maximum mileage reimbursement rate for District Director Mileage Claims for expenses incurred from September 1 to December 31, 2007, is 48.5 cents per mile. The maximum mileage reimbursement rate for expenses incurred from January 1 to August 31, 2008 is 50.5 cents per mile.** A District is not required to pay the maximum rate and may pay at a lesser rate.

Technical Service Provider:

The TSSWCB received an additional \$80,000 in NRCS 2007 Technical Service Provider funding. The additional funding is being allocated to districts for work beginning October 1, 2007. An allocation letter will be forthcoming in January.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Current Job Openings

- Natural Resource Specialist IV
Class No. 2684/B11
Starting Annual Salary: \$40,790
Required Travel: As Needed
Location: Dublin, Texas

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Program Overview

Special Projects is a department within the TSSWCB that provides coordination for the Annual State Meeting of Soil and Water Conservation Directors, facilitates open government functions required by the Texas Administrative Procedures Act, and directs the completion of other mandatory agency responsibilities such as compiling the agency's Semi-Annual Report and rule making.

Annual State Meeting of Soil and Water Conservation District Directors

The State Meeting for this year is scheduled for September 29-30 and October 1, 2008 in Galveston. Please mark this date and make plans to attend. Everyone's support is needed and welcomed.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Soil Stewardship Public Speaking Contest—

NACD Stewardship and Education Committee announced that "Water is Life" will be the theme of the 2008 Stewardship Week. According to NACD, the materials will be available for purchase in November. As a result, preparations are now underway for developing the 2008 Soil Stewardship Public Speaking Contest packet which will be sent to SWCDS and Ag Science teachers around January or February.

Wildlife Alliance for Youth—38 FFA teams with 100 students and 9 4-H teams with 35 students participated in the Region IV Wildlife Contest held on October 31. The high point individual in the FFA category was Tommy Marchetti of the Rusk FFA chapter. Hunter Westbrook of the Red River County 4-H team was the high point scorer in the 4-H category.

SWCD Director Training Conference— A training conference for district directors is scheduled for January 29-30, 2008 at the TSSWCB state headquarters in Temple. Correspondence announcing the workshop along with a registration form was sent to all districts the last week in November.

Informational Brochure for New Directors—

A letter introducing the new pamphlet for newly elected/appointed directors along with a request form was sent to all districts last fall. In addition, the new pamphlet will be included with appointment or election papers sent to districts with a new director(s).

Pocket Calendars—1,000 pocket planners for 2008 were purchased through the Association's Public Information/Education Program for distribution to SWCD directors at the state meeting. The remaining copies will be distributed at exhibits in upcoming trade shows.

SWCD Director Training Resource Project—

(Formerly referred to as the NASCA project) All agency training materials such as PowerPoint presentations, and other documents used as resources in District Director Training workshops are being consolidated into a specific TSSWCB website link. The purpose of organizing the material into a Training Resources link enables field staff to conduct director training on a localized basis and to provide SWCDs with easier access to materials of specific interest on an "as needed" basis following workshop training.

TSSWCB Conservation Video Library

About The Catalog

There are over 190 conservation-related videos available; the catalog can be downloaded from the TSSWCB website at <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/files/contentimages/videocat05-06.pdf>. No rental fees are assessed to those wishing to borrow the videos from the library. However, the borrower is responsible for paying the return postage. Borrowing privileges are for a length of two weeks and must be returned upon the date specified by the librarian. Videos can be ordered through your local soil and water conservation district or by contacting the Public Information/Education department of the TSSWCB.

How Shipping Works

The Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts' Public Information/Education Committee will pay the first transit postage costs to mail the video(s) to the requester. Postage for returning the video(s) will be the responsibility of the borrower. All videos must be insured upon return.

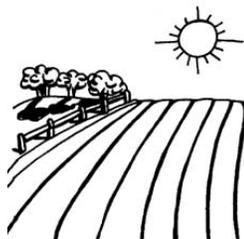
Ordering a Video

Select a video from the [TSSWCB Conservation Video Catalog](#), then contact Meredith McArthur at mmcarthur@tsswcb.state.tx.us to check it out.

WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRAM

Program Overview

The passage of Texas Senate Bill 503 (1993) directed the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board to implement water quality management plans (WQMPs) in Texas. A WQMP



is a site-specific plan developed through and approved by soil and water conservation districts for agricultural or silvicultural lands. The agency has been implementing WQMPs since the mid 1990s and has completed over 10,000 plans in the State of Texas.

Program News

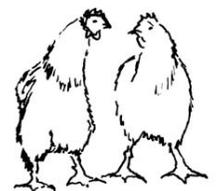
Between September 1, 2007 and April 30, 2008, districts in priority areas will be busy developing water quality management plans and obligating cost-share funds to these plans. Another priority will be to ensure that FY-06 funds are utilized prior to August 31, 2008 after which they will be cancelled. For more information on the Water Quality Management Program, please visit the agency's website at <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/wqmp>.

SB 503 Manual Update—Work is underway to update the Water Quality Management Program Nonpoint Source Pollution Agriculture/Silvicultural Reference Guide. Early in 2008 we will be printing a new publication and making it available to interested districts.

POULTRY WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

Overview

In 2001, the 77th Legislature amended the Texas Water Code to require all persons who own or operate a poultry facility to implement and maintain a Water Quality Management Plan that is certified by the State Soil and Water Conservation Board. For more information on Poultry WQMPs, please visit <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/poultry>.



Program News

The TSSWCB has filled four Poultry Program positions (Natural Resource Specialist IVs) appropriated to the TSSWCB during the 80th

Regular Texas Legislative Session in 2007. The positions are headquartered in Center, Centerville, Nacogdoches, and Gonzales. These positions will continue the TSSWCB's duty to assist poultry producers in meeting state water quality standards through the successful implementation of a Water Quality Management Plan certified by the TSSWCB under §201.026, Agriculture Code.

Program Activities

On December 7, 2007, the TSSWCB hosted a staff meeting in Nacogdoches with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the Texas Cooperative Extension, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service to review rules and requirements that apply to poultry producers defined as concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO). TSSWCB is also preparing to conduct six poultry producer meetings in January and February 2008 in cooperation with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and Texas Cooperative Extension. The purpose of the meetings is to familiarize poultry producers that meet the federal and state definition of a CAFO with water and air quality requirements that are in addition to their Water Quality Management Plan. The TSSWCB has prepared a new guidance document that should make these additional requirements as unobtrusive as possible. The meetings for producers will start at 6:00 pm on the following dates:

January 10	Mt. Pleasant Civic Center
January 17	Gonzales American Legion Hall
January 24	Center High School Cafeteria
February 7	Nacogdoches Knights of Columbus Hall
February 14	Caldwell Civic Center
February 28	Franklin Pidgeon Center

CLEAN WATER ACT, §319(h) GRANTS

Background

Congress enacted §319(h) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) in 1987, establishing a national program to control nonpoint sources (NPS) of water pollution. Through §319(h), federal funds are provided through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to states for the development and

implementation of each state's nonpoint source management program. The §319(h) funding in Texas is divided evenly between the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB). The following report provides an overview of TSSWCB's §319(h) program status and major ongoing activities.

FY2001 – FY2007 CWA §319(h) Grant Status

There are currently 87 ongoing §319(h) grant-funded projects addressing a wide array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Federal funds totaling \$25 million are primarily being used to address NPS pollution from animal feeding operations, prevent atrazine runoff, provide technical assistance, implement best management practices, support various NPS outreach/education programs, develop and implement Watershed Protection Plans (WPPs), and implement the nonpoint source portion of TMDL Implementation Plans.

FY2007 Nonpoint Source Annual Report

In order to receive §319(h) funds, the State of Texas must submit a report on the activities of the Texas NPS Program annually. TSSWCB staff and TCEQ staff are currently developing the content of the report. The report will highlight the State's efforts during 2007 to collect data, assess water quality, implement projects that reduce or prevent nonpoint source pollution, and educate and involve the public to improve and maintain the quality of water resources for current and future generations of Texans. This report must be submitted to EPA in January 2008 to ensure continued funding. For past editions of the annual report, please visit <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/reports> under the heading *Texas Nonpoint Source Management Program*.

FY2008 CWA §319(h) NPS Grant Request for Proposals

The FY2008 Request for Proposals was published in the Texas Register on December 7th, posted on the TSSWCB's website, and emailed to all soil and water conservation districts and cooperating entities on our contact list. The deadline for proposal submission is February 1, 2008.

TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS AND WATERSHED PLANNING

Total Maximum Daily Load Program Overview

The federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires Texas to identify lakes, rivers, streams and estuaries failing to meet or not expected to meet water quality standards and not supporting their designated uses (swimming, drinking, aquatic life, etc.). This list of impaired waterbodies is known as the *Texas 303(d) List* and must be submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for review and approval every two years. The State must then establish a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for certain waterbodies identified on the *303(d) List*. A TMDL defines the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can assimilate on a daily basis and still meet water quality standards. Based on the environmental target of the TMDL, an Implementation Plan (I-Plan) is then developed that prescribes the measures necessary to mitigate anthropogenic (human-caused) sources of that pollutant in that waterbody. Together, the TMDL and the I-Plan serve as the mechanism to reduce the pollutant, restore the full use of the waterbody and remove it from the *303(d) List*. Responsibility to develop and implement TMDLs is shared between the TSSWCB and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). More information on the TSSWCB TMDL Program is available at <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/tmdl>.

Watershed Protection Plan Program Overview

A Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) is a coordinated framework for voluntarily implementing prioritized and integrated water quality protection and restoration strategies driven by environmental objectives. Through the WPP process, TSSWCB encourages stakeholders to

holistically address all of the sources and causes of impairments and threats to both surface and ground water resources within a watershed. Developed and implemented through diverse, well integrated partnerships, a WPP assures the long-term health of a watershed with strategies for protecting unimpaired waters and restoring impaired waters. WPPs have a variety of ingredients and can take many forms. TSSWCB-sponsored WPPs are consistent with guidelines promulgated by EPA that describe nine elements fundamental to a potentially successful plan. More information on the TSSWCB WPP Program is available at <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/wpp>.

MOA Coordination with TCEQ

On September 27, 2006, at a joint TSSWCB/TCEQ meeting, a new *Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on TMDLs, I-Plans, and WPPs* was approved by the Board and Commission. This framework for collaboration between the two agencies describes the programmatic mechanisms employed to develop and implement TMDLs and WPPs. TSSWCB staff continue to work with TCEQ staff to implement components of the *MOA*.

Bacteria TMDL Task Force

On June 29, 2007, at a joint TSSWCB/TCEQ meeting in Austin, the Board and Commission approved the recommendations from the joint Bacteria TMDL Task Force. The Board directed TSSWCB staff to work with the staff of the TCEQ to 1) incorporate the principles of the recommendations into an updated joint-agency TMDL guidance document, 2) move diligently to expedite the development of bacteria TMDLs that were paused during the work of the Task Force, and 3) establish a multi-agency bacteria work group to continue examining the scientific research and development needs identified in the Task Force Report. TSSWCB staff are currently working with TCEQ staff to implement these directives.

State Appropriations for TMDL Program Grants

On May 24, 2007, the Board approved a *TSSWCB Policy on TMDLs* which provides guidance to staff on directing state appropriations for the TMDL Program. On July 19, 2007, the Board approved an operating budget for FY2008 that allocated \$1,200,494 to TMDL Program

grants. Staff have obligated \$758,024 through three contracts and are working with cooperating entities to develop workplans and budgets to obligate the remaining \$442,470.

Texas Water Quality Inventory and 303(d) List

On December 21, 2007, the TCEQ published for public comment the draft *2008 Texas Water Quality Inventory and 303(d) List*. This report describes the status of the state's waters, as required by the federal CWA. It summarizes the status of the state's surface waters, including concerns for public health, fitness for use by aquatic species and other wildlife, and specific pollutants and their possible sources. The *List* identifies those waterbodies not attaining water quality standards as impaired. The public comment period has been extended to January 31, 2008. Comments on proposed listings and changes in use attainment must be based on an analysis performed consistent with the TCEQ's *2008 Guidance for Assessing and Reporting Surface Water Quality in Texas* and must include summary information demonstrating that the current or proposed listing status is inaccurate, i.e., the water body is now attaining or not attaining the designated use. All data used for the assessment was collected using TCEQ-approved quality assurance and quality control mechanisms to ensure the data are of known and appropriate quality. Any data or other information provided through public comment to refute or substantiate current assessments must have been collected using TCEQ-approved methods and be consistent with TCEQ quality-assurance requirements. All comments must be received in writing by 5:00 p.m., January 31, 2008. The TCEQ intends to submit the *2008 Inventory and List* to the EPA in April. More information is available at <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/compliance/monitoring/water/quality/data/08twqi/twqi08.html>.

Galveston Bay Estuary Program

On December 13, Brian Koch attended the Galveston Bay Estuary Program Water and Sediment Quality Subcommittee meeting in Houston. Galveston Bay is an estuary of national importance and, through the federal CWA §320, is included in the National Estuary Program administered by the EPA. Updates on current subcommittee projects covered WPPs for Dickinson and Bastrop Bayous, a video on construction site operation for area municipalities, Trash Bash, and implementation

for failing septic systems in Houston's Westfield Estates. The National Estuary Program Strategic Action Plan performance measures were discussed. New projects were discussed including a WPP in the West Galveston Bay Watershed, funding for the Clean Marinas Program, identifying and implementing nonpoint source (NPS) best management practices (BMPs), and running an effective, targeted Outreach and Education Campaign. More information is available at <http://www.gbep.state.tx.us/>. The Galveston Bay Plan, a comprehensive conservation and management plan, impacts agricultural and silvicultural operations in watersheds that drain to Galveston Bay in Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, Harris and Liberty counties.

Wharton Regional Watershed Coordination Steering Committee

On December 6, Brian Koch, Kendria Ray, Loren Henley and Aaron Wendt hosted the TSSWCB Wharton Regional Watershed Coordination Steering Committee (WCSC) meeting in Columbus. The Houston-Galveston Area Council presented an overview of their Contact Recreation Use Attainability Analysis (UAA) for the Houston area. The majority of the waterbodies in the Houston area are impaired for bacteria. A UAA is a structured scientific assessment of the factors affecting the (non)attainment of the designated use which may include physical, chemical, biological and economic factors. This UAA study was conducted to determine if bacteria standards are appropriate for Houston area bayous, determine the possibility of adopting secondary recreation standards for some bayous, and develop template protocols for bacteria UAAs statewide. A pilot study using the UAA protocols was conducted on Mill Creek in Austin County, which is considered a least-impacted stream. Factors determined to be important for contact recreation UAAs include base flow conditions, depth of stream, water quality data collection, accessibility of stream, and determining actual use of stream. The study concluded that bacteria water quality data collection protocols currently in place appear to be appropriate, UAA protocols developed are appropriate but that it is difficult to interview sufficient numbers of people at sampling sites and it is difficult for a least impacted stream to meet current bacteria standards. The study recommends the development of contact recreation UAAs throughout the Buffalo and White Oak Bayous watersheds. Brian Koch led a discussion on selecting the next candidate watershed for WPP development in the WCSC focus area. The set of criteria used to evaluate

potential watersheds include 1) impairment, 2) planning status, 3) land use, 4) BMP implementation status, 5) size of watershed, 6) agricultural NPS potential, 7) potential for land use change, 8) WCSC member priority, 9) within the coastal zone, and 10) anticipated local stakeholder buy-in. This is the same set of criteria and process used by the WCSC to select Plum Creek as a good candidate for WPP development in December 2005. The top five watersheds identified in this round were Geronimo Creek, Mustang Creek, Double Bayou, Chocolate Bayou and Skull Creek. Discussion focused on Mustang Creek and Chocolate Bayou, with emphasis on which had the best chance for developing a successful plan, the potential for future urbanization, current agricultural land use, and BMP implementation potential. The WCSC members selected Mustang Creek as the next candidate watershed. TSSWCB will work with the Lavaca-Navidad River Authority and Texas Cooperative Extension to develop a scope of work and budget to facilitate the development of a WPP in this watershed. More information is available at <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/cwp>.

Copano Bay and Mission and Aransas Rivers

On December 3, Kendria Ray, Brian Koch, John Foster, TJ Helton, Mitch Conine and Aaron Wendt attended the Copano Bay and Mission and Aransas Rivers TMDL public meeting in Refugio. This was the first public meeting since June 2006 and served to update stakeholders on what the State has been doing to address stakeholder concerns expressed at that meeting. Major issues raised by stakeholders included 1) the need for more water quality data from the rivers, 2) the need for more data from WWTFs, 3) how the BST data was collected and used, and 4) how the data analysis and modeling was conducted. TSSWCB has initiated several projects funded with CWA §319(h) grants to address many of the concerns. TSSWCB has provided grants to 1) the Nueces River Authority to collect additional, targeted water quality data during high flows at stream sites across the watershed and from WWTFs, 2) Texas Cooperative Extension to develop and implement an education program for livestock producers about BMPs to improve water quality, and 3) the Texas Water Resources Institute to collect edge-of-field data on the effectiveness of BMPs, such as alternative water sources and prescribed grazing, on reducing bacteria runoff from grazing livestock. Texas A&M University-Corpus

Christi is continuing the BST work in the watershed by collecting additional samples from the river segments and increasing the robustness of the known source library by collecting additional fecal samples from feral hogs and horses. TCEQ is taking a fresh, new approach to data analysis and will be completing 1) Load Duration Curves for the river segments about tidal, 2) a mass balance model for the tidal portions of the rivers, and 3) a prism model analysis for loadings to the bay. More information is available at <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/42-copano.html>. This TMDL will impact livestock operations in the Copano Bay and Mission and Aransas Rivers watershed in Bee, Goliad, Refugio, Karnes, Aransas and San Patricio Counties.

Dickinson Bayou

On December 5, Brian Koch attended the Dickinson Bayou Watershed Partnership meeting in Dickinson. The focus of this meeting was to update stakeholders on progress in developing both the WPP and the TMDL for dissolved oxygen. The first order of business was to introduce the Co-Chairs for the Partnership, who were recommended by the advisory committee and voted on by the partnership. The decision making body of the Partnership has been re-named the Dickinson Bayou Watershed Advisory Committee. This Watershed Advisory Committee reports directly to the greater Dickinson Bayou Watershed Partnership and the individual work groups report to the Watershed Advisory Committee. The Chairs from each work group provided updates regarding work to develop their respective portions of the WPP. Most work groups have completed their tasks, except for the land use work group, which has a tough task in dealing with the rapid development occurring across the watershed. TCEQ provided an update on the dissolved oxygen TMDL. Computer modeling has been completed and the results show that any amount of pollutant load reduction will not bring the dissolved oxygen levels in the bayou into compliance with water quality standards, due to the nature of the bayou. TCEQ suggested that the only thing that could be done was to change, or reverse, current pollutant loading/runoff trends and/or change the designated use (i.e., the water quality standard) for the bayou. This WPP is proceeding in tandem with the on-going Dickinson Bayou bacteria and dissolved oxygen TMDLs. More information on this WPP is available at <http://www.dickinsonbayou.org/>. Both this WPP and the TMDL have the potential to impact farming and

ranching operations in the Dickinson Bayou watershed in Galveston and Brazoria Counties.

Elm and Sandies Creeks

On December 10, Kendria Ray, TJ Helton and Aaron Wendt met with SWCD 339 and TCEQ staff in Cuero to discuss the SWCD's concerns with how the TMDL project is proceeding. More information is available at <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/31-elmsandies.html>. This TMDL will impact livestock operations in the Elm and Sandies Creeks watershed in Gonzales, DeWitt, Karnes, Wilson and Guadalupe Counties.

Gilleland Creek

On December 14, Donna Long attended the Gilleland Creek TMDL I-Plan Education Work Group meeting in Austin. Discussion focused on development and implementation of a coordinated education program targeted to various audiences. More information is available at <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/69-gillelandcreekbacteria.html>. This TMDL will have limited impacts on livestock operations in the Gilleland Creek watershed in Travis County.

Hickory Creek

On December 14, Aaron Wendt attended the Hickory Creek Watershed Stakeholder Meeting in Denton. While portions of this watershed are rapidly urbanizing (24%), significant portions remain rangeland (37%) and cropland (31%). SWAT modeling indicates significant sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus loadings are coming from nonpoint sources on cropland and rangeland. Analysis of load reduction scenarios (BOD and phosphorus) has identified 282 priority sites throughout the watershed for BMP implementation. These sites have been ranked based on the potential change in land use and maximizing economic return on the cost of the BMPs versus water quality benefit. Most of these sites are currently range or crop land. These 282 priority sites account for about 25,000 acres of the nearly 125,000 acre watershed. A detailed implementation plan still needs to be developed that addresses needed work on about 22 sites/year through 2020. The WPP will lay out a suite of options and scenarios but will not "select" which one to implement. The group discussed potential funding mechanisms including grants and water fees.

The City of Denton intends to release the full, draft WPP in February for review and comment. More information is available at

<http://www.cityofdenton.com/pages/mygovenvironmentalwater319grant.cfm>. This WPP has the potential to impact farming and livestock operations in the Hickory Creek watershed in Denton County.

Leon River

On December 10, Mitch Conine attended two Leon River WPP Focus Group meetings in Comanche. The Dairy and Agriculture Focus Groups were brought together to help direct how the Brazos River Authority and Parsons should proceed with facilitating the development of the WPP. Discussion centered on distinguishing the difference between the TMDL and the WPP, establishing historical land uses and current farming and ranching activities, identifying areas of concern, and stressing the importance of stakeholder involvement. More information on the WPP project is available at <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/managementprogram/leonwpp>.

On December 12, Don Brandenberger, Charlie Upchurch, Steve Jones, Pamela Casebolt, Mitch Conine and Aaron Wendt attended the Leon River TMDL public stakeholder meeting in Hamilton. Discussion centered on limiting the TMDL to one endpoint for the main river segment and not setting separate endpoints for the other five impaired tributaries. When the TMDL for the main river segment is achieved, it is presumed that the tributaries will also be in compliance with water quality standards. This justifies not setting separate endpoints for each tributary. A TCEQ CAFO permitting representative was present to answer questions regarding general permits vs. individual permits for dairies. Stakeholders had expressed concern regarding the impact of the TMDL on dairy CAFOs and if an individual permit would be required as a result of the TMDL. He stated that a general permit, which is more flexible, would cover the dairies and if any additional management measures were needed to support compliance with the TMDL, then a change in their general permit would be all that is needed. TCEQ expects to publish the TMDL for public comment in May. More information on the TMDL project is available at http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/34-leon_group.html.

This TMDL is proceeding in tandem with the TSSWCB-sponsored WPP for the Leon River. Both this TMDL and WPP will impact livestock operations in the Leon River watershed in Comanche, Coryell, Mills, Erath and Hamilton Counties.

Pecos River

On December 3, Mitch Conine and Aaron Wendt participated in a Pecos River WPP teleconference with project collaborators. Discussion centered on the release of the first draft of the WPP and the first comment period which closed December 17. The draft WPP will be modified to address comments received. A second draft of the WPP will be released in January and five public comment meetings are scheduled in February. More information, including the draft WPP, is available at <http://pecosbasin.tamu.edu/>. This WPP will impact agricultural operations in the Pecos River watershed in Andrews, Brewster, Crane, Crockett, Culberson, Ector, Jeff Davis, Loving, Pecos, Presidio, Reagan, Reeves, Terrell, Upton, Val Verde, Ward and Winkler Counties.

Plum Creek

On December 4, Brian Koch, Pamela Casebolt and Loren Henley attended the Texas Watershed Stewards Program (TWSP) training in Kyle. Funded through CWA §319(h) grants from TSSWCB, the TWSP was developed by Texas Cooperative Extension as a community-based water resource educational training to empower individuals to take leadership roles in community water issues, such as WPP and TMDL initiatives. This training focused on enhancing stakeholder involvement in the Plum Creek WPP process. Discussion focused on what it means to be a watershed steward, water quality impairments, managing urban and rural lands through the use of best management practices, and how to get involved in community-driven watershed protection and management. Interactive demonstration such as a NPS watershed model, a rainfall simulator and a rainwater harvester were utilized during the training. More information on the TWSP is available at <http://twsp.tamu.edu/>.

On December 10, Kendria Ray, Brian Koch, TJ Helton and Aaron Wendt attended the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership Steering Committee meeting in Lockhart. The steering committee reviewed the various work

groups' recommended suite of BMPs to reduce bacteria and nutrients. Recommended urban stormwater management measures include pet waste collection stations, retrofitting stormwater detention basins for water quality benefits, initiating street sweeping programs, and completing comprehensive assessments of the storm drain systems. Recommended wastewater management measures include upgrading WWTFs for better phosphorus removal, replacement of old sanitary sewer lines, and increased septic system inspection, repair, and replacement. Agricultural NPS management measures focus on providing technical and financial assistance to producers to develop and implement WQMPs on livestock and crop operations. The WPP also includes management measures for feral hog control and a comprehensive outreach/education campaign targeted various audiences. The group also discussed expected pollutant load reductions that will be achieved by implementing the proposed suite of BMPs. The draft WPP has been released for public comment and is expected to be finalized in February. More information, including the draft WPP, is available at <http://pcwp.tamu.edu/>. This WPP will impact livestock and farming operations in the Plum Creek watershed in Caldwell and Hays Counties.

Upcoming Public Meetings

- January 7 – Plum Creek WPP Public Comment Meeting (Luling)
- January 8 – *Expressing Daily Loads in TMDLs* (EPA Webcast)
- January 10 – Plum Creek WPP Public Comment Meeting (Kyle)
- January 10 – Leon River WPP Monitoring Work Group (Temple)
- January 11 – Gilleland Creek TMDL I-Plan Natural Resources Work Group (Austin)
- January 11 – Plum Creek WPP Public Comment Meeting (Lockhart)
- January 15 – Arroyo Colorado Watershed Outreach and Education Work Group (Weslaco)
- January 24 – Texas Watershed Stewards Program (Wellington)
- January 24 – Cedar Creek Watershed Stakeholder Meeting (Kaufman)
- January 24 – Arroyo Colorado Watershed Agricultural Issues Work Group (Weslaco)
- January 24 – Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership Steering Committee (Weslaco)

January 24 – Arroyo Colorado Watershed Habitat Work Group (Weslaco)
 January 31 – Plum Creek Watershed Steering Committee (Lockhart)
 February 19 – Pecos River WPP Public Comment Meeting (Pecos)
 February 19 – Pecos River WPP Public Comment Meeting (Imperial)
 February 20 – Pecos River WPP Public Comment Meeting (Iraan)
 February 20 – Pecos River WPP Public Comment Meeting (Ozona)
 February 20 – Lake Granbury WPP Stakeholder Meeting (Granbury)
 February 21 – Pecos River WPP Public Comment Meeting (Del Rio)
 February 21 – Galveston Bay Estuary Program Water and Sediment Quality Subcommittee (Houston)

COASTAL NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION CONTROL

Program Overview

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) is a member of Texas' Coastal Coordination Council, which administers the Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program. The TSSWCB manages the agricultural and silvicultural portions of this program. The Texas Coastal Management Program was approved by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on January 10, 1997. The Texas Coastal Management Program is administered by the Texas Coastal Coordination Council and staff of the Texas General Land Office. Section 6217 of the Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments requires each state with an approved Coastal Management Program to develop a federally approvable program to control coastal nonpoint source (NPS) pollution. The program must be submitted within 30 months of Coastal Management Program approval. As a



result, the Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program was submitted in December 1998 by the Coastal Coordination Council. The Coastal Management Program recognizes the TSSWCB and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) as holding primary responsibility over the development and implementation of the NPS program. More information is available at <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/coastalnps>.

Program Activities

The CCC met in Austin, Thursday, December 13 at 1:30 p.m.

CIAP Program

The State of Texas will receive \$48,591,202.09 for fiscal year 2007 and for fiscal year 2008. Of that amount, \$31,584,281.36 will be allocated to the state and \$17,006,920.73 will be allocated directly to the 18 coastal counties.

Before any funds can be disbursed to the state or the counties, a state CIAP plan must be approved by MMS. This plan will include the recommended projects that have been submitted for funding. The CIAP staff has prepared a draft plan which was presented to the Coastal Land Advisory Board (CLAB). The CLAB met on November 6 to review the draft plan for FY 07 funding. The draft plan was approved as presented. The CLAB-approved draft plan will be submitted to the Office of Governor for final approval before being posted in the Texas Register for 30 days. After public comments are reviewed, the state plan will be presented at a second CLAB meeting. Upon approval by the CLAB and the Office of the Governor, the plan will be submitted to MMS, who has 90 days to review and approve/disapprove the plan. After the state plan is approved by MMS, grant applications for each selected project will be submitted to MMS for funding approval.

A total of \$145.5 million in proposals was considered, but only \$31.6 million in funding was available. Kleburg County, in partnership with Kleburg-Kenedy SWCD had a \$200,000, "Water Quality Management Plan." However, it was not

recommended for funding. The list of projects considered can be found at:

<http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/ciap/2005/pdf/ScoreSheet9.27color.pdf>

The 2008 CIAP program will begin in the near future.

Additional information on the CIAP program can be found at:

<http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/ciap/ciap2005.html>

WATER ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM REPORT

WATER ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM STATUS REPORT

BACKGROUND:

The 80th Legislature continued funding for the Water Enhancement Program by providing \$1,848,927.00 in General Revenue Funds in FY08. These funds were directed to be used for continuation of brush control projects designated by the Soil and Water Conservation Board.

- Staff has been providing information on water yield to Dr. Rainwater and Dr. Fish for primarily the Twin Buttes, Pedernales, and Canadian River Watersheds.
- Provided the following SWCD with Brush Program Updates or Brush Program Assistance

Area 1 Districts

Dawson County SWCD
Upper Colorado SWCD

Area 2 Districts

North Concho River SWCD
Nolan County SWCD
Middle Concho SWCD
Eldorado-Divide SWCD
Tom Green County SWCD
Pedernales SWCD
Mitchell County SWCD
Gillispie County SWCD
Runnels SWCD

Pecos County SWCD
Middle Clear Fork SWCD
Midland SWCD
Trans Pecos SWCD
Sandhills SWCD
Howard County SWCD

Area 3

McMullen County SWCD
Caldwell/ Travis SWCD
Waters Davis SWCD

Area 5

Archer County SWCD
Lower Clear Fork/Brazos SWCD

- Evaluate pending application sub basin criteria from all projects
- Legislative update for Senator Duncan, Rep. Drew Darby, and Rep. Nathan Macias, and Senator Watson
- Assist TCEQ with Brush rider concerning water yield in State Brush Projects
- Met with CRMWA to discuss update on Canadian River Project and attend public meeting concerning the Environmental Impact study being conducted

The TSSWCB staff and other professionals have been discussing current water enhancement project throughout the State identifying the highest yielding areas of each project. The TSSWCB allocated money at the November 2007 meeting to the Twin Buttes and Pedernales Projects and began implementing Dr. Fish and Dr. Rainwater's selection and criteria report submitted to the TSSWCB at the November 2007 meeting. The TSSWCB staff and other professionals are currently studying the remaining projects. Money for other projects will be allocated at a later date by the TSSWCB contingent on receiving acceptable water yield data and project information based on Dr. Fish and Dr. Rainwater's report.

FLOOD CONTROL DAMS

Program News

A possible source of funding for pre-disaster mitigation planning and implementation may be available for sponsors. The Governor's Division of Emergency Management (GDEM) has funding available for this type of work. Included in eligible funding is relocation of structures, acquisition of real property for conversion to open space, and repair of public structures (bridges or dams) to meet applicable "building codes" (dam safety rules?). The funding is available through a grant process which can be found at:

<http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/pages/index.htm>

Look under "Grants" and "Hazard Mitigation."

Obviously, the most likely projects to qualify for funding would be high hazard dams with critical repair or upgrade needs. This may help local sponsors address some of these needs, including the local sponsor's 35% share of rehabilitation costs.

TEXAS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Section 26.403 of the Texas Water Code established the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC), and mandated that the Executive Director (or a designee) of the TSSWCB be a permanent member. The TGPC bridges the gap between state groundwater programs, improves coordination between member agencies and works to protect groundwater as a vital resource.

The Texas Groundwater Protection Committee:

- Improves coordination between State and Federal agencies to protect groundwater.
- Reports on its activities and recommends new protection programs to the Legislature.
- Publishes numerous reports.
- Advises the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality on the development of agricultural chemical plans for groundwater.
- Develops, implements and updates a

comprehensive *State Groundwater Protection Strategy* and an annual *Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report*.

The TGPC will meet next on January 16, 2008, at the offices of the TCEQ. This meeting is a work session for the Committee members and their staff to discuss the revision of the *Texas Groundwater Protection Strategy*. Meeting information is available on the TGPC website at:

<http://www.tgpc.state.tx.us/meetings/Meetings.htm>.

Monthly Program News and Activities is produced by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) for use by Texas soil and water conservation district directors. If you have any questions regarding its contents, or have information you would like to see in a future issue, please contact Loren Henley (254) 773-2250 or lhenley@tsswcb.state.tx.us.

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) is a state agency that administers Texas' soil and water conservation law and coordinates conservation and pollution abatement programs throughout the State. Headquartered in Temple, Texas, the TSSWCB offers technical assistance to the state's 217 soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs). The TSSWCB is the lead state agency for the planning, management, and abatement of agricultural and silvicultural (forestry) nonpoint source pollution, and administers the Texas Brush Control Program. The TSSWCB maintains regional offices in strategic locations in the State to help carry out the agency's responsibilities.



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