



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>

March 2008

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

- **April 5th is the new deadline for submission of the 2010-2011 SWCD Biennial Budget Request.**

CONTENTS

State Board Work Sessions and Meetings	Page 01
Budget and Accounting	Page 02
Human Resources	Page 02
Special Projects	Page 02
Public Information and Education	Page 02
Water Quality Management Plan Program	Page 04
Poultry Water Quality Management Plans	Page 04
Clean Water Act, §319(h) Grants	Page 04
Total Maximum Daily Loads and Watershed Planning	Page 05
Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control	Page 12
Water Enhancement Program	Page 13
Flood Control Dams	Page 14
Texas Groundwater Protection Committee Activities	Page 14

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, May 14, 2008**. A formal State Board Meeting is tentatively scheduled for 8:00 a.m. on **Thursday, May 15, 2008**, a location for our work session and board meeting have yet to be determined. For more information on State Board Work Sessions and Meetings, visit the agency's website at <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/boardmeetings>.

Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the March 20, 2008, State Board Meeting will be considered for approval at the meeting tentatively scheduled for May 15, 2008. To view any past Board Meeting minutes visit the agency's website at <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/boardmeetings/minutes>

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

2010 – 2011 SWCD Biennial Budget Request:

On January 28th, the TSSWCB mailed instructions for completing and submitting the 2010 – 2011 SWCD Biennial Budget Request. This year the request will be completed electronically and the mailed instructions included a USERID and PASSWORD for each district to use in completing the form. The Budget Request Form and all instructions can be found through the following web address: <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/swcds/request> The deadline for submission is April 5th.

HUMAN RESOURCES

There are currently no job openings.

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.

Press Releases

Gilleland Creek Water Quality Workshop a Success

Nearly 90 citizens attended a Texas Watershed Steward workshop on March 25 in Pflugerville to learn about local water quality issues, sources of water pollution, and ways to get involved in local watershed management efforts. One participant said, "The workshop was extremely effective and inspirational, and I made many excellent contacts in the community." [Read more...](#)

Meetings Held for Large Poultry Operations

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) coordinated six meetings for poultry farm operators in January and February in areas most heavily populated by poultry to ensure that poultry operators are aware of requirements they must meet to comply with federal and state animal feeding operation laws and rules. [Read more...](#)

Texas Watershed Steward Training Slated for Brady

Organizers of the Texas Watershed Stewards Program (TWSP) encourage anyone interested in protecting and restoring the health of local creeks and streams to attend a free workshop April 2 from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. in the Pilot's Lounge at Curtis Field in Brady. Curtis Field is located at 3821 U.S. Highway 377 North. [Read more...](#)

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

The 2008 Soil Stewardship Public Speaking FFA area contests will be held during May. Scheduled Area contests are as follows:

Area I	May 16--Amarillo
Area II	May 16-17--Odessa
Area III	May 8--Brenham
Area IV	Unknown
Area V	May 17--Frisco
Area VI	May 17--Gilmer
Area VII	May 13-- San Marcos
Area VIII	May 16-- Waco
Area IX	Unknown

Area X May 15—Kingsville

The theme for this year's contest is "Water is Life" which correlates with the annual NACD Soil Stewardship program.

SWCD Director Training Conference— A training conference for district directors and interested district employees is scheduled for July 29-30, 2008 at the TSSWCB's state headquarters in Temple. The first promotional flyer was sent to all districts on March 24.

Water Quality Management Plan Program Guidance Manual

Work continues to complete and update the Water Quality Management Plan Program Guidance Manual. On March 27, 2008 a second draft was received and is now under review.

SWCD Director Training Resource Project— A specific link is being developed for the TSSWCB website to permit SWCDs to access district related training resource materials. The target date to have all the training resources posted on the agency website is May 8.

All materials used in current district director training workshops have been formatted into a uniform look. The purpose of organizing this material into a Training Resources link will enable field staff to conduct director training on a localized basis as well as provide SWCDs to more easily access materials of specific interest on a as need basis following workshop training.

Priority Education Funding Program

Thirty-five SWCDs have asked for and received approval for funding priority education programs under the Priority Education Funding program. Districts, during this fiscal year have until August 1 to make application for funding. The program is offered to districts through the Association of Texas

SWCDs public information/education program.

Regional Wildlife Contests— Regional wildlife contests will be held in April with the state contest slated to be held in May. Contest dates and locations are:

- **Region I-----April 8-----Matador Wildlife Center**
- **Region II-----April 15---San Angelo**
- **Region III----April 15---Welder Wildlife Refuge**
- **Region IV-----Held last fall**
- **Region V-----April 15---Flat Top Ranch near Walnut Springs**
- **State Contest-----May 13---San Angelo State Park**

Wharton Regional Office— National Ag Week Event in Colorado County was held on March 11, 2008 in Columbus; Brian Koch presented information about the role of the TSSWCB and the importance of soil and water conservation to 175 fourth grade students from Colorado County. This program was part of National Ag Week activities for the Colorado SWCD #333 and their Ag Partners group.

Central Texas Association of SWCDs— The association will hold its spring meeting on April 10 in Stephenville. The theme of their meeting is "Going Green in Texas, what this means to Farmers, Ranchers and Landowners." Travis Brown from the Office of Rural Community Affairs will present a program on Renewable Energy in Texas. Brown is associated with the State Energy Conservation Office which has overview on all the Renewable Energy programs in Texas. Brown will talk about what products are in the future for use in ethanol plants, what plants are best, what are not usable, where future plants may be located, distribution problems, and incorporation into service stations.

Brown will also talk about methane generation, solar power and wind generation and how these alternative energy sources will impact agriculture.

A business session will follow the presentation.

TSSWCB Conservation Video Library

About The Catalog

There are over 200 conservation-related videos available; the 2008 catalog can be downloaded from the TSSWCB website at

http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/files/contentimages/2008_Video_Library_Catalogue.pdf . The 2008

Catalog includes 18 new titles in DVD format. 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.

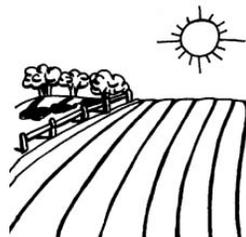
Ordering a Video

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

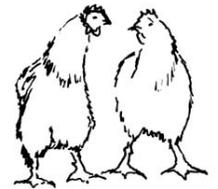
Between September 1, 2007 and April 30, 2008, districts in priority areas will be busy developing water quality management plans and obligating cost-share funds to these plans. Another priority will be to ensure that FY-06 funds are utilized prior to August 31, 2008 after which they will be cancelled.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

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

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 Activities

The TSSWCB staff will soon begin conducting inspections of poultry CAFO facilities to ensure they are meeting all the necessary requirements. In addition, existing WQMPs are being reviewed and updated and plans are being developed for newly constructed farms. **Contact the poultry office at (936) 462-7020 if you have questions about the poultry program.**

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 82 ongoing §319(h) grant-funded projects addressing a wide array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Federal funds totaling \$16 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. The report highlights 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. The 2007 Annual Report has been completed and submitted to EPA. The 2007 Annual Report is currently being printed for distribution and is available electronically at

<http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/managementprogram> under the heading Program Reports.

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*.

Specifically, on March 26, John Foster, TJ Helton, Donna Long, Lee Munz, Brian Koch, Pamela Casebolt, Loren Henley, Mitch Conine, and Aaron Wendt hosted a quarterly MOA coordination meeting with staff from TCEQ and EPA in Temple. Discussion centered on programmatic questions related to review of WPPs, long-term sustainability of WPPs, interaction of WPPs with TMDLs and the appropriate role state and federal agencies should play in facilitating local stakeholder groups. Additionally, agencies exchanged information and provided updates on various on-going TMDL and WPP projects. Staff discussed fiscal resource allocation for planned and proposed projects for FY2009.

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 continue to work with TCEQ staff to implement these directives.

Specifically, staff have completed a full draft of the revised TMDL guidance document, which incorporates the bacteria recommendations, and are reviewing the document for consistency between chapters. On March 27, TJ Helton, Donna Long and Aaron Wendt met with TCEQ staff in Austin to work through unresolved issues related to the chapter of the TMDL guidance document focused on bacteria TMDLs. Also, TSSWCB staff have provided peer review comments on drafts of the Clear Creek bacteria TMDL and the Dickinson Bayou dissolved oxygen TMDL. Staff are currently reviewing and developing peer review comments on the Upper Coast Oyster Waters and Buffalo and Whiteoak Bayous bacteria TMDLs.

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 \$886,728 through five contracts and are working with cooperating entities to develop workplans and budgets to obligate the remaining \$313,766.

Texas Water Quality Inventory and 303(d) List

On February 8, the EPA approved the *2006 Texas 303(d) List of Impaired Waters*. On March 19, the TCEQ approved the *2008 Texas Water Quality*

Inventory and 303(d) List for submission to EPA. These reports describe the status of the state's waters, as required by the federal CWA. They summarize 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. More information is available at http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/compliance/monitoring/water/quality/data/wqm/305_303.html.

Texas Clean Rivers Program

The Texas Clean Rivers Program (CRP) is a state fee-funded program for water quality monitoring, assessment, and public outreach administered by the TCEQ. CRP is a collaboration of 15 partner agencies who conduct water quality monitoring and assessments in the 23 river and coastal basins in Texas. Each river or coastal basin is assigned to one of the designated CRP partner agencies. Each CRP partner agency has an established steering committee to set monitoring and assessment priorities within its basin. These committees bring together the diverse interests in each basin and are designed to allow local concerns to be addressed through regional solutions. The Texas Water Code requires the TCEQ and CRP partner agencies to coordinate monitoring and assessment activities with local SWCDs through the TSSWCB. The data generated by CRP partner agencies is used to identify significant long-term water quality trends and characterize water quality conditions. Each CRP partner agency develops and publishes an annual *Basin Highlights Report* and a five-year *Basin Summary Report*. The TCEQ also uses CRP-generated data in the biennial assessment conducted for the *Texas Water Quality Inventory and 303(d) List*. More information is available at <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/nav/eq/texcleanriver.html>.

On March 4, Brian Koch attended the Houston-Galveston Area Council Clean Rivers Program Coordinated Monitoring meeting in (Houston).

Discussion focused on coordinating surface water quality monitoring activities for FY2009 among various entities collecting data in the San Jacinto River Basin, Brazos-Colorado Coastal Basin, San Jacinto-Brazos Coastal Basin, and Trinity-San Jacinto Coastal Basin. More information is available at <http://www.h-gac.com/community/water/rivers/default.aspx>.

On March 20, Brian Koch and Shari Johnson attended the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) Clean Rivers Program Steering Committee meeting in Seguin. An overview of CRP activities was provided by GBRA, Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA), and Wimberley Valley Watershed Association (WVWA). GBRA discussed a radiological site on Coletto Creek being examined to better understand groundwater and surface water interaction and the relation with uranium mining. UGRA focused on the bacteria TMDL for the Guadalupe River near Kerrville, which is currently in the implementation phase. WVWA discussed the Cypress Creek WPP; the group is currently delineating the subwatersheds to rank major NPS contributing areas and to use in the development of a SWAT model for the watershed. An update on the Plum Creek WPP was provided by AgriLife Extension. The Plum Creek stakeholders have approved and signed the WPP and submitted it for state and federal consistency review. Also, GBRA provided an update on the additional monitoring in Plum Creek, funded by TSSWCB to better understand pollutant sources in the watershed. GBRA is also working with student in schools in the watershed to do water quality monitoring. Staff from TCEQ provided updates on current TMDL projects in the basin including Peach Creek, Elm and Sandies Creeks, and Upper Guadalupe River. Shari Johnson provided an update on the TSSWCB Poultry WQMP activities in the basin, including background of the program and the purpose of WQMPs. Also, technicians from the Gonzales County and DeWitt County SWCDs provided an update on cooperative conservation efforts in Peach and Elm and Sandies Creeks watersheds. More information is available at <http://www.gbraz.org/>.

On March 25, the Red River Authority Clean Rivers Program Steering Committee meeting was held in Amarillo. Topics focused on the Canadian River Basin. More information is available at <http://www.rra.dst.tx.us/>.

On March 27, Mitch Conine and Brian Koch attended the Nueces River Authority Clean Rivers Program Steering Committee meeting in Corpus Christi. An overview of CRP activities including delistings, new listings and continued listings was discussed for the waterbodies in the Nueces River Basin. Reports were given on the active TMDLs in the area, including Oso Bay and Creek, Atascosa River, Copano Bay and Arroyo Colorado. Outreach activities, including the Headwaters Stewardship Project and the Nueces watershed model funded by TSSWCB, various Texas Stream Team (formerly Texas Watch) projects, such as trash pick-ups and volunteer water quality monitoring, and the Arroyo Colorado Watershed model were also presented to the group. Also, the draft Basin Summary Report for 2008 was provided for review. The Nueces River Authority held a Clean Rivers Program Steering Committee meeting in Uvalde on March 25 focused on the upper reaches of the basin. More information is available at <http://www.nueces-ra.org/>.

On March 27, Pamela Casebolt attended the Brazos River Authority Clean Rivers Program Steering Committee meeting in Waco. The main topics of discussion were water quality standards and permitting, impaired waterbodies, WPPs, monitoring recommendations, environmental law enforcement, and the TCEQ continuous water quality monitoring network. Highlights included a detailed description of the impairments in each of the Brazos River Basin watersheds, updates on the Lake Granbury, San Gabriel River, Leon River and Lampasas River WPPs, and coordinated monitoring locations for FY2009. More information is available at <http://www.brazos.org/>.

Galveston Bay Estuary Program

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. The Galveston Bay Council is the stakeholder advisory group that coordinates the implementation of the *Galveston Bay Plan*, which is a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan developed under the auspices of the National Estuary Program.

On March 13, Brian Koch attended the GBEP Water and Sediment Quality Subcommittee meeting in Houston. At this meeting there was a presentation on the Illicit Discharge Elimination Project that was conducted by the Harris County Watershed Protection Group. This project was done to assess illicit discharges and eliminate them in tributaries of Whiteoak Bayou, and then assess the water quality after the discharges were eliminated. After the discharges were eliminated, it was found that the bacteria contribution from these discharges was 22% of total bacteria loadings, and re-growth was probably the highest contributor. An overview of current projects being funded was provided and prioritization of funding for future projects took place. Also, Brian Koch was elected Vice Chair of the Subcommittee.

More information is available at <http://www.gbep.state.tx.us/>. The implementation of the *Galveston Bay Plan* affects 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 March 6, Brian Koch hosted the 12th Regional Watershed Coordination Steering Committee (WCSC) meeting in Columbus. At this meeting, an update on WCSC prioritized watersheds was given. Included in this update was Mustang Creek, which was selected for WPP development in December 2007. Through further discussion with the Lavaca-

Navidad River Authority, and AgriLife Extension, it was decided to gather more water quality data in the watershed before moving forward with stakeholder process. Plum Creek stakeholders have finalized and approved their WPP and authorized the submittal of the WPP for state and federal consistency review. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department presented results from their Use Attainability Analysis (UAA) for Dissolved Oxygen (DO) in Coastal Streams. The focus of this study was to get a better understanding of tidal streams, as many are not meeting water quality standards for DO. In southeast Texas, the study focused on Cow Bayou, which is currently not meeting the DO standard and is impacted by industrial and urban development. In comparison, Lost River was used as a reference stream because it is similar to Cow Bayou, but is in a more pristine state and not affected by development. Both were assessed for habitat and fish and invertebrate surveys. The results showed consistently higher DO in Lost River than Cow Bayou and more actual fish and invertebrate numbers in Lost River, but higher species diversity for Cow Bayou. Texas Water Resources Institute gave an overview of the project "Fate and Transport of E. coli in Rural Texas Landscapes and Streams". This project is funded by TSSWCB through a CWA §319(h) NPS Grant. The project begins to examine some of the research and development needs identified by the TCEQ/TSSWCB joint Task Force on Bacteria TMDLs; namely, seeking to better understand bacteria sources and transport mechanisms in rural watersheds. Cedar Creek, which drains to the Navasota River in Robertson and Brazos Counties, will be the study watershed. The project objectives include 1) monitoring, demonstration and stakeholder education, 2) identification, characterization, and quantification of E. coli loads through sanitary surveys, 3) collection of fecal samples from sources, 4) examination of survival, growth, re-growth, and die-off of E. coli under different environmental conditions, 5) examination of re-suspension where a natural stream disturbance will be replicated and water samples will be collected before and after disturbance to compare

bacteria. More information is available at <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/cwp>.

Texas Watershed Planning Short Course

Proper training of watershed coordinators and water resource professionals is needed to ensure that WPPs are adequately planned, coordinated and implemented and the results properly assessed and reported. To provide the needed training and promote sustainable proactive approaches to managing water quality throughout the state, this Short Course will provide participants with guidance on stakeholder coordination, education, and outreach; meeting the EPA's nine key elements of a WPP; data collection and analysis; and the tools available for plan development. The planning team, which includes TSSWCB staff, has finalized the course content and agenda and selected the most appropriate lecturers. The first course is scheduled for June 2008 in Bandera. More information is available at <http://watershedplanning.tamu.edu/>.

Concho River

The Upper Colorado River Authority (UCRA) has been working to finish a draft of the Concho River WPP that will be circulated to Stakeholder Advisory Committee members and SWCDs for comment. UCRA will be meeting with SWCDs in the watershed in March and April to discuss the draft WPP. More information is available at http://www.ucratx.org/CRiverRest_UCRA.html. This WPP has the potential to affect farming and livestock operations in the Concho River watershed in Coke, Concho, Crockett, Glasscock, Howard, Irion, Menard, Midland, Reagan, Runnels, Schleicher, Sterling, Tom Green, and Upton Counties.

Hickory Creek

The City of Denton released the full draft WPP on March 11 for comment by the stakeholder committee. Comments should be submitted by April 11. More information is available at <http://www.cityofdenton.com/pages/mygovenviron>

mentalwater319grant.cfm. This WPP has the potential to affect farming and livestock operations in the Hickory Creek watershed in Denton County.

Gilleland Creek

On February 29, Donna Long and Pamela Casebolt attended the Gilleland Creek TMDL Implementation Plan Education and Outreach Work Group meeting in Austin. The main topics of discussion were On-Site Sewage Facilities (OSSF) and the Texas Watershed Steward Program workshop. The Work Group found the need to either develop or refine existing OSSF educational materials, such as Tex*A*Syst, and target both government officials and homeowners. The group also discussed how they could connect existing OSSFs to areas that have or will have central sewage collection systems. Ideas were generated on how to conduct the 45-minute work session available at the conclusion of the March 25 Texas Watershed Steward Program workshop to generate a grassroots group formation. Project leaders will conduct a brief overview of the Gilleland Creek TMDL and I-Plan then break out into small discussion groups.

On March 25, nearly 90 citizens attended a Texas Watershed Steward workshop in Pflugerville to learn about local water quality issues, sources of water pollution, and ways to get involved in local watershed management efforts. The workshop was sponsored by TSSWCB, the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, and the Lower Colorado River Authority in support of ongoing watershed management efforts in the Gilleland Creek watershed. The Texas Watershed Steward Program was developed by AgriLife Extension through CWA §319(h) NPS grants from the TSSWCB. Workshop participants learned about watershed systems, water quality regulation and monitoring, methods to improve water quality, and community-driven watershed protection and management. The workshop also provided the basic knowledge and tools needed to form a watershed action group, participate in and organize local watershed activities, and become more involved in protecting

and enhancing community water resources. More information about the Texas Watershed Steward Program is available at <http://tw.s.tamu.edu>.

On March 28, Pamela Casebolt attended the Gilleland Creek TMDL Implementation Plan Education and Outreach Work Group meeting via conference call. The main topics of discussion were 1) success of the Texas Watershed Steward workshop, 2) outcomes of the small group break out session from the workshop, and 3) assessing progress on completing I-Plan management measures. Following the March 25 Texas Watershed Steward workshop, LCRA facilitated several small group discussions where stakeholders talked about their vision for Gilleland Creek and what they can do to make a difference. The small groups acknowledged that growth was inevitable and there is a need to preserve and restore riparian areas. Education and participation will be essential to getting Gilleland Creek off the 303(d) list and keeping it off. The Education and Outreach work group reviewed the management measures in the draft I-Plan and how this work group can contribute and support the other work groups.

More information is available at <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/69-gillelandcreekbacteria.html>. This TMDL will have limited affect on livestock operations in the Gilleland Creek watershed in Travis County.

Lake O' the Pines

At their April 2 meeting, the TCEQ intends to consider publishing and soliciting public comment on *An Implementation Plan for One TMDL for Dissolved Oxygen in Lake O' the Pines (Segment 0403)*. More information is available at <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/19-lakeopines.html>. This TMDL and Implementation Plan affects poultry, dairy and forestry operations in the Lake O' the Pines watershed in Upshur, Camp, Titus, Morris, Cass, Harrison and Marion Counties

Leon River

On March 19, TCEQ approved publishing and soliciting public comment on *One TMDL for Bacteria in the Leon River below Proctor Lake for Segment 1221*. The public comment period is April 4 through May 5. A public meeting to receive comments on the proposed TMDL is scheduled for April 17 in Hamilton. Comments not submitted at the public meeting must be provided in writing and must be received by the TCEQ no later than May 5. This TMDL is proceeding in tandem with the TSSWCB-sponsored WPP for the Leon River. More information on the TMDL project is available at <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/34-leonbacteria.html>. Both this TMDL and the WPP will affect livestock operations in the Leon River watershed in Comanche, Coryell, Mills, Erath and Hamilton Counties.

Lower San Antonio River

On March 3 and 5, Brian Koch and Aaron Wendt attended public meetings in Goliad and Karnes City on the Lower San Antonio River TMDL. This was the first series of meetings with stakeholders since work on this TMDL was resumed after the Bacteria TMDL Task Force concluded its work. An explanation of what a Load Duration Curve is was followed by a discussion of the bacteria load allocations for the River. Total required reductions from all potential sources range from 17.3-51.1% depending on flow condition and location along the 153 mile segment. A presentation on the Upper San Antonio River Watershed Protection Plan was given as an example of what stakeholders could do to voluntarily collaborate to reduce loadings. More information is available at <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/34-lowersanantoniobac.html>. This TMDL will likely affect livestock operations in the Lower San Antonio River watershed in Karnes, Goliad, Refugio, DeWitt, Wilson, Victoria, and Guadalupe Counties.

Peach Creek

At their April 2 meeting, the TCEQ intends to consider publishing and soliciting public comment on *One TMDL for Bacteria in Peach Creek (Segment 1803C)*. More information is available at http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/34-peachcreek_group.html. This TMDL will affect livestock operations in the Peach Creek watershed in Gonzales, Bastrop, Fayette and Caldwell Counties

Upper Oyster Creek

At their April 2 meeting, the TCEQ intends to consider publishing and soliciting public comment on *One TMDL for Dissolved Oxygen in Upper Oyster Creek (Segment 1245)*. More information is available at <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/25-oystercreek.html>. This TMDL will have no to limited affect on farming and livestock operations in the Upper Oyster Creek watershed in Fort Bend County.

Upper Trinity River

On March 12, Donna Long attended a public meeting in Arlington on the Upper Trinity River TMDL. More information is available at <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/66-trinitybacteria.html>. This TDML has the potential to affect livestock operations in the Upper Trinity River watershed in Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Henderson, Kaufman, Navarro and Tarrant Counties.

Upcoming Public Meetings

- April 1 – Red River Authority Clean Rivers Program Steering Committee Meeting (Wichita Falls)
- April 1 – Angelina and Neches River Authority Clean Rivers Program Steering Committee Meeting (Nacogdoches)

- April 2 – TCEQ Agenda Meeting regarding Peach Creek, Upper Oyster Creek and Lake O' the Pines TMDLs (Austin)
- April 2 – Texas Watershed Steward Program Workshop on Brady Creek (Brady)
- April 10 – Monitoring Watershed Program Effectiveness (EPA Webcast)
- April 10-11 – Texas Water and Recreation Summit (San Marcos)
- April 15 – Peach Creek TMDL Public Comment meeting (Waelder)
- April 16 – Galveston Bay Council (Pasadena)
- April 16 – High-Resolution Monitoring in Aquatic Environments Technical Seminar (Austin)
- April 17 – Leon River TMDL Public Comment meeting (Hamilton)
- April 18 – Pharmaceuticals in Animal Manure - Potential Impacts and Management II (NLPCLC Webcast)
- April 22 – Upper Oyster Creek TMDL Public Comment meeting (Sugar Land)
- April 22 – TCEQ Water Quality Advisory Work Group (Austin)
- April 24 – Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership Steering Committee Meeting (Weslaco)
- April 24 – Northeast Texas Municipal Water District Clean Rivers Program Steering Committee Meeting (Hughes Springs)
- April 28-30 – Forecast: Climate Change - Texas Water 2008 Symposium (Austin)
- April 29 – Lake O' the Pines Implementation Plan Public Comment meeting (Hughes Springs)
- April 30 – Dickinson Bayou Watershed Partnership Meeting (Dickinson)
- April 30 – Trinity River Authority Clean Rivers Program Steering Committee Meeting (Dallas)
- April 30 – Cedar Creek WPP Steering Committee Meeting (Kaufman)
- May 1 – Houston-Galveston Area Council Natural Resources Advisory Committee (Houston)
- May 8 – Plum Creek Steering Committee Meeting (Lockhart)

- May 13 – NEMO Managing Urban Growth: Quality of Life and Environmental Issues in Plum Creek (Lockhart)
- May 14 – Texas Watershed Steward Program Workshop on Bastrop Bayou (Angleton)
- May 16 – Market Based Conservation – Implications for Future Management (NPLELC Webcast)

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>.



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 Texas Draft Coastal Impact Assistance Plan was posted for public comment on the GLO CIAP Website for 30 days. The document was also provided to Minerals Management Service (MMS) for comment. Staff from the CIAP agencies are reviewing the comments and preparing the final plan. Upon approval of the Coastal Land Advisory Board and the Office of the Governor, the final plan will be sent to MMS, who has 120 days to review and approve the plan. Grant applications for individual projects will be submitted to MMS after the state plan has been approved. It is anticipated that state projects will be approved for funding before the end of the year.

A total of \$145.5 million in proposals was considered, but only \$31.6 million in funding was available. The plan can be found at:
<http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/ciap/pdf/StatePlan-FinalDraft10-26-07.pdf>

The 2008 CIAP program will begin in the near future. At least two public meetings will be held on the coast to present the program. Notification of public meetings and project solicitation will be posted on the GLO CIAP Website and sent to all 2007 project nominees and Council and Executive Committee members.

Additional information on the CIAP program can be found at:
<http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/ciap/index.html>

WATER ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

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 Activities

Provided the following SWCD with Water Enhancement Program Updates or Water Enhancement 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
Comal/ Guadalupe SWCD

Area 5

Archer County SWCD
Lower Clear Fork/Brazos SWCD

Program Activities

- 4 Landowners assisted with Brush Contracts
- 15 Landowners assisted with Brush Certifications
- Assisted Glasscock SWCD with the training of full-time District Employee
- Evaluate pending application from all projects
- Assist TCEQ with Brush rider concerning water yield in State Brush Projects
- Assisted UCRA, Dr. Rainwater, and Dr. Fish in reviewing the monitoring sites on the paired watershed studies in the North Concho River Project
- Evaluated sub-basins in the Twin Buttes and Pedernales watersheds that meet criteria for water enhancement cost share assistance and assess land owner participation
- Assist Comal/ Guadalupe District in reviewing potential areas for Water Enhancement Project
- Assisted U.S. Congressman Henry Cuellar and Congressman Ben Thompson's office in reviewing potential areas to control Arundo Cane on the Rio Grande River
- Assist Dr. Rainwater and Dr. Fish with maps of treated areas in the water enhancement projects throughout the State
- Assisted Dr. Fish and CRMWA in reviewing the activities and progress of the Canadian River Salt Cedar Project

FLOOD CONTROL DAMS

Floodwater retarding dams built by local watershed sponsors under the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) watershed program successfully protected many Texas communities from catastrophic damage during the spring and summer storms of 2007. Floodwaters from 24 storm events caused damages in 14 counties, with some counties being affected multiple times. Floodwater retarding dams in 19 watershed projects located within these

counties reduced flood damages by \$25 million for these storm events.

Statewide, 145 watershed projects provide average annual benefits exceeding \$110 million. This very important infrastructure provides benefits by reducing flood damages to homes, businesses, roads, bridges, and agricultural lands, as well as protects many people's lives.

NRCS has begun an O&M initiative mandated by their national office. This will include an O&M inspection, an estimate of needed O&M and associated costs, an estimated of needed major repairs and the repair cost, and a review of the hazard classification of all of the structures. These actions are scheduled for completion by May of this year. This initiative will provide an up-to-date estimate of O&M and repair costs needed in the program. Information from this initiative will be extremely useful in our budgeting process for the upcoming legislative session.

The NRCS has prepared Watershed fact sheets have for all U.S. Congressional Districts in Texas that have watershed projects. A state-wide fact sheet has also been prepared. You may access the fact sheets from the Texas Watershed Web at: <http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/watersheds/index.htm> The fact sheets and other data from the watershed web may be used in working with your local watershed sponsors on O&M, repair, dam safety, and rehabilitation of watershed project dams.

The TCEQ is in the process of updating Texas' dam safety rules. d. The proposed rules are scheduled to be published for public comment in July of 2008.

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*.

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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