



TEXAS STATE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

Program News and Activities

JANUARY 2014

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 about specific programs or projects please don't hesitate to call your local field representative or our state headquarters.

REX ISOM

Executive Director

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Upcoming State Board Work Session and Meeting
- 1 Budget and Accounting
- 2 Human Resources
- 2 Special Projects
- 2 Public Information and Education
- 3 Texas Nonpoint Source Management Program
- 3 Nonpoint Source Grant Program
- 3 Coastal NPS Pollution Control Program
- 5 Water Quality Coordination Activities
- 5 Water Quality Planning and Implementation
- 6 Upcoming Public Meetings
- 6 Water Supply Enhancement Program

UPCOMING STATE BOARD WORK SESSION AND MEETING

The State Board has scheduled a Work Session on **Wednesday, March 19, 2014** and a formal State Board Meeting on **Thursday, March 20, 2014 in Temple**. More information is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/boardmeetings>, or by contacting Karen Preece at (254) 773-2250, ext. 245 or kpreece@tsswcb.texas.gov.

BUDGET AND ACCOUNTING

- Important Dates and Deadlines for Calendar Year 2014 are now available on SWCD Resources Page of the TSSWCB Website.
- April 1st is the deadline for submitting Board Member Election Delegate Forms for Areas II and IV.

For more budget and accounting information, contact Kenny Zajicek at (254) 773-2250 ext. 236 or kzajicek@tsswcb.texas.gov

HUMAN RESOURCES

TSSWCB currently has 2 positions available at this time.

- Engineering Technician-Hale Center Regional Office
- Program Specialist (Flood Control)- Primarily Central, North Central and East Texas

For additional information or to download an application, visit

<https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/employment>.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

The TSSWCB Special Projects department provides coordination for the Annual State Meeting of Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Directors, facilitates open government functions required by the Texas Administrative Procedures Act, and directs the completion of other mandatory agency responsibilities such as publishing the agency's Semi-Annual Report and coordinating rule-making functions.

Annual State Meeting of SWCD Directors
Mark your calendars for October 27-29, 2014 and plan on attending the 74th Annual State Meeting held in Galveston.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Program Development Workshop

Seventy individuals have currently registered for the District Director/Employee Program Development Workshop scheduled for February 11-12, 2014.

The workshop will be held at the Bell County Expo Center located south of Belton, TX off

Interstate Highway 35. A block of rooms have been arranged with the La Quinta Inn located adjacent to the Expo Center. Directors and district employees who are planning to attend the training are encouraged to make their room reservations by January 28th in order to be guaranteed the conference rate. Information about how to make lodging reservations will be included in the packet of information that is being sent out.

The workshop will take on a new format to promote attendance. As an incentive to further encourage attendance, the agenda will include two hours of training on the "Open Meetings Act" and "Texas Public Information Act" which is mandatory training for newly appointed or elected directors. The topics will be presented by a representative of the Office of the Attorney General.

Directors, district employees and NRCS employees who want to receive CEU training toward maintaining current pesticide applicator licenses may participate in the training if they wish. One hour of credit can be earned during the normal course of the workshop as a result of relevant program content. An additional two hours of credit on laws and regulations can be earned by attending an optional two hours of training following the conclusion of the Program Development Workshop

In addition, several existing agenda items are being revised or updated.

Conservation News

Conservation News is a collection of readily available current news and information regarding natural resource issues. TSSWCB periodically distributes Conservation News via email to those interested. To subscribe, send an email to conservation-news-subscribe@tsswcb.texas.gov. Conservation News is also available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/news>.

Conservation Video Library

There are over 200 conservation-related videos available; the 2011 catalog can be downloaded at

<http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/infoed/videolibrary>.

No rental fees are assessed to those wishing to borrow videos from the library.

Ordering a Video

Select a video from the Conservation Video Catalog, then contact Loren Warrick at lwarrick@tsswcb.texas.gov to check it out. The Association of Texas SWCDs 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.

TEXAS NONPOINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires states to develop a program to protect the quality of water resources from the adverse effects of nonpoint source (NPS) water pollution. The *Texas NPS Management Program* is the State's comprehensive strategy for addressing NPS pollution. The program publication is updated every five years. The most recent revision was submitted by the Governor in June 2012 and thusly approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The *Texas NPS Management Program* is jointly administered by the TSSWCB and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Implementation of the *Texas NPS Management Program* involves partnerships among many organizations. With the extent and variety of NPS issues across Texas, cooperation across political boundaries is essential. SWCDs are vital partners in working with landowners to implement best management practices (BMPs) that prevent and abate agricultural and silvicultural NPS water pollution.

More information on the *Texas NPS Management Program* is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/managementprogram>.

Nonpoint Source Grant Program

FY2009 – FY2013 CWA §319(h) Grant Status

There are currently 35 on-going §319(h) grant-funded projects addressing a wide array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Unliquidated federal funds for these 35 on-going projects total approximately \$11 million and are primarily being used to implement BMPs to abate NPS pollution from animal feeding operations, grazing livestock operations and row crop operations; provide technical assistance through SWCDs for the development of WQMPs; provide financial incentives for implementing certain BMPs prescribed in WQMPs; support various targeted educational programs; develop and implement Watershed Protection Plans (WPP); and implement the NPS portion of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plans (I-Plan).

FY2012 – FY2014 State Grant Status

There are currently 16 on-going projects addressing an array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Unliquidated state funds for these 16 on-going projects total approximately \$2.1 million and are primarily being used to implement agricultural NPS components of TMDL I-Plans; conduct Recreational Use Attainability Analyses (RUAA); support increased analytical infrastructure at public bacterial source tracking (BST) laboratories; demonstrate innovative BMPs on animal feeding operations and grazing lands; and collect and analyze water quality data for watersheds with impaired waterbodies.

SRM staff is in the process of developing workplans and budgets with collaborating entities to obligate the FY2014 allocated funds.

Coastal NPS Pollution Control Program

The Texas Coastal Management Program (CMP) was created to coordinate state, local and federal programs for the management of Texas coastal resources. The CMP improves the management of the State's coastal resources to ensure long-term ecological and economic productivity of the coast. The CMP brings in federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) funds to Texas to implement projects and program activities for a wide variety of purposes. The Texas General Land Office (GLO) and the Land Commissioner

are responsible for coordinating activities associated with the CMP. The Coastal Coordination Advisory Committee (CCAC), established by the Texas Legislature, advises the Land Commissioner on matters related to implementation of the CMP; the TSSWCB is a statutorily-authorized member of the CCAC.

The GLO is charged with adopting uniform goals and policies to guide decision-making by all entities regulating or managing natural resource use within the Texas coastal area. The GLO reviews significant actions taken or authorized by state agencies and subdivisions of state government that may adversely affect coastal natural resources to determine consistency with CMP goals and policies. In addition, the GLO oversees the CMP Grants Program and the Small Business and Individual Permitting Assistance Program.

The federal Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments (CZARA) §6217 requires each State with an approved CMP to develop a federally approvable program to control coastal NPS pollution. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the EPA jointly administer §6217 at the federal level. In Texas, the TSSWCB and the TCEQ hold primary responsibility for the development and implementation of the Texas Coastal NPS Pollution Control Program.

More information on the CMP is available at <http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/grants-funding/cmp/index.html>.

Coastal Coordination Advisory Committee

The CCAC was created during sunset legislation (SB656) in the 82nd legislature. SB656, which was enacted in 2011, abolished the Coastal Coordination Council and transferred its functions to the Land Commissioner and the GLO. The legislation established the CCAC to advise the Land Commissioner on matters related to the CMP. The CCAC includes a representative of the TSSWCB designated by the Chairman of the State Board.

The general structure of the coastal program consists of workgroups from the agencies and governor appointees which focus on specific

projects. The main function of the CCAC is to provide consistency review of federal projects and actions and to provide support to the workgroups.

More information is available for a limited time at <http://www.glo.texas.gov/GLO/boards-and-commissions/coastal-coordination-council/index.html>.

CMP Grant Program

Through the CMP, GLO awards approximately \$1.8 million of the federal §306/§306A coastal management grant funds received from NOAA to local governments and other entities along the coast for the planning and implementation of projects that address environmental problems affecting the coastal area and that promote sustainable economic development.

More information on the CMP grant program can be found at <http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/grants-funding/cmp/index.html>.

Coastal Planning

The coastal program is dedicating \$309 funds to the creation of a long-term plan utilizing coastal and marine spatial planning. The first year of this five-year initiative was to create a report to provide a "snapshot" into the current priorities of the Texas coast. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of coastal experts was formed to review and evaluate the project list and the issues of concern for the four coastal regions. TSSWCB is participating in this planning effort as a member of the TAC. TAC regional meetings were held to identify the critical areas and needs of the Texas coast. The information collected at the TAC meetings was used to develop a "snapshot" report to inform the 83rd Texas Legislature of the coastal priorities for each of the four regions, and to serve as a baseline for the long-term planning process. A brochure was also developed, *The Texas Coast: Shoring up our Future*, and can be found here: <http://www.glo.texas.gov/shoring-up-texas/shoring-up-our-future-brochure.pdf>.

Year two of this effort will continue with the creation of a broader planning effort. This long-term plan will better enable an integrated, adaptive management approach to plan for and balance competing natural and human uses along

our coast.

Water Quality Coordination Activities

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 (GBC) 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. The TSSWCB is a named member of the Galveston Bay Council.

On December 17, 2013, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a Water and Sediment Quality Subcommittee meeting for the Galveston Bay Council in Houston. This meeting focused on project ideas for FY15 for the estuary program and revising the strategic action plan for the Galveston Bay Plan. Project updates were given by managers of various implementation and planning projects in the Galveston Bay watershed.

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 the Galveston Bay complex in Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, Harris and Liberty Counties.

Coastal Bend, Bays and Estuaries Program

The 75 miles of estuarine environment along the Texas Coastal Bend, including Aransas Bay, Corpus Christi Bay, Baffin Bay and the Upper Laguna Madre, are of national importance and, through the federal CWA §320, are included in the National Estuary Program administered by the EPA. The Bays Council is the stakeholder advisory group that coordinates the implementation of the *Coastal Bend Bays Plan*, which is a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan developed under the auspices of the National Estuary Program. The TSSWCB is a named member of the Water and Sediment Quality Implementation Team.

On January 15, 2014 SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended the Water and Sediment Quality Implementation Team meeting for the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program in Corpus Christi. This meeting was held to generate project ideas for the FY15 workplan. These project ideas are then turned into proposals for consideration of the team and then the top proposals are moved to the Bays Council for approval.

More information is available at <http://www.cbep.org/>. The implementation of the *Coastal Bend Bays Plan* affects agricultural operations in watersheds that drain to these estuaries in Refugio, Bee, McMullen, Live Oak, Jim Wells, Duval, Brooks, Kenedy, Kleberg, Nueces, San Patricio, and Aransas Counties.

Water Quality Planning and Implementation

STATE DISTRICT III

Geronimo Creek

Impairment: Bacteria

Mechanism: WPP

Lead: TSSWCB

Project: "Water Quality Monitoring in the Geronimo Creek Watershed and Facilitation of the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership", Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority; Federal \$292,421/ External \$191,435

Project: "Implementing Agricultural Nonpoint Source Components of the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Protection Plan", Comal-Guadalupe SWCD #306; Federal \$155,973

On January 14, 2014, TSSWCB SRM staff [Jana Lloyd] attended a Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Partnership meeting in Seguin. This meeting provided a presentation on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department mussel watch program, latest water quality data for Geronimo Creek was presented by GBRA. USGS presented on a new isotope study they will be conducting on the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks as well as on Plum Creek. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension staff

led a discussion on upcoming implementation activities in the watershed.

More information is available at <http://geronimocreek.org/>. This WPP affects ranching and farming operations in the Geronimo Creek watershed in Guadalupe and Comal Counties.

Upcoming Public Meetings

- February 4, 2014 – Feral Hog Workshop, Plum Creek (Luling)
- February 4, 2014 – Lower Colorado River Authority Water Quality Advisory Committee Meeting (Wharton)
- February 11, 2014 – Bacteria Implementation Group Animals and Agriculture Workgroup Meeting (Houston)
- February 13, 2014 – Plum Creek Watershed Partnership Meeting (Lockhart)
- February 17, 2014 – Texas Watershed Steward Workshop, Neches & Sabin River Basins (Tyler)
- February 18, 2014 – Texas Watershed Steward Workshop, Angelina River Watershed (Nacogdoches)
- February 18, 2014 – Double Bayou Watershed Protection Plan Meeting (Double Bayou)
- February 19, 2014 – Coastal Bend Bays and Estuary Program Water and Sediment Quality Implementation Team Meeting (Corpus Christi)
- February 20, 2014 – Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan Agriculture Workgroup Meeting (Weslaco)
- February 20, 2014 – Upper San Antonio River I-Plan Meeting (San Antonio)
- February 24, 2014 – Double Bayou Watershed Protection Plan Recreation and Hunting Workgroup Meeting (Anahuac)
- February 25, 2014 – Double Bayou Watershed Protection Plan Wastewater Workgroup Meeting (Anahuac)

WATER SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The 83rd Legislature continued funding for the Water Supply Enhancement Program by providing \$2,135,413 in General Revenue Funds in FY2014. Staff has begun implementing HB 1808 and the Sunset Commission's recommendations.

Staff Activities

- Applied spatial analysis of FY 14 WSEP Project Proposals to determine highest yielding areas
- Met with Dr. Ryan Banta to review and discuss the effects of Huisache control on water quantity in Victoria county
- Consulted with USGS regarding the Lake Alan Henry feasibility study/computer model
- Attended meetings with Nueces-Frio Sabinal SWCD, Upper Nueces-Frio SWCD, and Pedernales SWCD to discuss potential WSEP projects

Monthly Program News and Activities is published by the TSSWCB for use by Texas SWCD Directors. If you have any questions regarding its contents, or have information you would like to see in a future issue, please call (254) 773-2250.



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Established in 1939, the TSSWCB administers Texas' soil and water conservation law and

delivers coordinated natural resource conservation programs to agricultural producers through the State's 216 individual SWCDs. The agency is governed by a seven-member State Board composed of two Governor appointees and five individuals elected from across Texas by 1,080 Directors of local SWCDs. The TSSWCB is the lead state agency for planning, implementing, and managing programs for preventing and abating agricultural and silvicultural (forestry) nonpoint sources of water pollution; administers a water supply enhancement program through the targeted control of brush species in areas in need of water conservation; provides operation, maintenance, and structural repair grant funds to local government sponsors of the State's network of 2,000 flood control dams; and facilitates the Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee.

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