



TEXAS STATE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

Monthly Program News and Activities

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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

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STATE BOARD WORK SESSION AND MEETING

The State Board has scheduled a Work Session on **Wednesday, July 18, 2012** and a formal State Board Meeting on **Thursday, July 19, 2012** 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

- The deadline to claim 2/3 of the second EQIP allocation for 2012 is June 15.
- The deadline for Fiscal Year 2012 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Quarter Director Mileage and Per Diem claims is June 1. Regular claims for Director Mileage and Per Diem must be **post-marked or faxed** by the submission deadline to be accepted for payment.

For more budget and accounting information, contact Kenny Zajicek at (254) 773-2250 ext. 236

or kzajicek@tsswcb.texas.gov.

HUMAN RESOURCES

TSSWCB is currently not recruiting for any state employee positions at this time.

TSSWCB does intend to engage the services of **contracted** conservation planners to provide services including recruitment of landowners and/or agricultural land operators and the development of conservation plans, in the specified sub-watersheds inside Wilson, Karnes, and Goliad counties. This initiative is a component of the United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service’s (USDA-NRCS) overall San Antonio River Watershed Protection Plan Implementation Conservation Initiative. Interested individuals should visit http://esbd.cpa.state.tx.us/bid_show.cfm?bidid=98000 for more information. **These positions will be independent contractors and will NOT be state employees.**

For additional information on posted vacancies or to download an application, visit <https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/employment>.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Program Overview

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 29 - 31, 2012 and plan on attending the 72nd Annual State Meeting held at Bastrop. Lodging reservations for the Hyatt Lost Pines Resort are currently sold out, and a waiting list will be started August 1st.

Online meeting registration will start soon, and we will e-mail districts when that is configured.

Rule Reviews

Consistent with the State Board’s rule review plan, the State Board is publishing the following rules in the *Texas Register* for review and comment: Chapter 517, Subchapter B, Cost-Share Assistance For Water Supply Enhancement and Chapter 527, Removal Of A District Director.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Follow TSSWCB on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn!

<http://twitter.com/TSSWCB>



<http://www.facebook.com/tsswcb>

<http://www.linkedin.com/company/968674>

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>.

Program Development Workshop

A Program Development Workshop for SWCD Directors, employees and new NRCS district conservationists has been set for June 26-27, 2012. The training will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Temple. Recently appointed District Directors were sent advance registration information on April 26, 2012. Letters of open invitation with registration information was sent to all SWCDs on May 9, 2012.

Texas Conservation Awards Program

TSSWCB Executive Director, Rex Isom, appointed a committee to study the status of the regional programs and to develop a survey which will be sent to all SWCDs to gather local input about the future of the program. Districts can expect to receive the survey in the next couple of weeks.

Annual Youth Range Workshop

The 58th consecutive Annual Youth Range Workshop will be held on June 24 - 29, 2012, at Texas Tech University, Junction. The purpose of the workshop is to recognize outstanding youth, develop leadership skills and provide advanced training to 4-H and Future Farmers of America youth interested in practical range ecology, ranch and natural resource management. Workshop participants will return to their local communities and serve as leaders to educate youth and other audiences about the value and management of rangeland. A total of 40 youth will be accepted to the 2012 workshop.

The workshop curriculum is structured to provide knowledge and understanding in the following areas: land stewardship, range ecology, plant growth, plant-soil-water relations, primary and secondary plant succession, watershed management, livestock and wildlife needs, tools of range and natural resource management, prescribed burning, and the impact of management decisions on the range resource and the landowner.

Hands-on activities provide curriculum reinforcement, visual examples and opportunities to learn skills in plant identification, plant collecting, plant species composition, total resource planning, stocking rate determinations, estimating forage standing crops, brush densities and ecological trend.

Conservation Video Library

About the 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 Mel Davis at mdavis@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.

WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRAM

Program Overview

With the passage of Senate Bill 503 in 1993, the Texas Legislature directed the TSSWCB to implement water quality management plans (WQMPs) to abate agricultural and silvicultural nonpoint source water pollution. A WQMP is a site-specific plan developed through and approved by SWCDs. The agency has been implementing WQMPs on private lands since late 1993 and has certified 10,119 plans on 3,921,289 acres as of May 11, 2012. All agriculture and silviculture producers in the state are eligible to have a water quality management plan developed. The TSSWCB identifies areas of the state where water quality is being negatively impacted by agricultural and silvicultural nonpoint source water pollution and allocates funding to those priority areas to serve as financial incentives to increase participation in the program. SWCDs with lakes, rivers or stream segments listed on the 303(d) list as impaired due to agriculture are eligible to be included as priority areas. FY2013 Water Quality Management Plan cost-share allocations to priority SWCDs will be set at the July State Board Meeting. However, all animal feeding operations are considered to be high priority and are eligible to receive financial incentives to install needed practices in their WQMP through their priority area or statewide assistance program. More information about the WQMP Program is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/wqmp>.

To date, 244 new WQMPs have been certified on 97,224 acres in FY12. There have also been 214 applications for cost-share assistance approved to assist producers with implementation of needed practices.

SWCD requests for supplemental statewide water quality management plan funding are due in the Dublin Regional Office prior to July 9, 2012.

SWCDs should submit requests through their area regional office.

POULTRY WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

Program Overview

In 2001, the 77th Texas Legislature amended the Texas Water Code to require all persons who own or operate a poultry facility to implement and maintain a WQMP certified by the TSSWCB.

In 2009, the 81st Texas Legislature amended the Texas Water Code to require TSSWCB to assess whether the existing and construction of all new poultry farms or existing farms that expand by more than 50% within ½ mile of permanently inhabited residences, businesses or places of worship is likely to cause a persistent nuisance odor. An odor control plan may be required for those farms. The new law also requires all poultry producers and most receivers of poultry litter to keep records of poultry litter usage.

Program Activities

TSSWCB continues to conduct inspections of poultry CAFO facilities to ensure they are meeting all the necessary requirements. In addition, staff continues to review and update existing WQMPs and develop plans for newly constructed farms. For more information on Poultry WQMPs, please visit <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/poultry> or contact the Poultry Program Office at (936) 462-7020.

WATER CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Program Overview

Recognizing the importance of water conservation in meeting our future demand, the 80th Texas Legislature in 2007, via the passage of Senate Bill 3 and House Bill 4, directed the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to appoint the members of the newly created Water Conservation Advisory Council (WCAC). The WCAC was created to provide the Governor, Lieutenant

Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Legislature, TWDB, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), political subdivisions, and the public with the resource of a select council with expertise in water conservation.

According to the legislation, the WCAC is composed of 23 members appointed by the TWDB. At their August 27, 2007 meeting, the TWDB appointed one member to represent each of the 23 entities or interest groups. The TSSWCB is a statutorily-authorized member of the WCAC.

Duties of the WCAC include:

- Monitoring trends in water conservation implementation and new technologies for possible inclusion as best management practices (BMPs)
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the statewide water conservation public awareness program and developing and implementing a state water management resource library
- Developing and implementing a public recognition program for water conservation
- Monitoring the implementation of water conservation strategies by water users included in regional water plans
- Monitoring target and goal guidelines for water conservation to be considered by the TWDB and TCEQ
- Evaluating the desirability of requiring certification of water conservation training facilities, entities, and programs that provide assistance to retail public utilities in developing water conservation plans

Recent Activities

On May 16, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Richard Egg] attended a WCAC meeting.

Meeting agendas and minutes are available on the WCAC's website: <http://www.savetexaswater.org>.

The agricultural workgroup is reviewing the state's agricultural water conservation BMPs that were developed by the Water Conservation Task Force (2003-2005). The workgroup will determine if each BMP is still appropriate as is, or if it needs updating

or removal. The agricultural workgroup will also review current methods of reporting irrigation water use (e.g., gal/ac, gal/ton) to evaluate if current methods are appropriate, or if more efficient methods should be developed and used.

The workgroups do not make any decisions, but make recommendations to the WCAC for any required decisions. All interested persons are welcome and encouraged to participate as members of the various workgroups. If anyone is interested in becoming a workgroup member, please contact Richard Egg at (254) 773-2250 ext. 246 or regg@tsswcb.texas.gov.

The WCAC is beginning work on its report of activities to the legislature. More information on the WCAC is available at <http://www.savetexaswater.org/>.

Water Conservation Report

The TSSWCB and TWDB released the report “An Assessment of Water Conservation- Report to the 82nd Legislature.” This report is mandated to be written and released every five years in conjunction with the State Water Plan. The report assesses the status of water conservation in Texas and makes recommendations to the Legislature on policies that could enhance the adoption of water conservation practices.

The report is available online at: http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/files/docs/waterconservation/TWDBTSSWCB_82nd.pdf

TEXAS NONPOINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Program Overview

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 to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by the

Governor in December 2005. The *Texas NPS Management Program* is jointly administered by the TSSWCB and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

The *Texas NPS Management Program* utilizes baseline water quality management programs and regulatory, voluntary, financial, and technical assistance approaches to achieve a balanced program. NPS pollution is managed through assessment, planning, implementation, and education. The TCEQ and TSSWCB have established goals and objectives for guiding and tracking the progress of NPS management in Texas. Success in achieving the goals and objectives are reported annually in the *Annual Report on Managing NPS Water Pollution in Texas*, which is submitted to the EPA in accordance with the CWA.

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*, including the *2011 Annual Report*, is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/managementprogram>.

The following is a compilation of relevant information pertaining to the multiple water quality programs and functions administered by and/or coordinated through the TSSWCB Statewide Resource Management (SRM) group that collectively represent the agency’s efforts in supporting the goals and objectives of the *Texas NPS Management Program*.

Watershed Approach

Protecting the State’s rivers, streams, lakes, bays and aquifers from the impacts of NPS pollution is a complex process. Texas uses a Watershed Approach to focus efforts on the highest priority water quality issues of both surface and ground water. The

Watershed Approach is based on the following principles:

- Geographic focus based on hydrology rather than political boundaries;
- Water quality objectives based on scientific data;
- Coordinated priorities and integrated solutions; and,
- Diverse, well-integrated partnerships.

The TSSWCB applies the Watershed Approach to managing NPS pollution by channeling its efforts to restore and protect water quality through the development and implementation of watershed protection plans (WPPs) and total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) in those watersheds where agricultural and/or silvicultural NPS pollution is contributing to a water quality impairment or concern to an extent which TSSWCB believes is sufficient to justify expenditure of agency resources. A list of these watersheds, including links to on-going restoration projects within those watersheds, is available at

<http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/watersheds>.

Summaries of the TSSWCB's activities within specific watersheds are provided in the *Water Quality Planning and Implementation* section of this report.

Texas Nonpoint Source Management Program – Revision Status

The State of Texas must have a federally approved Management Program in order to continue receiving CWA §319(h) grant monies from the EPA. The “Texas NPS Management Program” was last approved in December 2005 for a five-year planning period. Since that time, significant events have occurred in the program and the State must now update the Management Program to provide for new initiatives and to specify program goals for the upcoming planning period.

The draft *2012 Texas NPS Management Program* document has been developed consistent with regulatory guidance from EPA to satisfy requirements of the federal CWA. The draft document incorporates EPA's nine components of an effective program; establishes long- and short-term goals for the program; provides for the

coordination of NPS-related programs and activities conducted by federal, state, regional, and local entities; and prioritizes assessment, planning, and implementation activities in priority watersheds and aquifers.

On January 19, 2012, the State Board approved publishing the draft 2012 document for public comment. On January 25, 2012, the Commission took the same action. The public comment period was from February 10, 2012 through March 12, 2012. On February 23, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff, in collaboration with TCEQ staff, hosted a public comment meeting in Austin. An overview of the changes made to the Management Program was presented and questions were answered regarding the document. No official public comments were received at the meeting. Written comments were received from 14 entities and citizens during the comment period. TCEQ and TSSWCB staff developed responses to comments received and incorporated changes in a revised Management Program document. Staff of both agencies will be seeking formal action by the State Board (May 24, 2012; see Agenda Item 16) and the Commission (May 30, 2012; see Agenda Item 45) to consider approval of the revised *2012 Texas NPS Management Program* document. If approved by the State Board and Commission, it will be submitted to the Governor for submission to the EPA prior to July 2012.

The draft document is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/managementprogram#revision>.

Nonpoint Source Grant Program

The NPS Grant Program is administered by the TSSWCB for the purpose of providing funding as grants to cooperating entities for activities that address the goals and objectives stated in the *Texas NPS Management Program*. The Texas Legislature and the U.S. Congress (through the EPA) provide funding to the TSSWCB to administer the agricultural and silvicultural components of the *Texas NPS Management Program* through the TSSWCB NPS Grant Program.

Summaries of the TSSWCB's activities within specific watersheds funded through this NPS Grant Program are available in the *Water Quality Planning and Implementation* section of this report.

Clean Water Act §319(h) Grant Funding

Background

Congress enacted §319(h) of the CWA in 1987, establishing a national program to control NPS water pollution. Through §319(h), federal funds are provided annually through the EPA to States for the implementation of each State's NPS Management Program. The §319(h) funding in Texas is divided equally between the TCEQ and the TSSWCB. Over the past several years, the State's allocation has been approximately \$9 million.

In November 2011, EPA submitted *A National Evaluation of the Clean Water Act Section 319 Program* to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This national program evaluation was conducted by EPA to improve understanding of how States currently utilize and leverage §319(h) grant funds to achieve NPS management program goals and to identify opportunities for improvement of the §319(h) program. Recommendations for programmatic improvement included in the report may be used by EPA, OMB, the Administration, or Congress to improve accountability and effectiveness of the §319(h) grant program. The report is available at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/pdf/319evaluation.pdf>.

FY2007 – FY2011 CWA §319(h) Grant Status

There are currently 42 on-going §319(h) grant-funded projects addressing a wide array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Unliquidated federal funds for these 42 on-going projects total approximately \$13.1 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

WPPs; and implement the NPS portion of TMDL I-Plans.

FY2012 CWA §319(h) Grant Application Status
TSSWCB SRM staff identified priority areas and activities for this funding cycle based on the *Texas NPS Management Program* and the *2010 Integrated Report*. The deadline for proposal submission was October 14, 2011. TSSWCB received 28 proposals requesting a total of \$11,040,653 in federal funds. Received proposals have been reviewed by SRM staff based on the published ranking criteria and are being selected for funding. On March 14, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff submitted 16 proposals to EPA for their review and comment. EPA provided comments on the proposed projects to TSSWCB SRM staff on April 13, 2012; responses were developed and modified scopes of work and budgets were returned to EPA on May 4, 2012. TSSWCB SRM staff are working with EPA to negotiate scopes of work and budgets for selected proposals to ensure a full grant application is submitted to EPA in June 2012 for review and approval.

State General Revenue Grant Funding

Background

The 80th Texas Legislature appropriated general revenue funds to the TSSWCB for the purpose of planning, implementing, and managing programs and practices for preventing and abating agricultural and silvicultural NPS water pollution in impaired watersheds; the 81st and 82nd Texas Legislatures renewed this appropriation.

The State Board has approved operating budgets for FY2010, FY2011 and FY2012 that allocated a total of \$3.77 million in state general revenue to the NPS Grant Program. On September 17, 2009, the Board approved a revised *TSSWCB Policy on TMDLs and Watershed Planning, Assessment, and Implementation Activities* which provides guidance to SRM staff on directing these state appropriations for the NPS Grant Program. This *Policy* is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/managementprogram#StateGR>.

FY2010 – FY2012 State General Revenue Grant Status

There are currently 10 on-going general revenue-funded projects addressing an array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Unliquidated state funds for these 10 on-going projects total approximately \$2.9 million and are primarily being used to implement agricultural NPS components of TMDL I-Plans; conduct recreational use attainability analyses (RUAAAs); 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.

TSSWCB SRM staff are in the process of finalizing workplans and budgets with collaborating entities to obligate remaining FY2012 allocated funds.

Total Maximum Daily Load Program

Background

The 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 EPA for review and approval every two years.

The State must then establish a TMDL for certain waterbodies identified on the *Texas 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. The pollution reduction goal set by the TMDL is necessary to restore attainment of the designated use of the impaired waterbody. The TMDL allocates pollutant loads between point sources and nonpoint sources. It also takes into account a margin of safety, which reflects uncertainty and future growth.

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. The I-Plan specifies

limits for point source dischargers and recommends BMPs for nonpoint sources. It also lays out a schedule for implementation. 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*. EPA must approve the TMDL, but the I-Plan only requires State approval. TSSWCB shares responsibility with the TCEQ for the development and implementation of TMDLs.

More information on TMDLs is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/tmdl>. Summaries of the TSSWCB's activities within specific watersheds are available in the *Water Quality Planning and Implementation* section of this report.

Watershed Protection Plan Program

Background

Watershed Protection Plans (WPPs) are locally-driven mechanisms for voluntarily addressing complex water quality problems that cross multiple jurisdictions. WPPs are coordinated frameworks for implementing prioritized water quality protection and restoration strategies driven by environmental objectives. Through the watershed planning 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.

WPPs integrate activities and prioritize implementation projects based upon technical merit and benefits to the community, promote a unified approach to seeking funding for implementation, and create a coordinated public education program. Developed and implemented through diverse, well integrated partnerships, a WPP assures the long-term health of the watershed with solutions that are socially acceptable and economically viable which achieve environmental goals for water resources. Adaptive management is used to modify the WPP based on an on-going science-based process that incorporates new knowledge into decision-making.

TSSWCB provides technical and financial assistance to local stakeholder groups to develop and implement WPPs to address significant agricultural or silvicultural NPS issues. EPA

requires certain expenditures through CWA §319(h) grants to be in accordance with a WPP. While WPPs sponsored by TCEQ have significant water quality issues related to urban NPS pollution or wastewater treatment, most, to varying degrees, have agricultural or silvicultural NPS pollution components. There are several other watershed planning projects across the state which are funded and sponsored by entities and agencies other than TSSWCB or TCEQ.

More information on WPPs is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/wpp>. Summaries of the TSSWCB's activities within specific watersheds are available in the *Water Quality Planning and Implementation* section of this report.

Coastal NPS Pollution Control Program

Background

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>.

Conditional Approval Status of Coastal NPS Program

Texas submitted the Texas Coastal NPS Pollution Control Program to EPA and NOAA in December 1998. In July 2003, NOAA and EPA issued conditional approval of the Texas Coastal NPS Pollution Control Program. NOAA identified five areas the State must strengthen or correct; the agricultural and silvicultural portions of the program were approved without conditions. Texas had five years to meet the remaining conditions to gain full approval. States that fail to submit an adequate program (full approval) face penalties including loss of EPA and NOAA funds, including CWA §319(h) NPS grant monies.

In July 2008, the State again responded to the remaining conditional approval findings of NOAA and EPA. It was anticipated that this response would address the remaining conditions resulting in a fully-approved program. However, in May 2009, GLO received comments from NOAA and EPA which concluded that enough progress had been made to lift only one of the conditions.

On January 26, 2012, GLO submitted the State's approach to resolving one of the remaining conditions (associated with on-site sewage facilities) to NOAA and EPA for review and approval.

Coastal Coordination Advisory Committee The Coastal Coordination Advisory Committee

(CCAC) was reviewed by the Sunset Advisory Commission this biennium. Sunset legislation (SB656) has been signed by the Governor. The act abolishes the CCC and transfers its functions to the Land Commissioner and the GLO. The legislation also requires establishment of a Coastal Coordination Advisory Committee to advise the Land Commissioner on matters related to the CMP. This Advisory Committee includes a representative of the TSSWCB designated by the Chairman of the State Board. The act took effect September 1, 2011.

The general structure of the coastal program will be work groups from the agencies and governor appointees to focus on specific projects, modeled on the grants workgroup. The main function of the Advisory Committee will be to provide consistency review of federal projects and actions, and to provide support to the work groups.

More information on the CCAC 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 planning and implementation of projects that address environmental problems affecting the coastal area and that promote sustainable economic development.

Application information for Grant Cycle 18 was distributed in April 2012. The GLO expects to award approximately \$1.8 million for planning, acquisition, construction, education, and research projects during Grant Cycle 18. The deadline for pre-proposals is June 20, 2012. The full application is due September 26, 2012. Submission of the pre-proposal is only necessary if applicants would like written comments on their pre-proposals. The GLO will accept applications for both construction and non-construction projects that address any of the following funding categories:

- Coastal Natural Hazards Response

- Critical Areas Enhancement
- Public Access to Beaches
- Water Sediment Quantity and Quality Improvements
- Waterfront Revitalization and Ecotourism Development
- Permit Streamlining/Assistance, Governmental Coordination, and Local Government Planning Assistance

Three grant workshops were held on the coast to inform potential applicants about the changes made to the grant program and to discuss potential project application submissions. All potential applicants were strongly encouraged to attend the workshops.

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>.

Texas Groundwater Protection Committee

Background

Established by the Texas Legislature in 1989, the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) bridges the gap between State groundwater programs, improves coordination between member agencies, and works to protect groundwater as a vital resource; the TSSWCB is a statutorily-authorized member of the TGPC.

The Texas Water Code sets non-degradation of the State's groundwater resources as the goal for all State programs and asserts that groundwater is kept reasonably free of contaminants that interfere with its present and potential uses. The TGPC implements the State's groundwater protection policy which:

- Requires that pollution discharges, waste disposal and other regulated activities not harm public health or impair current or potential groundwater use;
- Recognizes the variability between aquifers;
- Acknowledges the importance of water quality;
- Balances the protection of the environment and the long-term economic health of the state; and,

- Recognizes the use of the best professional judgment of the responsible state agencies to implement the policy.

Activities of the TGPC and Subcommittees

On April 18, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Richard Egg] attended the TGPC Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee meeting in Austin.

On April 18, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Richard Egg] attended the TGPC Research Subcommittee meeting in Austin.

On April 18, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Richard Egg] attended the TGPC meeting in Austin.

The next Public Outreach & Education Subcommittee meeting is set for June 12, 2012.

More information on the TGPC is available at <http://www.tgpc.state.tx.us/>.

Water Quality Coordination Activities

Coordination with TCEQ

On September 27, 2006, at a joint meeting, the TSSWCB and the TCEQ approved a new *Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on TMDLs, I-Plans, and WPPs*. This framework for collaboration between the two agencies describes the programmatic mechanisms employed to develop and implement TMDLs and WPPs. TSSWCB SRM staff continue to work with TCEQ staff to implement components of the MOA including meeting regularly to discuss the status of the NPS Management Program and its related projects. The MOA is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/tmdl#moa>.

On May 8, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [TJ Helton, Pamela Casebolt, Loren Warrick, Aaron Wendt, Mitch Conine, Ashley Alexander, Jana Lloyd, Brian Koch, Kristen Kylberg] met with TCEQ staff in Austin to discuss and coordinate the many on-going activities between the two agencies. Many topics were discussed including the Watershed Action Planning process and finalizing the *2012 Texas NPS Management Program* revision. An update on the progress of resolving the conditional approval status

of the *Texas Coastal NPS Pollution Control Program* was discussed as well. Other updates included the current status of both agencies' WPPs, TMDLs, and RUAA projects, the 2012 Integrated Report, the upcoming FY2013 CWA §319(h) NPS grant Request-for-Proposals, waterbody restoration success stories, and statewide educational programs.

Coordination with Texas Water Development Board

On April 26, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Aaron Wendt] joined TCEQ staff in a meeting in Austin with staff from the TWDB to discuss coordination between the three agencies. TWDB manages the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) which is a federal CWA program administered by EPA. The CWSRF provides loans at interest rates lower than the market to political subdivisions to be used for planning, design, and construction of wastewater treatment facilities; sewer collection systems; and NPS pollution control projects. Discussion focused on increasing the use of the CWSRF for NPS projects designed to implement WPPs and TMDLs. The group discussed the process to initiate projects selected in the FY2012 Intended Use Plan, and proposals received through the solicitation for projects for FY2013 CWSRF funding, including one project designed to implement portions of the Plum Creek WPP. More information is available at <http://www.twdb.texas.gov/financial/programs/cwsrf.asp>.

USDA-NRCS National Water Quality Initiative

On May 8, 2012, USDA announced the launch of a new National Water Quality Initiative committed to improving water quality and aquatic habitats in priority impaired watersheds across the nation. Using funds from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, NRCS will provide financial incentives and technical assistance to producers for implementing conservation practices. To deliver the initiative, NRCS worked in collaboration with local partners and state conservation and water quality agencies to identify watersheds where on-farm investments have the best chance to improve water quality.

In Texas, the Chambers Creek watershed above Richland-Chambers Reservoir in Ellis and Navarro

Counties in the Trinity River Basin has been selected because of turbidity, siltation, dissolved oxygen, and high nutrient levels. NRCS will work with the Tarrant Regional Water District, TSSWCB, TCEQ, and the EPA, as well as the Navarro SWCD #514 and the Ellis-Prairie SWCD #504 to implement this initiative. Through this effort, eligible producers will invest in voluntary conservation practices to help provide cleaner water for their neighbors and communities. NRCS has allocated \$2 million in financial assistance for farmers, ranchers and forest landowners in the Chambers Creek watershed.

More information is available at <http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP/nwqi.html>.

Surface Water Quality Standards Revision

On June 30, 2010, the TCEQ adopted major revisions to 30 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 307, Texas Surface Water Quality Standards (Standards), and the *Procedures to Implement the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, RG-194* (IPs). These major revisions to the Standards include the establishment of numeric nutrient criteria for large reservoirs and significant modifications to contact recreation use and associated bacteria criteria. The adopted Standards became effective as a State rule on July 22, 2010. TCEQ submitted the revised Standards and IPs to EPA on August 4, 2010. EPA must now take action to approve these changes to the Standards in accordance with the federal CWA.

On June 29, 2011, EPA notified TCEQ of action taken on the water quality standards revisions. EPA approved the changes to recreation use and bacteria criteria. However, the high flow exemption was disapproved.

More information on the revisions to the Standards is available at: http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water_quality/stakeholders/2010standards.html.

On March 28, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Aaron Wendt, Rusty Ray] participated in the TCEQ Water Quality Standards Advisory Workgroup meeting in

Austin. This was the first of three planned workgroup meetings to provide guidance to TCEQ staff on options for revising the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards to be proposed in 2013. Topics discussed at the meeting included an update on EPA approval of the 2010 revisions; proposed topics for the 2013 revisions; mercury and other fish tissue-based criteria; the update to the State's Numeric Nutrient Criteria Development Plan; and, recreational use categories and the status of RUAAAs.

More information on this Standards review process is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/standards/stakeholders/swqsawg.html>.

Watershed Action Planning Process

Watershed Action Planning (WAP) is a new process for coordinating, documenting, and tracking the State's water quality management programs. The WAP process coordinates planning and activities among TCEQ, TSSWCB, the Texas Clean Rivers Program partners, and stakeholders at the watershed level. The process can have significant implications for regional and local residents. The major objectives of WAP are to:

- engage stakeholders more fully in determining strategies that restore water quality,
- improve access to state agencies' water quality management decisions and increase transparency of decision-making, and
- improve accountability of state agencies' commitments to improve water quality

The WAP process recognizes a range of tools and options for addressing impaired waterbodies on the *303(d) List*. The WAP process provides for a stakeholder-led evaluation of watershed-specific circumstances and a deliberative and collective decision as to what tool to apply to move forward with addressing the impairment. A major product of the WAP process is a comprehensive strategy for improving the quality of impaired waters and protecting waterbodies of special interest. Those strategies are summarized in the *WAP Strategy Table* which is maintained by TCEQ. The *WAP Strategy Table* will be updated as frequently as

needed to meet the objectives of this evolving process. The *WAP Strategy Table* lists:

- impaired and special interest waterbodies
- the recommended strategies to improve water quality in impaired segments or to protect waterbodies of special interest
- the status of each strategy
- the lead agency and program for tracking each strategy

On January 13, 2012, TCEQ published the first iteration of the *WAP Strategy Table* (December 2011). During 2011, participating agencies initiated this complex cycle and recommended strategies for nearly 1,190 impairments and over 30 special interest waterbodies.

WAP will increase the transparency of the State's water quality management programs by presenting the list of impaired waters in such a manner as to communicate activities and intentions collectively to the public at large. WAP is key to providing for the collaboration being called for and the coordination necessary to achieve the goal of clean water for Texas. More information on WAP is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/planning/wap/>.

Recreational Use Attainability Analyses

The 2010 revisions to the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards establish a four tier approach to recreation use including primary contact recreation, secondary contact recreation 1, secondary contact recreation 2, and noncontact recreation. In order to change the presumed level of recreation use of a waterbody (i.e., primary contact) to any of the other 3 tiers and the associated bacteria criterion, a recreational use attainability analysis (RUAA) must be completed for each waterbody and approved by TCEQ and subsequently EPA.

The purpose of an RUAA is to ascertain the actual recreation occurring on a waterbody, establish or verify a presumed use, and, if necessary, assign a more appropriate use. During an RUAA information is collected on water recreation activities, stream flow type, and stream depth; additionally, interviews from users who are present

during surveys and those familiar with the waterbody are conducted and a review of historical information is completed. If the results of the RUAA indicate that a different, more appropriate use is warranted, the resulting change in the associated bacteria criterion may result in the waterbody no longer being identified on the *303(d) List* as impaired, thus negating the need to adopt a TMDL.

The TCEQ is in the process of conducting RUAAs on over 90 waterbodies across the state; TSSWCB is taking the lead on conducting RUAAs on another 12 waterbodies. TCEQ contractors were asked to coordinate communication with SWCDs through TSSWCB SRM staff. After the RUAAs are conducted, TCEQ will evaluate the information and again consult with stakeholders regarding potential site-specific revisions to the Surface Water Quality Standards for each waterbody.

On May 16, 2012, TCEQ released an RUAA Report for multiple waterbodies in the Brazos River Basin, including the following waterbodies: Allen's Creek 1202H, Davidson Creek 1211A, Nolan Creek/South Nolan Creek 1218, Duncan Creek 1222A, Sweetwater Creek 1222E, Leon River below Leon Reservoir 1223, Armstrong Creek 1223A, Cottonwood Branch 1242B, Still Creek 1242C, Thompson Creek 1242D, Big Creek 1242P, and Wasp Creek 1246E. Public comment is solicited on the report and on any additional information regarding current or past recreation activities occurring on the waterbodies. The public comment period extends through June 18, 2012. The report is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/standards/ruaas/ruaasbrazos>.

Summaries of RUAA activities on waterbodies where TMDLs and/or WPPs are also on-going are available in the *Water Quality Planning and Implementation* section of this report.

More information on RUAAs is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/standards/ruaas/index>. These RUAAs affect livestock operations in scores of watersheds across the state.

Texas Integrated Report for CWA §§305(b) and 303(d)

The *Texas Integrated Report* (IR) 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, as required by CWA §305(b). The IR also identifies waterbodies not attaining water quality standards (i.e., impaired), as required by CWA §303(d).

On November 18, 2011, EPA approved the *2010 Texas 303(d) List of Impaired Waters*. TCEQ had approved the *2010 Texas Integrated Report* for submission to EPA on August 25, 2010. A total of 1,012 impairments are identified on 438 waterbody segments. Impairments due to elevated bacteria associated with recreation use and oyster waters use continue to dominate the list. A significant achievement for the State is EPA's conclusion that the *Rationale for Reclassifying Plum Creek (Segment 1810) from Category 5 to Category 4b on the Texas Integrated Report* adequately demonstrates how other pollution control requirements (i.e., the Plum Creek WPP) will lead to water quality standards attainment in a reasonable period of time. This is the first successful submission of a WPP in lieu of a TMDL. EPA's approval letter to TCEQ is available at http://www.epa.gov/region6/region-6/tx/tx_303d.html.

More information on the *Texas Integrated Report*, including the 305(b) Assessment and 303(d) List, is available at http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/assessment/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, plus bays and estuaries, 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 Integrated Report*.

On April 19, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Pamela Casebolt] attended a CRP Coordinated Monitoring meeting hosted by the Brazos River Authority in Waco. Discussion focused on coordinating surface water quality monitoring activities for FY2013 among various entities collecting data in order to avoid overlap and maximize resources in the Brazos River Basin. More information is available at <http://www.brazos.org/>.

On April 23, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a CRP Steering Committee meeting hosted by the Sabine River Authority in Orange. Meetings were also held on April 24, 2012 in Longview and on April 25, 2012 in Greenville. This meeting featured updates from across the Sabine River Basin for the past year, including the I-Plan currently under development for Adams and Cow Bayous, which is expected to be completed in late summer 2012. There was also discussion on a drought strategy for Toledo Bend Reservoir, and water quality conditions in the basin. More information is available at <http://www.sratx.org/>.

On April 23, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a CRP Coordinated Monitoring meeting hosted by the Sabine River Authority in Orange. Meetings were also held on April 24, 2012 in Longview and on April 25, 2012 in Greenville. Discussion focused on coordinating surface water

quality monitoring activities planned for FY2013 among various entities collecting data in order to avoid overlap and maximize resources in the Sabine River Basin. There was also discussion of WAP priorities and the *WAP Strategy Table*. More information is available at <http://www.sratx.org/>.

On April 24, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a CRP Coordinated Monitoring meeting hosted by the LCRA in La Grange. Discussion focused on coordinating surface water quality monitoring activities planned for FY2013 among various entities collecting data in order to avoid overlap and maximize resources in the Lower Colorado River Basin, portions of the Brazos-Colorado Coastal Basin, and the Colorado-Lavaca Coastal Basin. More information is available at <http://www.lcra.org/water/quality/crp/index.html>.

On April 26, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Mitch Conine] attended a CRP Coordinated Monitoring meeting hosted by the Northeast Texas Municipal Water District in Hughes Spring. Discussion focused on coordinating surface water quality monitoring activities planned for FY2013 among various entities collecting data in order to avoid overlap and maximize resources in the Cypress Creek Basin. More information is available at <http://www.netmwd.com/>.

On April 26, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Mitch Conine] attended a CRP Steering Committee meeting hosted by the Northeast Texas Municipal Water District in Hughes Spring. Topics discussed at the meeting included: an update on the environmental flows special study, presentation on the 2012 Basin Highlights Report, Big Cypress Creek Bacteria Assessment Project update, Cypress Creek OSSF monitoring update, and Watershed Action Planning. More information is available at <http://www.netmwd.com/>.

On April 27, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Mitch Conine] attended a CRP Steering Committee meeting hosted by the Angelina & Neches River Authority in Nacogdoches. Discussion focused on monitoring in the basin, an update on the Attoyac Bayou WPP and RUAAs being conducted in the basin, invasive species, and acidification of Stryker

Lake. The draft Basin Highlights Report was presented as well. More information is available at <http://www.anra.org/>.

On April 30, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Ashley Alexander, Kristen Kylberg] attended a CRP Steering Committee meeting hosted by the Trinity River Authority in Dallas. Several presentations were given including an overview of the Upper Trinity River Bacteria TMDL I-Plan being developed by the North Central Texas Council of Governments and an "All Things Trinity, All Things Conservation" presentation by Texas AgriLife Extension. Trinity River Authority staff also gave an update on their continuing Trinity River Survey. More information is available at <http://www.trinityra.org/clean-rivers-program.htm>.

On April 30, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Ashley Alexander, Kristen Kylberg] attended a CRP Coordinated Monitoring meeting hosted by the Trinity River Authority in Dallas. Discussion focused on coordinating surface water quality monitoring activities planned for FY2013 among various entities collecting data in order to avoid overlap and maximize resources in the Trinity River Basin. More information is available at <http://www.trinityra.org/clean-rivers-program.htm>.

More information on CRP is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/clean-rivers/index.html>.

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

On April 25, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a quarterly Galveston Bay Council meeting in Houston. This meeting focused on the 20-year review of the *Galveston Bay Plan*, which

turns 20 years old in 2015. Strategies were discussed on how to review the document and apply adaptive management to the plan. Next, discussion and approval of the FY2013 project workplan was held, where most of the funding is to be dedicated to acquisition and restoration projects and the public outreach “Back the Bay” campaign. This campaign will be fully implemented starting with Bay Day, to be held on June 9, 2012.

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.

Sheldon Lake State Park Wetland Field Day

On April 19, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a Wetland Field Day at Sheldon Lake State Park in Houston. The field day, which was presented as *A Case Study in Freshwater Coastal Prairie Wetland Restoration*, provided attendees the opportunity to learn about the unique methods used at this site for wetland restoration. This project, and field day, is funded by TSSWCB with a CWA §319(h) NPS grant. Presentations were given by Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and Ducks Unlimited on Prairie Wetland Restoration and specifically, the restoration methodology used at Sheldon Lake State Park. A field tour followed which included walk-throughs of the wetland restoration and concluded with a view from the new observation tower. More information is available at <http://www.urban-nature.org/urbanwet/sheldon.htm> and <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/en/managementprogram/wetland>.

International Wild Pig Conference

On April 16-17, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Aaron Wendt] attended the International Wild Pig Conference in San Antonio. The International Wild Pig Conference is the only forum in the world that provides federal, state, and private stakeholders a venue to discuss biological, financial, and social implications of feral hogs. Presentations, posters, and general discussion were structured around the

following topical areas: Feral Hog Distribution and Habitat Use, Outreach and Extension Programming focusing on Feral Hog Management, Baits and Delivery Methods, Trapping and Removal Methods, and Genetics and Population Trends. Many on-going feral hog projects in Texas were highlighted, including the TSSWCB-funded Feral Hog Management Education Program in the Plum Creek Watershed and several projects conducted on Fort Hood in central Texas. The efforts of many States to manage the spread and impact of this invasive species were highlighted, in addition to international efforts in Australia. More information is available at <http://www.wildpigconference.com/>.

Luling Foundation Farm Field Day

On May 17, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended the 85th Luling Foundation Farm Field Day in Luling. The Luling Foundation was founded by Edgar B. Davis in 1927 as a demonstration farm to help local farmers and ranchers in the surrounding counties. This field day featured talks on drought recovery, agriculture tax exemptions, and agricultural economics in the coming year. There were also booths to feature products and sponsors, including a booth for the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership and the Caldwell-Travis SWCD #304 to promote the Plum Creek WPP and implementation associated with the plan.

Upcoming Public Meetings

- June 1, 2012 – Lower Neches Valley Authority Clean Rivers Program Steering Committee Meeting (Beaumont)
- June 4, 2012 – Water Rights Advisory Workgroup (Austin)
- June 7, 2012 – TSSWCB Southeast and South Central Texas Regional Watershed Coordination Steering Committee (Columbus)
- June 7, 2012 – Cedar Bayou Watershed Partnership Steering Committee meeting (Baytown)
- June 7, 2012 – Attoyac Bayou Watershed Partnership Steering Committee (Nacogdoches)
- June 8, 2012 – Texas Groundwater Protection Committee NPS Task Force Meeting (Austin)
- June 9, 2012 – Travis County Conservation Expo (Austin)

- June 12, 2012 – Texas Watershed Steward Workshop for Colorado River (Smithville)
- June 12, 2012 – Texas Groundwater Protection Committee Public Outreach and Education Subcommittee (Austin)
- June 14, 2012 – *CWA §319 NPS Projects Reducing Agricultural Pollution* (EPA Webcast)
- June 19-21, 2012 – National NPS Program EPA-States Meeting (Annapolis, MD)

Water Quality Planning and Implementation

The TSSWCB applies the Watershed Approach to managing NPS pollution by channeling its efforts to restore and protect water quality through the development and implementation of WPPs and TMDLs. A list of watersheds including links to on-going restoration projects within those watersheds is available at

<http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/watersheds>; more detailed information on all watersheds described below is available at this website.

Adams and Cow Bayous

Impairment: Bacteria, Dissolved Oxygen, pH
 Mechanism: TMDL, I-Plan
 Lead: TCEQ

On May 15, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a stakeholder meeting for the Adams and Cow Bayous I-plan in Orange. This meeting was held to give an overview of the draft I-plan, with the contractors going through the document and making changes based on comments from stakeholders. The stakeholder development of the I-plan is expected to be complete by September 2012.

More information on the Adams and Cow Bayous TMDL and I-Plan is available at <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/37-orangecounty.html>. These TMDLs affect livestock and forestry operations in Orange, Jasper and Newton Counties.

Arroyo Colorado

Impairment: Bacteria, Dissolved Oxygen
 Concerns: Nutrients, Sediment
 Mechanism: WPP, UAA
 Lead: TCEQ

On April 19, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Ashley Alexander] and Regional Office staff [Ronnie Ramirez] hosted the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership Agricultural Issues Workgroup meeting in Harlingen. TWRI gave a presentation on Financial Incentive Opportunities in the Arroyo Colorado Watershed. This presentation will be given to landowners across the watershed, and therefore feedback from the workgroup was solicited. A Cameron County landowner presented his experience with financial incentive programs, particularly focusing on TSSWCB's WQMP Program. Updates for the Arroyo Colorado WQMP implementation and education grants were also given.

On April 19, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Ashley Alexander] and Regional Office staff [Ronnie Ramirez] attended the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership Habitat Issues Workgroup meeting in Weslaco. Discussion centered on Arroyo Colorado WPP implementation and various project updates, as well as, opportunities for future grants and potential studies.

On April 19, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Ashley Alexander] and Regional Office staff [Ronnie Ramirez] attended the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership Steering Committee meeting in Weslaco. Discussion centered on workgroup updates, long-term Partnership sustainability, as well as, opportunities for future implementation funding.

More information is available at <http://www.arroyocolorado.org/>. This WPP affects farming operations in the Arroyo Colorado watershed in Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties.

Brady Creek

Impairment: Dissolved Oxygen
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TCEQ

On May 3, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Aaron Wendt] attended a Brady Creek watershed stakeholder meeting in Melvin. Topics discussed included an overview of water quality data from across the watershed, impacts to water quality from oil and gas exploration activities, an overview of the different computer models to be used to characterize pollutant loading across the watershed, and the water quality education curriculum being utilized by schools in the watershed.

More information is available at <http://www.ucratx.org/NPSBrady.html>. This WPP has the potential to affect agricultural operations in the Brady Creek watershed in McCulloch, Concho, San Saba and Menard Counties.

Caddo Lake

Impairment: Dissolved Oxygen, pH, Bacteria
Mechanism: WPP, UAA
Lead: TCEQ

On April 25, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Mitch Conine] attended the Caddo Lake WPP Water Quality Workgroup meeting in Hughes Springs. The group discussed the comments received on the modeling technical reports that were completed to support development of the WPP. Some of the comments were able to be addressed while others will need additional instream water quality data and additional stakeholder input to move forward. The group discussed seeking additional funding to address the remaining outstanding modeling issues.

More information is available at http://www.netmwd.com/Caddo%20Lake%20Protection%20Plan/Caddo_index.html. This WPP affects poultry, forestry and other agricultural operations in the Caddo Lake watershed in Upshur, Camp, Morris, Cass, Harrison, Marion, Wood, and Gregg Counties.

Copano Bay and Mission and Aransas Rivers

Impairment: Bacteria
Mechanism: TMDL, UAA
Lead: TCEQ (TMDL), TSSWCB (UAA)

On April 18, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Jana Lloyd, Brian Koch] and field staff [Adrian Perez] attended the Bee SWCD #344 meeting in Beeville. Discussion centered on updating the SWCD on activities related to the Aransas Creek RUAA, as well as soliciting input regarding proposed monitoring locations.

More information on the TMDL is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl/42-copano.html> and on the RUAA at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/managementprogram/aransaruaa>. This TMDL will affect livestock operations in the Copano Bay and Mission and Aransas Rivers watershed in Bee, Goliad, Refugio, Karnes, Aransas and San Patricio Counties.

Cypress Creek

Concerns: Dissolved Oxygen, Bacteria
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TCEQ

On May 9, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a Cypress Creek watershed stakeholder meeting in Wimberley. This meeting focused on choosing BMPs for grazing land, urban development, and construction. The BMPs were introduced to the workgroups, then discussed and prioritized in the workgroups, and then in front of the steering committee.

More information is available at <http://www.cypresscreekproject.org/>. This WPP has the potential to affect livestock and farming operations in the Cypress Creek watershed in Hays County.

Double Bayou

Impairment: Bacteria, Dissolved Oxygen
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TSSWCB

On May 10, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Loren Warrick, Aaron Wendt, Brian Koch] met with staff

from the Houston Advanced Research Center, Shead Conservation Solutions, and the USGS to discuss initial steps to develop a WPP for the Double Bayou watershed. The focus of the meeting was to discuss the tasks and goals for the project over the next three years. Several key tasks were discussed, including public participation and stakeholder coordination, water quality monitoring, modeling and data analysis and public outreach and education.

More information is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/watersheds#doublebayou>. This WPP has the potential to affect agricultural operations in the Double Bayou watershed in Chambers and Liberty Counties.

Geronimo Creek

Impairment: Bacteria
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TSSWCB

On April 23 and 24, 2012, Guadalupe Blanco River Authority and Texas AgriLife Extension Service hosted two meetings in Seguin and New Braunfels to accept public comment on the draft Geronimo and Alligator Creeks WPP. Three comments from the public were received at the meetings. TSSWCB SRM staff [Loren Warrick] attended the meeting in New Braunfels on April 24.

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.

Lake Granger

Impairment: Bacteria
Concern: Sediment
Mechanism: WPP, UAA
Lead: TSSWCB (WPP), TCEQ (UAA)

On May 16, 2012, TCEQ released an RUAA Report for multiple waterbodies in the Brazos River Basin, including the following waterbodies in the Lake Granger watershed: Willis Creek 1247A and Mankins Branch 1248C. Public comment is solicited on the report and on any additional information regarding current or past recreation

activities occurring on the waterbodies. The public comment period extends through June 18, 2012.

More information on the WPP is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/watersheds#lakegranger>. More information on the RUAA is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/standards/ruaas/ruaasbrazos>. Both the WPP and the RUAA will affect farming and livestock operations in the Lake Granger watershed in Williamson and Burnet Counties.

Leon River

Impairment: Bacteria, Dissolved Oxygen
Mechanism: WPP, TMDL, UAA
Lead: TCEQ (TMDL, UAA), TSSWCB (WPP)

On May 16, 2012, TCEQ released an RUAA Report for multiple waterbodies in the Brazos River Basin, including the following waterbodies in the Leon River watershed: Leon River below Proctor Lake 1221, Resley Creek 1221A, South Leon River 1221B, Pecan Creek 1221C, Indian Creek 1221D, Plum Creek 1221E, and Walnut Creek 1221F. Public comment is solicited on the report and on any additional information regarding current or past recreation activities occurring on the waterbodies. The public comment period extends through June 18, 2012.

More information on the postponed bacteria TMDL is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl/34-leonbacteria.html>. More information on the WPP is available at <http://www.brazos.org/LeonRiverWPP.asp>. More information on the RUAA is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/standards/ruaas/ruaasbrazos>. The WPP, the TMDL, and the RUAA affect livestock operations in the Leon River watershed in Comanche, Coryell, Mills, Erath and Hamilton Counties.

Lower Nueces River

Impairment: None
Concern: Chlorophyll-a, Nutrients, Sediment
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: Third Party

On April 19, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Aaron Wendt] attended a Lower Nueces River Watershed Steering Committee meeting in Corpus Christi. The group discussed the status of a septic system inventory (previously funded by TSSWCB with a CWA §319(h) grant), progress made by the various work groups to develop implementation strategies and budgets, the installation of educational kiosks purchased with TSSWCB CWA §319(h) monies, recent water quality monitoring data, and the Don't Mess With Texas Water program being developed by TCEQ.

More information is available at <http://www.nuecesriverpartnership.org/>. This WPP has the potential to affect livestock and farming operations in the Lower Nueces River watershed below Lake Corpus Christi in Jim Wells, Nueces, and San Patricio Counties.

North Bosque River

Impairment: Nutrients, Bacteria
Mechanism: TMDL, I-Plan, UAA
Lead: TCEQ

On May 16, 2012, TCEQ released an RUAA Report for multiple waterbodies in the Brazos River Basin, including the following waterbodies in the North Bosque River watershed: Indian Creek 1226E, Sims Creek 1226F, Little Duffau Creek 1226K, Upper North Bosque River 1255, Goose Branch 1255A, North Fork Upper North Bosque River 1255B, Scarborough Creek 1255C, unnamed tributary of Goose Branch 1255E, unnamed tributary of Scarborough Creek 1255F, and Woodhollow Branch 1255G. Public comment is solicited on the report and on any additional information regarding current or past recreation activities occurring on the waterbodies. The public comment period extends through June 18, 2012.

More information on the RUAA is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/standards/ru>

[aas/ruaasbrazos](#). The RUAA has the potential to affect dairy operations in the North Bosque River watershed in Bosque, Erath, Somervell, Hamilton, Coryell and McLennan Counties.

Paso del Norte portion of the Rio Grande

Impairment: Bacteria
Concern: Nutrients, Salinity
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: Third Party

On May 9, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Jana Lloyd] attended a Texas Watershed Steward workshop in El Paso. Over 60 people attended the workshop that was sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and TSSWCB, in coordination with the Paso del Norte Watershed Council, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, and the New Mexico Environment Department. The training, focused on the Paso del Norte watershed, discussed what it means to be a watershed steward, watershed impairments, managing urban and rural lands through the use of BMPs, and how to get involved in community driven watershed protection and management. The workshop included an overview of water quality and watershed management in Texas and New Mexico. More information on the Texas Watershed Steward Program is available at <http://tws.tamu.edu/>.

More information is available at <http://www.pdnwc.org/>. This WPP has the potential to affect agricultural operations in the Paso del Norte watershed in El Paso County.

Pecan Bayou

Impairment: Bacteria
Mechanism: UAA
Lead: TSSWCB

On May 16, 2012, TCEQ released the RUAA Report for Mid Pecan Bayou. Public comment is solicited on the report and on any additional information regarding current or past recreation activities occurring on the waterbody. The public comment period extends through June 18, 2012. The report is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/standards/ruaas/midpecanbayou1431>.

More information is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/managementprogram/mpbruaa>. This project has the potential to affect livestock operations in portions of the Pecan Bayou watershed in Brown County.

Pecos River

Impairment: Dissolved Oxygen
Concern: Salinity
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TSSWCB

On April 23, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Mitch Conine] attended the Pecos River WPP field day at the Live Oak Ranch near Fort Lancaster, and on April 24, 2012, field staff [Ben Wilde] attended the field day at Santa Rosa Ranch near Cayanosa. The field days were well attended with a total of 74 landowners. Progress on the dissolved oxygen modeling currently being conducted was discussed with landowners. An update was given by Texas Forest Service on the status of saltcedar debris burning and on drought and tree mortality. Lastly, a brief presentation was given on technical assistance and financial incentives available to landowners. Participants were able to see conservation practices implemented to achieve water quality goals in the WPP through CWA §319(h) funding and through the USDA NRCS EQIP.

More information is available at <http://pecosbasin.tamu.edu/>. This WPP affects 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

Impairment: Bacteria
Concerns: Nutrients
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TSSWCB

On May 3, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Jana Baker, David Reeves] and field staff [Tony Franklin] attended the Caldwell-Travis SWCD #304 meeting in Lockhart. The purpose of attending the meeting was to update the SWCD on the recently submitted

Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) feral hog abatement proposal and introduce the new Plum Creek Watershed Coordinator to the SWCD.

On May 3, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Jana Lloyd, Aaron Wendt, Brian Koch] attended the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership Steering Committee meeting in Lockhart. The new Watershed Coordinator was introduced to the Partnership. Discussion centered on the approval of the WPP Update Report. Updates were given on the City of Kyle Implementation Grant and Water Reuse Feasibility Study, as well as, the Plum Creek Feral Hog Education project, and implementation of agricultural BMPs. Also there was an update on the Hillside Terrace SRF application and the Caldwell County Solid Waste grant application.

More information is available at <http://plumcreek.tamu.edu/>. This WPP affects livestock and farming operations in the Plum Creek watershed in Caldwell and Hays Counties.

San Bernard River

Impairment: Bacteria
Mechanism: WPP, UAA
Lead: TCEQ

On April 26, 2012, TSSWCB staff [Ashley Alexander, Brian Koch] attended a San Bernard River WPP meeting in West Columbia. Several presentations were given during the meeting. First, the Environmental Institute of Houston presented results of the RUAA study. Secondly, H-GAC staff presented an update, as well as distributed hardcopies, of the draft Executive Summary of the San Bernard River WPP. Input was solicited from stakeholders at the meeting, and the comments will be accepted on the document until June 1, 2012. Updates were also given on revisions to the San Bernard River WPP and on the TSSWCB-funded San Bernard River water quality monitoring project.

More information is available at <http://www.h-gac.com/go/sanbernard> and <http://www.sanbernardriver.com/>. This WPP affects farming and livestock operations in the San Bernard River watershed in Austin, Brazoria, Colorado, Fort Bend and Wharton Counties.

WATER SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The 81st Legislature continued funding for the Water Supply Enhancement Program by providing \$2,135,413 in General Revenue Funds in FY2012. Staff has begun implementing HB 1808 and the Sunset Commission's recommendations.

Staff Activities

The Water Supply Enhancement Program Working Committee met in Temple and has begun finalizing the new Water Supply Enhancement project application, ranking criteria, and an explanation on how to complete the new application. The new forms were presented at the State Board Meeting in May for final approval.

The Water Supply Enhancement Program has also been working with the TWDB to gather information on the water need for Texas.

FLOOD CONTROL DAM PROGRAMS

Background

Nearly 2,000 floodwater retarding structures, or dams, have been built over the last 60 years within the State of Texas. The primary purpose of the structures is to protect lives and property by reducing the velocity of floodwaters, and thereby releasing flows at a safer rate. These are earthen dams that exist on private property, and were designed and constructed by the United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS). They were built with the understanding that the private property owner would provide the land, the federal government would provide the technical design expertise and the funding to construct them, and then units of local government would be responsible for maintaining them into the future.

Local sponsors of the dams were required before a federal project began. Local sponsors signed a watershed agreement which outlined the duties and responsibilities of the federal and local sponsors. In general, local sponsors are required to obtain and enforce easements, conduct operation and

maintenance (O&M) inspections, maintain the structures, and implement land treatment measures in the watershed. SWCDs are one of the local sponsors in all watershed projects. Other local sponsors include counties, cities, and Water Control and Improvement Districts (WCIDs).

Due to the passage of time and difficulty in raising adequate funds locally, many sponsors approached the Texas Legislature with their concerns over amount of needed O&M and repairs. In recognition that these dams will continue to serve as a critical protection for our state's infrastructure, private property, and lives, the Legislature appropriated \$15 million dollars to TSSWCB for grants to local SWCDs during the 2010-2011 biennium for O&M and structural repairs.

In response to this appropriation, TSSWCB assembled a representative stakeholder group and began the process of developing programs to deliver the funds to the sponsors of flood control dams during the Summer of 2009. It was determined that the most efficient and effective way to proceed was to develop two separate grant programs, one to address O&M, and the other to address structural repairs, due to their difference in complexity.

O&M Grant Program Update

In FY2010, \$2,472,008 was allocated to 84 SWCDs and co-sponsors to conduct O&M activities on flood control dams. Currently, there is a balance of \$17,437 to be utilized by June 29, 2012.

In FY2011, \$2,472,008 was allocated to 84 SWCDs and co-sponsors to conduct O&M activities on flood control dams. Currently, there is a balance of \$276,902 to be utilized by August 31, 2012.

Structural Repair Grant Program Update

In FY2010, \$4,055,471 in program funds were obligated to conduct structural repairs on 18 flood control dams. The TSSWCB and local SWCDs partnered and leveraged resources through the USDA-NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program for disaster recovery and provided funding for structural repair activities on 5 of these dams. To date, all needed repairs have been

completed on 12 of the 18 flood control dams and the remaining six are under construction.

In FY2011, \$2,823,166 in program funds was obligated to conduct structural repairs on seven flood control dams. TSSWCB and local SWCDs continued to partner and leveraged resources through the USDA-NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program for disaster recovery and provided funding for structural repair activities on one of these dams. To date, all needed repairs have been completed on 1 of the 7 flood control dams and the remaining 6 are under construction.

In FY2012, the TSSWCB's budget was reduced from \$7.5 million per fiscal year to \$2 million per fiscal year. Due to this reduction in funding, the TSSWCB is currently only able to fund 2 flood control dam repair projects. Currently, \$1,364,836 of FY12 program funds have been obligated.

For more information on these programs, please visit the TSSWCB's website at:
<http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/en/floodcontrol>.

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.