



TEXAS STATE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

Program News and Activities

OCTOBER 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

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UPCOMING STATE BOARD WORK SESSION AND MEETING

The State Board has tentatively scheduled a Work Session on **Wednesday, November 19, 2014** and a formal State Board Meeting on **Thursday, November 20, 2014**. 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

- November 1st supplemental payments for Matching Funds FY2014 will be made.
- November 1st supplemental payments for TA FY2014 will be made. Regular and supplemental claims must be submitted with an original signature and post-marked 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

SPECIAL PROJECTS

The 2014 State Meeting is in the books and we had a wonderful turnout of over 600 people. We can't thank our directors enough for coming to Galveston. A press release will be out shortly and remember to thank our sponsors.

Mark your calendars for October 26-28, 2015 and plan on attending the 75th Annual State Meeting held in Corpus Christi.

WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRAM

With the enactment of Senate Bill 503 in 1993, the Texas Legislature designated the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) the lead agency in the state for the abatement, management, and prevention of nonpoint source pollution from agricultural or silvicultural sources. Additionally, the Legislature authorized the agency to administer a certified water quality management plan (WQMP) program, complete with a cost-share program to incentivize participation and offset the cost of implementing soil and water land improvement measures, for lands within the state. While the TSSWCB makes the program available on a statewide basis, the State Board approves priorities based on activity and geography to target the cost-share incentive funding to the areas of the state that exhibit the most need for nonpoint source pollution abatement.

The purpose of cost-share funding is to provide an incentive to landowners or operators to install soil and water conservation land improvement measures consistent with the purpose of controlling erosion, conserving water, and/or protecting water quality. Rule requires this be done in accordance with a water quality management plan certified by the State Board.

On September 9, 2014 and October 9, 2014 the regional Offices conducted a ranking exercise to rank all Requests for Cost-Share Incentive Funding. Regional office staff is currently working

with those producers who ranked out, to develop a certified WQMP. Once the WQMP is certified an application for Cost-Share Incentive funding is completed. This application obligates funding to that producer to be used to implement Best Management Practices.

POULTRY WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has given notice that all poultry growers have until March 1, 2015 to register any incinerators they have on their farms for mortality disposal. Incinerators found to be unregistered after that date may be subject to enforcement penalties. TSSWCB intends to send notice to all poultry growers with a WQMP.

All poultry staff continues to update existing WQMPs, develop new WQMPs for new and proposed poultry operations, conduct CAFO inspections on 20% of existing large poultry farms, conduct status reviews of all poultry WQMPs, and assist producers in obtaining incentive funding for installing approved practices on their 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.

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

FY2010 – FY2014 CWA §319(h) Grant Status

There are currently 38 on-going §319(h) grant-funded projects addressing a wide array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Unliquidated federal funds for these 38 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).

FY2013 – FY2015 State Grant Status

There are currently 21 on-going projects addressing an array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Unliquidated state funds for these 21 on-going projects total approximately \$3 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.

Water Quality Coordination Activities

Coordination with TCEQ

On September 26, 2014, TSSWCB SRM staff [Jana Lloyd, Ashley Wendt, Wesley Gibson, Mitch Conine, Brian Koch, TJ Helton, Liza Marshall] 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, water quality standard revisions and the 2014 Assessment (Integrated Report) progress. 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 status of the FY2014 CWA §319(h) NPS grant, FY2015 CWA §319(h) NPS grant Request-for-Proposals, Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP), the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program (CBBEP) and the Clean Rivers Program.

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 October 2, 2014, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a Galveston Bay Council Budget and Priorities subcommittee meeting in Houston. This meeting was held to approve the proposed project budget for FY16. Several projects from the different subcommittees were reviewed and discussed, leading to approval of the proposed projects. Other council business was discussed, including discussion of the by-laws and any changes that are needed.

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.

Water Quality Planning and Implementation

STATE DISTRICT III

Lower Nueces River

Impairment: Total Dissolved Solids
Concern: Chlorophyll-a, Nutrients, Sediment
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TSSWCB
Projects: "Development of the Lower Nueces River Watershed Protection Plan", Nueces River Authority; Federal \$309,727/External \$248,968

On October 7, 2014, TSSWCB SRM staff [Jana Lloyd] attended the Lower Nueces River Watershed Partnership Stakeholder meeting in Corpus Christi. Meeting topics consisted of updates on the development of the OSSF management plan and the large debris management plan. Other discussion focused on an upcoming water hyacinth survey and riparian workshop.

More information, including the draft *Source Water Protection Plan*, 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.

Plum Creek

Impairment: Bacteria
Concerns: Nutrients
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TSSWCB
Project: "Coordinating Implementation of the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan", Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority; Federal \$216,000/ External \$144,000
Project: "Surface Water Quality Monitoring and Additional Data Collection Activities to Support the Implementation of the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan",

Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority; Federal \$485,545/ External \$257,165

Project: "Implementing Agricultural Nonpoint Source Components of the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan", Caldwell-Travis SWCD #304; Federal \$150,788

On October 7, 2014, TSSWCB SRM staff [Liza Marshall] attended a Homeowner Septic System Workshop in San Marcos. The workshop provided homeowners within the Plum Creek Watershed information about the operation and maintenance of conventional and aerobic septic systems. Presentations included Introduction to Onsite Wastewater Treatment, Preventing Illness and Accidents, How OWTs Using Aerobic Treatment Work, and General Operation and Maintenance of Systems.

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.

STATE DISTRICT IV

Cedar Bayou

Impairment: Bacteria
Concerns: Macroinvertebrate Community, Dissolved Oxygen, Nutrients
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TSSWCB
Project: "Development of a Watershed Protection Plan for Cedar Bayou", Houston-Galveston Area Council; Federal \$804,000/ External \$353,876

On October 7, 2014, TSSWCB SRM staff [Ashley Wendt, Brian Koch] attended a Cedar Bayou Watershed Partnership Meeting in Baytown. The central focus of the meeting was on initial outcomes of the SWAT modeling and bacteria reduction goals. Copies of new chapters of the Watershed Protection Plan were also handed out for review at the meeting.

More information is available at <http://www.cedarbayouwatershed.com>. This WPP affects farming and livestock operations in the

Cedar Bayou watershed in Harris, Liberty, and Chambers Counties.

Double Bayou

Impairment: Bacteria, Dissolved Oxygen
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TSSWCB
Project: "Development of a Watershed Protection Plan for Double Bayou", Houston Advanced Research Center; Federal \$1,023,614/ External \$388,149

On September 30, 2014 SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a workgroup meeting for the Double Bayou Watershed Partnership in Anahuac. This meeting was the Agriculture, Wildlife and Feral Hog workgroup. Results from the first run of SELECT modeling were presented, with opportunity for stakeholder input. The SELECT model estimates total daily potential load from sources that are put into the model based on land use, densities, and populations. These loads only represent what can be deposited on the ground, the model is not capable of estimating in-stream loading.

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.

STATEWIDE PROJECTS (NOT WATERSHED SPECIFIC)

Project: "Statewide Delivery of Riparian and Stream Ecosystem Education Program", Texas Water Resources Institute/Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources; Federal \$317,486/External \$207,973

On October 8, 2014, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a Riparian and Stream Ecosystem Workshop targeted for multiple watersheds in the Corpus Christi area. Over 35 people attended the workshop that was sponsored by the Texas Water Resource Institute, TSSWCB and the Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources. The training focused on water quality issues including the key role riparian areas play in helping improve and protect water quality in the area. Topics

covered included: the definition of a watershed and riparian area, riparian vegetation ratings, how to photo monitor, and local resources for landowners. The training also involved a field tour which provided a chance to see a recovering riparian area and evaluate the vegetation within it. For more information on the Riparian and Stream ecosystem educational program, please visit <http://twri.tamu.edu/>.

Upcoming Public Meetings

- October 27 – 29, 2014 – 74th Annual Meeting of SWCDs (Galveston)
- November 6, 2014 – Mill Creek WPP Meeting (Bellville)
- November 13, 2014 – Mill Creek WPP Meeting (Brenham)
- November 20, 2014 – Upper San Antonio River I-Plan Meeting (San Antonio)

WATER SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

In order to help meet the State's critical water conservation needs and ensure availability of water supplies, the TSSWCB administers the WSEP to increase available surface and ground water through the selective control of brush species that are detrimental to water conservation (e.g., juniper, mesquite, saltcedar). The 83rd Legislature continued funding for the WSEP by providing \$2,135,413 in General Revenue Funds in FY2015.

- WSEP staff assisted SWCD Directors with WSEP issues at board meetings for the Pedernales SWCD #218, Bandera SWCD #229, Upper Nueces-Frio SWCD #238, Gillespie County SWCD #220, and Kendall SWCD #216.
- WSEP staff assisted Conservation Planners in the Upper Guadalupe River, Pedernales River, Frio River, Upper

Nueces River, and Edwards Aquifer projects.

- WSEP staff attended the following Texas Water Development Board Regional Water Planning Group meetings to discuss WSEP issues: Region K (October 8, 2014; Austin).
- On September 18, 2014, the State Board approved the allocation of \$1,436,590 in FY2015 cost-share funds to 13 WSEP projects. WSEP staff did send letter out in early October.
- On October 22, 2014 WSEP staff attended the Water Conservation Advisory Council meeting in Austin. Presented on WSEP and how we are implementing program changes.
- On October 30, 2014 WSEP staff attended the Texas Alliance Groundwater Districts meeting in Kingsville.
- More information on the WSEP is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/brushcontrol>.

FLOOD CONTROL DAM PROGRAMS

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) is appropriated general revenue by the Texas Legislature to provide grants to the sponsors of flood control dams for operation, maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation. The TSSWCB administers an Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Grant Program and a Structural Repair Grant Program, both of which are administered according to rules adopted by the State Board in 31TAC529. The rules for these programs specify which flood control dams are eligible for funding, the entities that are eligible to apply and receive funding, and the conditions under which a grant must be administered, matched, and reported.

For FY2013, \$2,050,997 was allocated to 69 dam sponsors to conduct O&M activities on flood

control dams through June 30, 2015. To date there is a balance of \$648,529 that still needs to be spent before the June 2015 deadline.

The TSSWCB has contracted with the Dalworth SWCD to conduct a major repair on Mountain Creek, Site 10, in Ellis County using \$5,600,000 of FY2014 funds.

TSSWCB has signed ten Project Agreements with NRCS for \$13. million in federal rehabilitation funding for planning, design, and construction on 15 dams. TSSWCB will be contracting for engineering services on these dams over the next three months. TSSWCB will also be providing financial assistance to sponsors for the local share of construction cost on 5 additional dams during the next three months.

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.

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