



TEXAS STATE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

Program News and Activities

OCTOBER 2013

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 scheduled a Work Session on **Wednesday November 20, 2013** and a formal State Board Meeting on **Thursday, November 21, 2013 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

- September 30th was the deadline for submitting Fiscal Year 2013
 - 4th Quarter Mileage/Per Diem claims and return of unused advance funds. Advance payments for Fiscal Year 2014 will not be paid if unused advanced funds from Fiscal Year 2013 are not returned by the deadline.

Regular and Supplemental Technical Assistance claims.

TSP allocations and required forms were mailed on September 23rd.

October 15th advance payments for 2014 Mileage and Per Diem were made.

October 31st was the deadline for submitting completed financial statements.

November 1st supplemental Technical Assistance, Matching Fund, and Mileage/Per Diem claims will be paid.

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

HUMAN RESOURCES

TSSWCB currently has 2 positions available at this time.

- Natural Resources Specialist III – Nacogdoches
- Natural Resources Specialist III- Temple

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

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Program Development Workshop

A new approach to promoting attendance at future program development workshops has been initiated for newly appointed directors and directors who will be elected in scheduled October elections. The new change that is being implemented incorporates a “New Director Training Agreement” included as part of the director document packet. A new director will be expected to complete and return the document to the TSSWCB headquarters. The purpose of the document is to seek a commitment to attend a scheduled training and to point out that it is an expectation that a new director attend a training conference within 18 months of assuming office.

In addition, future correspondence that will be mailed to new directors announcing a scheduled workshop will include a reminder of that agreement. To further emphasize the importance of attending a scheduled training workshop, special emphasis will be stressed during area discussion sessions at the State meeting.

The format of the training program is also undergoing some changes. As an incentive to

further encourage attendance, the agenda will include two hours of training on the “Open Meetings Act” and “Texas Public Information Act” which is mandatory training for newly appointed or elected directors. The topics will be presented by a representative of the Office of the Attorney General.

Directors, district employees and NRCS employees who want to receive CEU training toward maintaining current pesticide applicator licenses will also have this opportunity at future workshops. One hour of credit can be earned during the normal course of the workshop as a result of relevant program content. An additional two hours of credit on laws and regulations can be earned by attending an optional two hours of training following the conclusion of the Program Development Workshop

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

Conservation News

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

Conservation Video Library

There are over 200 conservation-related videos available; the 2011 catalog can be downloaded at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/infoed/videolibrary>. No rental fees are assessed to those wishing to borrow videos from the library.

Ordering a Video

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

Association of Texas SWCDs will pay the first transit postage costs to mail the video(s) to the requester. Postage for returning the video(s) will be the responsibility of the borrower. All videos must be insured upon return.

TEXAS NONPOINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

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

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

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

Nonpoint Source Grant Program

FY2008 – FY2012 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 \$9.2 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 CWA §319(h) Grant Application

TSSWCB's FY2013 CWA §319(h) grant application was submitted to EPA on June 18, 2013 requesting \$3,522,000 for 8 projects. On September 18, 2013, all 8 projects were approved for funding by EPA.

FY2014 Request for Proposals

On August 30, 2013, TSSWCB SRM staff issued the FY2014 Request for Proposals (RFP) for the NPS Grant Program. The RFP was published in the Texas Register, posted on the TSSWCB website, and all SWCDs and cooperating entities were notified of this funding opportunity. TSSWCB SRM staff identified priority areas and activities for this funding cycle based on the Texas NPS Management Program and the 2012 Integrated Report. The deadline for proposal submission was October 11, 2013.

FY2012 – FY2014 State Grant Status

There are currently 13 on-going projects addressing an array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Unliquidated state funds for these 13 on-going projects total approximately \$2 million and are primarily being used to implement agricultural NPS components of TMDL I-Plans; conduct Recreational Use Attainability Analyses (RUAA); support increased analytical infrastructure at public bacterial source tracking (BST) laboratories; demonstrate innovative BMPs on animal feeding operations and grazing lands; and collect and analyze water quality data for watersheds with impaired waterbodies.

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

Coastal NPS Pollution Control Program

The Texas Coastal Management Program (CMP) was created to coordinate state, local and federal

programs for the management of Texas coastal resources. The CMP improves the management of the State's coastal resources to ensure long-term ecological and economic productivity of the coast. The CMP brings in federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) funds to Texas to implement projects and program activities for a wide variety of purposes. The Texas General Land Office (GLO) and the Land Commissioner are responsible for coordinating activities associated with the CMP. The Coastal Coordination Advisory Committee (CCAC), established by the Texas Legislature, advises the Land Commissioner on matters related to implementation of the CMP; the TSSWCB is a statutorily-authorized member of the CCAC.

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

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

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

Coastal Coordination Advisory Committee

The CCAC was created during sunset legislation (SB656) in the 82nd legislature. SB656, which was enacted in 2011, abolished the Coastal Coordination Council and transferred its functions to the Land Commissioner and the GLO. The

legislation established the CCAC to advise the Land Commissioner on matters related to the CMP. The CCAC includes a representative of the TSSWCB designated by the Chairman of the State Board.

The general structure of the coastal program consists of workgroups from the agencies and governor appointees which focus on specific projects. The main function of the CCAC is to provide consistency review of federal projects and actions and to provide support to the workgroups.

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

CMP Grant Program

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

§306 Grants

Grant Cycle 19 final application deadline was September 25, 2013, with proposed project start dates of October 2014.

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

Coastal Planning

The coastal program is dedicating §309 funds to the creation of a long-term plan utilizing coastal and marine spatial planning. The first year of this five-year initiative was to create a report to provide a "snapshot" into the current priorities of the Texas coast. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of coastal experts was formed to review and evaluate the project list and the issues of concern for the four coastal regions. TSSWCB is participating in this planning effort as a member of the TAC. TAC regional meetings were held to identify the critical areas and needs of the Texas coast. The information collected at the TAC

meetings was used to develop a “snapshot” report to inform the 83rd Texas Legislature of the coastal priorities for each of the four regions, and to serve as a baseline for the long-term planning process. A brochure was also developed, *The Texas Coast: Shoring up our Future*, and can be found here: <http://www.glo.texas.gov/shoring-up-texas/shoring-up-our-future-brochure.pdf>.

Year two of this effort will continue with the creation of a broader planning effort. This long-term plan will better enable an integrated, adaptive management approach to plan for and balance competing natural and human uses along our coast. Meetings were scheduled with local elected officials in July and August in the various regions along the Texas coast, specifically Galveston, Beaumont, Port Lavaca, Corpus Christi and Port Isabel.

Water Quality Coordination Activities

Galveston Bay Estuary Program

Galveston Bay is an estuary of national importance and, through the federal CWA §320, is included in the National Estuary Program administered by the EPA. The Galveston Bay Council (GBC) is the stakeholder advisory group that coordinates the implementation of the *Galveston Bay Plan*, which is a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan developed under the auspices of the National Estuary Program. The TSSWCB is a named member of the Galveston Bay Council.

On September 17, 2013, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a Water and Sediment Quality (WSQ) Subcommittee meeting for the Galveston Bay Council in Houston. The meeting included a presentation on a regional BMP database from Harris County Flood Control District. Also, discussions were held on WSQ project planning and RESTORE Act funding opportunities. Watershed groups updated the subcommittee on their WPPs, I-plans, and other projects of interest.

More information is available at <http://www.qbep.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

Atascosa River

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

On October 10, 2013, TSSWCB SRM staff [Jana Lloyd] attended a Texas Well Owner Network training in Charlotte. Over 40 people attended the training that was sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Water Resource Institute and TSSWCB in coordination with the Evergreen Groundwater Conservation District. The training focused on water quality issues in the Atascosa River Watershed, as well as help private well owners to understand and care for their wells. Topics covered included: aquifers in Texas, private water well basics, onsite wastewater treatment, water quality and quantity, and protecting your water supply. More information on the Texas Well Owner Network Program is available at <http://twon.tamu.edu/>.

More information is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl/31-atascosa.html>. This project affects livestock operations in the Atascosa River watershed in Atascosa, Bexar, Frio, Karnes, Live Oak, McMullen, Medina and Wilson Counties.

Cypress Creek

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

A Texas Well Owner Network training took place in Wimberley on September 12, 2013. Over 90 people attended the training that was sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Water Resource Institute and TSSWCB in coordination with the Cypress Creek Watershed Partnership. The training focused on water quality issues in the Cypress Creek Watershed, as well as help private well owners to understand and care for their wells. Topics covered included:

aquifers in Texas, private water well basics, onsite wastewater treatment, water quality and quantity, and protecting your water supply. More information on the Texas Well Owner Network Program is available at <http://twon.tamu.edu/>.

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.

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 3, 2013, TSSWCB SRM staff [Ashley Wendt] attended the Cedar Bayou Watershed Partnership Steering Committee Meeting in Baytown. The first half of the meeting was dedicated to having partners active in the watershed, City of Baytown and Galveston Bay Foundation, present on current and upcoming activities. The City of Baytown focused on their current wastewater improvement programs such as the Sanitary Sewer Overflow Initiative (SSOI) and Private Service Line Inspection Program (P-SLIP). Their SSOI program, in coordination with TCEQ, dedicates at least \$1 million a year to wastewater improvements such as pipe bursting and repairing or replacing taps and manholes. The second half of the meeting focused on reviewing preliminary chapters of the WPP. Stakeholders are asked to provide comments/revisions/edits to these chapters prior to the next meeting occurring the first week of December 2013.

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 17, 2013, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch, TJ Helton] attended a Double Bayou Watershed meeting in Double Bayou. This meeting focused on building the Partnership's Steering Committee and Workgroups, with presentations focused on the role of the respective groups in developing the WPP. Meeting participants signed up for different roles in the partnership. TCEQ also presented information on the fish tissue advisories for PCBs and Dioxins. There are no known sources in the watershed, but since the bayou itself drains to the Galveston Bay system, it is included in the advisory.

More information is available at <http://doublebayou.harc.edu/>. This WPP has the potential to affect agricultural operations in the Double Bayou watershed in Chambers and Liberty Counties.

Other State District IV Projects

Project: "Building Partnerships for Cooperative Conservation in the Trinity River Basin", Texas Water Resources Institute; Federal \$437,946/ External \$293,569*

On October 2, 2013, TSSWCB SRM staff [Ashley Wendt, Pamela Casebolt] attended the Trinity River Land and Water Summit hosted by Trinity Waters and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, in coordination with the Texas Water Resources Institute, in Athens. The importance of the value the Trinity River provides and land stewardship were the focus of the Summit. Over 80 people attended the Summit workshop, which was highlighted by keynote speakers, Bob McCan, National Cattlemen's Beef Association President Elect, and Todd Staples, Texas Agriculture Commissioner. Information provided to attendees, as well as feedback received, is

crucial to future watershed planning efforts and therefore, keeping the Trinity River healthy. More information can be found at <http://www.trinitywaters.org/>.

STATE DISTRICT V

Lampasas River

Impairment: Bacteria, Dissolved Oxygen
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TSSWCB
Project: “Coordinating Implementation of the Lampasas River Watershed Protection Plan”, Texas A&M AgriLife Research; Federal \$205,305/External \$162,913

On September 18, 2013 TSSWCB SRM staff [Wes Gibson] attended a Lone Star Healthy Streams Workshop to support implementation of the Lampasas WPP in Lampasas. The workshop covered all aspects of water quality and the role that beef cattle, feral hogs, and horses play in keeping our streams and rivers healthy. Education and outreach through workshops like these are critical to abating and preventing water quality issues. For more information about workshops like these, visit <http://lshs.tamu.edu/>.

More information is available at <http://www.lampasasriver.org/>. This WPP affects livestock operations in the Lampasas River watershed in Bell, Burnet, Hamilton, Lampasas and Mills Counties.

STATEWIDE PROJECTS (NOT WATERSHED-SPECIFIC)

Project: “Continued Statewide Delivery of the Texas Watershed Steward Program”, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service; Federal \$417,398/ External \$72,033

A Texas Watershed Steward workshop took place on September 19, 2013 in Killeen. Over 32 people attended the workshop that was sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and TSSWCB, in coordination with Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. The training, focused on the Nolan Creek 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. More information on the Texas Watershed Steward Program is available at <http://twsw.tamu.edu/>.

A Texas Watershed Steward workshop took place on October 11, 2013 in Austin. Over 35 people attended the workshop that was sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and TSSWCB, in coordination with the Lower Colorado River Authority. The training, focused on the Colorado River 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. More information on the Texas Watershed Steward Program is available at <http://twsw.tamu.edu/>.

Project: “Preventing Water Quality Contamination Through the Texas Well Owner Network”, Texas Water Resources Institute; Federal \$474,627/ External \$312,296

A Texas Well Owner Network training took place in Weatherford on October 2, 2013. Over 160 people attended the training that was sponsored by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Water Resource Institute and TSSWCB in coordination with the Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District and the City of Fort Worth Water Department. The training focused on water quality issues in the Upper West Fork Trinity River Watershed, as well as help private well owners to understand and care for their wells. Topics covered included: aquifers in Texas, private water well basics, onsite wastewater treatment, water quality and quantity, and protecting your water supply. More information on the Texas Well Owner Network Program is available at <http://twon.tamu.edu/>.

Upcoming Public Meetings

- November 5, 2013 – Texas Watershed Steward Workshop (Sugarland)
- November 6, 2013 – Texas Watershed Steward Workshop (Spring)
- November 7, 2013 Plum Creek Watershed Partnership Steering Committee Meeting (Lockhart)
- November 19, 2013 – Texas Well Owner Network Training, Leona River (Uvalde)
- November 22, 2013 – Feral Hog Workshop, Leon River (Gatesville)

Staff Activities

- Finalized all FY11 program funds
- Completed FY13 Performance Measures, which includes the water yield report
- Funded the following feasibility studies: Lake O.H. Ivie Reservoir, Honey Creek, Upper Llano River, and Goliad/Victoria counties
- Collaborated with USGS, SARA, and the Corps of Engineers to begin developing the model for Goliad/Victoria counties
- Met with the Texas Farm Bureau to review potential WSEP projects on the Brazos River
- Attended the Region L Water Planning Meeting
- Posted FY14 Application for WSEP projects on the TSSWCB website and mailed official letter to the districts
- Currently working with USGS and Lubbock to develop a contract to study Lake Allen Henry

WATER SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

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

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.



4311 SOUTH 31ST STREET, SUITE 125
TEMPLE, TEXAS 76502

(254) 773-2250 <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov>

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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