

**Fish Sampling Advisory Subcommittee (FSAS)  
Toxic Substances Coordinating Committee (TSCC)  
Minutes from February 10, 2009**

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
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1. Michael Tennant of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Seafood and Aquatic Life Group (SALG) called the meeting of the Fish Sampling Advisory Subcommittee (FSAS) of the Toxic Substances Coordinating Committee (TSCC) to order on February 10, 2009.
2. Mike reiterated the completion of sampling for the East Texas Mercury Reservoirs Project. All risk characterizations have been completed with the exception of two: Lake Isabel and Village Creek (currently working on drafts).
3. Mike announced a list of Statewide Fish Tissue Monitoring Project water-bodies of which sampling is complete and are awaiting partial data from GERG. They are as follows:
  - Neches River-currently working on draft {mercury exceedance; sampling completed (60 samples) in September 2007}
  - Granger Lake-reviewing QA/QC {pesticides exceedance; sampling completed (40 samples) in February 2008}
  - Lake Mineral Wells-reviewing QA/QC {mercury exceedance; sampling completed (59 samples) in March 2008}
  - Gordon Lake-reviewing QA/QC {mercury exceedance; sampling completed (46 samples) in March 2008}
  - Lake Alan Henry-currently working on draft {mercury exceedance; sampling completed (100 samples) in March-April 2008}

4. Mike also listed four water-bodies that are scheduled for reevaluation in the TMDL 303(d) Listed Waters Project. They are as follows:
  - Clear Creek-draft in review {Advisory rescinded on October 9, 2001; sampling completed (30 samples) in April 2007}
  - Leon Creek-awaiting partial data {Currently has an advisory for PCBs; sampling completed (50 samples) in November 2007}
  - Trinity River-awaiting data {Currently has an advisory and ban area (12 sites) for PCBs, Chlordane, and DDE; sampling completed (130 samples) in July 2008}
  - Lake Worth-awaiting data {Currently has an advisory for PCBs; sampling completed (80 samples) in October 2008}
  - Mountain Creek Lake-awaiting data {Currently has a ban for PCBs and organochlorine pesticides; sampling completed (80 samples) in October 2008}
5. Mike announced to the group he was informed of a fish kill in the Victoria barge canal on January 20-21, 2009. Alex Nunez of the TPWD Spills and Kills Team informed Mike that acetone cyanohydrin was the contaminant responsible; detected at < 0.25 ppm to 0.5 ppm on January 20<sup>th</sup>. However, none was detected on January 21<sup>st</sup>.
6. Mike announced that two bills have been filed in the legislative session. They are as follows:
  - HB681-pertains to warning signs for mercury in retail establishments
  - HB679-pertains to testing of fish tissue for mercury in retail establishments

Possible future legislation to be filed requiring DSHS SALG to use 0.3 mg/kg as opposed to the current 0.7 mg/kg mercury level to issue fish consumption advisories/bans.

7. Mike informed the subcommittee that the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is in the process of placing fish consumption advisory and or ban signs at all pertinent public boat ramps across the state. DSHS SALG has received numerous calls questioning whether signs indicate new or existing advisories (predominately concerning the mercury advisory for king mackerel along the Texas Gulf Coast and the mercury advisory for largemouth bass and freshwater drum in Sam Rayburn Reservoir)
8. Mike announced that the DSHS print shop has sent a proof our new fish consumption advisory booklet for review, but the print shop is having issues converting a few details from PC to MAC. Hopefully the new booklet will be issued in late February or early March 2009.

9. Mike informed the subcommittee that a question regarding how DSHS assesses fish tissue arsenic exposure was recently asked. The question was with regard to why the DSHS does not apply the assumption that 10% of total arsenic is inorganic arsenic in the calculation of the arsenic health assessment comparison (HAC value). Rather, DSHS applies the above mentioned factor to the reported arsenic concentration prior to risk assessment. Upon review, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends that the assumption be applied to the reported arsenic concentration rather than the calculation of the arsenic HAC value. It was also noted, that at some point in time, there may be different values for freshwater and marine fish species.
10. Lastly, Mike announced that the Environmental and Injury Epidemiology and Toxicology Branch of DSHS would like the DSHS SALG to collect fish tissue samples from Joe Pool Reservoir in conjunction with air quality and sediment data the EIET branch would collect to conduct a public health assessment (pending available funding)
11. Dania Grundmann (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, TCEQ, Total Daily Maximum Load Program, TMDL) announced that TCEQ is currently developing the Trinity River TMDL and there will be a public hearing in Spring 2009 to discuss the results.
12. Dania also mentioned that there is a new standard (currently 126 CFU) being proposed (206 CFU) for evaluating the geo-mean of bacteria.
13. Pat Bohannon (TCEQ, Surface Water Quality Monitoring Team, SWQM) passed out a copy of his poster presentation entitled “Current Status of the Texas Interagency Statewide Fish Tissue Monitoring Program” which he gave at the annual Texas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society meeting in Ft. Worth, Texas on January 27-31, 2009. Pat also passed along a copy of a poster presentation entitled “Mercury concentration in red snapper (*Lutjanus campechanus*) from the northern Gulf of Mexico” authored by Brianne Kiestler and Matthew Chumchal, Texas Christian University; Kevin Boswell, Michelle Zapp, and James Cowan Jr., Louisiana State University; R.J. David Wells, Texas A&M University at Galveston.
14. Pat announced that the “National Fish Tissue Study in Large Rivers” project in conjunction with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to gather baseline information has been completed.
15. Lastly, Pat gave an overview of the latest mercury taskforce meeting, which included discussions mostly concerning TMDL processes and 5M (must be a comprehensive air mercury emission reduction before being accepted) approaches to deal with mercury issues.
16. Mark Luedke (TPWD, Contaminants Assessment Team) provided a handout of data listing 20 reservoirs to be sampled beginning in March 2009 as part of the reevaluation of the East Texas Mercury Reservoirs Project.

17. Mark also passed along a handout of mercury in fish tissue data from fish species collected in the Trinity River (Lake Livingston to coast) from 3 sites (HWY 59, HWY 90, and IH 10). Mark informed the subcommittee that he and Roxie Mills also want to collect fish tissue samples from alligator gar from the same sites. Projected collection time is summer 2009.
18. Stephen Twidwell (TPWD, Spills and Kills Team) announced recent fish kills. They are as follows:
  - Small pond connected to Tranquitas Creek (eventually empties into Baffin Bay) outside of Kingsville, TX (Fish kill was concentrated only in the pond and the land owner agreed to treat it)
  - Lower Brazos River below IH 10 (predominately carp and catfish species affected)
19. Steve also mentioned that bioassays taken at Moss Creek, Lake E.V. Spence, and Colorado City Lake (20,000 cells / mL) showed toxicity (golden algae), but there were no signs of stress to fishes.
20. Dr. David Villarreal (Texas Department of Agriculture, TDA) informed the subcommittee feral hog issues continue to garner interest within the department. As a result, there may be some legislative bills filed in relation to the issue.
21. David also mentioned that bacteria source tracking continues to be an issue within the department.
22. Lastly, David mentioned that the use of personal care products and pharmaceuticals continue to garner interest within the department, as well as support from local municipalities.
23. Charles Smith (TPWD) announced that the coastal assessment group is currently finalizing the report for the Environmental Protection Agency (water quality, sediment, metals and organics data collected from 2000 to 2004). The report will be presented to the USEPA upon completion. Charles also noted that arsenic in fish tissue is part of the report and that the coastal assessment group is examining the way it is evaluated.

The subcommittee will next meet on Tuesday May 12, 2009. The meeting will convene at 9:30 AM at the Exchange Building, 8407 Wall Street

Mike Tennant (DSHS) adjourned this meeting of the FSAS subcommittee. Respectfully submitted by Zack Thomas (DSHS) this 1<sup>st</sup> day of April 2009.