



**Watershed Coordination Steering Committee  
Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board  
Wharton Regional Office**

**Meeting Summary  
Thursday, June 30, 2005**

**Attendance**

Persons present:

Steven	Johnston	Galveston Bay Estuary Program
Debbie	Magin	Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority
Carl	Masterson	Houston-Galveston Area Council
Sylvia	Balentine	Lavaca-Navidad River Authority
Chad	Kinsfather	Lavaca-Navidad River Authority
David	Cowan	Lower Colorado River Authority
Walter	Garrett	Lower Colorado River Authority – Board of Directors
Dwight	Head	Natural Resources Conservation Service – Corpus Christi Zone
Rocky	Freund	Nueces River Authority
Miles	Hall	Sabine River Authority
Stephen	Lusk	San Antonio River Authority
Laurie	Curra	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality – Clean Rivers Program
Gail	Rothe	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality – TMDL Program
Nikki	Dictson	Texas Cooperative Extension – Master Watershed Steward Program
Monty	Dozier	Texas Cooperative Extension – Soil and Crop Sciences
Richard	Eyster	Texas Department of Agriculture
Shane	Harrington	Texas Forest Service
Cindy	Contreras	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – Coastal Fisheries Division
Kevin	Wagner	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
Aaron	Wendt	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board

Committee agencies not represented:

Brazos River Authority  
Brazos Valley Council of Governments  
Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program  
Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission  
Lower Neches Valley Authority  
Natural Resources Conservation Service – Bryan Zone  
South East Texas Regional Planning Commission  
Texas General Land Office  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – Inland Fisheries Division  
Texas Water Development Board  
Texas Water Resources Institute  
Trinity River Authority

## **Call To Order**

Aaron Wendt opened the second meeting of the Watershed Coordination Steering Committee (WCSC) of the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) Wharton Regional Office (WRO). Self-introductions of those in attendance were made. The meeting was held at the Colorado SWCD office in Columbus, Texas and was well attended by invited entities, some added since the first meeting.

## **Review of this Coordinated Watershed Protection Planning Project**

Aaron Wendt presented a brief refresher overview of 1) the TSSWCB and its program areas, 2) this coordinated watershed protection planning project and its various goals and tasks, and 3) Watershed Protection Plans (WPPs) and the EPA guidance on developing WPPs. For a detailed review of this presentation, please see the Adobe Acrobat PDF handouts or Microsoft PowerPoint presentation.

## **Update on Watershed Coordinator Activities**

Aaron Wendt provided an update on activities conducted since the first WCSC meeting in March 2005. Membership gaps on this committee were addressed by adding CBBEP, NRCS, TPWD and TFS. After further discussion on including a private citizen on this committee, the consensus was to not include that stakeholder group at this time. As this project moves into a specific watershed, private citizens will be an integral demographic serving on the local Watershed Action Committee. There is a distinction between this WCSC and WPP partnerships. Design of the project website continues. As design and publishing is being done by TSSWCB staff, the timeframe for posting is uncertain. Watershed Coordinator participation in numerous meetings (CRP, TMDL) to further an understanding of ongoing projects and monitoring efforts. For a detailed review of this project update, please see the Adobe Acrobat PDF handouts or Microsoft PowerPoint presentation.

## **Discussion of Watershed Inventory and Priority Criteria Assessment**

Aaron Wendt led a discussion of the watershed inventory and priority criteria assessment. Workplan Task 3 is to prioritize watersheds in the Wharton Region. This steering committee will identify watersheds in the region and prioritize the watersheds based on a developed set of criteria.

After a closer examination of HUC-8 watershed delineations and the Wharton Regional Office service area, three watersheds were recommended to be removed from this project's service area (12020002 Middle Neches, 12070205 San Gabriel, and 12110108 Lower Frio). The WCSC concurred with the recommendation. This reduces the project's service area to 48 HUC-8 watersheds (all of or portions of) covering 40 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in 47 counties in southeast and south central Texas.

The first draft of the priority criteria assessment was circulated prior to this meeting. Discussion points and comments included:

- Rural to urban interface – stream assessment before development occurs to obtain baseline water quality data
- Large geographic scope of project suggests a need to focus on smaller watersheds for WPP development

- Pick watersheds that have high probability to demonstrate positive results – a developed plan that is implemented resulting in water quality improvements and 303(d) de-listings
- Particular interest in Coastal Zone watersheds
- How to correlate this project with active TMDL projects in 25 counties in service area
- Voluntary nature of WPPs
- Watersheds with listed waterbodies are the target but those with active TMDL projects should be avoided for this WPP
- Integrate flooding issues into WPP – stakeholder driven
- Focus on 303(d) category 5c; category 5b is too specialized
- Include category 4 (atrazine threatened)
- Capture NPS potential – focus on watersheds with high % of NPS versus point source
- Weight agriculture-induced impairments greater with focus on DO and bacteria impairments
- Weight non-listed but threatened with high potential for listing
- Don't over-weight listed waterbodies versus others
- Threatened waterbody with high potential for further degrading water quality
- Trinity Bay has high nutrients (P) but is not currently listed on 303(d)
- Caney Creek (Wharton/Matagorda counties) has DO standards issues, also Armand Bayou
- Weight for a 501(c)(3) citizen group
- Critical to evaluate existing BMPs and funding mechanisms
- TCEQ Source Water Assessment team has data on vulnerability of drinking water sources
- Census data can suggest potential urban flight
- Criteria need to be more objective/numerical versus narrative descriptions
- Correlate with NRCS EQIP funding priorities
- Concerns lists
- Likelihood of success in project timeframe
- Put criteria into GIS
- Evaluate geographic involvement of WCSC (NRA vs. GBEP)
- Some point source issues evolve into NPS (Lake Dunlap)
- Evaluate the volume of data for a particular listing – single sample event to list
- Watershed definition – by sampling locations? Mixture of classified segments, HUCs and local usage (CRP)
- Include criterion evaluating how much commitment from local WCSC members - \$, resources, manpower

#### Discussion on other topics included:

- How many WPPs is this project going to develop? One per year, so two WPPs in remainder of project timeframe. Potential to extend the project exists.
- Are there other TSSWCB WPP projects? Yes, Pecos River (TCE), Concho River (UCRA), Little Wichita River (TiAER), North Bosque River (BRA). Also TCEQ led Arroyo Colorado through TCE Sea Grant.
- WPPs will help acquire funding, specifically agriculture \$
- EPA Environmental Finance Centers, R6 at New Mexico Tech
- WPPs and technical estimates of load reductions, BMP effectiveness – will engineers/modeling be involved?
- WPPs not as stringent as TMDLs so TSSWCB will accomplish WPPs without engineers/modeling

- Add TCEQ Source Water Assessment to WCSC
- Add/invite EPA representative

The Texas Master Watershed Steward Program, discussed at the first WCSC meeting, has hired a watershed educator. Nikki Dictson will lead this TSSWCB 319-funded project that is intricately tied to this Wharton Region Coordinated Watershed Protection Planning project.

### **Reciprocating Your Involvement on this Committee**

TSSWCB does not want WCSC members to feel like this is a one-way street with the WRO Watershed Coordinator continuously seeking input and involvement without some return on the commitment. What can the Watershed Coordinator do for your agency? What does your agency expect to achieve with involvement in this project? The website and newsletter are opportunities to reciprocate member entities involvement. What does the WCSC need?

### **Path Forward**

Future dates for WCSC meetings were established with consent of the committee.

- September 22, 2005
- December 15, 2005
- March 9, 2006
- June 8, 2006
- September 7, 2006
- December 7, 2006
- March 8, 2007
- June 7, 2007

At the September 22 meeting, the priority criteria assessment will be finalized.

### **Adjournment**

Aaron Wendt thanked those in attendance for their active participation. Today's discussions on the watershed assessment criteria will allow this project to move towards WPP development in watersheds with the greatest need for assistance and the greatest opportunity for success.