



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

**Meeting Summary
Thursday, December 15, 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
David Cowan	*Lower Colorado River Authority
Tomas Dominguez	*Natural Resources Conservation Service – Zone 3
Miles Hall	*Sabine River Authority
Steve Lusk	*San Antonio River Authority
Laurie Curra	*Texas Commission on Environmental Quality – Clean Rivers Program
Arthur Talley	*Texas Commission on Environmental Quality – TMDL Program
Monty Dozier	Texas Cooperative Extension – Soil and Crop Sciences
Nikki Dictson	Texas Cooperative Extension – Texas Master Watershed Steward
Mark McFarland	*Texas Cooperative Extension – Soil Fertility and Water Quality
Dale Rankin	Texas Cooperative Extension – Colorado County Extension Agent
Richard Eyster	*Texas Department of Agriculture – Pesticide Program Division
Shane Harrington	*Texas Forest Service
Cindy Contreras	*Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – Coastal Fisheries
David Sager	*Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – Inland Fisheries
Susan Benner	Texas Sea Grant
Kevin Wagner	*Texas Water Resources Institute
Kendria Ray	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
Aaron Wendt	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
Brian Koch	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board

**WCSC member*

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 – Zone 4
Nueces River Authority
South East Texas Regional Planning Commission
Texas General Land Office
Texas Water Development Board
Trinity River Authority

Call To Order

Brian Koch opened the fourth 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 County SWCD in Columbus, Texas and was moderately attended by steering committee members.

Update on Watershed Coordinator Activities

Brian Koch gave an overview of Watershed Coordinator activities since the previous meeting on November 3. Brian Koch, Nikki Dictson, and Kevin Wagner attended the “Essential Elements for Successful Watershed Planning” conference in Fayetteville, Arkansas December 5-9. The conference focused on planning, selection of stakeholder groups, BMP comparison and implementation, case studies for group projects, networking exercises, group discussions and presentations that were evaluated and incorporating EPA’s Nine Elements into a watershed plan.

Overview of the Selection Process

Aaron Wendt led a discussion on the review of priority criteria assessment parameters for the selection of the waterbody for a WPP. These ten parameters were approved for weighing criteria at the meeting on November 3: (Weighting Score in Parentheses)

- Impairment (17.26)
- Planning Status (7.26)
- LULC (8.47)
- Implementation Status (8.05)
- Size (5.21)
- Ag NPS Potential (14.11)
- Threat or LULC Change (9.95)
- Member Priority (7.63)
- Coastal Zone (6.75)
- Stakeholder Buy-in (15.26)

Each parameter was evaluated and scored independently and then weighted against each other to obtain overall watershed score. Percent weight of each of the ten parameters to the overall score was determined by polling WCSC and taking average of weighting %. All WCSC members received a list of the ten parameters and were asked to attribute a % (to total 100%) to each of the parameters. These scores were then applied to a worksheet containing all of the watersheds that fall in the WRO. The worksheet was submitted to the WCSC by email, and each member was asked to select their top three watersheds and rank them according to their concerns and priority for a WPP. Next, the selected watersheds were weighed against each other, and the top five were submitted to the WCSC at the meeting to select for the WPP. The top five waterbodies were:

1. Colorado River above LaGrange SegID 1434
2. Colorado River below Town Lake SegID 1428
3. Remainder of HUC 12100102 SegID 1604 (Lake Texana Watershed)
4. Remainder of HUC 12030203 SegID 0801 (Trinity River Below Tidal)
5. Plum Creek SegID 1810

Discussion and Approval of Selected Waterbody for a Watershed Protection Plan (WPP)

Brian Koch led a discussion working toward the selection of the first waterbody for a WPP. The top five were announced to the WCSC members and the positives and negatives for each one were discussed, with the focus being on Lake Texana and Plum Creek, criteria included overall size, what private and public entities were located in these areas, help from the communities located within the watershed, marketing possibilities, stream versus reservoir, probability of being de-listed from the 303d list after implementation of a WPP, and greatest chance for a successful plan. The WCSC members selected Plum Creek as the selected waterbody for the pilot WPP. The factors in selecting Plum Creek included:

- SWCD is very active
- Location gives it “Good Marketing Value”
- 303d listing (bacteria)
- Manageable Size
- County Extension Agents have high involvement water and land use change issues
- Secondary Concerns nitrate and nitrite nitrogen, ammonia, total phosphorus
- Oil and Gas production is high in the Area, potential concern
- Population is rapidly increasing in this area

Plan of Attack for Selected Watershed

Brian Koch and Nikki Dictson introduced the Plan of Attack for Plum Creek.

- Research Watershed (WQ Data/maps/LULC/etc.)
- Talk to local agencies/TCEQ/DOH/RA
- Start work on forming local stakeholder group
 - identify “major players” i.e. key landowner, city council, mayor, newspaper editor, etc...
- Start awareness campaign through media on general water quality issues
- Build task groups based on stakeholders’ expertise
 - e.g. agriculture groups
- Plan initial meetings located in different cities within the watershed to build stakeholder base
- Start the planning process

Brian Koch introduced a timeline for the Plum Creek WPP.

Month 0 (December) – Selecting Watershed

Start Research and Background of Watershed

Month 1 & 2 (January & February) – Start building partnership, engage technical advisory group: TCEQ, CRP, TPWD, GLO, RA, collecting hard data on site. Identify local Stakeholders

Month 2 (February) – Media Blitz on General WQ issues, and continue building Stakeholder Group

Month 3 (March) – Continue Media Blitz on General WQ and start Advertising Series of Public Meetings

Month 4 (April) Seek Commitment to Partnership / Discuss task groups

Month 5 (May) – First Partnership Meeting

Month 6 (June) – 2nd Partnership Meeting / Identify Chair

Month 7 (July) – Task Groups Meeting

Month 8 (August) – Task Groups

Month 9 (September) – Partnership Meeting
Month 10 (October) – Task Groups
Month 11 (November) – Task Groups
Month 12 (December) – Partnership Meeting
Month 13 (January) – Task Groups
Month 14 (February) – Task Groups
Month 15 (March) –Partnership review and endorse Plan / Partnership transforms to Watershed Action Committee Series of Public Meetings about Outcome of the plan, and implementation
Month 15 (March) – Regional Steering Committee review and endorse Plan
Month 15 (March) – Equals Month Zero in Planning for the next Priority Watershed
Month 17 (April) – TSSWCB/ TCEQ review and endorse Plan
Month 18 (May) – EPA review and endorse Plan

Path Forward

Action Items

- Next meeting March 9, 2006
- WCSC Members serve as technical advisors to local watershed committees region-wide
- Beginning of calendar 2006 – start planning process in selected watershed
- First of the Monthly Newsletters to WCSC January 2006

Adjournment

Brian Koch thanked those in attendance for their active participation. Today's selection of Plum Creek as the first WPP for the WRO is a great step towards achieving our goal in finding a watershed for the greatest chance of success.