



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

**Meeting Summary  
Thursday, March 9, 2006**

**Attendance**

Persons present:

James Kubecka	Fayette County Commissioner
Tom Muras	Fayette County Commissioner
Steven Johnston	*Galveston Bay Estuary Program
Debbie Magin	*Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority
Carl Masterson	*Houston-Galveston Area Council
Sylvia Balentine	*Lavaca-Navidad River Authority
Tomas Dominguez	*Natural Resources Conservation Service – Zone 3
Robbie Davis	Natural Resources Conservation Service – Victoria
John Payne	*Sabine River Authority
Steve Lusk	*San Antonio River Authority
Arthur Talley	*Texas Commission on Environmental Quality – TMDL Program
Monty Dozier	Texas Cooperative Extension – Soil and Crop Sciences
Nikki Dictson	Texas Cooperative Extension – Texas Watershed Steward Program
Cecilia Wagner	Texas Cooperative Extension – Soil and Crop Sciences
John O’Connell	Texas Cooperative Extension – Matagorda County Marine Agent
Richard Eyster	*Texas Department of Agriculture – Pesticide Program Division
Shane Harrington	*Texas Forest Service
Cindy Contreras	*Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – Coastal Fisheries
Susan Benner	Texas Sea Grant
Kevin Wagner	*Texas Water Resources Institute
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 Colorado River Authority  
Lower Neches Valley Authority  
Natural Resources Conservation Service – Zone 4  
Nueces River Authority  
South East Texas Regional Planning Commission  
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality- Clean Rivers Program  
Texas General Land Office  
Texas Parks and Wildlife-Inland Fisheries

### **Call To Order**

Brian Koch opened the fifth 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 Agriculture Building in Columbus, Texas and was moderately attended by steering committee members and invited guests.

### **Update on Watershed Coordinator Activities**

Brian Koch gave an overview of Watershed Coordinator activities since the previous meeting on December 15, 2005.

- Participated in the EPA's Webcast on the "Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect our Waters". The handbook is available online at [http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/watershed\\_handbook/](http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/watershed_handbook/)
- Attended the Clean Rivers Program meetings for the Brazos River Authority and the Nueces River Authority
- Attended training for ArcGIS 9.1
- The inaugural issue of the Coordinated Watershed Planning in Southeast and South Central Texas newsletter was distributed on March 1, 2006

### **Update on Plum Creek**

Brian Koch gave an update on the progress of the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan.

- December 15 WCSC selected Plum Creek for WPP
- January 6 first official visit to Plum Creek with GBRA, Plum Creek Conservation District (PCCD), and Caldwell and Hays County Extension Agents
- Plum Creek WPP Press Release by TSSWCB
- Introduced the Plum Creek WPP at the meetings of Caldwell-Travis and Hays County SWCDs, also at the PCCD and the GBRA Board meetings
- Attended the Arroyo Colorado WPP Steering Committee meeting to get an overview of the stakeholder process

### **Discussion/Questions on Plum Creek**

Brian Koch led a discussion on Plum Creek.

- Steering Committee Structure and Creation
- Work Groups – Agriculture, Water Quality, and Flooding/Stormwater or Urban NPS
- Outreach and Education will be a part of each these work groups instead of its own group
- Need for additional sampling locations?
- How do you determine if you need bacterial source tracking (BST) to prioritize BMPs?
- Can more easily and less expensive look at if human or not?
- TCEQ - Need to talk to stakeholders and find out what will motivate them to move on this issue? Do they need a lot of data and modeling or can we motivate them now without it to start implementing management practices that are needed?
- GPEP - BST to determine where the loads are coming from
- HGAC – problem with BST

- TPWD - Can look at other things like TSS that would give a sign if improving or not instead of the hard and more costly bacteria. Could we use something like that as a means to target?
- SARA – using TSS could determine higher bacteria, at the same time low TSS had high bacteria in the Upper San Antonio River
- TPWD - Need to determine dry weather loads and wet weather loads because very different things happening during these different loading scenarios.
- Additional monitoring would allow you to look at the tributaries and their contribution.
- TCEQ -There is a TCEQ TMDL workgroup on bacteria and we should meet and coordinate with this group. May not need to spend a lot of resources on modeling if you go in and target everything and continue to monitor as have been to see a difference.
- GBRA – Bacteria numbers from a majority of land conversion to subdivisions on septic tanks with poor soils, subdivisions are also old enough that they could be failing. Kyle WWTP has a good amount of load into Plum Creek.
- Bacteria levels were 2500 at the highest on graph and it exceeds contact recreation by the geometric mean.
- Can we find out if WWTPs discharging into Plum Creek are meeting standards through self reporting data? Do they chlorinate before they discharge?
- GBRA – responded that Buda disinfects and was not sure if Kyle disinfects or has a UV system

### **Tour of Plum Creek**

Brian Koch gave a virtual tour of Plum Creek to present the different components that make up the Plum Creek Watershed. The tour included pictures and maps to highlight land use, to explore different potential causes for the impairment, and to present the other challenges within the Plum Creek watershed.

### **TCE Update**

Nikki Dictson gave an update on the status of the Texas Watershed Steward Program.

- Texas Watershed Steward website has been revised
- Plum Creek Watershed Partnership press release by TCE
- Plum Creek Watershed Partnership draft information sheet
- Workgroup formation
- Meeting schedule
- Plum Creek website is now online at: <http://pcwp.tamu.edu/>

### **Other WPP Projects Within the WRO Service Area**

Brian Koch invited these groups to present an overview/update on their respective WPPs within the Wharton Regional Office service area.

- Dickinson Bayou, Ms. Susan Benner, Texas Sea Grant
  - Partnership Structure
  - Follows EPA 9 Elements
  - Elements affecting the Watershed Plan
  - Cities include Dickinson, Texas City, and League City, in Galveston and Brazoria Counties
  - Currently under a TMDL, DO in the tidal segment, bacteria in the above tidal segment
  - Steering Committee developed the workgroups
  - Stakeholders as residents first, agencies and/or groups second
  - USGS proposal to examine the saltwater wedge
  - Wetlands restoration at a park in Dickinson
  - December 2005 kickoff meeting

- January 2006 initial Steering Committee meeting
- Workgroup meetings scheduled
- April 19, 2006 Partnership Meeting

[www.dickinsonbayou.org](http://www.dickinsonbayou.org)  
[www.urban-nature.org](http://www.urban-nature.org)

- Upper San Antonio River, Mr. Stephen Lusk, San Antonio River Authority
  - Hired a consultant to write the plan (consumes 60% of budget)
  - Tight timeline, 15 months from contract to deliverable
  - Entirely within the City of San Antonio
  - Currently under a TMDL for Bacteria
  - Short timeline, changed to a WPP from a 319 project to implement BMPs
  - Follows EPA 9 Elements
  - San Antonio Zoo is a major contributor, along with urban NPS
  - Problems with the media creating misconceptions within the public
  - Large maps at meetings for citizens to identify potential sources
  - Zoo has implemented BMPs

[www.sara-tx.org](http://www.sara-tx.org)
- Bastrop Bayou, Mr. Carl Masterson, Houston-Galveston Area Council
  - Submitted a proposal for a WPP to TCEQ
  - Not on 303d list, but not a large amount of monitoring done yet
  - Major recreation area, water skiing and fishing
  - Increasing urban development
  - Large public concern
  - Entirely contained in Brazoria County, including cities of Alvin, Angleton, and Lake Jackson
  - GIS of residence addresses overlaid with WWTP service areas results in identifying probable OSSF areas
  - Ag, aquaculture, and septic systems are a concern
  - Public outreach through signs, and stickers in schools
  - Establish Stakeholder Advisory Group
  - Conduct public education & outreach campaign
  - Estimate load reductions
  - Prioritize BMP types & locations
  - Implement BMPs
  - Assess BMP effectiveness
  - Goal is to achieve community-based management

### **Path Forward**

- First Plum Creek Watershed Partnership Steering Committee meeting will occur in May 2006.
- The April WCSC newsletter is in the works, is anybody interested in submitting topics or an article?
- Next WCSC Meeting on June 8, 2006

### **Adjournment**

Brian Koch thanked those in attendance for their active participation in working toward successful coordination of watershed protection planning activities in southeast and south central Texas.