

**Guadalupe River Basin
Clean Rivers Program
Steering Committee
Annual Meeting**

June 12, 2003

Minutes

The annual meeting of the CRP Guadalupe River Basin Steering Committee was held Thursday, June 12, 2003 at 1:00 p.m. in the Seguin-Guadalupe County Coliseum. Fifteen committee members/representatives attended as well as Allison Woodall and Andrew Sullivan representing the TCEQ's Clean Rivers Program (CRP) and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) teams. Charles Kneuper represented the Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA) and Debbie Magin, Mike McCall, Hoppy Haden, Randy Worden, Fred Blumberg and Cinde Thomas-Jimenez represented the GBRA. Also attending the meeting was Paul Jensen, PBS&J.

After introductions, Debbie Magin, GBRA Clean Rivers Program project manager, briefed the committee on the program activities in the GBRA ten-county district. The program consists of seven tasks, project administration, quality assurance, data management and analysis, public participation and special studies. She discussed the status of the two monitoring studies being conducted this year. One study is investigating the elevated sulfate concentrations in the upper Blanco River. The Big Creek, a sub-watershed of the Blanco has shown to be higher than the other study watersheds and a possible source of sulfate. The second study is investigating the impact of oil field activities in Caldwell County. Through the monitoring to date, no oil-related organic compounds have been found at the study sites. Both studies will be completed shortly. A copy of the presentation is available on the GBRA website, www.gbra.org.

Paul Jensen, with PBS&J, discussed the 2003 Basin Summary Report. Mr. Jensen discussed the trend analysis that was performed on the historical data available on the monitoring sites in the basin. The statistical analysis was done to see if water quality conditions are changing, and to review the data in relation to state screening levels. The basin was divided into 11 subwatersheds. There were 233 data sets analyzed, with 42 showing a decreasing trend and 21 showing an increasing trend. The most prevalent trends declines in the dissolved oxygen deficit (DO) which is equivalent to increases in DO levels. Mr. Jensen pointed out that trends can be affected by a number of factors such as an improvement in a methodology (e.g. ammonia-N) or a change in the time of sampling over the data period (DO deficiency). The report recommendations included working to establish site-specific water quality criteria that are based on the uses of the smaller streams. He also recommended additional monitoring at sites exhibiting a water quality concern, i.e. Geronimo Creek which has shown an increase in the nitrate concentration over time. A copy of his presentation

is available on the GBRA website. The report will be completed and submitted to the TCEQ on July 1 and will be posted on the GBRA website.

Charles Kneuper with UGRA, discussed the CRP activities in Kerr County. UGRA's monitoring activities include 10 sites for routine monitoring and 19 sites for *E. coli* analysis, collected May through August. Bacteriological analyses have found that several sites at bridge crossings have elevated fecal coliform/*E. coli* concentrations. By process of elimination, they feel the bacterial contamination is due to ducks, pigeons and cliff and cave swallows that nest on or near the bridges. Efforts are being made by UGRA to work with TXDOT to reduce the bird population under these bridges by installing nets and steel grates on the existing and future bridge crossings that would deter bird nesting and roosting. Additionally, UGRA is providing the middle school science curriculum in the Kerr County schools as well as a program for elementary students.

David Baker with the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association presented their monitoring program. Volunteers have been monitoring Jacob's Well, the Cypress Creek and the Blanco River in Wimberley for a number of years. The Village of Wimberley has funded additional monitoring at six sites that is being collected under the GBRA CRP Quality Assurance Project Plan and submitted to TCEQ. A copy of his presentation is available on the GBRA website.

Allison Woodall with the TCEQ briefed the steering committee on the current issues facing the state's program. Funding has been reduced each year but the need for monitoring and special studies is still there. She commended GBRA on the amount of data collection per dollar spent in the basin. She asked that the steering committee comment and give direction to the GBRA and TCEQ and she asked if the reports and information provided each year was of value and understandable to the readers.

Andrew Sullivan with the TCEQ discussed a TMDL project being conducted in the Guadalupe River Basin. This project is investigating the designations of impairments to aquatic life use due to low dissolved oxygen in segments in the Guadalupe Basin. The project is being conducted by Texas A&M Kingsville. The segments in the Guadalupe Basin included in the TMDL are Cypress Creek, Camp Meeting Creek, Sandies Creek and Elm Creek. Monitoring is currently underway at the sites. He presented results of the monitoring to date and discussed the process that TCEQ follows as it moves through these projects. A copy of his presentation is available on the GBRA website.

The committee was then presented with information on several studies that have been conducted or will be started soon in the Guadalupe River watershed. Fred Blumberg, GBRA Deputy General Manager, discussed the water quality studies related to the Lower Guadalupe Water Supply Project. These studies are just beginning and will be completed in the next 4 to 6 years. Included is a study being conducted by the University of Texas to research and analyze data on the bays and estuaries at the mouth of the Guadalupe River. Texas A&M University is conducting a study on the

whooping cranes and the impacts the water supply project might have on their habitat along the coast. These studies are being funded by the water supply project partners, the GBRA, the San Antonio River Authority and the San Antonio Water System.

Dr. Glenn Longley, SWT Edwards Aquifer Research and Data Center, presented information on a study that will be conducted on the Blanco River. SWT will conduct a study on the Blanco River watershed that will include biological, habitat, hydrology and hydrogeology elements. He indicated that the effort will also support a number of graduate students, and that the first year of the three-year study has been funded by the Nature Conservancy.

Debbie Magin discussed the Texas Water Conservation Association's "Investigation to support the development of nutrient criteria based on recreational uses of reservoirs." Canyon Reservoir will be included in the study that will compare nutrient and chlorophyll a concentrations measured to the recreational users opinion of the water quality as it relates to their use on the day of sampling. This type of study has been conducted in other locations in the US and is being conducted in an effort to assist the TCEQ in their development of numeric nutrient standards for reservoirs in Texas.

Pat Radloff, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, presented information on the Department's study, in conjunction with the TCEQ, that will develop a new Use Attainability Assessment methodology for tidal streams. Garcitas Creek in the Guadalupe-Lavaca Coastal Basin is included in the study.

Paul Jensen, PBS&J, briefed the committee on the results of the Canyon Reservoir Water Quality and Regional Wastewater Feasibility Study sponsored by the Texas Water Development Board, the GBRA and Comal County. The study was conducted in response to the explosive growth in the area surrounding Canyon Lake. The study is available on the GBRA website.

The next portion of the meeting allowed committee members an opportunity to discuss areas of concern in the basin or suggest projects that could be funded by the Guadalupe River Basin Clean Rivers Program.

Arthur Nagel of Kerrville expressed concern in the effectiveness of the TCEQ program to issue discharge permits to municipal and industrial waste dischargers. He pointed out the need for more scrutiny of the permit holders by the agency. He also expressed his desire to get the county commissioners courts in the basin more educated about the impacts of platting high-density developments in their areas of the basin.

Jason Pinchback, Texas Watch, requested that more monitoring locations be established in the area he termed the "No Man's Land" which lies in the Plum Creek watershed east of IH 35 between Buda and San Marcos. He pointed out the tremendous amount of growth occurring in the area. He requested that GBRA work

toward regional wastewater treatment facilities in the area. He related to the committee that there are volunteers being trained as Texas Watch monitors in the area.

Susan Meckel of the Buda area agreed with Mr. Nagel that the county commissioners courts need more information and training on the management of growth in their counties. She related how many subdivisions are being developed in the area that intend to utilize package plant-size wastewater treatment plants. Ms. Meckel also related that when and if stream standards were developed on the small streams in the basin that they not go backward and become less protective of the smaller streams that may have less obvious uses such as contact recreation and livestock watering.

Debbie Magin, GBRA, expressed a desire to see GBRA work with the TXDOT to develop a strategy to establish spill prevention and containment on bridges that cross the Guadalupe River and its tributaries.

With no further discussion or comments, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.