

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

March 30, 2004

Minutes

The annual meeting of the Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Guadalupe River Basin Steering Committee was held Tuesday, March 30, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. in the Seguin Independent School District Staff Development Room, at 1221 E. Kingsbury, Seguin. Fifteen committee members/representatives attended as well as Allison Woodall representing the TCEQ's Clean Rivers Program (CRP). Charles Kneuper represented the Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA) and Debbie Magin, Mike McCall, and Josie Longoria represented GBRA. David Baker and Jason Pinchback, representing the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association attended. Also attending the meeting was Paul Jensen with PBS&J.

Allison Woodall with the TCEQ briefed the steering committee on the Clean Rivers Program, its goals and objectives and funding sources. 65% of the stream monitoring data collected across the state comes from CRP partners. She commended GBRA on the amount of data collected per dollar spent in the basin. She asked for feedback from the steering committee on the program and to give direction to UGRA, GBRA and TCEQ so that the issues specific to the Guadalupe Basin are addressed. She asked if the reports and information provided each year was of value and understandable to the readers.

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, covering project administration, quality assurance, data management and analysis, public participation and special studies. She discussed the findings of the two monitoring studies conducted in 2003. One study investigated the elevated sulfate concentrations in the upper Blanco River. The Big Creek, a sub-watershed of the Blanco was determined to be higher in sulfate concentration than the other study watersheds. Groundwater in the sub-watershed is a possible source of these sulfates. The second study investigated the impact of oil field activities on the San Marcos River and the Plum Creek in Caldwell County. While there was no oil-related organic compounds found at the study sites during routine or storm water monitoring, GBRA and TCEQ are recommending that analysis for oil-related organic compounds be conducted annually at the two study sites. A copy of the presentation is available on the GBRA website, www.gbra.org.

David Baker and Jason Pinchback with the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association gave a presentation on 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 are being monitored under the GBRA CRP Quality Assurance Project Plan and submitted to TCEQ. Jason discussed data collected over the past year. The data has led them to investigate the occurrence of low dissolved oxygen at a site on the Cypress Creek, downstream of an area that typically would be aerated as water passed over a small waterfall. They found that the site was being influenced by the contribution of groundwater from springs in the area. Water coming from springs is low in dissolved oxygen as it exits to the channel. David Baker also pointed out that the WVWA is working with the volunteer monitoring program that has been collecting bacteriological samples on the Cypress Creek and Blanco River for a number of years, to convert their sampling program from analysis for fecal coliforms to *E. coli*, a better indicator of swimability and contamination.

Charles Kneuper with UGRA, discussed the CRP activities in Kerr County. UGRA is focusing efforts to eliminate a disconnect between the public and their knowledge of the Upper Guadalupe River Authority. The UGRA Volunteer River Monitor program has been established to give citizens the opportunity to contribute to the understanding and stewardship of the Guadalupe River, and will help educate the citizens in Kerr County on the activities of the Clean Rivers Program as well as monitoring conducted by UGRA. The goals of the program are:

- 1) increase the current water quality database through volunteer data collection,
- 2) encourage public participation in UGRA water quality monitoring efforts, and
- 3) education regarding water quality parameters and their significance.

Volunteer opportunities for 2004 include participation in the Creeks and Seeps study, evaluating smaller water bodies, springs, and seeps in Kerr County; the "Swimability" study (weekly water collections at swimming sites) between Memorial Day and Labor Day; and a study that evaluates general water quality in the Guadalupe River. In 2003, 19 volunteers for the "swimability" study, the initial volunteer project, sampled 14 sites. This year UGRA plans to increase the number of volunteers in the Volunteer River Monitor program.

Paul Jensen, with PBS&J, discussed the draft 2004 Basin Highlights Report and the results of the state's water quality assessment of the streams in the Guadalupe River Basin. Mr. Jensen ended his presentation with questions that led into the feedback session from the steering committee. He asked the committee to consider whether there were other uses in addition to water supply, recreation and aquatic life that should be considered when assessing a water body. As an example he asked the committee to consider aesthetic appreciation of water bodies which would be impacted by trash and debris. A copy of his presentation is available on the GBRA website. The draft Highlights report is available on the website as will the final report when completed.

The following is a recap of the feedback and discussion portion had by the members of the steering committee in attendance:

- Dan Laroe, representing the Protect Lake Dunlap Association (PLDA), mentioned a concern recently discussed at their annual membership meeting. The residents along the lake have been noticing large amounts of aquatic vegetation floating downstream from the New Braunfels area. The masses of plant material have been identified as hygrophila and valsinaria. No one has identified a source to date. He offered to take employees of GBRA out to investigate the source further.
- Kent Kottler also representing PLDA, mentioned the problem of trash that comes from recreationists upstream of Lake Dunlap, such as Styrofoam cups, cans, shoes, etc.
- Peggy McKanna, representing the Friends of Lake McQueeney (FOLM), reported that the plant that is floating down from the New Braunfels area has been identified as hygrophila by Malcolm Johnson, a consultant of her organization and that they have found the plant rooting in the lake. She reported that the reputation of hygrophila is similar and as frightening as hydrilla. She explained that her organization is watching the plant very carefully.
- Dr. Jack Fairchild, representing the San Marcos River Foundation, reported that there are areas on the San Marcos River that see a similar build up of plant mass that comes from the harvesting of plants in Aquarena Lake in San Marcos. He also discussed his organization's concern with the increase in recreational use on the San Marcos River. He sees this as a "people" problem and described it as "recreational overload." He asked if there were any plans to add pharmaceuticals and personal care products to the list of parameters monitored on the streams in the basin.
- Jim O'Leary, representing the Citizens United for Lake Placid, voiced concern over storm water management and the areas that fall outside the jurisdiction of entities required to maintain storm water management plans.
- Dr. Fairchild reported that there were landowners that were pushing trees and debris left by flood waters into the stream.
- Arthur Nagel of Kerr County voiced his concern that the TCEQ issues permits for septic tanks and wastewater discharge permits but does an insufficient job of monitoring and inspecting the permittees, allowing poorly treated wastewater to enter the stream.
- Representatives from all of the upper hydro-lakes collectively voiced concern about the permit renewal process for the New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) Kuehler wastewater treatment plant. It has been underway for two years and the draft permit was recently issued without nutrient removal required but with the requirement of a nutrient study to be conducted by NBU on Lake Dunlap. GBRA is working with NBU to bring the data collection efforts under the CRP Quality Assurance Project Plan. The study must be conducted over the next two years. The permit if issued would be valid until 2007.

- David Baker reiterated some of the points he made during his presentation. He pointed out how important it is that the members of the steering committee stay aware of the activities of the legislative committees that will shape the face of water use and availability, and the subsequent impacts on water quality, in the basins across Texas. The CRP Steering Committee cannot, as a body, make comment to the legislative committees, such as the Environmental Flows Committee, but each member could attend and voice their opinion. Bill West, GBRA General Manager, is on several of the legislative committees and can be contacted by the committee members as well.
- Mr. Baker also mentioned that a concern in his area is ground water mining of the Trinity Aquifer. Mining of the ground water presents a direct threat to the springs that create Jacob's well and the flow in the Cypress Creek. Cypress Creek is very important to the community of Wimberley.
- Jason Pinchback asked about the feasibility of incorporating non-quality assured data that comes from studies conducted in the basin by special groups or universities. He also asked if there were other bacterial indicator species that could be monitored that would be more indicative of the swimability of the streams. He asked about the feasibility of toxic compounds that could be added to the list of constituents monitored by CRP.
- Sam Dement, FOLM, mentioned that there is a need for improved education of the public on water quality issues and the impacts their activities have on water quality.

Each of these issues were discussed and GBRA and TCEQ made note of the member's comments, questions, and concerns. There was additional discussion of activities that GBRA is involved in, in addition to CRP, to address some of these concerns such as the Texas Water Development Board grant that is funding a regional wastewater feasibility study for the Eastern portion of Hays County that will begin shortly. Also, GBRA has applied for a 319 grant for a non-point source education project in the counties of the entire basin.

With no further discussion or comments, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.