

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

March 23, 2006

Minutes

The annual meeting of the Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Guadalupe River Basin Steering Committee was held Thursday, March 23, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. at the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) River Annex, 905 Nolan St., Seguin. Seventeen committee members/representatives attended as well as Allison Woodall representing the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) CRP, Ray Buck and Ted Ground representing the Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA), Debbie Magin, Lee Gudgell, Brian Lyssy, Cinde Thomas-Jimenez and Kathy Boulter representing GBRA, David Baker representing the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association (WVWA), Marcus Gary representing the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and Jason Pinchback representing the WVWA and Texas Watch.

Debbie Magin, GBRA Clean Rivers Program project manager, briefed the committee on the program activities in the GBRA ten-county district. The CRP consists of seven tasks, covering project administration, quality assurance, data management, data analysis and reporting, public participation, and special studies. In addition to the existing routine monitoring conducted by the GBRA and the UGRA, a special nutrient monitoring study was concluded on Lakes Dunlap and McQueeney and special monitoring sites have been established on Peach Creek in Gonzales County, Perdido Creek and Coletto Creek in Goliad County. The systematic site on Peach Creek is in the second year of monitoring. The sites in Goliad County were established after a local resident called attention to the possible impacts associated with oil field activities in the area as well as leaking crude storage tanks in the watershed. Her presentation also included discussion on the inventory of events that could have an impact on water quality in 2005.

Ray Buck, the UGRA General Manager, discussed the CRP activities in Kerr County. Mr. Buck described their focus on education in their area which is the headwaters of the Guadalupe River and home to the Guadalupe Bass which is not only the state fish but an indicator of excellent water quality. UGRA is also continuing the "Swimability" study (weekly water collections at swimming sites) between Memorial Day and Labor Day and their Annual River Clean Up. He also explained that the constituents in the area are concerned with impacts resulting from the mining of gravel in the watershed.

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 with funding provided by the Village of Wimberley. Mr. Baker explained the

goals of the monitoring program are watershed education and the collection of baseline data. He went on to relate that Jacob's well has been mapped to over 5200 feet and that a blind salamander has been discovered in the well. Currently, the flow from the well has dropped to less than 2 cubic feet per second but the aquifer levels are 50 feet higher than in 2000 when the flow from the well stopped. Mr. Baker went on to discuss issues of concern in the watershed. The organization is recommending that:

- 1) mapping be done for the Jacob's well recharge zone,
- 2) a education program be developed for 404 permitting,
- 3) a failing lift station be moved out of the floodway,
- 4) a water quality protection plan be developed for the Cypress Creek and Blanco River watersheds, and
- 5) an instream flow study be performed for the Jacob's well and Cypress Creek.

Jason Pinchback discussed the WVWA data collected over the past year and indicated that water quality conditions are good in the Cypress Creek and Blanco River watersheds. Marcus Gary, with USGS, gave a presentation on the monitoring study that is currently underway on Jacob's well. The study is funded through September 2006. The USGS has deployed a Doppler flow meter and a monitoring probe that takes continuous water quality measurements. In addition to the continuous real-time data, they have collected a water quality sample for an entire suite of constituents including pesticides, heavy metals and endocrine disrupting chemicals.

Debbie Magin then discussed the segments of the river that are impaired or have a concern, as listed in TCEQ's 2004 305(b) Watershed Inventory and 303(d) report and the work being done in those watersheds. Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies are wrapping up on four of the impaired water bodies: Peach Creek, Sandies Creek, Elm Creek, and the Guadalupe River above Canyon Reservoir. The 2006 assessment of the state water bodies is currently underway.

Jason Pinchback discussed the Texas Watch activities in the basin. He explained that the amount of data being generated by Texas Watch groups in the Guadalupe River basin is only second to the amount generated in the Colorado Basin. Judy Lee, a teacher from the Canyon Middle School, discussed the Texas Watch monitoring activities she utilizes with her students. She requested that Texas Watch consider incorporating elements of GIS into the program.

Cinde Thomas-Jimenez, GBRA Education Coordinator, discussed the new format for the 2006 Basin Highlights Report. The report is being done entirely in-house by GBRA. The report includes maps and descriptions of each watershed, a short summary of the results of the nutrient study on Lakes Dunlap and McQueeney and information on the activities of GBRA, UGRA and the WVWA. She asked the members of the basin steering committee to review the document and offer any feedback to content and format.

Ms. Jimenez introduced the new educational landowner brochure being developed by GBRA. The landowner brochure will educate the new landowners that have made the

flight from urban neighborhoods to small rural “ranchettes”. The focus is educating the landowners about the “footprints” that they can leave with activities such as applying fertilizing, pesticides and disposing of wastes. The brochure will be distributed to real estate agencies, title companies and at environmental events such as Earth Day and hazardous waste collection events.

Kerry Niemann and Andrew Sullivan, by conference call, presented information on the TMDL studies wrapping up in the basin. Mr. Niemann discussed the work done on the Peach Creek in Gonzales County which was listed as impaired due to fecal coliform bacteria counts that exceeded the contact recreation standard. Data has been collected to confirm the impairment, describe baseflow conditions and conditions during storm events. This data has been incorporated into a model that will allocate the loading of bacteria. Bacterial source tracking was employed in this study and identified probable sources of the bacteria as being cattle, chickens, and domestic wastewater, with a percentage being from unidentifiable sources. Mr. Sullivan then discussed the work being concluded on Sandies and Elm Creeks in Gonzales and DeWitt counties. The data collection efforts confirmed the impairment. Currently, work on the project has slowed somewhat because the contractor working on the project has withdrawn and the work has been shifted to the Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research located in Stephenville.

The committee was given an overview of a nutrient study on Lakes Dunlap and McQueeney conducted by the GBRA and CRP. The purposes of the study were to 1) collect surface water quality data that characterized water quality conditions in the river and lakes between New Braunfels and Seguin, 2) to look for possible nutrient sources and 3) to determine if there is a relationship between flow and chlorophyll *a*. Data collected during twelve sampling events conducted beginning in April 2004 and extending until August 2005 were used to characterize water quality conditions in the study area. Sampling was conducted monthly April through October 2004, except in June 2004 due to severe weather and flooding conditions in the study area. Sampling resumed in March 2005 and continued monthly until August 2005. The Comal River, and the Guadalupe River above the confluence with the Comal River combine to create the flow through Lakes Dunlap and McQueeney. The list of possible sources of nutrients to the system includes the Comal Springs, the bottom release from Canyon Reservoir, urban and rural runoff, including a golf course and residential lawns, upstream recreational activities, discharges from wastewater treatment plants, septic tanks, nutrient-rich sediments, lake recreation and waterfowl. A synopsis of the study findings can be found in the Basin Highlights Report, and the entire study report found on the GBRA website.

Brian Koch and Aaron Wendt of the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board gave an overview of the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership in Caldwell County. The Partnership is a collaboration between local citizens and regional, state and federal agencies with the goal to develop and implement a proactive strategy for protecting and improving the water quality of Plum Creek. According to the 2004 Texas Water Quality Inventory and 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies, Plum Creek is impaired due to elevated bacteria concentrations and exhibits elevated nutrient levels. These water quality issues, along with changing land use across the watershed and the

potential for nonpoint source pollution, were considered when Plum Creek was selected by a regional water quality committee as a watershed that would best benefit from development and implementation of a watershed protection plan. The timeline for the project extends into early 2008.

Discussion then turned to the water quality issues that were sent in by steering committee members. A list of these issues is posted on the website. Many of the issues were being addressed either by the GBRA CRP or by other projects or initiatives. These issues will be referenced when planning the basin program in the next year and the next biennium contract.

Copies of the minutes, handouts and presentations are available on the GBRA website, www.gbra.org. The Basin Highlights report is available on the website.