

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

March 22, 2007

**Minutes**

(Changes to 2007 and 2008 Coordinated Monitoring Schedules follow)

The annual meeting of the Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Guadalupe River Basin Steering Committee was held Thursday, March 22, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. at the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) River Annex, 905 Nolan St., Seguin. Eleven committee members/representatives attended as well as Allison Woodall representing the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) CRP, Ted Ground representing the Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA), Debbie Magin, Lee Gudgell, Cinde Thomas-Jimenez and Kathy Bouler representing GBRA, Bill Harrison representing the TCEQ Surface Water Quality Monitoring team, Kerry Niemann of the TCEQ Total Maximum Daily Load team, Chad Ahlgren and Corey Burke of TCEQ Region 14, Claudia Chaffin of TCEQ Region 11, Lynn Lindsay of TCEQ Region 13, and Jason Pinchback representing the WWA 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, special monitoring sites have been established on Perdido Creek and Coletto Creek in Goliad County. The systematic monitoring on the sites in Goliad County are in the second year and 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.

Ms. Magin notified the steering committee that the Guadalupe River Basin CRP received an additional \$21,000 for 2007 to cover the cost of a new microscope for invertebrate identification, costs to print the basin highlights report in its new format and increase costs of laboratory analyses. She also discussed the public outreach and education project, "Don't Be Clueless". Originally, GBRA produced the landowner educational brochure to be sent to real estate agencies and title companies for distribution to new landowners as a resource on such topics as hazardous waste disposal, septic tank uses, and fertilizer application. It reminds landowners that their property is part of a larger area of land called a watershed and activities on their property can have an impact on the water quality of that watershed. The distribution of the brochure, and the use of displays that have been produced to support the "Don't Be Clueless" campaign has expanded. The information has been used at county fairs, science fairs, chamber of commerce events and environmental awareness events throughout the basin.

Her presentation also included discussion on the 2006 inventory of events that could have an impact on water quality. Those events included the State Department of Health Services (SDHS, formerly the Texas Department of Health) fish consumption advisory issued for Canyon Reservoir. Due to elevated mercury found in the fish tissue of long-nosed gar and striped bass, SDHS issued a fish consumption advisory for these two species. No known source is listed but atmospheric deposition is suspected.

Another event that could impact water quality was the proposed in-situ mining of uranium in Goliad County. The Uranium Energy Corporation has made application with the TCEQ to develop wells for in-situ mining of uranium. The Uranium Information at Goliad, a citizen group has formed to gather information and inform the public of the possible impacts from this type of mining activity. Additional information on in-situ mining is available through this group's website: <http://goliad-tx.tamu.edu/uiag.html>.

Ted Ground, with the UGRA, discussed the CRP activities in Kerr County. Mr. Ground described the UGRA monitoring activities for CRP as well as for their "Swimmability" study (weekly water collections at swimming sites) between Memorial Day and Labor Day. He also explained that UGRA has begun efforts to fund the development of a watershed protection plan for the upper Guadalupe Basin. The UGRA lab is working on adopting the standards of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program which is a requirement for data submittal for the CRP program.

Jason Pinchback with the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association gave an overview of 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. He said that they have not observed any declining trends overall but have seen slight elevations in nutrients and decreases in dissolved oxygen which he attributes to drought conditions that have persisted for much of 2006. Mr. Pinchback also described high turbidities being observed at their monitoring site at the Cypress Creek at Blue Hole which they will be taking a closer look at in the coming months.

Mr. Pinchback discussed the WVWA, Texas Watch and the Water Resources Institute efforts to acquire funding for the development of a watershed protection plan for the Cypress Creek and Blanco River watersheds. The modeling efforts that would be a part of the plan could be used to forecast impacts to water quality by a land use change in the watershed. Part of the driving force behind the effort comes from the results of a survey conducted in Hays County that showed that 71% of the respondents felt that water was the most important issue facing the county at this time, with 91% of those concerned with drinking water.

Jason then switched "hats" and discussed the Texas Watch activities in the basin. He explained that the Guadalupe River basin has some of the most active Texas Watch groups in the state, mostly in the upper to middle basin. The Texas Watch program is expanding their list of parameters available for volunteers to include *E. coli* analysis. They will be looking for sites in and near public parks and areas for contact recreation. The groups will share their information with regulators and collaborate to investigate any findings. Jason also related that Texas Watch has been taking calls from area residents

that are concerned about the fish advisory on Canyon Reservoir as well as the sediment loading of Sink Creek and algal blooms in Spring Lake, water bodies in the San Marcos River watershed.

Cinde Thomas-Jimenez, GBRA Education Coordinator, discussed the draft 2007 Basin Highlights Report. She asked that steering committee members look closely at the maps and watershed information presented in the report and let GBRA know if there are errors. The report is being done in-house by GBRA again this year. The report will have a similar format to the 2006 report that included maps and descriptions of each watershed, a short summary of the activities of GBRA, UGRA and the WVWA and the events inventory of the last year. A section will be included this year on the development of a watershed protection plan for Plum Creek. The WPP development effort is being funded by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, in partnership with the Texas Cooperative Extension, the TCEQ and EPA. GBRA has been very active in the WPP planning process and Cinde described to the steering committee her efforts to get the information to the families in the watershed through the fourth and fifth graders in Lockhart, Luling and Kyle schools. She has developed, and teachers are using, a science unit that includes the quarterly testing of water from the Plum Creek watershed by the students themselves. The students then post the data on the Plum Creek WPP website. A version of the "Don't Be Clueless" educational brochure has been developed specific to Plum Creek and will be sent home with the students. Cinde went on to describe the watershed model of the Guadalupe River Basin that is being made. It will be carried to classrooms and environmental events where she can show how rainfall that falls on one part of the basin can carry nutrients and chemicals off and down through the watershed.

Brian Koch 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 water bodies, 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 non-point 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 steering committee and workgroups have been meeting every month to gather information on possible sources of the bacterial and nutrient concentrations. Also discussed are best management practices (BMPs) that should be included in the plan. The plan is being written and has been partially reviewed by committee members. Bill Harrison related to the committee that TCEQ is sampling fish tissue from Plum Creek this year at the request of the PC WPP steering committee.

Kerry Niemann 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. There will be a meeting on April 10 to discuss the TMDL report being issued on March 23 on the Upper Guadalupe River project. Mr. Niemann related

that the work is still ongoing on Sandies and Elm Creeks in Gonzales and DeWitt counties, with no new information to report.

Jessi Goodsen of the Gonzales County Soil and Water Conservation District reported about specific activities that have occurred in the Peach Creek watershed as a result of the heightened awareness of the bacterial impairments. Three cattle producers in the watershed have adopted water quality plans for their operations and have used cost share funding to implement their plans. A wastewater lagoon located at a chicken producer has been closed and the poultry houses removed.

The final segments of the meeting were discussions on the 2006 water quality assessment of the water bodies in the Guadalupe River basin and on issues that stakeholders feel warrant attention by the CRP. Debbie Magin briefed the committee on the segments of the river that are impaired or have a concern, as listed in TCEQ's 2006 305(b) Watershed Inventory and 303(d) reports. The 2006 assessment was a more extensive assessment than the 2004 assessment and utilized data that included data collected by the TMDL studies. The following table lists the segments that have been removed from the list of concerns or impairments.

<b>Segment No.</b>	<b>Segment Name</b>	<b>Concern or Impairment</b>	<b>Reason for Change</b>
1701	Barge Canal	Dissolved Oxygen	Removed; additional 24 hour DO available for assessment
1801	River Tidal	Dissolved Oxygen	Removed; additional 24 hour data and no exceedances during past 5 years
1802	Lower Guadalupe	Dissolved Oxygen	Removed; additional 24 hour DO available for assessment
1803B	Sandies Creek	Ammonia-Nitrogen	Removed; additional data available from TMDL study
1804	Lake McQueeney	Chlorophyll a	Removed; chlorophyll a concentrations low over last 5 years

New listings on the 2006 Assessment include:

<b>Segment No.</b>	<b>Segment Name</b>	<b>Concern or Impairment</b>
1803C	Peach Creek	Dissolved oxygen
1804A	Geronimo Creek	Bacteria
1805	Canyon Reservoir	Mercury in Fish Tissue
1813	Upper Blanco River	Concern at Dissolved Oxygen Grab
1817	North Fork Guadalupe River	Concern at Dissolved Oxygen Grab

The meeting concluded with a discussion on the issues that were of concern by the stakeholders present and those that were sent in on the survey distributed to committee members in February. The issues raised were:

- Trash and the need for its designation as a pollutant.

- The impact on water quality by the number of recreationists on the Comal and Guadalupe Rivers in the summer, low flow periods.
- The cumulative impacts on watersheds caused by multiple subdivisions in the IH 35 corridor and by riverbank modifications and associated erosion.
- Infestation by non-native species being introduced in the watershed, ex. Ram's horn snail, hygrophila, loriicarids.
- Impacts to water quality from uranium in-situ mining.
- Selenium concentrations in fish tissue in Geronimo Creek.

Copies of the minutes, handouts and presentations are available on the GBRA website, [www.gbra.org](http://www.gbra.org). The Basin Highlights report will be available on the website.

### **Coordinated Monitoring Meeting Followed:**

The following changes or additions have been made to the 2007 and 2008 monitoring schedule. These changes have come about because of concerns or requests of steering committee members or monitoring entities.

1. The Guadalupe River at Dupont site will be discontinued at the present location and a new site that is downstream and out of the mixing zone of the Dupont discharges will be found for 2008.
2. A new site on Peach Creek will be added bimonthly in 2008 (site no. 17935, Peach Creek at FM 397.) Data at this site was collected during the Peach Creek TMDL. The site will be monitored in 2008 and beyond to identify any changes in the water quality that may be a result of the implementation of BMPs in the watershed.
3. The UGRA weekly monitoring of *E. coli* will no longer be funded by CRP. The TCEQ has sufficient data for assessment purposes and does not need the bacterial data at this frequency any longer. UGRA will evaluate their ability to continue monitoring at these sites for their own use and use by their constituents.
4. The metals in the water sample that was to be collected in 2007 at the Dupont site will be moved to Geronimo Creek. Metals in sediment in Geronimo Creek will be added to the 2008 schedule.
5. The TCEQ SWQM program will include fish tissue in Geronimo Creek.
6. Region 13 will add a quarterly monitoring location in Cypress Bend Park on the Guadalupe River.
7. Organics in sediment, specifically those organics associated with urban environments (TPH and BTEX), will be analyzed at the San Marcos River at IH 35 location.
8. Samples for *E. coli* will be sampled every Saturday for eight weeks, beginning in mid-May and ending in July 2007, for screening of bacterial concentrations on the Comal and Guadalupe Rivers to determine if sampling in mid-week is significantly different from weekend periods of peak recreational use.
9. Background radiological data will be collected on Coletto Creek in advance of in- situ mining in Goliad County in 2008.