Guadalupe River Basin
Clean Rivers Program
Steering Committee
Annual Meeting

March 21, 2013

Minutes

(Changes to 2014 Coordinated Monitoring Schedules to follow)

The annual meeting of the Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Guadalupe River Basin Steering Committee was held Thursday, March 21, 2013 at 1:00 p.m. at the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) River Annex, 905 Nolan St., Seguin. Attending were representatives from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) CRP; the Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA); GBRA; TCEQ Region 13; Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association; Texas AgriLife Extension Service; the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment (the Cypress Creek Watershed Planning project; the Upper San Marcos Watershed Planning project); and Texas Stream Team. Also attending were representatives from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board; Kendall County; the Goliad County Groundwater Conservation District; the New Braunfels Utilities; the cities of Victoria, San Marcos and New Braunfels; the Gonzales County Soil and Water District; the San Marcos River Foundation; the Edwards Aquifer Research and Data Center; Master Naturalists from Comal and Hays County; and the Friends of Lake McQueeney.

After introductions, Debbie Magin, Tara Bushnoe and David Baker gave the stakeholders an update of the CRP activities in their respective areas. **Copies of the presentations can be found on the GBRA Clean River Page at http://www.gbra.org/crp/default.aspx.**

Allison Fischer with the TCEQ Clean Rivers Program gave a presentation on the changes that the state CRP program will undergo in FY 2014. As a result of the 82nd Legislature in 2011 the budget for CRP was cut by 10%. For the FY2014-15, the Guadalupe River Basin allotment will be reduced from $286,682 to $270,756 per biennium, or a 5.6% reduction.

Ms. Fischer then gave an overview of the status of the water quality standard revisions that were adopted by TCEQ in 2010. After adoption, the standards were sent to EPA for their review and approval. EPA is still reviewing the numeric nutrient criteria proposed for selected reservoirs. Ms. Fischer went on to explain that the next triennial review of the standards has begun and should be available for public comment in August 2013. Currently, the Standards Team is working on the nutrient criteria development plan for flowing streams. The numeric nutrient criteria for rivers and streams should be included in the 2017 revision of the Water Quality Standards.

Bill Harrison, with TCEQ's Surface Water Quality Monitoring Team, gave an overview of the stream assessment process conducted for 2012. Every two years the TCEQ Surface Water Quality Monitoring Team produces the *Texas Integrated Report for Clean Water*

Act, Sections 305(b) and 303(d). The Integrated Report (IR) is produced according to the *Guidance for Assessing and Reporting Surface Water Quality in Texas* with methods that are developed by the TCEQ with the advice of a diverse group of stakeholders. The guidance is based on a set of methods that apply the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards (30 TAC §307) to ambient water quality data. Surface water monitoring data used in this year's assessment was collected during the seven-year period (December 1, 2003 to November 30, 2010). In some cases, ten years of data were included to attain a minimum number of samples for assessment. The total number of segments evaluated in the Guadalupe River Basin was 32, with 10 on the 2012 303(d) list of impaired water bodies. 12 stream segments are listed with concerns for nutrients, bacteria, dissolved oxygen or biological communities or habitat. Three segments, Denton Creek, Sandy Fork Creek and Camp Meeting Creek, were removed from the 303(d) list. Denton and Sandy Fork were removed because the original basis for the bacteria listing was inaccurate. Review of the data showed that samples were collected during storm water events and were not representative of ambient conditions. Camp Meeting Creek was removed because it is meeting the dissolved oxygen criteria specified in the standards adopted in 2010.

Following Mr. Harrison's presentation, a discussion was led by Debbie Magin on each of the segments that have been listed as impaired or with concerns in order to get stakeholder feedback. The stakeholders were also invited to voice any other concerns on segments within the river basin. Dianne Wassinich raised two concerns. She reported that she is very concerned in the portion of the San Marcos River located near where the three counties, Hays, Guadalupe and Caldwell Counties (CR 266 downstream to Skull Road) meet. She said that the river is seeing more intense recreation pressure as a consequence of the Can Ban adopted by the New Braunfels city council. She is concerned because there are more river outfitters, no restrooms and a rise in the murkiness of the stream in this area. She also reported that there is a bill in the legislature that will create a water-oriented recreation district in Caldwell County. The second issue Ms. Wassinich raised was the need for county oversight of the on-site septic systems in the "man camps" springing up in DeWitt County as a result of the oil and gas activities associated with the Eagle Ford Shale. Debbie Magin offered to contact DeWitt County to relay her concerns.

Clint Robertson, with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, gave a presentation on the Texas Instream Flow Program which will be working in the Guadalupe River Basin, beginning in 2012. The program will look at the flow conditions that support a sound ecological environment in the lower Guadalupe River, from downstream of Seguin to the City of Victoria. The program will look at the primary disciplines of hydraulics and hydrology, water quality, biology, geomorphology and connectivity. The study design will be developed in collaboration with the stakeholders. Mr. Robertson followed this presentation with an overview of the role of the TPWD's Kills and Spills Team.

After a break, the meeting resumed with presentations from representatives from the different watershed protection activities being conducted in the river basin. Copies of the presentations on these activities can be found on the GBRA Clean River Page at http://www.gbra.org/crp/default.aspx.

Tara Bushnoe with the Upper Guadalupe River Authority gave a status report on the Bacteria Reduction Plan being implemented by the UGRA. The plan is a result of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) adopted on the 3.5 mile reach of the upper Guadalupe River that flows through Kerrville. This segment was designated as impaired due to exceedence of the bacteria standard for recreation. Implementation of the plan that is being funded by a Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 319(h) grant from TCEQ includes Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will reduce the bacteria load from sources identified in the TMDL. Those BMPs include bird deterrents at bridge crossings, pet waste stations and waterfowl management in the Kerrville city parks, education and inspections of on-site sewage facilities and BMPs directed at storm water runoff such as street sweeping and river cleanups. UGRA is partnering with the City of Kerrville, Kerr County, TxDOT and the Clean Rivers Program to provide the matching funds for the grant.

Nick Dornak followed with a presentation on the status of the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan and Partnership. Plum Creek was designated as impaired for bacteria with concerns for nutrients in 2006. Since that time the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan has been accepted by EPA and implementation of the plan has been underway since 2008. Mr. Dornak briefed the stakeholders on the efforts of the PCWP, the City of Buda and Hays County to obtain funding from the Texas Water Development Board to take the Hillside Terrace subdivision in the Plum Creek watershed off of failing septic systems and onto a municipal wastewater collection system and treat the wastewater at the city's wastewater treatment plant. Funding from the city, the county and a loan from the State Revolving Fund will pay for the planning and design phase of the project. Mr. Dornak also related that much of his time has been spent coordinating activities that would reduce the bacterial load from feral hogs, a pollutant source that was identified in the watershed protection plan. Those activities include assisting Caldwell County with their Hog Out Campaign in the fall of 2012, feral hog education events and serving on the newly formed Feral Hog Task Force in the county. Mr. Dornak also reported that he has coordinated several clean up events. He also reported on a wastewater spill from the City of Kyle's wastewater treatment plant that occurred in November 2012. The city and the WWTP operator, Aqua Texas, are under enforcement. There is hope that a portion of the fines assessed to the city and Aqua Texas will be used in a Special Environmental Project in the Plum Creek watershed.

Ward Ling briefed the stakeholders on the status of the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Protection Plan. The creeks had been designated as impaired for bacteria and a concern for nitrate nitrogen. The plan has been accepted by EPA. The plan identifies BMPs that if implemented, will reduce the pollutant load from urban, agricultural and wastewater sources. The Geronimo Creek Partnership have begun working on implementing these BMPs. A community stream cleanup has been scheduled for April 6, 2013.

Chris Clary with the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment briefed the stakeholders on the status of the watershed protection efforts being conducted in the Cypress Creek watershed. The Watershed Protection Plan should be completed in 5 months. The process thus far has included the evaluation and stakeholder support of appropriate BMPs for the Cypress Creek watershed. The stakeholders remain committed

to the development of the plan, but are adamant in their desire to see the groundwater spring flow strategy remain a priority in these efforts.

Mary VanZant, also with the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, gave an overview of the watershed protection plan being developed on the Upper San Marcos River. The upper segment of the San Marcos River has been listed as an impaired water body because of elevated total dissolved solids. The watershed protection plan will build on the information gathered in other recent characterization projects and explore management strategies that will help reduce pollutant loading to surface and groundwater resources.

After the project updates were given, Travis Tidwell with the Texas Stream Team (TST) gave an overview of the TST and the different monitoring groups working in the Guadalupe River Basin. There are 79 active monitors, collecting data on 71 sites within the basin. These sites are located on the Blanco River and its tributaries, Cypress Creek, Plum Creek, the Guadalupe River above and below Canyon Lake, the Comal River, the San Marcos River, and the Geronimo Creek in Seguin. Mr. Tidwell went on to describe resources and tools available to Stream Team monitors that include a paperless newsletter, an online self-assessment testing module and data viewer.

Doyle Mosier, a retired biologist from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, gave an overview of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) developed by the Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program (EARIP). In an effort to balance the use of water from the Edwards Aquifer, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) brought together 26 stakeholders from throughout the region, representing diverse and sometimes conflicting interests spanning from the Hill Country to the Gulf Coast, to participate in a collaborative process to develop a plan that would aid in the recovery of federally listed species dependent on the aquifer. Stakeholders of the EARIP have compromised on a scientifically-developed HCP. The minimization and mitigation measures included within the HCP are designed to ensure that incidental take resulting from the covered activities will be minimized and mitigated to the maximum extent practicable and will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival and recovery of covered species associated with the Aquifer and Comal and San Marcos springs and rivers ecosystems. The HCP was approved by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in January 2013. The HCP includes Habitat Protection Measures for the San Marcos and Comal Springs, Flow Protection Measures and other supporting measures. The projects and studies included in the measures are being implemented by five partners, the Edwards Aquifer Authority, the San Antonio Water System, the cities of New Braunfels and San Marcos and Texas State University.

Nikki Dictson closed the afternoon with a presentation on the Texas Riparian and Stream Ecosystem Education Program being conducted by the Texas Water Resources Institute with funding provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board. The goals of the program are to improve the management of these sensitive and vital ecosystems. Riparian education programs are needed regarding the nature and function of riparian zones, their benefits, and BMPs for protecting them. This will not only reduce NPS pollution, it will provide tremendous ecosystem service benefits and direct economic benefits to the community. The program

will deliver a minimum of 25 riparian education programs to participants in prioritized watersheds, typically watersheds with watershed planning or total maximum daily load efforts due to impaired water quality. The program will also coordinate three Modified Proper Functioning Condition/Stream Visual Assessment trainings to agency personnel and water professionals and coordinate two statewide riparian conferences.

Zack Martin, with the City of New Braunfels was not able to give his presentation on the Can Ban Ordinance adopted by the city in 2012. He had a meeting conflict but admitted that there has not been an assessment of the effectiveness of the ordinance yet. He will plan on giving the presentation next year when there is more information available.

The meeting closed at 5:05 p.m.