

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

March 20, 2014

Minutes

(Notes from 2015 Coordinated Monitoring Schedule to follow)

The annual meeting of the Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Guadalupe River Basin Steering Committee was held Thursday, March 20, 2014 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 and Surface Water Quality Monitoring (SWQM) Team; the Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA); GBRA; TCEQ SWQM Regions 11, 13, 14; Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; Texas Department of Agriculture; 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 Goliad County Groundwater Conservation District; the New Braunfels Utilities; Geronimo Creek Watershed Partnership; Plum Creek Watershed Partnership; Cypress Creek Watershed Partnership; the cities of Victoria, San Marcos and New Braunfels; the San Marcos River Foundation; the Edwards Aquifer Research Center; Edwards Aquifer Authority; Master Naturalists from Guadalupe, Comal and Hays Counties; the Friends of Lake McQueeney; and Citizens United for Lake Placid.

After introductions, Debbie Magin (GBRA), Travis Linscomb (UGRA), David Baker and Travis Tidwell (WVWA) gave the stakeholders updates of the CRP activities in their respective areas. Also copies of the 2014 draft Basin Highlights Report was made available to those stakeholders that could not view the draft report sent out by email. The public comment period on the report is open until April 30, 2014. **Copies of the presentations can be found on the GBRA Clean River Page at <http://www.gbra.org/crp/default.aspx>.**

Sarah Eagle, the TCEQ project manager for the Guadalupe River Basin CRP gave an update from TCEQ. Her presentation covered overviews of the 2014 Water Quality Standards, Water Quality Assessments, and Watershed Action Planning. The 2014 triennial revision to the Texas Water Quality Standards were adopted by the TCEQ Commissioners in February 2014 and became effective March 6, 2014. The revisions have been submitted to EPA for approval. One of the most important revisions to the standards includes the expansion of the contact recreation use categories to include the “Primary Contact 2 (PCR2) Category”. PCR2 assumes that in the river segment there can be activities that have the potential for immersion, such as swimming, skiing, and tubing (same as PCR1) but, in these segments, there is limited public access. All streams are considered PCR1 until a Recreational Use Attainability Assessment (RUAA) is conducted to determine the appropriate recreational use designation. The water quality standard that

is associated with the contact recreation use standard is the geometric mean of the *E. coli* concentrations. The standard for PCR1 is 126 colony-forming units per 100 milliliters. The standard for PCR2 is 206 colony-forming units per 100 milliliters. No segments within the Guadalupe River Basin are scheduled for a RUAA. Ms. Eagle went on to explain that EPA has not approved the previously submitted revisions to the stream assessment process so the 2014 stream assessments will be conducted using the same methods used for 2012. The assessments will be completed and issued for public comment in a few months. Her presentation concluded with an explanation of the TCEQ's Watershed Action Planning (WAP) Initiative. WAP takes action on water quality issues by selecting strategies to address water quality impairments, answering the question: What is the best "next step?" WAP recognizes the importance of stakeholder involvement and includes meetings with stakeholders throughout the process. **Copies of Ms. Eagle's presentation can be found on the GBRA Clean River Page at <http://www.gbra.org/crp/default.aspx>.**

Following Ms. Eagle'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 invited to voice any concerns on these segments or any other segments or water bodies within the river basin. No comments were made by the stakeholders in attendance. Stakeholders were encouraged to submit comments or concerns about water quality at any time to GBRA or UGRA. **Copies of Ms. Magin's presentation can be found on the GBRA Clean River Page at <http://www.gbra.org/crp/default.aspx>.**

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. Mr. Tidwell described resources and tools available to Stream Team monitors that include GIS mapping and a data viewer. The TST data is being used in the watershed protection activities being conducted in the Upper San Marcos and Cypress Creek watersheds. Mr. Tidwell also introduced a new TST program called TST Paddlers. The Paddlers will be conducting water quality monitoring from canoes and kayaks. An advantage provided by this type of monitoring will be the collection of water quality data from the middle of a stream channel. **Copies of Mr. Tidwell's presentation can be found on the GBRA Clean River Page at <http://www.gbra.org/crp/default.aspx>.**

After a break, the meeting resumed with a presentation from Dr. Glenn Longley of Texas State University and the Edwards Aquifer Research Center. His presentation, *Emerging Contaminants*, covered types of endocrine-disrupting compounds, personal care products and pharmaceuticals that are being detected in the waters of the U.S. He also covered the results of a study that looked at the fate of these compounds through the wastewater treatment process. **Copies of Dr. Longley's presentation can be found on the GBRA Clean River Page at <http://www.gbra.org/crp/default.aspx>.**

Travis Linscomb with the Upper Guadalupe River Authority handed out a second year 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 an 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. The project will conclude in August 2014. **A copy of the second year report can be found on the GBRA Clean River Page at <http://www.gbra.org/crp/default.aspx>.**

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 is paying 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 began with Caldwell County's support of the Hog Out Campaign in the fall of 2012, and has led to the newly formed Caldwell County Feral Hog Task Force. The Task Force is led by a committee of local landowners. The county was awarded a grant from the Texas Department of Agriculture that has helped remove almost 5,000 feral hogs in the first year. Mr. Dornak reported that there has been several cleanup/hazardous waste collection events held in the watershed. He concluded with news of an upcoming meeting to discuss the operation of the City of Kyle wastewater treatment plant. Several divisions from TCEQ, along with key stakeholders will discuss the impacts of wastewaters spills from the city's plant (operated by AquaTexas) on Plum Creek. **A copy of Mr. Dornak's presentation can be found on the GBRA Clean River Page at <http://www.gbra.org/crp/default.aspx>.**

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 with 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 has begun working on implementing these BMPs. The 2nd annual community stream cleanup has been scheduled for April 5, 2014. Other educational events in the coming months include: Smart Growth Workshop March 25th (GBRA-Seguin), Septic System Homeowner Workshops-April 28th and 29th (Seguin and New Braunfels), Feral Hog Workshop-May 25th (Big Red Barn – Seguin), Lone Star Healthy Streams Workshop-June 5th, and the Rainwater Harvesting-August 12th. Mr. Ling mentioned that GBRA and USGS have begun an Isotope study that will look at possible sources of the elevated nitrates in the Geronimo as well as Plum Creek watersheds. **A copy of Mr. Ling's presentation can be found on the GBRA Clean River Page at <http://www.gbra.org/crp/default.aspx>.**

Matt Heinemann, the interim watershed coordinator for the Cypress Creek Watershed Partnership briefed the stakeholders on the status of the watershed protection efforts being

conducted in the Cypress Creek watershed. The Watershed Protection Plan has been submitted to TCEQ for review prior to the public comment period. After the public comment period, the plan will be submitted to EPA for their review and acceptance. Recognizing the importance of protecting the base flow of the Cypress Creek, implementation of the plan includes development of a localized groundwater/ surface water interaction model and ground water protection strategies. **A copy of Mr. Heinemann's presentation can be found on the GBRA Clean River Page at <http://www.gbra.org/crp/default.aspx>.**

Travis Tidwell, 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. **A copy of Mr. Tidwell's presentation can be found on the GBRA Clean River Page at <http://www.gbra.org/crp/default.aspx>.**

Cindy Hopson, representing the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, gave an overview of the TPWD's roles, responsibilities and activities in the Guadalupe River Basin. She explained that Alan Butler is regional biologist assigned to the TPWD Kills and Spills Response team that covers this area. Questions or reporting of any threats to wildlife or aquatic species can be directed to Mr. Butler at (512) 389-4848 or (281) 842-8100.

Alecia Reinmund-Martinez, with the Edwards Aquifer Authority, gave an overview of the water quality monitoring program associated with 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 brought together 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. Included in the HCP are water quality and biological data collections that will be used to support the HCP biological goals and objectives. The HCP monitoring program will be used to gather baseline data on the ecosystems of the Comal and San Marcos Rivers and Springs, assess effectiveness of the conservation measures included in the HCP, identify impairments and concerns, and support adaptive management decisions. The monitoring program includes routine water quality monitoring, groundwater, sediment and storm water monitoring. **A copy of Ms. Reinmund-Martinez's presentation can be found on the GBRA Clean River Page at <http://www.gbra.org/crp/default.aspx>.**

The meeting closed at 5:15 p.m.