

2023 GBRA Clean Rivers Program Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

GBRA

- 19 Routine monthly stations, 14 Quarterly, and 2 Aquatic Life Monitoring events in FY23
- CRP Budget increase in FY22-23
- Created the Basin Summary Report
 - WQ Trend and analysis over a 10 year period.
 - Completed every 5 years to identify trends and changes.
- Most significant trends overall were Chloride and Sulfates and could be influenced by:
 - Low rainfall totals
 - Nonpoint source pollution
 - Effluent discharges
- Major threats to WQ over time include:
 - Population growth, land-use changes, water availability

UGRA

- CRP Sampling: 12 quarterly and 7 monthly stations
- 23 water quality investigations across the county in 2022.
- 2022 Driest year on record for Kerrville
 - Drought can have an impact of WQ data (bacteria and other pollutant levels increased)
- Bacteria reduction plans
 - 2 sections impaired for bacteria
 - Plan has worked and now meeting water quality standards.
 - Ways to continue BMPs for bacteria reduction:
 - Education and outreach
 - Green infrastructure
 - Riparian restoration
- Water Resources Scholarships
 - College students in Kerr county majoring in water resources can apply for \$10k and an internship with UGRA.
- Water Resources Preservation Grant Program
 - Projects in Kerr county can apply for a rebate up to \$150,000 for design and construction of green infrastructure.

WVWA

- CRP Sampling: 3 monthly sites, 4 quarterly on upper Blanco river and 6 quarterly on Cypress Creek.
- Upper Blanco River:
 - Bacteria meeting Geomean for all 3 monthly sites; Strong correlation with flow
 - Dissolved oxygen is above WQ standards, could be due to increased nutrients
 - Increase of nutrients increases number of algae.
 - Total Phosphorus is non-detectable with some variability at downstream site (FM 165)

- Land application direct discharge above FM165 on Blanco River is increasing algae numbers after 2 years of not directly discharging.
- Upper Blanco quarterly stations:
 - bacteria levels were below WQ standards
 - Higher colony counts in urbanized areas.
- Cypress creek Monitoring:
 - Dissolved oxygen grab samples were below WQ standards for RR12 and blue hole sites
 - Other 4 meet WQ standards
 - Dissolved oxygen lower this year (2023) than last year (2022) 24hr deployments at blue hole
 - Most likely due to drought influences. However, 303d DO impairment kept
 - E. coli above WQ standards at RR12 and Blanco river confluence
 - Working on bacteria study for publication
- Future Projects/Continuation on Cypress creek:
 - Dye tracing event for possible E. coli influences
 - Optical brightener study continuing

GBRA Mussel Survey

- About 24 mussel species in the Guadalupe River with 3 proposed for the Endangered Species Status in 2021.
- Large portions of basin have not been surveyed for mussels.
- Guadalupe River Basin Habitat Conservation Plan is in development.
 - Scheduled for completion in 2026
- Survey Goals:
 - Verify/confirm historical records
 - Assess rare species population and spatial variation in assemblages
 - Help inform the GBRA HCP
- 5 Segments studied in survey
 - 60 survey sites in total
 - 55 wadeable, 5 non-wadeable
- Total of 13,015 mussels from 12 species observed
 - Guadalupe Orb was the 4th most abundant in all 4 study segments
 - San Marcos River segments had the higher diversity and species evenness.
- Guadalupe Orb populations healthier than previously documented
 - Evidence of subadult recruitment
- More distribution and abundance data needed for Guadalupe River Basin

Upper San Marcos River WPP

- Sessom Creek WPP implementation
 - Grant from 2020 ended in 2023 February.
 - Task 3: Riparian and stream restoration
 - Non-native terrestrial Invasive vegetation removal
 - Mulched to capture storm water
 - Trunks as sediment control
 - Seeding with Native American Seed
 - Native grasses, wildflowers, & deer resistant mixes
 - Seed slingers used for distribution
 - Live native plantings
 - Root plugs, trees and shrubs
 - Task 5: Sediment control berms
 - Runoff from small apartment complex mitigation
 - Trucks/slash material from invasive species
 - Task 6: Community trail plan
 - Guide people through implementation areas
 - Task 7: Education and outreach with signs in greenspace
 - 212 volunteers, 16.5 acres restored.
- Sessom Creek Wastewater Collection System Relocation
 - Removal of suspended waste water lines that we previously buried
 - City of San Marcos Replaced and reburied the lines under the creek.
- Stream restoration Project of Sessom Creek to help handle high water flows
 - Part of the EAAHCP; Phase 1 to be completed by May 2023.
- Mermaid Society
 - Environmental and cultural awareness along with stewardship towards the river.
 - Mermaid Chats and SPLASH programs
 - 16 events for education and outreach so far.
- US ARMY Core San Marcos River Ecosystem Restoration Project
 - Removal of non-native riparian vegetation
 - Native veg planting
 - Stormwater outfall improvements

Watershed Association Program Updates

- 319 grant funding until August 2023.
- Working on sustainability Plan
- Cypress on 303D list for Impaired DO and aquatic life.
- Drought impacting funds for Association
 - No flow means no tourism
- Drought and Urban growth impacting well pumping
 - Working with Aqua Texas to reduce spring flow impacts
 - Jacob's Well has had 0cfs flow for the 5th time.
 - Impacts Cypress Creek and the inflows to the Blanco River and Edwards Aquifer.

- Land conservation
 - Hays Co \$75M parks and open space bonds
 - Waiting on funds for implementation
- City of Blanco Water Reclamation Task Force
 - Recommending from direct discharge to TLAP permit
 - Lower the discharge amount for the future
 - Biologic surveys show negative impacts on WQ in the Blanco River.
- Blue Hole Primary School
 - Inspire and inform on One Water projects

Geronimo Creek WPP Update

- On 303d list since 2008
 - Bacteria exceeds recreational use standards
 - Nitrate-Nitrogen concerns
- First 10 years
 - WQ monitoring
 - Stakeholder surveys
 - Bacterial Source Tracking in 2020
 - Cleanup events (10 events)
- New Turfgrass management course
 - 4-hour course with CEUs
 - Comal County Extension Office on March 24th, 2023.
 - Help to address commercial sources of fertilizer and pesticide runoff
- April 22nd, 2023 – 10th annual creek cleanup event
 - Over 23,000 lbs. of trash removed since 2013

City of New Braunfels

- Dry Comal and Comal WPP
 - Placed on the 303(d) list in 2010 and 2016 respectively
 - Videos and local outreach to help with WQ issues
 - Addition of city signage for watershed notification
 - Hands-on learning activities for bacteria sample preparation and readings for classrooms or group projects.
 - Wildlife waste removal
 - Service is twice a month
 - Over 3000 lbs. of waste removed
- BMP Addressing Stormwater
 - Design work for stormwater filtration system (occur in FY24)
 - Pilot study will determine effectiveness from upstream and downstream data collection.
 - 2 biofiltration beds monitored as well.
- Future outreach with digital campaign, newspapers, and community impact.

Plum Creek WPP

- New Updates to WPP:
 - New Grant Cycle started January 1st 2023.
 - New Watershed Coordinator: Sean Melvin
 - Former partner Polonia Water Supply merged with Aqua water supply company to become new funding partner.
- 1321 subscribers on constant contact for the Plum Creek Current Newsletter
 - Higher social media following over the last year.
- Plum Creek Stewards-Texas Stream Team
 - 5 monitors and 12 sites available within the Plum Creek watershed
 - 2 additional monitoring kits available
- Central Texas feral Hogs Task Force
 - Since 2012, ~24,500 feral hogs removed
 - Last year, 1,122 feral hogs removed in Hays and Caldwell County
 - Additional 2,850 removed by existing traps.
- Steering Committee Meeting held on June 3rd, 2022
 - Youth Education was identified as a priority for the Steering Committee
 - Landowner outreach and wastewater was second importance.
- Steering Committee Meeting held on January 12th, 2023.
 - Updating ground rules
 - Restructured from 5 work groups into 2.
- Texas Riparian and Stream Ecosystem training workshop held on May 12th, 2022
 - Offered CEU credits
- Lone Star Healthy Streams Workshop
 - Seguin TX, June 1st 2022.
- Upcoming Events
 - April 1st, 2023-Lockhart sip and stroll
 - April 22nd, 2023– Keep Lockhart beautiful earth day cleanup
 - Summer 2023 – Texas Watershed stewards workshops
 - Feral Hog Bounty claim collection
 - March 23rd, April 20th, May 18th. June 15th, July 20th.
 - April 25th- Kyle, TX Steering committee meeting