

TEXAS CLEAN RIVERS PROGRAM FOR THE RIO GRANDE BASIN

MIDDLE RIO GRANDE COORDINATED MONITORING MEETING

April 19, 2016
1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Laredo, Texas

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Participants

Leslie Grijalva, USIBWC Clean Rivers
Robin Cypher, TCEQ Surface Water Quality
Mario Gomez, USIBWC Laredo
Bianca Garcia, TCEQ Laredo
Guadalupe Luna, City of Laredo Health Dept
Elsa Hull, TCEQ Laredo
Victor Wong, TCEQ Border Affairs
JV Perales, City of Laredo Health Dep Lab
Rebecca Castro, City of Laredo Health Dep Lab

Sarah Eagle, TCEQ Clean Rivers
Francisco Rosales, City of Laredo Env. Services
Lucky Roncinske, City of Laredo Env. Services
Agustin Boone, CILA Nuevo Laredo
Sarah Whitley, TCEQ Surface Water Quality
Gerardo Flores, City of Laredo Env. Services
Dr. Tom Vaughan, RGISC
Daniel Maldonado, City of Laredo Health Dept
Andres Garcia, USIBWC Clean Rivers

Meeting Notes:

- Leslie Grijalva opened meeting and began with introductions from all participants.
- Leslie briefly explained the handouts and other materials available.
- Leslie mentioned that TCEQ and USIBWC CRP had noticed construction around Manadas Creek area when driving into Laredo. What is going on?
 - The City of Laredo is building a new WWTP on the north side of the creek.
 - Dr. Vaughan: City of Laredo purchased land where Anzon smelter is, covering it with a 3 inch cap of asphalt (to prevent leaching).
 - Currently three projects proposed for this area, an 18-wheeler parking lot, solar farm (proposed by RGISC), garbage transfer station.
- El Pico WTP Phase I is functional and operating. This plant is treating drinking water for the north part of Laredo.
- There is another proposal to build another WWTP near La Bota Ranch, but nothing for sure yet.
- Dr. Vaughan: The TX Hornshell mussel will probably be listed as endangered soon, since Laredo has the only remaining live population in TX.
 - Dr. Vaughan gave a brief summary of the mussel research going on in the area. This area is concerned mainly with the TX Hornshell and the Mexican Fawnsfoot.
 - Leslie told him about the projects the NMISC is doing, and that she had passed along his name to them as a contact for mussel research on the Rio Grande.
 - The City of Laredo has long been proposing a weir just upstream of what is currently the only TX mussel community, which would wipe them out. The species would go extinct if this happens. The weir is proposed upstream of the World Trade Bridge.
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- What about the RGISC proposals for restoration on Manadas Creek?
 - Started off as a high school environmental science class project.
 - North Creek Shopping Center built, channelized that portion of the creek, which branches off of Manadas Creek.
 - Lots of trash and dumping issues, which flow down that creek, into Manadas Creek, and into the Rio Grande.
 - Submitted two grant proposals to do some volunteer monitoring. USIBWC CRP provided letters of support.
 - **UPDATE: Learned on 5/2/16 that RGISC did not get one of the grants.**
- Plastic Bag ordinance has had a dramatic impact on the amount of trash in the area.
- Leslie touched on the Bacteria issues:
 - Still super high counts at all stations below Jefferson Plant.
 - Becky says Webb County's samples are always super high (have been as high as 800,00 MPN).
 - What kind of system do the prisons have?
 - TCEQ Laredo said they thought the prisons were connected to the city's collector system, but not completely sure.
- Coyote Creek was brought up as a big contributor to the bacteria issues. Last year, RGISC did a canoe trip down the RG and sent CRP video footage and pictures of the discharge in this creek. Obvious evidence of raw sewage in the water. Leslie took the opportunity to ask CILA about the repairs that are being done in Nuevo Laredo.
- Mario and Agustin Boone: Ing. Boone offered an update into what has been occurring on the MX side.
 - Arroyo Coyote: CILA understands this is a main issue affecting water quality. Flows are coming from two plants upstream (discharging at 200 l/day and 30 l/day), which gets to a small lagoon that only overflows when there is rainfall. It is this lagoon that is causing problems. They (CILA, BECC, city) are working on it.
 - In 2012, there were 30 discharge points that needed to be addressed (connected, shut off, repaired, etc). As of the date of the meeting, about half have been addressed.
 - The City of Nuevo Laredo invested money in a recreational area along the river in this area, and CILA has made them aware of the bacteria issues.
 - The Nuevo Laredo International WWTP treats >20 million gallons/day, and treats to U.S. secondary standards.
 - Status of La Joya: Had been repaired, but then the pumping station transformer exploded and the pump stopped working. Has still not been repaired, so still discharging about 3 million gal/day. This is by far the largest problem right now.
 - Status of Arroyo Las Alazanas: 4 separate discharge points on this arroyo, previously discharging about 1 million gal/day. One discharge point has been completely repaired, 2 are pending and will soon be completely repaired. One still needing repairs.
 - Both La Joya and Las Alazanas are above the WTP intake.
- Leslie proposed a new recon survey by canoe, of only the areas of concern, to see first-hand what is going. Proposed to work with CILA to gain access to the MX side and look at the

discharges, perhaps all the way to the point of origin. TCEQ-Laredo, RGISC and TCEQ Border Affairs all said they would like to participate in the recon survey. Need to plant this.

- Leslie said that after infrastructure repairs are complete on the MX side, the IBWC is still proposing a repeat of the bacteria study 6 months later. This had been discussed previously at other meetings, but she wanted to let everyone know that both the U.S. and MX is still on board with this and we are just waiting for repairs to be completed.
 - Will require a massive coordination effort, as this will be a binational effort.
 - Please consider if you would like to participate, and Leslie will keep everyone informed.
 - In the meantime, Leslie will report on the information received from Ing. Boone and Mario about the status of the infrastructure repairs on the MX side.
- CILA stated that they are also trying to get permission to do a tour of the WWTPs in Nuevo Laredo. Leslie said she would like to attend. (Update- Approval granted to Leslie to join the tour of the N. Laredo WWTPs).
- Rio Bravo WWTP and WTP: Plants still have numerous problems, even with new officials, but they are working on fixing their issues.
- Aerial spraying of cane: RGISC and Laredo community are against the spraying.
 - City Council wrote a letter condemning the aerial spraying by the TSWCB, and supporting Dr. Goolsby's methods (UT-Austin), which include biological controls.
 - CRP, and the USIBWC, had no knowledge of this proposed spraying until Leslie received all this information from RGISC.
 - CRP sent the information up the chain of command, and the USIBWC sent a letter to the TSWCB requesting information about the proposed spraying. At the time of the meeting, no response had been received.
 - State legislature just passed a bill to deal with cane (SB1734, Rio Grande Carrizo Cane Eradication Program).
- Leslie reviewed the Coordinated Monitoring schedule:
 - Dr. Vaughan, RGISC: no changes
 - May soon need a new lab space. Can't use the Laredo FO because Safety would not give Dr. Vaughan a key to the building because it's a security risk. Need to figure something out.
 - No more shipping issues with FedEx.
 - Mario says that the Laredo FO has hired a hydrotech, and this person may be able to take on the sampling once Dr. Vaughan leaves. CRP will work with Mario and Dr. Vaughan on this.
 - City of Laredo Environmental: No issues or updates for sampling. Only issue is low flows at times.
 - Laredo Health Department: No changes and no issues.
 - Laredo Health Department Lab: No update. They submitted a request for a new sealer, which CRP is working on with the USIBWC Env. Management Division.
 - TCEQ Laredo: They have been sampling at 18792 instead of 20999 (no sampling at 20999), to include sediment samples. There is much better access here again, and it's a much better site for sediment sampling. This was reflected on the CMS (email received from Elsa).
 - USIBWC CRP continued sampling at 20999, with sediment sampling.

- This may be overkill at 20999. Compare data, may remove this and add quarterly sediment sampling at 20997.
- Meeting adjourned

Training Participants

Andres Garcia, USIBWC CRP
 Leslie Grijalva, USIBWC CRP
 Rebeca Castro, City of Laredo Health Dept. Lab
 Vicky Perales, City of Laredo Health Dept. Lab
 Daniel Maldonado, City of Laredo Health Dept.
 Lupe Luna, City of Laredo Health Dept.
 Dr. Tom Vaughan, RGISC
 Trisha Cortez, RGISC
 Lucky Roncinske, City of Laredo Environmental Services Department
 Francisco Rosales, City of Laredo Environmental Services Dept.
 Gerardo Flores, City of Laredo Environmental Services Dept.

Training Notes:

- CRP assigned and went over the new equipment that the partners received.
- SOP should be coming out in May.
- Leslie took notes on partners who needed supplies, etc.

AGENDA

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| 1:00 | Welcome and Introductions |
| 1:15 | Discussion of various water quality topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCEQ Watershed Action Planning Process • Discussion of TCEQ's Integrated Report/303d list • Identification of water quality issues, data gaps, sources |
| 1:45 | Ongoing research and projects in the area addressing issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laredo Bacteria issues: Updates • Infrastructure repairs in Nuevo Laredo • Any projects or research in the Middle Rio Grande Basin |
| 2:15 | Monitoring Schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of statewide Coordinated Monitoring Schedule (CMS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://cms.lcra.org/ - current and FY 2017 monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stations- any issues ○ Shipping issues ○ safety/security issues • Potential future projects and potential new sites |
| 2:45 | Other announcements and information |

- 2016 Basin Highlights Report for the Rio Grande Basin

3:00 Final comments and adjourn

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- 3:15 USIBWC CRP Partner Training and Monitoring Guidance Updates- **Required**
- Issue new equipment to CRP partners
 - Answer questions and review monitoring procedures on Draft USIBWC YSI multiprobe Standard Operating Procedures for maintenance and calibration for the new sondes.
 - Answer questions and review procedures for YSI 556. Please bring your probes if you need assistance.
 - Review of Field forms, Chain of Custody Forms, cooler shipment procedures
 - Answer questions and review monitoring procedures, as requested

4:00 Adjourn refresher training portion
