



**Status of the  
Implementation Plan for One Total Maximum Daily Load for Nitrate-  
Nitrogen  
in the Lower Sabinal River: Segment 2110  
December 2006**



**Dear Lower Sabinal River Stakeholders and Interested Parties:**

This is an informal “newsletter” to update you on the progress of the *Implementation Plan for One Total Maximum Daily Load for Nitrate-Nitrogen in the Lower Sabinal River*. The plan specifies how nitrogen loading to the river will be reduced by relocating the Sabinal Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) to a location less susceptible to flooding.

The current WWTP is an Imhoff tank and lagoon evaporation system originally designed for no discharge to the river. According to the Total Maximum Daily Load study, it is thought that the lagoons have been damaged by flood waters and may be a source of nitrogen contamination in the river.

The proposed new facility will include a mechanical screen, looped aeration basin, two clarifiers, and an ultraviolet disinfection system and will be permitted to discharge 0.34 million gallons per day of treated effluent to the Sabinal River. It is to be located outside of the floodplain and/or protected from flooding.

In 2003 the City of Sabinal submitted an application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development-Rural Utilities Services for a grant/loan to fund construction of the new WWTP. According to the local USDA representative, the project has been approved and they are waiting for the money to be released by Washington. They are expecting the money to be available in January or February 2007.

Once the money is received, the City of Sabinal plans to secure a site for the new facility, develop final engineering plans, and solicit bids for the construction of the facility. It is anticipated that contractors will have 30 days to submit their proposals. Until the site is secured, specific engineering plans will not be available.

Based on the July 2, 2002 flood, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) in Ft. Worth Texas has suggested that 150,000 cubic feet per second and 935’ above mean sea level define a 100 year flood. This differs from

previous United States Geological Survey Federal Emergency Management Agency interpretations which placed the 100-year floodplain at a lower level.

The proposed WWTP site identified in the USDA funding request is mostly located above the USACOE 100-year floodplain and is to be protected from floodwaters. Also included in the project is a new lift station on the east side of the Sabinal River above the floodplain and construction of a new pipeline across the river to deliver the wastewater to the plant.

The construction of the pipeline across the river was authorized by USACOE under the Nationwide Permit 12 for Utility Line Activities in a letter dated November 3, 2004, with an expiration date of November 3, 2006 – a casualty of the funding delay. The engineering consulting firm will be requesting a renewal of the authorization and does not expect any problems with it.

The new plant will require a permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to discharge treated effluent into the Sabinal River. The permit will specify how the plant is to be operated including the qualifications for the operator. The new plant may require a higher level of certification for the plant operator than is now required.

The Environmental Assessment Report on the proposed location addresses a number of potential consequences. No problems or concerns with the proposed location of the new WWTP were found.

The City of Sabinal will be required to submit a closure plan for review and approval to TCEQ for the old plant. Closure of a WWTP includes the permanent removal from service of any pit, tank, pond, lagoon, surface impoundment and/or other treatment unit regulated by the permit. The old plant will be decommissioned as soon as possible after the new plant comes online.

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