

**Nueces River Authority
Clean Rivers Program
Steering Committee Meetings Summary
March 2009**

The Nueces River Authority (NRA) held two Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Steering Committee Meetings in March, 2009. The first meeting was held on March 3rd in Uvalde, TX and the second meeting was held on March 5th in Corpus Christi, TX. The meetings were well attended by a cross section of stakeholders including water suppliers, industry and agricultural interests, university faculty, local government representatives, environmental groups, state agencies, and concerned citizens.

The meetings provided an overview of CRP, including NRA's area of responsibility, funding, and CRP requirements.

The Draft Basin Highlights Report was distributed and discussed. Ms. Freund asked for any comments, either at the meeting or at a later date.

NRA's outreach and education activities for the Upper Nueces Basin, Lower Basins, and Arroyo Colorado were discussed.

Member comments and recommendations were noted during each meeting and are summarized as follows:

Uvalde, March 3, 2009

- Leona River – It was noted that the TCEQ monitoring site at Ft. Inge boat ramp is very near the NRA site at the Winkle farm and that neither are downstream of the confluence of Cook's Slough which is the tributary receiving discharge from City of Uvalde's WWTP. The coordination of monitoring on the Leona was discussed. The possibility of one entity; NRA or TCEQ; doing routine monitoring at all four sites on the Leona could lead to a more comprehensive approach and would allow for consolidated observations. The City of Uvalde indicated an interest in communicating with the monitoring staff and being made aware of observations made while sampling.
- Also regarding the Leona and the ongoing nitrate – nitrite exceedences; it was noted that an old style tail water pit still exists and holds water in the bed of Cooks Slough between Hwy 90 and Hwy 83. This could be a contributing source of nitrogen to the river.
- Headwater streams, including Frio River and Nueces River, near Chalk Bluff – A steering committee member inquired about the water quality impacts of digging swimming holes in the bed of the rivers. All agencies present noted receiving calls regarding this subject in general, some wanting permission to dig other complaining about neighbors digging. The regulation of this activity by TPWD

under Sand Marl and Gravel permits was discussed and it was suggested that NRA/TCEQ/TPWD/NRCS work together to provide education to TPWD SMG permittees and applicants. The geomorphology videos produced for the State of Missouri, by EMRIVER were mentioned as a possible tool.

- Hondo Creek – There were comments and recommendation regarding the addition of a routine site at Hwy 90 to complement the existing site downstream on Hwy 173 where nitrates have become a concern.
- West Squirrel Creek (tributary to Frio River) – it was noted that the Standard Conductance measured during an investigation was extremely high 3-4000 *uc* range as compared to East Squirrel Creek which was measured around 400-500 range. One member noted that this area, near the Frio/Medina County line is noted for having thermal groundwater, often containing sulfur, which at times must be cooled prior to using it for irrigation.
- Concern was raised about the riparian conditions and maintenance of emergency flood ways downstream of the watershed dams on Cooks Slough. The dams were constructed to control flooding within the City of Uvalde and are often found overgrazed and becoming unstable.

Corpus Christi, March 5, 2009

- Jace Tunnel inquired as to why the Nueces Bay was not on the official list of impairments. Ms. Freund said that the TMDL has been approved; therefore, it would not be on the official list.
- Alex Nunez would like to see some monitoring done on the Northern Spillway because there is a lot of water flowing there. He also commented that he thought there were around 9 discharges into the spillway. Ms. Freund advised him to attend our Coordinated Monitoring Meeting in hopes of finding a location for sampling. Mr. Nunez also wanted everyone to know that there is currently a golden algal bloom south of Kingsville in a small body of water that flows into Tranquitas Creek which flows to San Fernando Creek in Kleberg County. This is the southernmost bloom that he is aware of to occur, and has contributed to fish kills. Mr. Nunez said he was also surprised at the salinities in the area, which average to be 5 ppt. This may mean that the segment has an impairment for chloride.
- Lionel Lopez would like another monitoring site in Petronila Creek on the west side of SH77. Ms. Freund told him that NRA had investigated that possibility, but had found that most of the time it is dry in that area. Mr. Lopez commented that the reason for that is because a rancher in the area has dammed up the water. Ms. Freund advised him to speak to TCEQ about this issue.

- Paul Carrangelo wanted more information about nutrient standards in reservoirs that may be revised. Ms. Freund stated that she did not know a lot of information about that at this time. He also said he thought that there were going to be proposed standards to municipal POTW's.
- Jamie Flores wanted NRA to know that he has applied for a grant to allow for more sampling at WWTF in the Arroyo Colorado watershed.