

**Nueces River Authority
Clean Rivers Program
Steering Committee Meetings Summary
March 2008**

The Nueces River Authority (NRA) held two Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Steering Committee Meetings in March, 2008. The first meeting was held on March 25th in Uvalde, TX and the second meeting was held on March 27th 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 CRP video produced by the Houston-Galveston Area Council, a CRP partner, was presented.

The results of the Draft 2008 Assessment were discussed, focusing on delisted and newly listed segments and parameters.

Mr. Andrew Sullivan with the Texas Commission on Environment Quality's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program, gave a presentation reviewing all of the current TMDLs in NRA's CRP area of responsibility. The Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan (ACWPP) was reviewed by Ms. Rocky Freund at the Uvalde meeting and by Ms. Laura De La Garza at the Corpus Christi meeting.

The Draft Basin Summary Report was distributed and discussed. Ms. Freund explained that the report is not yet complete, but reviewed how it is organized and 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. It was noted that NRA's Headwaters Stewardship Project has been selected for a Texas Environmental Excellence Award. At the Corpus Christi meeting, Dr. Julie Tuason, Texas Stream Team, gave an overview of their activities.

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

Uvalde, March 25, 2008

Mr. Dick Whipple, Southwest Texas Junior College, asked Andrew Sullivan if TCEQ and TMDL look for the sources of impairments and search for solutions. Ms. Freund and Mr. Sullivan explained that that is part of the process.

Corpus Christi, March 27, 2008

Mr. Lionel Lopez asked if Petronila Creek west of US 77 is being monitored. He stated that there were some goats and horses that drank the water and died. He says the water

there rarely flows, is full of debris, and is next to Lost Creek Colonia. Ms. Freund let him know that she would discuss the possibility of an additional monitoring station at the Coordinated Monitoring Meeting to be held in April.

Ms. De La Garza thought that the Arroyo Tidal had just gotten listed for bacteria (on the PowerPoint presentation it was showing that it had not been listed). Ms. Freund looked up the information in the TCEQ assessment, and it had not been listed.

Mr. Paul Carangelo commented on water quality standards that had been changed with the triennial review. The Nueces Bay TMDL would reduce total zinc criteria for this area. Mr. Sullivan explained that a change in the limit from 85 µg/L to 29 µg/L in total zinc has been implemented to protect human health and to support tissue levels protective of the oyster water use. Ms. Freund commented that the City Council Agenda has an item for starting up the Nueces Power Plant in this area again. This has been a concern for a potential source of contribution to the high levels of zinc.

He also commented that the addition of sea grass in outstanding and exceptional waters may be an additional parameter to assess the health of some water bodies. He said there was narrative language to manage water where sea grass has a potential to grow.

Mr. Carangelo asked about the stakeholder participation in and the major focus of the Atascosa TMDL. Mr. Sullivan said the stakeholder group is very receptive and that the focus has been rangeland.

Mr. Carangelo asked if the DO limit would be lowered for the Laguna Madre. Mr. Sullivan stated that it was under review and that the physical properties of the Laguna could allow for that.

With respect to the Arroyo Colorado wetlands, Mr. Carangelo asked if wetland mitigation credits could be used anywhere. Ms. De La Garza said they were having discussions with the Army Corps of Engineers to find suitable locations. Ms. Tuason asked about the desired parameters for attenuation in the drainage ditches. Ms. De La Garza stated that they wanted to look for nutrient loading reductions. Mr. Carangelo made some suggestions for funding for these activities in support of the ACWPP.