

TMDL Stakeholder Meeting – Guadalupe Blanco River Basin

September 29, 2002

Stakeholders Present: M.G. Hodges III (Cal-Maine), Barry Miller (Gonzales County Underground Water Conservation District), James Grimm (Texas Poultry Federation), Martha Goldfarb Barras (Legislative Liason, Senator Ken Armbrister), John Carey (Texas A&M Poultry Science), Wain Fairchild (Tyson), Linda Rathmann (Gonzales County Soil and Water Conservation District), Ted Reiley (Gonzales County Soil and Water Conservation District), Shari Johnson (Gonzales County Soil and Water Conservation District), Kendria Whitaker (Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board), Mark Walker (Gonzales USDA-NRCS), Billy Shankle (Holmes Foods), Dan Crozier (Holmes Foods), Julie Reiley (Citizen), Donna Long (TSSWCB), Harold Grauke (Tyson), Debbie Magin (GBRA), Calvin Spacek (Gonzales County SCTWAC-EAA)

Meeting Participants: James Miertschin (JMA), Wendy Block (H&C), Kerry Niemann (TCEQ)

Others Present: Reg Orthold (Cal-Maine), Phil Breitschopf (GCWS District), Don Vallis (Tyson), Jim Wells (Holmes Foods), James Lassig (Tyson), Troy Peshorn (Tyson), Craig Woods (Tyson), Sue Ortman (attorney)

Meeting Location: Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative, Gonzales, Texas

Meeting Date: Thursday, August 29th, 2002

Meeting began at noon. James Miertschin of James Miertschin and Associates (JMA) introduced the TMDL project for Peach Creek, Segment 1803C. Meeting participants introduced themselves.

James Miertschin's presentation included the following main points:

- A water body's impairment is based on levels of fecal coliform and e.coli
- Fecal coliform state standards: if geometric mean exceeds 200 colonies/ 100 ml or if one sample has more than 400 colonies/ 100 ml, then station is not supporting
- E. coli state standards: if geometric mean exceeds 126 colonies/ 100 ml, or if one sample has more than 394 colonies/ 100 ml, then station is not supporting
- State has adopted E.coli as the new standard, but the EPA has not approved it yet.
- Most historical data is on fecal coliform because that has been the standard for 20-30 years.
- It only takes one 'not supporting' monitoring station for the entire segment to be considered impaired
- Overview of TMDL process in general
- Peach Creek study focuses on lower 25 miles. Re-assessment of TNRCC data (because their data is old)

Review of Historical Data

- E.coli: Out of 60 samples, 12 were not supporting. Geometric mean was 121 (which is under the standard of 126). Therefore the stream did not technically show impairment, but it was very close, leaving some concern
- Fecal coliform: Out of 60 samples, 17 were not supporting. Geometric mean was 226 (which exceeds the standard of 200).
- The data is highly variable. There is no time correlation or trend that shows why or when the levels increased.

Questions and Answers

Q: Can you tell the source of the pollution?

A: Yes, but we aren't doing those tests. We need new data for assessment purposes. We propose 4 stations on the main stem of the creek.

Q: Any monitoring stations in Fayette?

A: No. No data at all for upstream to date.

Q: (Calvin Spacek) Who did the past data collection?

A: GBRA

Q: I'm not questioning the validity of the data, but it's only from 1 station and it doesn't indicate where the pollution is coming from.

A: These are the first bacterial TMDLs in the area.

Q: There are a lot of grasshoppers in the area – are they a problem?

A: No. Only warm-blooded animals create fecal coliform or e.coli

Q: Is there a distinction between running water and stagnant water for testing purposes?

A: Yes. We really only like to test in flowing water (minimum flow is necessary). We'll need to develop a procedure if it turns out that the water is stagnant.

Q: What about phosphorus?

A: Not in our study.

Debbie Magin from GBRA responded that GBRA does a test for phosphorus every month. She also explained that you can access the historical data on-line on their website: www.gbra.org. On the site go to clean rivers, water quality, and then choose station 14937 and it will show the historical data for that station.

Q: Do you collect flood data?

A: Yes

Q: What strand of e.coli are you testing for?

A: It is a specific strain, but I'm not sure which it is.

Q: Are the sampling conditions noted?

A: TNRCC assessment requires us to exclude samples under flow minimum. Those are not included in the statistical analysis. San Antonio Testing Laboratories are doing the lab work. Quality assurance offices on the team to make sure that data meets criteria.

Q: Do you do split sampling?

A: Not planned, but maybe we'll include some blind samples, etc.

Q: (Barry Miller, GCUWCD) The funding that was dropped for Waelder and Flatonía seems incomprehensible. I-10 was not on the list and it should be.

A: We wanted more sampling, but budget constraints didn't allow for it.

Kerry Niemann from TNRCC added that he spoke with the investigator from the TNRCC regional office regarding any violations in past years on Peach Creek and there weren't any. If in the future something shows concern, then we'll consider adding it. A scheduled comprehensive compliance investigation would address gross violations (3 or more), but there were only minor violations in Flatonía, so this investigation has not been done, and these stations have not been added.

Q: (James Grimm, TX Poultry Federation) How many unpermitted dischargers are there?

A: (Kerry Niemann) Not sure

Q: Who did the previous testing?

A: (Debbie Magin, GBRA) GBRA does Waelder

(JMA) New sampling to begin in October. First, we need approval from the EPA for the QAPP.

Q: (James Grimm) Is it necessary to wait another year before having another meeting?

A: Need at least 6 months from beginning of sampling, so next August makes the most sense. We can send out a newsletter with a mid-year update though.

Q: What if the problem is a (or a few) point source (s)?

A: That gets more into the implementation part of the plan. If it is a point source, then each point source would be given an allowable load with a timeline for compliance. If we don't find a point source and it's a number of different things (run-off, etc), then we'll apply some general loads. This hasn't been done anywhere yet, so we're not sure. If it's all natural sources (i.e. raccoons), then there's not much to do. We can do something called a site-specific standard revision if it's due to natural, uncontrollable sources. (Debbie Magin, GBRA) We are hoping that Peach Creek will have its own standards. Because of inconsistent flow, tree cover, etc. (JMA) Next step is to collect more data. We may see evidence of contamination, but we may not. We may need an expanded set of stations, but we will learn this as we go. Also, there is not a lot known about bacteria, making this even more difficult.

Q: (James Grimm) General comment - Doesn't see the point of the study if it cannot pinpoint the cause.

A: (Kerry Niemann, TNRCC) There are 180 segments in the state that are bacteria impaired. We are trying to develop a library across the state. For now, you can view the project overviews on the TNRCC website, and give Debbie Magin your card if you want the poultry report.

Meeting Attendees

M.G. Hodges III	Cal-Maine
Reg Othold	Cal-Maine
Phil Breuxhog	Gonzales County Soil & Water Cons. District (GCSWCD)
Linda Rathmann	GCSWCD – Planner
Kendria Whitaker	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
John Carey	Texas A&M Poultry Science
James Grimm	Texas Poultry Association
Don Vallis	Tyson Foods
Joe (unreadable)	Holmes Foods
James Lassig	Tyson Foods
Harold Grauks	Tyson Foods
Troy Pers (unreadable)	Tyson Foods
Craig Woods	Tyson Foods
Calvin E. Spacek	Gonzales County SCTWAC – EAA
Debbie Magin	Guadalupe Blanco River Authority
Shari Johnson	GCSWCD
Wain Fairchild	Tyson Foods – Nutrient Management Planner
Barry Miller	Gonzales County Underground Water Cons. District
Ted Reiley	GCSWCD
Mark Walker	USDA – NRCS
Martha Barras	Senator Armbrister’s office
Billy Shankle	Holmes Foods
Dan Crozier	Holmes Foods
Sue C. Ortma	Attorney
Julie Reiley	
Donna Long	TSSWCB
Kerry Niemann	TNRCC – TMDL
Wendy Block	Hicks and Company
James Miertschin	James Miertschin and Associates