

Meeting Minutes

Joint Meeting of the Water Quality Advisory Work Group (WQAWG) and the Water Quality Standards Work Group (WQSWG) to Address Thermal Discharge Issues

3rd Meeting

February 25, 2015

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Location: Building F, Second Floor, Room 2210

Time: 9:30 am

Handouts: Meeting Agenda, Temperature Screening Procedure Revised Flowchart and Thermal Plume Characterization Studies Information Sheet

9:34 a.m. Welcome and Introductions presented by David Galindo

The meeting commenced with an introduction by TCEQ Water Quality Division Director David Galindo, followed by TCEQ key staff introductions, a short description of the project and a short discussion of the recently prepared thermal plume study information sheet that is available as a handout and on the TCEQ web site.

9:38 a.m. Revised Screening Procedures Flowchart presented by Mark Rudolph, Water Quality Assessment Team

TCEQ presented a conceptual approach that could be used as a framework for the development of the screening procedures.

- Revised flowchart, changes are on the last page.
 - Only rise over ambient temperature criteria apply to unclassified waters.
 - Temperature criteria do not apply to intermittent water bodies with a minimal aquatic life use, although downstream waters may need to be screened.
 - More technical guidance details will be available in the future.

9:41 a.m.

At this time the audience was encouraged to participate in a discussion of the temperature screening approach.

General Discussion

SH QUESTION: Stakeholder (SH) asked how the rise over ambient temperature criteria will be applied.

TCEQ: We do not know at this time, possibly a statistical approach or in-stream monitoring for ambient temperatures; we would like to hear comments on this.

TCEQ COMMENTS: The wording on the flowchart regarding screening procedures for intermittent streams may need revision since they are subject to rise over ambient criteria; how would we develop ambient temperatures if there is no water in the stream; intermittent is defined as zero flow for at least one week during most years.

SH QUESTION: When the upstream flow is dominated by a POTW discharge, how will a thermal discharge be regulated?

TCEQ: Domestic wastewater discharges are exempt from the temperature standards, we have not yet developed procedures for determining ambient temperatures; we would like to hear stakeholder ideas on this issue.

SH COMMENT: TCEQ should communicate with the Texas Tech researchers about issues such as ambient temperatures; there are policy issues to understand.

SH QUESTION: Will certain models not require calibration?

TCEQ: That is correct, some conservative less resource intensive models will not require calibration; additional details will be developed.

9:50 a.m. Break

10:06 a.m. Resume

General Discussion

TCEQ COMMENT: How many stakeholders have cooling impoundments on segment? Permittees might be able to use the new cooling water area concept to include a portion of an impoundment. Give us information regarding the purpose of your impoundment for review.

SH QUESTION: Does it matter which came first, if an in-stream cooling impoundment was built before the stream segment received temperature criteria?

TCEQ: We will have to have that reviewed by legal.

SH COMMENT: A default flow value could be applied to intermittent streams such as that done in Arkansas (4 cfs minimum).

TCEQ: We have systems in place to define critical low flows. We are hoping to develop a simplified method for intermittent streams.

SH QUESTION: Will there be a default distance for intermittent streams that will preclude downstream evaluation such as for TDS evaluations?

TCEQ: TCEQ will consider this request as we further develop our screening procedures and examine the possibility of default mixing zones for temperature.

TCEQ COMMENT: We are available to meet to talk about thermal plume studies.

SH QUESTION: When will the screening procedures be available to Stakeholders for review?

TCEQ: July 2016.

10:18 a.m. Next Steps, presented by Lynda Clayton, Water Quality Assessment Team Leader

Lynda Clayton presented a summary of the next steps in the thermal discharge project including comments from Stakeholders due March 31, additional research through December 2015, screening approach submitted to EPA January 2016, revised procedures to Stakeholders July 2016 and final draft for comment to Stakeholders November 2016.

SH QUESTION: When should the thermal plume study be done?

TCEQ: One year is allowed so talk to us now. The purpose is to gather information, not demonstrate compliance; refer to the recently prepared information sheet. Passage of aquatic life means plume shape, not a detailed aquatic life study. Passage can include around or under the plume.

SH QUESTION: Regarding IPs, when are proposed revisions expected to be available for review; were the 2012 IPs adopted?

TCEQ: The 2012 IPs have not been adopted. We are trying to parallel the proposed 2017 standards revision timing.

SH QUESTION: How will the timeline be affected if EPA concurrence is not obtained according to the schedule?

TCEQ: The TCEQ has included EPA in the process and there is sufficient time for them to let us know if there are problems.

TCEQ COMMENT: Send your contact information to outreach@tceq.texas.gov

10:26 Adjourn