

Task 6: Stakeholder Participation & Public Outreach

Table of Contents

Task 6: Stakeholder Participation and Public Outreach	6-1
Introduction	6-2
Stakeholder Participation	6-2
Basin Steering Committee	6-3
Cooperative Watershed Planning.....	6-7
Education & Outreach.....	6-8
EPA Outreach Documents	6-8
Planning Agency Website.....	6-9
Volunteer Monitoring.....	6-11
Exhibit 6A Stakeholder Questionnaire	6-12

TASK 6: STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION & PUBLIC OUTREACH

Introduction

This task involves multiple requirements from the Clean River Program legislation (TWC Section 26.0135) which are succinctly summarized by two objectives from the CRP Long Term Plan:

- Inform and Engage Stakeholders
- Promote Cooperative Watershed Planning

To inform and engage stakeholders, the CRP Planning Agencies need to build strong stakeholder groups and find innovative ways to maintain active participation. The Steering Committee serves as the main outreach tool of the CRP and is used to both disseminate information as well as obtain input on water quality concerns and monitoring requests. Additional means of informing and engaging stakeholders may include the following:

- educational presentations,
- workshops,
- volunteer monitoring programs,
- public meetings,
- web site updates,
- news releases or public service announcements.

To promote cooperative watershed planning, CRP Planning Agencies may engage with federal, state, regional, and local planning agencies, governments, regulated entities and the public to strategize ways to address water quality issues. The CRP Planning Agencies may act as the basin's representative for state-level water quality initiatives such as Water Quality Standards revisions, Total Maximum Daily Loads, or even Watershed Protection Plans.

Stakeholder Participation

A stakeholder is defined as any individual or entity that has a vested interest in the basin's waters; this includes the general public, institutions, government, industry, fee payers, and other interested parties. It is important to get support from relevant stakeholders, those who help make decisions and those who will be affected by them, when planning and implementing watershed activities.

Stakeholder knowledge of local conditions provides additional information that can be valuable when used in conjunction with scientific efforts. This information helps to define water quality goals that are achievable. Planning Agencies should ensure that the contributions of stakeholders are recognized and used, in some manner, to achieve the goals of the CRP.

Basin Steering Committee

As one of the core elements of the CRP, the Steering Committee is an essential component of the public participation process that provides a forum for meaningful input by citizens and organizations that reside in or near the watershed. Planning Agencies should strive to develop and maintain an active, diverse, and representative Steering Committee. Planning Agencies have the responsibility to organize and lead at least one basin-wide Steering Committee per fiscal year that serves as the focus of public input and assists with the following:

- creation of specific, achievable water quality objectives and basin priorities,
- review and development of work plans and allocation of resources,
- review, development and approval of major reports,
- establishment of monitoring priorities and development of monitoring plans,
- identification of priority problem areas and possible actions to address these problems and pollutant sources.

Membership Guidelines

To ensure that the different interests, concerns and priorities of each watershed are addressed, TAC rules specify that the Steering Committee will include stakeholders from across the basin, representing the following:

- citizens
- fee-payers [identified in Texas Water Code TWC 26.0135(h)]
- political subdivisions (including local, regional, and state officials)
- appropriate state agencies including:
 - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
 - Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
 - Texas Water Development Board
 - Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
 - Texas General Land Office
 - Texas Department of State Health Services
 - Texas Department of Agriculture
 - Texas Railroad Commission
 - Texas Department of Transportation
- other entities interested in water quality matters including:
 - environmental and public interest groups



- agriculture
- business and industry

Steering Committees should consist of stakeholders who are committed to identifying water quality issues in the basin, prioritizing resources and monitoring plans, and providing input on reports. Special emphasis should be placed on engaging and recruiting citizens to participate in Steering Committees because the general public is often the least represented stakeholder group.

To increase participation, Planning Agencies should take every opportunity to promote the CRP and the role of the Steering Committee. This includes using applicable CRP meetings, letters, the CRP promotional video, e-mails, web sites, radio ads, questionnaires, etc. to introduce potential members to the CRP and promote participation in the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee composition must regularly be reviewed against the CRP membership guidelines to determine if reasonable representation is being maintained. A Steering Committee is considered reasonably representative when the composition of the committee closely reflects that of the surrounding area or of the basin. Planning Agencies should consider stakeholder needs when planning the location, number and frequency of stakeholder meetings. If groups listed in the membership guidelines are not represented, efforts should be made to recruit representatives before the next Steering Committee meeting. A list of all Steering Committee members and their affiliations will be maintained by the Planning Agency and submitted to the CRP Project Manager upon request.

Regular Communication

In addition to Steering Committee meeting discussions, it is recommended that additional forms of regular communication be established with Steering Committee members and other interested stakeholders to keep them informed of basin activities. The communication could be via e-mail or list server posting, phone calls, newsletters, or mailed letters. By encouraging frequent feedback from recipients, this process will contribute to project planning and Steering Committee meeting agenda development. Regular communication can include or address priority items such as the following:

- special studies updates, including CRP and other studies,
- water quality reports,
- updates on Water Quality Assessment Information or Water Quality Standards revisions,
- announcements,
- upcoming events,
- agendas for upcoming meetings.

Meetings

Steering Committees will meet publicly and should play an active role in the development of meeting agendas. To ensure program priorities are met and stakeholder issues are



addressed, Planning Agencies need to incorporate the following guidance into meeting development.

Scheduling

Each fiscal year, Planning Agencies are required to conduct at least one Steering Committee meeting to address basin-wide water quality issues. Due to the size and diversity of individual basins, it may be difficult for a single annual meeting to fully accomplish all meeting requirements. In that case, Planning Agencies should consider multiple Steering Committee meetings. The Planning Agency can choose to hold the meeting(s) at any time of the year. It is preferable to hold the meeting(s) in February or March to ensure input in advance of the Coordinated Monitoring Meetings. While this is a priority for the meeting, that objective can be accomplished through emails to Steering Committee members requesting their input on the monitoring schedule. In addition, input on annual reports can also be requested via email to allow the stakeholders more flexibility in providing comments on the report.

Meetings should be scheduled on convenient dates and times that facilitate maximum stakeholder attendance and participation; these dates and times should account for stakeholders traveling from other parts of the basin. ***It is important that Planning Agencies negotiate mutually agreeable Steering Committee meeting dates with their TCEQ Project Manager before stakeholders are notified of the meeting date.***

Meeting Announcements

To provide adequate notice of upcoming Steering Committee meetings, it is necessary that Planning Agencies issue a ***“save the date” notification a minimum of 45 days in advance*** of the next meeting.

Planning Agencies should contact all Steering Committee members with a questionnaire or survey to confirm their continued participation, provide a list of the draft meeting agenda topics, and request additional topics and potential stakeholders. See Exhibit 6A for a sample questionnaire. A final meeting announcement with the proposed agenda should be distributed ***a minimum of 15 days in advance of the meeting*** by use of written or electronic invitations. In addition, the Planning Agency will post the meeting agenda and date on their website and, when feasible, send meeting information to local news outlets.

Agenda Topics

The Steering Committee has a vital role in developing and reviewing priority items. The items that require Steering Committee input include:

- Water Quality Objectives and Priorities - Development of monitoring priorities
- Basin Summary/Highlights Report - Review, suggestions for modification, and approval of the draft Basin Summary/Highlights Report prior to publication
- Work Plans and Allocation of Resources - Operation and effectiveness of the CRP work plan and the use, adequacy and allocation of the program's costs and funds
- Public Participation - Upcoming events, public outreach, and educational activities

Additional items that should to be addressed during Steering Committee meetings on an annual basis include the following:

- overview of the CRP, including its goals and how the program is funded;
- recent Planning Agency accomplishments achieved with CRP support;
- identification, selection, and status of special study projects;
- recognition of the efforts of Steering Committee, stakeholders, volunteers, and others.

Along with the above topics, Steering Committee meetings will also provide the opportunity to discuss any topics that are of significant interest to stakeholders, including non-point source pollution issues, groundwater quality or availability, illegal dumping, basin-specific problems, agricultural issues and clean-up efforts. To provide additional viewpoints and expertise, Planning Agencies should seek out subject matter experts to present on applicable topics.

To meet these requirements, it is important that Planning Agencies provide Steering Committee members with all necessary meeting materials, including the agenda, draft reports, summaries, work plans, special studies, maps, monitoring schedules and other items to be discussed.

Subcommittee Workgroups

The Steering Committee may create smaller subcommittee workgroups to address certain, high-priority activities more efficiently. These workgroups have the responsibility of addressing, in greater detail, special studies, project planning, development of monitoring priorities, and implementation activities. In establishing a subcommittee workgroup, the Steering Committee should attempt to bring together the most appropriate skills and resources available to advance projects.

Meeting Evaluation and Feedback

It may be useful to distribute an evaluation at the end of the meeting to determine if stakeholder needs and concerns have been met. After each meeting, Planning Agencies have the responsibility to ensure that stakeholder input, comments and decisions are appropriately addressed, that subcommittee meetings are scheduled if necessary, and that meeting minutes are posted to the website.

Stakeholder Process Evaluation

Planning Agencies should evaluate their stakeholder process for effectiveness and engagement. Questions that may facilitate that evaluation include, but are limited to, the following:

- Is steering committee membership increasing or decreasing?
- Is the steering committee membership representative of the basin?
- How has the steering committee membership composition changed over time?

- Is the Planning Agency recruitment process targeting representatives from the following groups: persons paying fees under Section [26.0291](#) of the Texas Water Code, private citizens, the State Soil and Water Conservation Board, representatives from other appropriate state agencies, political subdivisions, and other persons with an interest in water quality matters of the watershed or river basin?
- Do stakeholders respond to regular communication, if appropriate?
- How can stakeholders be more regularly involved and how can engagement be increased?
- What percentage of steering committee members attend the Steering Committee Meetings?

Cooperative Watershed Planning

Watershed Action Planning (WAP) is the state's coordinated approach to develop, coordinate, and track actions taken to address water quality issues. Watershed Action Planning is a flexible approach that utilizes a range of strategy options to address impaired water bodies on the 303(d) List and other water quality issues. Information related to these strategies is stored in a database called the WAP tool. The WAP tool can be queried to identify current and planned activities to address water quality issues in the state. This process provides the framework that each program area, partner agency, and stakeholder can use for planning, budgeting, and implementing activities as they relate to addressing water quality issues.

Due to the longstanding relationship between the TCEQ and the CRP Partners, the CRP Partners are considered the first among many potential stakeholders in WAP. CRP Partner participation in the WAP process is critical because of our role in establishing and maintaining partnerships with state agencies, regional entities, local governments, industry, and citizens. These partnerships between the TCEQ, the CRP Partners and their local stakeholders, will help determine the appropriate watershed planning strategy to address water quality issues.

Local watershed meetings and solicitations, including but not limited to the CRP Steering Committee Meetings and Coordinated Monitoring Meetings, are integral to gather information to better understand and define the circumstances leading to water quality impairments and concerns. Certain efforts will need to be made to get input from select stakeholders that are the most closely associated with the waters of interest.

The type of data and information to be gathered through the local watershed discussions may include:

- Watershed Evaluation - Watershed maps, land use classifications, models, identify data gaps and data acquisition projects
- Pollution Sources - Identify potential point and nonpoint sources of pollution, evaluate pollution sources, identify pollution control practices, identify data gaps and data acquisition projects
- Water Quality Monitoring - Identify water quality monitoring sites, identify water quality indicators, identify data gaps and data acquisition projects

- Watershed Stakeholders - Identify key stakeholders, characterize stakeholder support, identify issues of concern and watershed goals.
- Public – Characterize public support, identify issues of concern and watershed goals.
- Watershed Planning Strategy – Identify what option(s) (e.g. Use Attainability Analysis, Total Maximum Daily Load, Watershed Protection Plan, etc.) the public and local stakeholders recommend be considered to address each water quality issue.

Education & Outreach

Planning Agencies should work to increase public awareness and interest, and enhance public participation in setting and implementing basin priorities. Opportunities for participation in the CRP that support overall program goals include the following:

- presentations or booths at schools, public meetings and conferences;
- distribution of applicable educational materials, curriculum, and the CRP video;
- development and/or distribution of fact sheets or newsletters;
- news releases, public service announcements, and advertisements;
- e-mail groups, up-to-date CRP web site, and email list servers;
- participation in volunteer monitoring programs and;
- participation in the Texas Watershed Stewards program.

With prior approval, funds may also be applied to outreach activities such as community action projects; including clean-up events, collection or disposal of hazardous household or agricultural products, watershed surveys, and storm drain stenciling.

Outreach efforts and purchases must directly support the CRP contract through association with a task or deliverable. If there isn't direct relation to the CRP contract or a deliverable, then CRP funds cannot be utilized, even if the public outreach efforts are to support a worthy cause.

EPA Outreach Documents

To assist in meeting the legislative obligations of the CRP and other water quality objectives, Planning Agencies should inform stakeholders about water quality issues, the possible or required actions needed to address these issues, and should motivate the stakeholders to act. To help Planning Agencies accomplish this, two EPA publications are recommended as resources: Getting in Step: A Guide for Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns 3rd Edition, and Getting in Step: Engaging and Involving Stakeholders in Your Watershed 2nd Edition. The guides provide the tools needed to develop and implement an effective outreach campaign as part of a regional water quality improvement effort; the publications also offer guidance for understanding the audiences in your watershed, creating resonating messages, and finding appropriate ways to communicate.



Planning Agency Website

Planning Agency Clean Rivers Program websites have been established to effectively circulate information and to enhance public access to detailed information regarding CRP activities. This form of communication is an important tool for increasing stakeholder and public awareness and improving involvement in the CRP.

Accessibility

Online or web accessibility means that people with disabilities can use the Internet. Accessibility is ensuring that people with disabilities can use, perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the Internet and the content it contains. The provision in the CRP contracts relating to accessibility is as follows:

Any electronic content and documents created as deliverables under Clean Rivers Program contracts must meet the accessibility standards prescribed in 1 Texas Administrative Code sections 206.50 and 213 for state agency web pages, web content, software, and hardware, unless TCEQ agrees that exceptions or exemptions apply.

General guidelines for developing accessible text documents, reports or deliverables include the following:

- fonts are of appropriate style, size, color and contrast;
- titles and headers are of sufficient size difference to body text;
- text is left-aligned and not justified;
- images and figures have alternative text;
- content is structured in a meaningful sequence or a logical way.

To support CRP Partners in meeting these requirements, the TCEQ CRP Project Manager will review contract deliverables that will be posted to a Planning Agency website for accessibility.

Website Content

During the upcoming biennium, Planning Agencies will continue to update and improve their CRP websites. To meet CRP goals, Planning Agency web sites need to include the following items and information:

- **Explanation of CRP, the Planning Agency, program goals, and the planning process**, to include: basin specific priorities developed from stakeholder input, a description and promotion of the Steering Committee process, defined roles for stakeholders, Steering Committee meeting minutes, and information on how to get involved.
- **Upcoming events and project updates**, including: Steering Committee meeting announcements and agendas, updates on special studies or a summary of project activities, and notification of other applicable and upcoming public outreach events occurring in the basin.
- **Contact information for Planning Agency**, to include: e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, mailing address and physical address.



- **Links to outside resources**, including the TCEQ Clean Rivers Program, other CRP Partners, and the Texas Stream Team Volunteer Monitoring Program.

Deliverables to Post

The following is a summary of the required work plan deliverables for all Tasks in the FY2020-21 CRP Guidance that must be posted on the Planning Agency web site.

Project Administration

- Final Work Plan

Project Planning and Quality Assurance

- Complete Quality Assurance Project Plan OR:
 - Monitoring/Project Objectives (A6, B1)
 - Measurement Performance Specifications (Table A7.1)
- Special Study Appendices

Water Quality Monitoring

- Special Study Reports
- Link to CRP Coordinated Monitoring Schedule (<http://cms.lcra.org>)

Data Management

- Water Quality Monitoring Data or link to TCEQ Water Quality Data

Data Analysis and Reporting

- Basin Highlights Report (with archived reports for the last five years)
- Basin Summary Report (at a minimum: Executive Summary & maps)

Stakeholder Participation and Public Outreach

- Announcements and agendas of Steering Committee and CRP public meetings
- Steering Committee meeting minutes/summaries

Special Projects

- Special Studies and/or Project Reports

Updates

The website will be reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure that information and announcements remain current and relevant. ***It is required that the Planning Agency also include summaries of revisions to the website with the corresponding quarterly Progress Report.***

Deliverables required to be posted to the website will follow the due dates indicated in the individual work plans. Posting dates for certain reports and project plans that are based on completion of the document or meeting should be negotiated with the CRP Project Manager.



Volunteer Monitoring

Monitoring of local water bodies by citizen volunteers is a good option for involving stakeholders in water quality activities. Planning Agencies can use volunteer monitoring activities to do the following:

- educate citizens about water quality and watershed management issues,
- enhance public participation in setting and implementing basin priorities,
- collect water quality data for planning purposes

Planning Agencies can choose to implement a volunteer monitoring program based on their own pre-determined set of guidelines, or can choose to implement activities supported by the Texas Stream Team Volunteer Monitoring Program.

Texas Stream Team

The Texas Stream Team Volunteer Monitoring Program can serve as a resource for a variety of outreach and training materials. Through a partnership with TCEQ, USEPA, and Texas State University, the Texas Stream Team supports environmental education activities and volunteer monitoring data collection programs throughout the state. The program also provides assistance to participating partners and develops, promotes, and maintains environmental education activities. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the Texas Stream Team directly, or by visiting the [Texas Stream Team Website](#).

Planning Agencies that choose to implement volunteer monitoring should determine the appropriate methods and focus for these activities in their basins. As it relates to the CRP, the collection of volunteer water quality data is considered to be an educational activity used to promote or enhance public awareness of water quality issues and involvement in CRP goals. To support this, the Texas Stream Team's QAPP limits the designated use for volunteer data to education and research, problem identification, and planning purposes.



Exhibit 6A

Stakeholder Questionnaire



EXHIBIT 6A

Clean Rivers Program Stakeholder Questionnaire

To better serve our stakeholders, the River Authority would like to know about topics and other water issues relevant to our stakeholders that should be addressed in future Clean Rivers Program (CRP) meetings. The following are topics for discussion for our next stakeholder meeting, which will be held on May 1, 2008. Please rate them on a scale according to how important these issues are as they relate to inclusion in our next CRP meeting agenda. You will be contacted with further information regarding our next CRP Steering Committee Meeting. We appreciate your past participation and look forward to your continued participation.

1. Implementation of Nutrient Standards in TPDES Permits

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Important | <input type="checkbox"/> Not At All Important |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Important | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Very Important | |

2. Impacts of Construction and/or Development on Water Quality

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Important | <input type="checkbox"/> Not At All Important |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Important | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Very Important | |

3. Permitting Trends in Wastewater

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Important | <input type="checkbox"/> Not At All Important |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Important | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Very Important | |

4. Proposed Changes to Water Quality Standards in the Basin

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Important | <input type="checkbox"/> Not At All Important |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Important | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Very Important | |

5. Review What the Clean Rivers Program Represents and How Participants Benefit

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Important | <input type="checkbox"/> Not At All Important |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Important | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Very Important | |

6. Water Bodies Not Meeting State Water Quality Criteria



Very Important

Not At All Important

Somewhat Important

Unsure

Not Very Important

7. Environmental Enforcement, Illegal Dumping and Illegal Discharge

Very Important

Not At All Important

Somewhat Important

Unsure

Not Very Important

8. Watershed Protection Plans

Very Important

Not At All Important

Somewhat Important

Unsure

Not Very Important

9. Are there any other water quality related issues in the Basin that you would like highlighted and/or discussed in more detail?

10. Are you still interested in receiving correspondence from the River Authority regarding CRP meetings and other stakeholder events?

11. Can you provide the names or organizations of potential stakeholders that may be interested in CRP activities?

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey!

To facilitate future communication please provide the following contact information:

Name:

Organization/Agency:

Address:

Phone #:

E-mail address:



If you have questions or need additional information about this meeting please contact: