

MINUTES
June 10, 2008 Meeting
Cottonwood Branch and Grapevine Creek Bacteria TMDL Project
First Public Meeting
Valley Ranch Library
401 Cimarron Trail
Irving, Texas

Attendees:

Sam Brush- North Central Texas Council of Governments
Moss Fennel- North Texas Tollway Authority
Joan Glass- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Glenn Harwell- United States Geological Survey
Angela Kilpatrick- Trinity River Authority
Pat Lambert- North Central Texas Council of Governments
Tom Moore- City of Irving
Brian Mueller- United States Environmental Protection Agency
Muhammad Rafique- DFW Airport
David Rutledge- Luminant
Karen Siddall – City of Irving
Sid Slocum- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Tim Wentrcek- DFW Airport

Support Staff:

Dania Grundmann- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
John Mummert- TCEQ
Larry Hauck- Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research (TIAER)
Jimmy Millican- TIAER

Administrative Issues

The first public meeting of the Cottonwood Branch and Grapevine Creek bacteria TMDL occurred on Tuesday, June 11, 2008 from 1:00 PM - 2:45 PM at the Valley Ranch Library in Irving, Texas. The meeting was conducted to inform the public about the status of the ongoing Cottonwood Branch and Grapevine Creek bacteria TMDL project. Larry Hauck, Deputy Director at TIAER, opened the meeting, and self-introductions were made by support staff and attendees.

Overview of TMDL Process

Dania Grundmann, TCEQ Project Manager, presented introductory material in order to familiarize attendees with the TMDL process. Ms. Grundmann discussed Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act and the process of water quality assessment. She also defined TMDLs, explained the function of TMDLs, presented the elements of a TMDL, and discussed the process involved in TMDL development and implementation.

Status of TCEQ Project: Cottonwood Branch and Grapevine Creek Bacteria TMDL

Larry Hauck, TIAER, presented background information concerning the non-support of contact recreation use in segments 0822A (Cottonwood Branch), and 0822B (Grapevine Creek). Dr. Hauck defined contact recreation use and discussed basic information concerning *E. coli* bacteria. Dr. Hauck provided a definition of the specific criteria used to determine if impairment exists within segments 0822A and 0822B. He presented a summary of the assessment data that indicated why portions of both segments do not support contact recreation and maps showing the non-supporting assessment unit in each segment.

Dr. Hauck informed attendees of the status of the TMDL project and a timeline of completed project milestones, which included the current contract between TIAER and TCEQ, the development of a TCEQ approved quality assurance project plan (QAPP) and Monitoring Plan, and data collection. Attendees were informed of the specifics of the Monitoring Plan for both segments including the number of stations that were being sampled and the number of samples being collected. The preliminary results of the *E. coli* sampling were also presented for monitoring events conducted January – April 2008, and attendees were made aware of the high *E. coli* concentrations that have been obtained from station 17166 located on Cottonwood Branch. Dr. Hauck also informed attendees of project tasks to be completed in fiscal year 2009.

TMDL Allocation Process

Dr. Hauck presented an introduction to the load duration curve method, which was the tool selected to develop load allocations for this project. The steps involved in developing flow and load duration curves were explained, and an example from a station outside of the project segments was presented. He explained the reasoning behind the partitioning of the load duration curves into four separate flow regimes (high, upper mid-range, mid-range, and low) for this particular example. Dr. Hauck also explained how load duration curves were used in determining percent reductions required to meet contact recreation use criteria based on the 75th percentile and geometric mean of historical *E. coli* data.

The TMDL allocation equation that will be used for this project was presented. Components of the TMDL allocation equation were explained. Dr. Hauck concluded the presentation with a brief overview of the entire TMDL development process that begins with the initial 303(d) listing, and then project initiation, allocation report development, and ultimately development of an implementation plan. He indicated the importance of stakeholder input within this process.

Meeting Conclusion

Attendees were given the opportunity to ask any additional questions that were not discussed during the presentations. A meeting evaluation form provided by TCEQ was made available for all attendees to fill out.

Questions during Meeting

Q: Patricia Lambert with the North Texas Council of Governments asked if EPA approval of the implementation plan was required.

A: Dania Grundmann answered that at this time, only TCEQ approves the implementation plan.

Q: Glenn Harwell with the United States Geological Survey asked if the historical assessment data presented for the two segments included data that TIAER has recently collected.

A: Larry Hauck answered that the data used for assessment included only historical data, which was collected mostly by the City of Irving with one station sampled by the Regional TCEQ office. The assessment did not include the TIAER collected data.

Q: Mr. Harwell asked if station 17166 on Cottonwood Branch was below a retention pond.

A: Jimmy Millican of TIAER answered that there was some concrete debris upstream that may cause some pooling, but TIAER is currently unaware of any retention ponds upstream of station 17166.

Q: Ms. Lambert asked if a bacteria source tracking study will be performed for the two project segments.

A: Larry Hauck answered that a bacteria source tracking study could be performed and if it were conducted it would likely be most beneficial during the implementation phase. He went on to explain that less costly measures such as reconnaissance of the study area to identify potential sources would likely occur before a decision would be made to do a bacteria source tracking study. Dania Grundmann of TCEQ added that stakeholders would be very instrumental in informing decisions regarding such a study. Dr. Hauck further added that less costly bacteria source tracking methods were under development making such studies increasingly more affordable.

Q: Mr. Harwell and Ms. Lambert asked how we were using the flow records from the White Rock Creek gauge to determine when to sample.

A: Larry Hauck answered that TIAER is attempting to collect additional *E. coli* data that supplements the historical data particularly for flow regimes where data are sparse or missing. He explained that TIAER is using the nearby USGS White Rock Creek gauge to determine the flow for a given day, since there are no continuous streamflow monitoring gauges in the project watersheds. Dr. Hauck added that the flow duration curves for each project station will have a shape similar to that of the flow duration curve for White Rock Creek gauge. He went on to explain that if the flow at the gauge is within a range of flows that are lacking historical *E. coli*, then a decision is typically made to sample.

Q: Sam Brush with the North Texas Council of Governments asked how much contact recreation use actually occurs in the study segments.

A: Larry Hauck answered that contact recreation has not been observed to occur as it does in some other streams in Texas, such as the Guadalupe River. However, he noted that the goal of the Clean Water Act is for our waters to be “fishable and swimmable.” He went on to explain that revisions of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards are currently underway and part of those revisions is consideration of modifying the recreation use standard to include somewhat greater flexibility on this issue. A copy of the meeting minutes from the Surface Water Quality Standards Advisory Work Group that occurred on May 5, 2008 was provided to all attendees, which contained a summary of the discussions that have occurred regarding revisions to the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards.

Q: Angela Kilpatrick with the Trinity River Authority asked if the database for the historical bacteria data contained any comments in regards to whether contact recreation use was observed during the time of sampling.

A: Larry Hauck answered that TIAER was unaware of any such comments; however, it would be worth further investigation.

Q: Tim Wenterchek with the DFW Airport asked how permittees would be affected by this TMDL.

A: Dania Grundmann answered that specific requirements had not yet been developed, and that some phase II permitted entities had recognized the need for monitoring to show BMP effectiveness. Ms. Grundmann went on to mention that the MS4 general permit for Phase II was just issued and those would be in place for 5 years. After that TCEQ could work with permittees to include some stormwater monitoring if needed. Ms. Grundmann also mentioned that wastewater treatment facilities could also see monitoring requirements. Sam Brush added that the Phase I permittees already had monitoring requirements.

Q: Mr. Harwell asked a general question in regard to the NELAC certification that is now required of environmental laboratories in Texas.

A: Larry Hauck answered that effective July 1, 2008 sample analyses had to be performed by a NELAC certified laboratory. A brief discussion followed that involved how this deadline would impact bacteria monitoring and comments and speculations on why *E. coli* analyses using the simple IDEXX method required NELAC certification.

Q: Mr. Harwell asked how many more sampling events would occur for this project.

A: Larry Hauck answered that there would be five more events that would occur prior to the sampling deadline of August 31, 2008.