

Meeting Summary

North Bosque River TMDL Work Group Meeting

January 21, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. (2nd meeting)

Welcome and Introductions

TCEQ's Louanne Jones briefly welcomed work group members and guests and noted that Jimmy Millican, TIAER Project Manager, was at the meeting in case questions arose about the TIAER data being discussed.

Questions/Concerns about Requested Follow-up Information

Stakeholders then turned to a brief discussion of questions and concerns related to the follow-up information provided by TCEQ after the November 2020 meeting.

Requested Cost Information

A stakeholder asked for confirmation that the first sheet of the workbook summarized the costs on the other sheets. TCEQ answered yes. A stakeholder remarked on the high amount that has been spent between June 2005 and August 2020. That period of time does not include costs for TMDL and I-Plan development and some early implantation.

Summary of I-Plan Performance Metrics

No questions or concerns were raised.

SWQM Data and Graphs

Stakeholders had a brief discussion about the pulses of chlorophyll-a following pulses of phosphorus throughout the watershed, as shown in the graphs. They also discussed that chlorophyll-a remains a concern in all the TMDL assessment units, despite the fact that phosphorus concentrations are meeting the TMDL water quality goals at the lower three stations.

Share Information and Discuss whether Water Quality Goals are Met

Dan Opdyke of Anchor QEA, consultant for the City of Waco, made a brief presentation sharing their analysis of TIAER data presented in TIAER's 2019 Trends Report. Mr. Opdyke noted that the most downstream assessment unit (AU) had never been impaired, but there were water quality concerns related to chlorophyll-a concentrations in that AU. He made the case that water quality goals described in the I-Plan have been met at the three downstream index sites, but not at the two upstream sites.

Stakeholders had a short discussion about Anchor QEA's presentation and asked some questions about it. Louanne Jones asked if the stakeholders could reach consensus on whether or not the I-Plan goals had been met and offered a possible voting option through the chat feature to see where majority opinion stood.

A stakeholder then asked for TCEQ's opinion of whether the -Plan goals had been met. TCEQ's Louanne Jones stated that although much work has been successfully completed in the watershed, when looking solely at the water quality success measures laid out in the I-Plan, it is clear that the goals have not yet been met throughout the entire watershed.

There being no further discussion or objection to the conclusion that the I-Plan water quality goals have not yet been met at all index sites, stakeholders moved to discussing next steps for the watershed.

Brief Discussion of Next Steps

Stakeholders discussed the viability of TCEQ Station 17226/TIAER BO020 and whether data from that station were representative of that part of the watershed. It was noted that in the upper part of the watershed (Segment 1255), the river and its tributaries were generally intermittent, and that the watershed had generally become drier in the period since the TMDLs were developed and index sites selected. It was noted that in summer months, the river is often pooled with low to no flow at Station 17226/BO020 so that samples cannot be collected. Stakeholders suggested that some consideration should be given to dropping 17226/BO020 as an index site. There was a brief discussion about whether there was a more suitable site above Stephenville that was not influenced by wastewater discharges, but no one was able to identify a suitable alternative monitoring station.

Stakeholders discussed options related to the frequency of instream monitoring at the five Bosque index stations. They also talked about the pros and cons of reducing the monitoring frequency and options for how much to reduce it by. General support emerged for reducing the frequency of monitoring at the three most downstream stations to every other month.

Stakeholders then discussed the need for more information about the correlation between phosphorus and chlorophyll-a concentrations and possible overgrowth of algae. There was a brief discussion about a possible biomass study and when the baseline biomass study had been conducted in the watershed (2005).

A question was raised about the recent annual costs for monitoring. Louanne Jones said the amount for the current year's effectiveness monitoring was \$178,000 and that funding could likely continue at this level in FY22.

Paul Cain and Darren Turley noted they had discussed offline that improvements could be made to streamline permit applications, renewals, and updates within the watershed. They didn't have any specific recommendations in mind but agreed to discuss the idea further.

TCEQ's Earl Lott asked if stakeholders would like TCEQ to develop recommendations for changes to the monitoring plan for presentation at the next work group meeting, taking into account data needs and stakeholder discussion points. Stakeholders accepted this suggestion.

Action Items

Conclusions from all action items will be presented at the next Work Group meeting.

Paul Cain and Darren Turley Discuss potential opportunities for streamlining permits in the watershed.

TCEQ Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of dropping 17226/BO020 as an index site.

TCEQ Discuss options for revising the frequency of sampling events in the effectiveness monitoring plan.

TCEQ Discuss possible options for studies to provide more information about the relationship between chlorophyll-a and phosphorus.

TCEQ noted that the next Work Group meeting would probably be scheduled in about a month to allow time for TCEQ staff to develop recommendations on its three action items. TCEQ expressed the hope that stakeholders might be able to conclude their charge by the end of the next meeting.

[Note: Louanne Jones did follow-up calculations after the meeting and determined that including effectiveness monitoring, continuous water quality monitoring sites, and maintenance of GIS data related to WWTFs and CAFOs, the annual monitoring costs over the last three years dropped gradually from about \$421,430 in FY18 to \$373,500 in FY20.]

Meeting Participants

(Listed in order of time joining the online meeting.)

Sixteen of the 16 voting Work Group members were present.

Name	Affiliation
Louanne Jones	TCEQ, TMDL Program, Water Quality Planning Division
Jill Csekitz	TCEQ, Technical Specialist, Water Quality Planning Division
Darren Turley	Texas Association of Dairymen
Jennifer Bronson-Warren	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Jimmy Millican	TIAER
Jay Bragg	Texas Farm Bureau
Thomas 'TJ' Helton	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
Jim Bradbury	Attorney, Agricultural Law
Michael Martin	TCEQ Region 4
John Foster	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
Anne McFarland	Watershed resident, retired TIAER Project Manager
Lauren Kalisek	Attorney for City of Waco
Elaine Fagner	McLennan Community College
Britt Dean	EPA Region 6
Paul Cain	City of Waco
Kerry Niemann	TCEQ, Section Manager, Water Quality Planning Division
Vance Kemler	Biogas Development, LLC
Sarah Whitley	TCEQ, SWQM Program, Water Quality Planning Division
Dan Opdyke	Anchor QEA
Charlie Olson	Landowner; Haley and Olson, Attorneys
Daniele Baker	Anchor QEA
Jaehak Jeong	Blackland Research Center, Texas A&M AgriLife Research
Lori Hamilton	TCEQ, Deputy Director, Water Quality Planning Division
Earl Lott	TCEQ, Director, Office of Water
William Cooper	EPA Region 6
Will Beecherl	Flat Top Ranch
Jenna Walker	Bosque River Coalition
Randall Rush	EPA Region 6