

Arroyo Colorado Education and Outreach Workgroup Formed Under The Arroyo Colorado Watershed Steering Committee

DRAFT Meeting Summary – January 18, 2005

ATTENDING WORK GROUP COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Diane Dickson
Terry Bredemeyer
Tony Reisinger
Laura De La Garza

Present at Austin through video-conferencing:

Kris Shipman
Roger Miranda
Dave Buzan

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Laura De La Garza opened the eighth meeting of the Education and Outreach Work Group that was located in the Board Room of the Learning Resource Center on the Texas State Technical College (TSTC) campus in Harlingen, Texas. There were technical difficulties with the video-conferencing equipment and therefore unable to hook-up with the participants in Austin. Ms. De La Garza had a phone conversation with the Austin group and briefly discussed the upcoming Coastal Expo and grant funding of the market survey and additional short term promotion of the Arroyo Colorado WPP.

The minutes from the previous meeting on October 19, 2004 were approved.

OVERVIEW AND PROGRESS OF OUTREACH EFFORTS

Ms. De La Garza discussed the two presentations she recently gave at the IBWC Citizen Forum on January 12, 2005, and to the South Texas Amateur Repeater Society (STAR) on January 15, 2005. There was a relatively low turn out at the IBWC Forum; however Ms. De La Garza met the long time Valley Representative Kika De La Garza who offered his services to the Arroyo WPP effort. The STAR group consisted of mainly winter Texans and no one from that group was interested in participating however they expressed gratitude for the presentation and for being made aware of our efforts.

We next discussed the possibility of a design competition to create a cultural/water quality watershed map. Ms. De La Garza said she would send Terry Bredemeyer an electronic file of the Arroyo TMDL watershed map. Mr. Bredemeyer will speak with the appropriate TSTC personal to get things started.

OVERVIEW AND PROGRESS OF THE O&E COMPONENT OF THE WPP

Ms. De La Garza distributed a draft document prepared by Don Hockaday in the summer of 2004 titled “Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan: Outreach Workgroup Goals, Approaches and Scope”. The document was reviewed and discussed. Again, public apathy and lack of awareness was highlighted as a main issue. In the section of the paper Nature of Problem Addressed, three items were listed as “Parameters available for possible modification: 1) Wastewater treatment plant effluent (point source); 2) Agricultural runoff (non-point source); and 3) Navigation channel and boat traffic.” The group agreed that navigation channel and boat traffic issue is a mute point and an issue that could be addressed is the placement of dredge spoil material minding its effect on the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge (LANWR), i.e. the dredge material inhibits water flow to the LANWR.

In the section “Driving Force(s)” the group agreed that the statement “The Arroyo Colorado is an impaired water body with a continued declining trend in water quality” is a great statement but that we need the facts to back it up. We need to review recent data and show trends. Ms. De La Garza will discuss this with Roger Miranda. Since we had a low turn out at this meeting, it was decided to wait to discuss the goals and objectives. We also decided to wait to discuss the creation of the “white paper”; however Ms. De La Garza said she would distribute what could be the beginnings of a “white paper”.

We next reviewed and built on the inventory of existing local water related organizations. Ms. De La Garza noted the changes/additions and will provide a revised list. We held off on reviewing the options for the promotion of the Arroyo Colorado WPP and discussed the grant for the market survey and short term promotion. Ms. De La Garza told the group that the amendment to the original grant for watershed coordinator position was in the legal department of the TCEQ and that the money to hire a consultant to do a market survey and short term promotion of the Arroyo Colorado WPP has been allocated. The contract will allow 3 months to get the contract going and 8 months for the deliverables. We can distribute the contract to one firm or divide up the tasks between two consulting firms. Ms. De La Garza will keep the group informed of the progress.

The meeting ended with a commitment by Ms. De La Garza and Mr. Bredemeyer to work with the appropriate TSTC professors to see about initiating a watershed map design competition.

It was agreed that the next meeting is scheduled for February 15, 2005, same time and same place.