

Arroyo Colorado Outreach and Education Workgroup

April 15, 2008

4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Meeting Summary

Attendees

Amy Rangel, TWRI

Laura de la Garza, TWRI

Briana Carlson, TPWD

Elizabeth Heise, UTB

Sky Lewey, NRA

Cecilia Wagner, TWRI

Jennifer Buratti, TCEQ

Megan Meier, TWRI

Don Hockaday, UTPA

Welcome and Introductions.....Laura De La Garza, TWRI

Arroyo Colorado Outreach Activities:

Past Events and Lessons LearnedLaura De La Garza, TWRI
Amy Rangel, TWRI

- Demonstrated model at several events
 - Winter wildlife expo, Harlingen Ocelot Festival, Rio Grand Valley Livestock Show, Edinburg Coastal expo, local schools, etc.
- Demonstrations have revealed a pervasive lack of knowledge of where water comes from and where it goes; suggestion to have full time O&E person
- Laura has trained Amy, people at IMAS, teachers, etc. on using the model
- Amy expressed the need to cater the script or modify it to work with little kids (had problems with running around, spraying each other). Need something to grab attention.
 - Sky Lewey suggested for little kids to have them feel the model and how it feels lumpy; ground/surface of the earth/watershed is not flat
- Model script is posted on the website now
- WPP includes reviewing science textbooks and providing inserts/supplements that are watershed/regional specific

Upcoming Events.....Laura De La Garza, TWRI

- Model at IMAS for Earth Day April 20
- Rio Fest April 17
- Earth Fest, Brownsville April 19
- Hummingbird Days, McAllen April 19
- McAllen Goes Green April 26
- Teacher training event with UTB July 2

O&E Project Updates:

Texas Stream Team..... Jason Pinchback, Texas River Institute

- 41 contacts/people have been trained
- Received funding from EPA for volunteer monitoring, education and coordinating in the Arroyo and requesting \$30k from another grant
- Working with UTPA teacher workshops
- 3 watershed education presentations
- 4 established monitoring sites and goal is to have 10

- Laura will work with volunteer monitors more; ask Master Naturalists for more volunteers

O & E Evaluation Form Cecilia Wagner, TWRI

- Met with Evaluation office at TAMU to further develop O&E draft from January
- Will vary depending on what the presentation is on
- Committed to doing at least one presentation a month; at meetings such as IBWC, Master Naturalist, Rotary Clubs, etc. and at Valley Nature Center
- Cecilia will make the form more specific and then re-send to group for comments
- Questions like “where does your water come from”, “where does it flow to”
- Laura’s presentations focus more on awareness than specifics
- Sky Lewey came across an evaluation tool created by the Meadows Foundation

Curriculum Development.....Laura De La Garza, TWRI

- Birdie (McAllen Recycling Center) introduced Laura to UTPA folks about curriculum testing using the computers at IMAS for testing the water quality monitoring part of the curriculum. Many computer not working well but have funding to purchase new equipment

NOAA B-WET Grant Development..... Don Hockaday, UTPA
Amy Rangel, TWRI

- Related to curriculum development
- Program for elementary teachers (2-5 grades) to teach teachers about wetlands and the watershed with field trips in the watershed and workshops (South Padre Island new World Birding Center and other Valley nature centers)
- Using SeaGrant’s floating classroom and Arroyo Colorado curriculums in workshops
- \$100,000 match from South Padre Island Economic Development Corporation
- Most of funding used for content development

Project Discussion:

Storm Drain MarkingMegan Meier, TWRI

- Someone knows of another area where the vinyl markers faded in 3 yrs even though they had a 10 year warranty; make sure the marker and installation costs are guaranteed for 10 years
- Laura suggested marking drains in the downtown areas or the art districts ore parade routes
- Jennifer at TCEQ suggested to not use the stencil and how nice the metal ones are
- Suggestions for putting markers in areas of high pedestrian traffic, schools, parks

Road Signage – Watershed BoundaryMegan Meier, TWRI

- Maybe have contest for designing road signs
- Discussed adding 1 to 2 extra colors, but this will come with a cost
- Discussed adding Spanish to the sign
 - Rectangle with English on one side, Spanish on the other side with logo in the middle
- Cecilia will work on updating design

Upcoming Grants and Potential Projects Cecilia Wagner, TWRI

- NOAA B-WET
- GLO CMP
- South Padre Island (Possibly use SPI funds for printing WPP, fliers, etc.)
- Endangered Species
- Gulf of Mexico Community-based Restoration
- Received funding from EPA-SAI for agricultural education and potential funding for similar project from GLO-CMP

Other Business.....Laura De La Garza, TWRI

- Habitat workgroup meeting and Steering Committee Meeting on April 24
- Task group/community event for Rio Hondo education center project

Next Meeting Date/Adjourn.....Laura De La Garza, TWRI

- July 15th