

# Arroyo Colorado Outreach and Education Workgroup

July 15, 2008 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

## Meeting Summary

### Attendees:

Laura De La Garza, TWRI  
Tony Reisinger, Texas SeaGrant  
Cecilia Wagner, TWRI  
Chelsea Hanchett (Americorp)  
Ouina Rutledge, City of McAllen  
Ludy Saenz, LRGVDC  
Loretta Mokry, APAI  
Marcie Oviedo, LRGVDC  
Alan Watts, TCEQ

Kris Shipman, TPWD  
Heidie Moltz, Tx StreamTeam  
Jason Pinchback, Tx StreamTeam  
Pamela Casebolt, TSSWCB  
Sky Lewey, Nueces RA  
Don Hockaday, UT-Pan Am  
Jennifer Owen, Estero Llano Grande Park  
Jennifer Buratti, TCEQ  
Enrique Perez, Texas AgriLife Extension

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

### Project Discussion:

Ecotourism Luncheon August 7, 2008 .....Laura De La Garza, TWRI  
Nancy Millar, McAllen Chamber of Commerce

- Working with Millar and LRGVDC
- Sent invitations already to ecotourism vendors & elected officials. Will check responses and if necessary, will send additional invitations (~300 invitations could be sent)
- Catered lunch for 100; \$250 obtained, \$500 maybe; need to raise additional money
- Nancy Millar, MC
- Martin Hagnee, Valley Nature Center guest speaker.
- Richard Moore valley nature documentary playing in background
- Eddie Lucio, III and Veronica Gonzales, Texas House Representatives to speak for approx. 5 minutes each
- Need to draft a pledge in support of project
- Laura developing new PPT
  - o Value of environmental stewardship (pulling information from <http://www.rpts.tamu.edu/tce/NT/>)
  - o Current value of ecotourism and tourism in general in the Valley
  - o Problems associated with AC and LLM
  - o Need to improve WQ in the AC
  - o Needed to create more habitat to build on birding, butterfly, and dragonfly viewing industry
  - o Need to create more jobs (tour guides, eco-lodging, photo blinds, etc)
  - o Opportunities for Partnering
  - o Ongoing projects
  - o How vendors can support efforts
    - Support ongoing efforts of local groups (USFWS, TPWD, WBC, EDC, ACWPP, other NGO's)
  - o Suggested having Richard Moore video as informational session at beginning.
  - o Need to identify media to be present at the event. **Marci is handling this task.**

Road Signage – Watershed Boundary .....Megan Meier, TWRI

- Went through the 11 possible sites:
  1. Bus HWY 83 E just west of FM 1427
  2. HWY 83 E east of Palmview
  3. 107 S at Mission
  4. 336 S at McAllen
  5. 281 S North of Pharr
  6. 281 S NW of Paloma
  7. 107 E between Santa Rosa and Comes
  8. HWY 77 S north of Comes
  9. FM 570 (it is 510 and not 570) W in Bayview
  10. 100 W north of Rancho Viejo
  11. 77 N near 1421 north of Rancho Viejo
- Remove the Business Hwy 83 E just West of FM 1427 if only able to do 10 sites
- Ouina suggested having the City of McAllen look into providing their own signs for the sites that are in McAllen. Ouina will go to Carlos Sanchez to talk to Eduardo Mendando (traffic) and Delilah Martinez (Stormwater person) cities.
- If City of McAllen is able to do their 2 sites: then we would add back in Bus 83 E just West of FM 1427.
- Add FM 1015 South approximately 1 mile South of Bus 83.

Storm Drain Marking .....Laura De La Garza, TWRI

- Working with SWTF
- Metal markers with generic fish logo “drains to the LLM”
- Suggested that they be placed in downtown areas of La Feria, San Benito and Harlingen for starters
- SWTF considering other options like heat transfers – Checked out price for SWTF and each costs \$19/storm drain
- We can proceed with the purchase of the metal markers
- Javier encouraged cities to involve groups with the application process
- Laura to work with La Feria, San Benito and Harlingen to organize events and check with them if they are interested in combining orders. We need to check with each city to make sure we are not breaking any purchasing rules.
- Laura is checking with the cities (SWTF) to see who can and wants to participate.

**Arroyo Colorado Outreach Activities:**

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

**Past events:**

- Wildlife Habitat – Teacher Training at Estero Llano Grande Birding Center, Weslaco, Texas
  - o JMG Training this past week (July 7) – about 16 participants. The Watershed Model was there and remains there.
  - o Enrique Perez asked for the names of the trained teachers as he assigns MG to teachers in the valley for volunteer opportunities.
- UTB Teachers Graduate Course with Dr. Ramirez – some students volunteered to help develop curriculum
- Victoria Wetland Field Trip

**Future events:**

- Ecotourism Luncheon – August 7, 2008
- Edinburg WBC Enviro Careers for High School Students –August 4, 2008

- AIA Annual Rio Grande Conference – Sept 25-27, 2008 – Ouina speaking at conference and can possibly bring AC model.
- McAllen’s Green Living Festival – October 11, 2008
- Pharr Out Nature Days – November 1, 2008
- Fall seminar events with SWTF – September 12, 2008 and November 21, 2008
- YardWise Program (formerly Grow Green) – July 30, 2008
- Texas Stream Team – Data presentation event (early 2009)

Grow Green Program..... Alan Watts, TCEQ

- Wanted to market the City of Austin IPM program
- Changed name to YardWise
  - Program offered to these 6 cities (with impaired waterbodies) for their citizens: Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex, Austin, San Antonio, Houston, Corpus Christi, and the Lower Rio Grande Valley
  - Scheduled meeting for Harlingen for July 30 for citizens
  - Alan distributed agenda – see attached
  - Promoting native and adaptive plant selection – Gene Lester
  - Building and maintaining soil health - Ouina Rutledge
  - Problem solving and IPM – Setamou; who else could we get involved? Barbara Storz. Enrique Perez uses Juan Anciso for IPM in landscapes.
  - Tour of Hugh Ramsey Park and a residential landscape
  - Welcome & Introductions – Enrique Perez; Laura?
  - Enrique Perez suggested having an additional training in Cameron County
  - Laura send out information to partnership
  - **Possible newsletter article.**

**O&E Project Updates:**

Texas Stream Team .....Heidie Moltz, Texas Stream Team

- Trainings over the past year and a half and have trained about 30 monitors
- They have a set of monitors (around 10) who have been monitoring at least monthly.
- They have just under 100 sampling events for the AC
- Location of the monitoring sites has been updated on the map, which is on the AC page of the Stream Team Website.
- They have not had a training in a while, but South Texas College and Hidalgo High School have been training their students who have been monitoring.
- Heidie has received inquiries about future trainings and they need a core group to begin planning the next training.
- **Laura will advertise this on the bi-monthly.**
- Upcoming events:
  - o Data presentation on the volunteer data as well as the professional data in the AC for an education event
  - o And a NPS presentation in the AC (details not planned yet, but they are looking for venues). Tony suggested Master Naturalist group.
  - o Texas Stream Team hosting a volunteer appreciation event for Saturday, July 19.
- Tony asked what the data was looking like
  - o Heidie has not looked at it recently, but we did get an email from one of the monitors that they recently got a very low DO number.

Storm Water Task Force Outreach Program ..... Javier Guerrero, TAMUK

- The Storm Water Task Force has an extensive list of items in their O&E plan

- **Laura volunteered to help produce a couple of utility bill inserts; general descr. of SWTF and MS4 requirements and ACWPP. Would like to produce 2 per year.**
- SWTF members required to do 2 presentations per year. A total of 11 ISDs so 22 presentations to schools
- Within their plan, they have a section on working with the ACWPP
  - Assign a city department to work with Partnership
  - Work with ACWP to develop a program to include events, outreach, and seminars
  - Develop a schedule for these events
  - Work with cities to develop partnership with EDCs, Chambers of Commerce, ISDs, museums
  - Conduct outreach re ACWPP, obtain feedback and adjust curriculum
- Sept 12 and Nov 24 – seminar events hosted by SWTF to conduct O&E open to cities. ACWPP might be on agenda.

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

- Need to follow-up with volunteers; UTPA, local teachers in UTB program with Dr. Ramirez,
- Follow-up with John Snyder, Victoria ISD
- Awaiting word on grant proposal

**Upcoming Grants and Potential Projects** .....Cecilia Wagner, TWRI

- City of McAllen submitting a USFWS Wetland development grant to develop a large wetland system; green system

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

- ADVANCE, AmeriCorps (Chelsea)
  - Have about 30 program sites and served over 1000 families this year
  - Approached Partnership about an environmental justice grant, but Americorp (local) was not eligible. Given the partnership could get 501c3 status in the future, it could be possible the collaborative effort might work next year as it is an annual grant program.
  - Wanted to propose a program to investigate how citizens in their target area use the AC as there are folks who use the AC for swimming, fishing, laundry, etc.
  - **Keep a lookout for funding for upcoming programs that deal with colonias and E&O for this area**
- PSA for local community radio stations
  - Laura met with Chris Maley to conduct regular radio spots for us as long as we develop a script. Develop a multitude of scripts (From general to specific) for AC. Emphasize impacts on LLM. 30 second scripts. **Kathy and Cecilia develop.**
- Don Hockaday is working on the Wikipedia page – Laura is sending him the latest draft
- Printing additional WPPs and additional brochures
  - We can possibly use money from TCEQ project
  - Need to update brochure

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



## **Workshop Agenda**

**Harlingen Cultural Arts Center  
576 '76 Drive, Harlingen  
Liberty Hall  
July 30, 2008, 9:00 a.m. - noon**

- 9:00 a.m. Welcome / Introductions
- 9:10 YardWise: a Resource for You  
Alan Watts, TCEQ
- 9:20 Planning & Planting: Native and Adapted Options  
Gene Lester, US Dept. of Agriculture
- 10:00 Tour of Local Residence (Billy Snyder)  
and Hugh Ramsey Park (Jeff Lyssy, Harlingen Parks Director)
- 10:40 Building and Maintaining Soil Health  
Ouina Rutledge, City of McAllen
- 11:20 Problem-Solving: Integrated Pest Management
- 12:00 Wrap-Up, Adjourn