

**Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan Implementation**  
**FY 07 CWA 319(h)**  
**TCEQ Agreement No. 582-7-77045**

Quarter no. 2 From 7/01/07 Through 8/31/07

## **I. Abstract**

The Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan Implementation Project continues to move along with great success. The Watershed Coordinator, Laura De La Garza, was able to hit the ground running given her past experience and expertise in the Arroyo Colorado Watershed. We anticipate with a grant writer/water quality analyst on staff during the next quarter, the project will achieve even more, especially in the area of acquiring funds to support the project. The interim grant writer, Megan Meier, even began collecting data for development of the database. And now that the project website is online, TWRI will work to revise the site to host a clearing house of information and data for the Arroyo Colorado. With so many ongoing activities, the Implementation of the WPP has led to coordination and involvement with several groups and/or agencies including, but not limited to Texas Watch, USIBWC, Stormwater Task Force, UT-Brownsville, Nueces River Authority, TAMU-Kingsville, Sea Grant, and many more. One exciting achievement is the development of the physical model of the watershed. This hands-on education tool will be unveiled during the next quarter.

## **II. Overall Progress and Results by Task**

### **TASK 1: Project Administration**

*Subtask 1.1: Project Oversight –TWRI will provide technical and fiscal oversight to ensure Tasks and Deliverables are acceptable and completed as scheduled and within budget.*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. TWRI re-posted position descriptions for the Program assistant (Grant Writer/Data Analyst) position. Applications were reviewed and following discussion, it was determined to split the position between 2 individuals. The position will be split between Megan Meier (at 25% time) located in College Station and Amy Rangel (at 75% time) located in Weslaco. Amy Rangel is still going through the new hire process and TWRI anticipates having her on board during the next quarter.
- b. TWRI has provided guidance and assistance to Watershed Coordinator in developing meeting agendas, summaries, an agency resolution, and facilitation of various meetings.

**22% Complete**

*Subtask 1.2: Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs) – TWRI, with the assistance of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Coordinator (ACWC) and Arroyo Colorado Grant Writer/Water Quality Analyst (ACGC), will submit QPRs to TCEQ by the 15th of the month following each state fiscal*

*quarter for incorporation into the Grant Reporting and Tracking System (GRTS). The Reports will include:*

- *status of deliverables for each Objective and Task*
- *narrative description of activities for each task outlined in this Scope of Work in Progress Report format*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. Submitted Year 1, Quarter 2 Report on September 14, 2007.
- b. It should be noted that quarterly report dates were incorrect in signed contract and per TCEQ agreement, the due dates for the quarterly reports will be changed to September 15, 2007, December 15, 2007, March 15, 2008, June 15, 2008, September 15, 2008, December 15, 2008, and March 15, 2009.

**22% Complete**

*Subtask 1.3: Quarterly TTVN or Teleconference – To facilitate good communication between project participants, a quarterly TTVN (Trans-Texas Videoconference Network) or teleconference will be scheduled and hosted by TWRI.*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. The Watershed Coordinator visited TWRI on July 9-10, 2007 to discuss project activities, coordination with TWRI project manager and interim grant writer and reporting requirements.
- b. In addition, TWRI met with the Watershed Coordinator to discuss progress on July 24-25, 2007 at Weslaco to discuss progress and ongoing activities.
- c. TWRI also has regular communication with the Watershed Coordinator to discuss day to day activities.

**15% Complete**

*Subtask 1.4: Arroyo Colorado Website – TWRI will maintain and improve the Arroyo Colorado website.*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. TWRI obtained all of the files from Sea Grant and their permission to transfer the site to TWRI's server.
- b. The web site, <http://www.arroyocolorado.org>, is now online and on the TWRI server.
- c. TWRI plans to conduct a revision and fully develop the web site so that it can be a clearing house of information for all Arroyo related activities. Specifically, this will include, but not limited to other Arroyo Projects facilitated by TWRI (Arroyo Colorado Ag Assessment Project; Education of Agricultural BMPs in the Arroyo Colorado; SWAT Modeling of the Arroyo Colorado).

**25% Complete**

*Subtask 1.5: Reimbursement Forms – Texas Cooperative Extension will submit reimbursement forms by the last day of the month following each state fiscal quarter*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. Quarterly invoice dates were incorrect in signed contract and per TCEQ agreement, the due dates for the quarterly reports should be September 30, 2007, December 31, 2007, March 31, 2008, June 30, 2008, September 30, 2008, December 31, 2008, and March 31, 2009. TWRI and TCEQ will discuss this issue during the next quarter to correct the incorrect dates.
- b. An invoice was submitted to TCEQ for \$7,734.28 covering all expenses through the end of June 2007. (Note: Because of the difference in timing, the invoice reported on the quarterly report will remain a quarter behind.)
- c. No documentation of match was provided with the first quarter invoice as the FAMIS system did not begin charging match until the September 1, 2007 date. Therefore, TCEQ and TWRI will have to discuss correcting this issue during the next quarter.

**22% Complete**

*Subtask 1.6: Final Report – TWRI, with assistance of the ACGC and ACWC, will provide TCEQ and EPA with a comprehensive report on the activities and success of the WPP conducted during the course of this project. An assessment of data collection and analysis efforts conducted under Task 5 of this scope of work will also be included in the final report.*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. No activity to report at this time.

**0% Complete**

**TASK 2: Steering Committee and Work Group Facilitation**

*Subtask 2.1: Facilitate and Coordinate Meetings – The ACWC will facilitate the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Steering Committee and Work Group meetings by working with the chairman and work group leaders. Specifically, the ACWC will be responsible for:*

- *Developing agendas, arranging meeting facilities and sending E-mail notices for Quarterly Steering Committee meetings*
- *Assisting all individual work groups with facility arrangements, developing and distributing agendas, and developing meeting summaries as requested by the Work Group Leaders; Work Group meetings will be held as needed, but, at least, semi-annually*
- *Providing information requested by work group leaders prior to and following work group meetings*
- *Attending all individual work group meetings*
- *Compiling and submitting all individual work group meeting agendas and meeting summaries to the TWRI project manager (these will be attached to QPRs and submitted to the TCEQ contract manager and posted on the webpage)*
- *Coordinating efforts of the individual work groups and the Watershed Steering Committee to facilitate the integration of the different components of the Watershed Protection Plan implemented by each workgroup*

- *Updating all Steering Committee meeting participants on the progress of individual workgroups (and/or arranging for individual workgroup leaders to provide these updates) and of the overall implementation of the Watershed Protection Plan*
- *Facilitating a forum for open discussion among Steering Committee meeting participants and interested parties attending the meetings*
- *Arranging presentations by guest speakers offering useful information to Steering Committee participants*
- *Preparing and disseminating summaries of Watershed Steering Committee meetings to all participants*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. Developed agenda, arranged meeting facilities and sent E-mail notices for a quarterly SC meeting held on July 24, 2007.
- b. Updated Partnership on overall implementation of the ACWPP at SC meeting.
- c. Arranged for 4 guest speakers to present at the SC meeting in relation to the four city wetland project.
- d. Assisted in arranging and facilitating three work group meetings:
  - O&E meeting held July 17, 2007
  - Ag meeting held July 24, 2007
  - Habitat meeting held July 24, 2007
- e. All meeting summaries for SC and workgroup meetings are included in Appendix A. All summaries will be posted to the Project website once it is revised and fully developed.
- f. Worked to set up a reoccurring date for the SC and workgroup meetings. The SC meetings will be held the fourth Thursday of each quarter. Ag and habitat workgroups will meet in conjunction with this SC meeting. Therefore, future SC meetings, ag workgroup and habitat meetings will be held on the following dates:
  - October 25, 2007
  - January 24, 2008
  - April 24, 2008
  - July 24, 2008
  - October 23, 2008
  - January 22, 2009
  - April 23, 2009 (if funds allow)
- g. Working with other workgroups (O&E and WWI) to determine a similar system of reoccurring dates for meetings.
- h. Attended all workgroup meetings, provided information requested by work group leaders and conducted follow-up activities as noted in the meeting summaries.

### **22% Complete**

*Subtask 2.2: Provide Bi-Monthly Updates – The ACWC will provide e-mail updates to TWRI, TCEQ and the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership on progress made in implementation of the ACWPP at least twice monthly.*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. Bi-monthly updates were distributed to the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership members via the Arroyo Colorado listserv on July 19 and 31, 2007 and on August 15 and 31, 2007. Copies of updates are provided in Appendix B.

**22% Complete**

*Subtask 2.3: Provide Membership Lists – The ACWC will provide TWRI updated lists of the Steering Committee and their contact information for posting on the project website.*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. The ACWC gave SC members two opportunities to object to posting their information on the website. Given no objection, the ACWC provided TWRI with an updated list of SC members and their contact information.
- b. TWRI will post the list to the website once the site is revised and fully developed.

**50% Complete**

*Subtask 2.4: Engage Stakeholders – The ACWC will encourage participation and involvement of key stakeholders in the implementation of the WPP.*

The ACWC conducted the following actions during this reporting period:

- a. Met with Nancy Millar, Vice President and Director of McAllen Chamber of Commerce, on July 11, 2007 to provide update on plan implementation and to discuss micro-campaign for the eco-tourism target audience.
- b. Met with Joe Hinojosa, Chairman of the LRGV Storm Water Task force to coordinate NPS education efforts on July 23, 2007.
- c. Met with Chris Boswell, Mayor of Harlingen, on July 31, 2007 to discuss the Harlingen aeration structures and the implementation of the ACWPP.
- d. Met with Alan Johnson, SC member to discuss regional wetlands on July 31, 2007.
- e. Met with Darrell Gunn, SC member and Assistant Manager with Harlingen Waterworks system on July 31, 2007.
- f. Met with Ed Smith, chairperson of Land Use subcommittee of the Hidalgo Metropolitan Planning Organization on August 2, 2007.
- g. Met with Alan Watts, TCEQ to coordinate the TMDL outreach project on August 8, 2007.
- h. Met with the Santiago Saldana, Jr., Mayor of Rio Hondo, and Minerva Martinez, SC member to discuss the Rio Hondo outreach project on August 10th.
- i. Gave an interview for a newspaper article titled “Water Worries” published in Valley newspapers on July 22, 2007.
- j. Participated in the USIBWC citizen forum on July 25, 2007 and opened discussion for implementation of an aspect of the ACWPP regarding stream configuration improvements for water quality.
- k. Gained audience with Godfrey Garza, Manager of the Hidalgo County irrigation district on August 28, 2007 to begin discussion on a regional wetland system in the Arroyo Colorado floodway. Was invited to visit office and discuss more.
- l. Met Carlos Pena, the new supervisor in the Environmental Management Division of the USIBWC to discuss alternative stream channel configurations and a regional wetland system in the floodway on August 28, 2007.

- m. Met with Amado Salinas, General Manager of the Military Highway WSC on August 30, 2007, to discuss plan implementation.

**22% Complete**

### **TASK 3: Facilitate Watershed Protection Plan Implementation**

#### *Subtask 3.1: Facilitate and Coordinate Implementation of Education and Outreach Measures as Outlined in ACWPP*

The ACWC conducted the following actions during this reporting period:

- a. Continued worked with Sky Lewey and Dr. Jude Benavides on the generation of a large-scale, three-dimensional model to show the topography of the entire Arroyo Colorado Watershed and the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Model to be completed by September 20, 2007.
- b. Through Texas Watch, 15 volunteer monitoring sites have been established on the Arroyo Colorado, associated drainages, the Lower Laguna Madre. Data is currently being collected and stored by Texas Watch.
- c. Worked on the planning and setup of the Texas Watch Regional meeting scheduled for September 22, 2007. Announcement and draft agenda included in Appendix C.
- d. Coordinated and facilitated communications and coordination of the efforts of the LRGV TPDES Storm Water Task Force and Texas Watch. Meeting was held on July 23, 2007 in Brownsville.
- e. Began working with Nancy Millar on planning a micro-campaign for the eco-tourism target audience.
- f. On July 18, 2007, presented the ACWPP and status to science teacher from UT Pan American as part of the TCEQ sponsored program "Teaching Environmental Science". Worked with Patricia Gandy and Dr. Ibrahim.
- g. On July 24, 2007, presented the ACWPP and status to science teacher from UT Brownsville as part of TCEQ sponsored program "Teaching Environmental Science". Worked with Marianna and Dr. Ramirez. Lead a field trip as part of the presentation.
- h. Began the development of an evaluation instrument to assess awareness campaign.
- i. A backpack stuffer in the form of a bookmark was developed and produced in conjunction with the LRGVDC.
- j. Began work on a resolution in support of the implementation of the ACWPP.
- k. Discussed the development of television PSAs with Alan Watts as part of the TCEQ TMDL outreach program.

**22% Complete**

#### *Subtask 3.2: Facilitate and Coordinate Implementation of Agricultural Pollution Control Measures as Outlined in ACWPP*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. Worked with Dr. Enciso to identify suitable sites to conduct assess effectiveness of agricultural BMPs through the TSSWCB funded Ag NPS Assessment Project.
- b. Contributed to the development of the QAPP for the Ag NPS Assessment Project.

- c. Agricultural education events occur on a regular basis in the watershed. The County Extension Agent for Cameron, Willacy and Hidalgo counties provide an update of agricultural activities for the Education of Agricultural BMPs Project, funded through the TSSWCB. As of the last quarter reported (April through June 2007), 1043 agricultural producers, youths, and residents from Cameron and Hidalgo Counties were provided training on subjects ranging from surface and groundwater protection to soil fertility and nutrient management, water conservation, irrigation management, rainwater harvesting, drip irrigation, xeriscaping and use of native plants, integrated pest management (IPM), pesticide application, and other best management practices. The total number of participants who have benefited from the Arroyo Colorado Education Program is now 3,940.

**22% Complete**

*Subtask 3.3: Facilitate and Coordinate Implementation of Recommended Measures Described in the Habitat Component of the ACWPP*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. Helped organize and participate in a Habitat Work Group meeting lead by new work group leaders, Dr. Kim Jones and Tony Reisinger. Meeting was held July 24, 2007.
- b. Continued work on developing a scope of work for a regional wetland system.
- c. Scouted out a new potential site, the "La Feria sandpit".
- d. At the Rio Grande Valley Citizen's Forum, initiated discussion with the USIBWC on the possibility of alternative stream channel configuration for water quality improvement.
- e. Presented comments at USIBWC public hearing on August 28, 2007 regarding the Rio Grande flood control projects. Requested partnership and increased participation in evaluation and possible development of wetland projects within the interior floodway (Arroyo Colorado). Written comments are due September 24, 2007.
- f. Gained audience with Godfry Garza on the potential of the development of a regional wetland system in Hidalgo Co. Mr. Garza is open for more discussion.
- g. Began work with TPWD on development of a drainage ditch improvement project.
- h. Continued encouragement of habitat restoration throughout the watershed.

**22% Complete**

*Subtask 3.4: Facilitate and Coordinate Implementation of Wastewater Infrastructure Pollution Control Measures as outlined in the ACWPP.*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. Met with Chris Boswell and Darrell Gunn, Mayor of Harlingen and Assistant Manager of Harlingen Waterworks System, respectively, in regards to their commitments in the "Pollution Reduction Plan (PRP) for the Arroyo Colorado". They are still planning on wastewater reuse and are also open to a regional wetland system.
- b. Met with Amado Salinas, General Manager of Military Highway Water Supply Corporation in regards to their commitments in the PRP. Mr. Salinas said the loan application was submitted May 2006; they received a letter of eligibility and are currently awaiting funding.

- c. Called Salomon Torres of US Congressman Ruben Hinojosa requesting he inquire about the status of Rural Utility Service funding from the TDA.
- d. Investigated the four city wetland projects. Talked to Author Talley, TCEQ and representatives of the four cities. Arranged for presentation to SC on July 24, 2007.

**22% Complete**

*Subtask 3.5: Semi-annual Newsletter Publication.*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. A draft of the newsletter has been completed and is scheduled to be printed and distributed before the end of September.

**15% Complete**

**TASK 4: Resource Identification and Grant Writing**

**Subtask 4.1:** *Track Grants and Assist Partners in Grant Applications – In coordination with TWRI, the Arroyo Colorado Grant Coordinator/Water Quality Analyst (ACGC), with assistance from the ACWC, will: 1) actively seek and pursue funding opportunities for watershed protection and restoration projects, 2) track appropriate grants that fund activities outlined in the WPP and assist Arroyo Partners in the grant application process and 3) link appropriate partners and projects.*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. Expanded initial search for funding opportunities for restoration projects and education and outreach projects.
- b. Compiled and organized information on potential funding opportunities for distribution to work group and steering committee members. Status of current funding opportunities included in Appendix D.
- c. Met with and assisting Arroyo Partners in development proposal for a regional wetland site suitability analysis.
- d. Met with and assisted stormwater task force representatives and Sea Grant to discuss development of the CHARM proposal.

**15% Complete**

*Subtask 4.2: Lead proposal development to request/acquire funding for Implementation of Measures as Outlined in ACWPP. A minimum of 10 grant proposals will be developed during the project period by the ACGC, in cooperation with the ACWC, TWRI, and project partners. Upon completion, the grant proposals will be submitted by either project partners or TWRI/TCE, whichever is most appropriate. Potential proposals may include, but not limited to funding requests to:*

- *Implement recommendations of the Outreach and Education Work Group.*
- *Produce an educational video.*
- *Increase wastewater and surface water infrastructure development within cities and public utility systems for colonias.*

- *Design and construct individual and/or regional enhanced biological treatment projects.*
- *Conduct feasibility studies and final engineering designs for development of individual and regional constructed wetland demonstration projects throughout the watershed.*
- *Establish individual and regional constructed wetland projects.*
- *Conduct feasibility studies for modifying the drainage channels to maintain moist soils to sustain wetland plants for treatment of nonpoint source pollution.*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. Began work on the development of a grant (CHARM) to implement storm water and urban nonpoint source outreach programs and to promote SmartGrowth.
- a. Developing 3 full proposals to submit by October 10, 2007 for the Texas Coastal Management Program Grant Cycle #13:
  - Pesticide education for agricultural producers in Cameron County
  - Creation of an education and outreach center and dock to increase public access to the Arroyo Colorado in Rio Hondo
  - Wetland site suitability analysis and construction of a nature park at the Rio Hondo education center
  - Regional wetland feasibility and site suitability analysis in Cameron County
- b. Developing a general proposal to submit to multiple funding agencies for a regional wetland site suitability analysis with the assistance of several Arroyo Partners.

**20% Complete**

#### **TASK 5: Data Gathering and Analysis to Assess Effects of Water Quality Protection Plan**

*The ACGC will assemble and maintain a data clearinghouse for all data collected in the Arroyo and from that data, evaluate changes in BOD, TSS, fecal bacteria, and nutrient loading to Segments 2201 and 2202 of the Arroyo Colorado. Data collection will include:*

- *Pollutant removal effectiveness of enhanced treatment projects through effectiveness monitoring conducted by participating cities.*
- *Wastewater permit holders self reporting data to better characterize loading of nutrients from WWTPs to the Arroyo Colorado*
- *Data collected through the Arroyo C*
- *olorado Agricultural Nonpoint Source Assessment Project'*
- *Texas Clean Rivers Program.*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. Located and assessed developed data sets for the Arroyo Colorado (including <http://arroyo.tamu.edu>, Nueces River Authority, Texas Watch and TCEQ).
- b. Received information on sample sites and requested a copy of the water quality data collected from those sites within the Texas Clean Rivers Program.
- c. Generated list with contact information of wastewater permit holders in the Arroyo Colorado watershed.
- d. Acquired data from Nueces River Authority.

**15% Complete**

**III. Related Issues/Current Problems and Favorable or Unusual Developments**

- None to report at this time

**IV. Projected Work for Next Quarter****Task 1**

- Hire Amy Rangel at 75% time for the Program Assistant position
- Host a meeting for the new Grant Writer and Watershed Coordinator in College Station.
- Revise and fully develop the Arroyo Colorado Website. TWRI anticipates the new site will be on-line and active by the release of the September newsletter.
- Host TCEQ grant manager and fiscal staff and TAMU fiscal staff at a meeting in College Station to discuss project budget, invoicing and deliverables.
- Work through amendments to contract regarding reporting and invoice date changes.
  - New Quarterly Report due dates will be: September 15, 2007, December 15, 2007, March 15, 2008, June 15, 2008, September 15, 2008, December 15, 2008, and March 15, 2009.
  - New Quarterly Invoice due dates will be: September 30, 2007, December 31, 2007, March 31, 2008, June 30, 2008, September 30, 2008, December 31, 2008, and March 31, 2009.
- Finalize any issues with match funds for the project with TCEQ.
- Submit quarter 3 report on December 15, 2007.

**Task 2**

- Schedule and facilitate a Steering Committee meeting and four work group meetings (Agricultural Issues, Habitat, Wastewater, and Outreach and Education). Draft and distribute agendas and meeting summaries.
- Attend all work group meetings.
- Coordinate work group efforts.
- Arrange for guest speakers at Steering Committee meeting.
- Production and distribution of bi-monthly updates.
- Continue to engage key stakeholders.

**Task 3**

- Continue work with Nancy Millar to implement Strategy 5.III of the Education and Outreach plan.
- Finalize a formal resolution in support of the implementation of the ACWPP of governing agencies to sign.
- Follow-up with representatives from the four cities in regards to the enhanced water treatment systems.
- Prepare and present a new PowerPoint presentation focusing on agricultural for presentation to the Texas Ag Industry on September 18, 2007.

- Participate in project Rio Reforestation on October 13<sup>th</sup> to promote and encourage habitat restoration and watershed stewardship.
- Continue networking with other watershed coordinators working in Texas.
- Continue to develop a full scope of work for a regional wetland system.
- Distribute the Arroyo Colorado Newsletter.
- Produce at least two press releases.
- Continue work on the development of an O&E evaluation instrument.

**Task 4**

- Complete and submit 3 proposals by October 10, 2007 for the Texas Coastal Management Program Grant Cycle #13.
- Finalize and submit the CHARM proposal to TCEQ.
- Identify additional funding opportunities to pursue.

**Task 5**

- Begin contacting wastewater permit holders to collect data on nutrient loading.
- Compile water quality data received in a database.

**Appendix A**

**Steering Committee and Workgroup (Ag, Habitat and O&E)  
Meeting Summaries**

**Arroyo Colorado Steering Committee/Partnership Meeting**

Texas A&M Kingsville, Citrus Center  
312 N. International Blvd, Weslaco, Texas 78596

July 24, 2007

4:30 am-7:00 pm

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**ATTENDANCE:**

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Enrique Perez – TCE                | Ernesto Reyes – USFWS Ecological Service |
| Brad Cowan – TCE                   | Rocky Freund – NRA                       |
| Andy Garza – TSSWCB                | Brad Lamb – EPA                          |
| John D. Wallace – USFWS/LANWR      | Fred Moore – EPA                         |
| Jude A. Benavides – UTB/TSC        | Neil Haman – HWWS/POH                    |
| Richard Ister – TDA                | Kevin Wagner – TWRI                      |
| Rick Reyes – IBWC                  | Cecilia Wagner – TWRI                    |
| Heather Harris – CH2M Hill         | Laura De La Garza – TWRI                 |
| Tony Reisinger – TX Sea Grant Ext. | Cory Horan – TCEQ                        |
| Elizabeth Heise – UTB              | Kim Jones – TAMUK                        |
| Abel P. Garza – TAMUK              | Martha McClain – City of San Benito      |
| Ruben Saldana – TCE                | Darla Jones – City of La Feria           |
| Jason Pinchback – TSU/RSI          | Richard LeFever – City of Mercedes       |

**MEETING**

**5:00 Welcome and Introductions** ..... Dr. Jude Benavides, Chairman

- Thanks to Harlingen Waterworks System for providing the snacks and refreshments
- Shifting from planning to action
- Special Guests from the EPA Region – Dallas Texas, Brad Lamb – Regional NPS Coordinator and Fred Moore – Extension Service Liaison
- Cory Horan – Project Manager Water Quality Planning also present
- Self introductions made

**Steering Committee Member Change** ..... Dr. Jude Benavides, Chairman

- Steve Bearden request that Bobby Aguilar replace him on the Steering Committee (to represent sugar cane growers), there were no objects. Bobby now a SC member
- Neil Haman no longer with TWDB but serves locally on two other boards (ask Neil)
- New Direction for Partnership – Plan Implementation rather than planning – new focus on grant writing for funding strategies.

**ACWPP Implementation Facilitation/Meeting Schedule** ..... Kevin Wagner, TWRI

- Lapse between contracts
- Position open for Program Assistant – Megan Meier assisting in mean time.

Quarterly SC meetings to be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of month – Next meeting October 25

**Presentation/Wetland Studies**..... Laura De La Garza introduced City Representatives

- Going through permitting process
- Discussed education and ecotourism possibilities
- Cost of land issues and engineering fees; discussed whether a liner will be needed
- Requested more guidance from TCEQ

Four City Wetland Project.....Martha McClain, City of San Benito  
 Darla Jones, City of La Feria  
 Richard LeFever, City of Mercedes  
 Laura De La Garza for the City of San Juan

**Work Group Updates:**

Agricultural Issues.....Andy Garza, TSSWCB  
 Kevin Wagner, TWRI

- Development of water quality management plans for thousands of acres
- BMP education and evaluation
- SWAT model simulation
- NPS assessment project

Habitat Issues ..... Dr. Kim Jones, TAMUK  
 Tony Reisinger, Texas Sea Grant

- Overview of CMP grants
- Site suitability analysis...need LIDAR data
  - Possible sites include Port of Harlingen oxbow, San Benito wastewater plant, Llano Grande near TPWD property, La Feria sand pit, Goat Island Resaca, shrimp farms

Education and Outreach ..... Laura De La Garza, TWRI

- Physical Model – Acknowledgement of Nueces RA and the Clean Rivers Program for providing \$12,000. Sky Lewey for being project coordinator, and Jude and Anthony Reisinger for providing the engineering. Should be completed by September 15<sup>th</sup> and housed at UTB.
- On going compost project. Acknowledge Christie Jo Lugo-Waldron and the City of Weslaco for project management. Will highlight project at one of the future meetings.
- CMP Grants and Don Hockaday taking lead on NSF grant
- Texas Watch’s work in the Valley – Jason Pinchback and Eric Mendelman
  - September 22, 2007 event

Other Work Groups..... Laura De La Garza, TWRI

- Will be scheduling a WWI Work Group meeting for end of August
- Need a new WG leader – Roger on other projects – Asking for nominations
- Four Cities wetland project – read and distribute write-up from Arthur Talley
- Acknowledge TCEQ and EPA for work and funding
- Rocky Freund, Nueces RA said that in regards to instream monitoring of the Arroyo Colorado, she has been working with the TCEQ Region 15 to establish five additional sites. Jude said that UTB could help in the sampling.
- TMDL work continues?
- Jason Pinchback presented Texas Watch Activities

**6:40 Discuss/Prioritize Future Funding Needs and Sources ..... Cecilia Wagner, TWRI**

- Regional Wetland development a priority need – CIAP maybe a source, need at least \$12M
- Review some of the grants available
- Work groups to focus on developing Scopes of Work – SC approval for drafting letters of support (LOS). Additional individual LOS may be asked of SC members
- Expressed need to maybe look for private funding sources

**6:50 Direction of Partnership/Other Business** ..... Dr. Jude Benavides, Chairman

- Long-term sustainability. Laura tasked with looking at local NOG umbrella, other possibilities like the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuary Program.
- IBWC meeting
- Cameron County resolution supporting ACWPP
- Ask SC of input.

**7:00 Adjourn** ..... Dr. Jude Benavides, Chairman

**Arroyo Agricultural Issues Work Group Meeting**  
**July 24, 2007, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon**  
**Meeting Summary**

**Attendance**

-Ray Prewett – Texas Citrus Mutal	-Xavier Peries - TAES
-Donald Thompson – Local Farmer	-Brian Jones – Farmer
-Brad Cowan – TCE	-Kevin Wagner – TSSWCB
-Os Longoria - NRCS	-Aaron Wendt – TSSWCB
-Richard Eyster – TDA	-Pamela Casebolt – TSSWCB
-Laura De La Garza – TWRI	-Eduardo Mendez – TSSWCB
-Andy Garza – TSSWCB	-Brad Lamb – EPA Region 6
-Gabrio ? - NRCS	-Fred Moore – EPA Region 6
-Jason Pinchback – Texas Watch	-Ruben Saldana - TCE

**Welcome and Introductions – Andy Garza:**

Mr. Garza opened the meeting at 9:20 am, welcomed the group and introductions were made.

**Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan (ACWPP) – Aaron Wendt:**

Aaron review the agreed upon agricultural components of the ACWPP; that the goal is the reduction of agriculture contributions to BOD, total nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment entering the Arroyo Colorado. Through volunteer adoption of agricultural best management practices he stated that by 2010 the goal is to have approximately 100,000 acres under water quality management plans; 150,000 acres by 2015. Aaron said to do that technical and financial assistance would be required along with additional monitoring.

Kevin asked Brad Lamb about the status of the ACWPP in regards to EPA’s final approval. Brad said that the jury is still out and he was here today to see what is going on.

**Watershed Protection Plan Implementation Status – Laura De La Garza**

Laura reviewed ongoing activities of the Habitat Work Group and the Outreach and Education Work Group. Three pre-proposals have been drafted for Coastal Management Program grants. One was for a feasibility/site suitability analysis for a regional wetland system to help achieve the main goal of the Habitat Work Group to develop a regional wetland system.

Two additional pre-proposals were written for educational activities. Ongoing O&E projects included the making of a 3 feet x 7 feet physical watershed model, the establishment of a volunteer monitoring program with Texas Watch, and the Texas GreenScapes compost program. Laura said that a Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group meeting will be soon scheduled and that nominees for a new work group leader are being solicited.

**Best Management Practice Implementation – Andy Garza:**

Andy reviewed some of the BMPs being implemented in the watershed. He said that 335 water quality management plans covering 34,000 acres have been processed using TSSWCB 319 funds. This in combination with NRCS EQIP contracts has resulted in development of a combined total 603 plans covering 61,000 acres.

The 319 project has expended \$1,795,991 for cost-share assistance. Approximately 156,288 feet of irrigation pipeline have been installed and 9,405 acres of irrigation land leveling has been completed.

Ray Prewett asked what the irrigation districts were doing in relation to what is being done. Brad Cowan said that by their irrigation distribution improvements, great head is generated making for more efficient irrigation and less runoff to the drainage ditches and Arroyo.

Kevin asked if we were going to be able to meet this year's goal. Aaron said that that meant 77,000 by the end of this fiscal year. Andy reminded the group that this is a volunteer program and that they are doing the best they can. There was a discussion about the cost share rate; that the one time rule and \$10,000 max limits program participation.

**Best Management Practice Education – Cecilia Wagner and Brad Cowan**

Cecilia said that they had just submitted a quarterly report and that they were on task except for the hiring of an assistant. Brad said that more than just a student is needed, that an offer was made to a qualified person and he did not accept the position. Brad said that a more competitive salary may be needed.

Brad said that the hiring goal is to multiply extension education in three counties, that that person will be housed in Cameron and Hidalgo offices part of the week. Os Longoria said that he gets a lot of calls for watershed training and that an assistant could help with this.

The following question was asked about Sub-task 2.2. What has been the turn-out for the soil testing campaigns? Enrique Perez said that they have been good. Brad said that he was not sure about funds for fertility testing and that we might need to talk to Mark McFarland about funding needs.

Brad also said that educational events were listed if they had a water quality component and that there is need to develop a PowerPoint presentation with Andy Garza. Andy said that the NRCS has a wealth of information on BMPs.

**SWAT Model Simulation of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed - Kevin Wagner**

Kevin said that they had just received the contract and that things were just getting rolling. Dr. Narayanan Kannan from the TAES Blackland Research and Extension Center was project lead. The goal of the model is to re-simulate nutrient loading to the Lower Laguna Madre. Aaron said that there have been many changes in the watershed since 1998 and they would use and updated SWAT model to better understand the Arroyo Colorado Watershed.

**Agricultural Nonpoint Source Assessment – Kevin Wagner, Dr. Venki Uddameri, and Xavier Peries**

Kevin reviewed the purpose of the ag assessment study; that it was to evaluate BMPs and the effects the drainage ditches have on agricultural runoff. The vegetation in the ditches appears to act as a filter but was not accounted for in the previous TMDL model. The assessment includes an updated GIS data base which would identify all ag plan implementation and inventory BMPs. The land use data will be updated; however, project staff is struggling to find tile drain data. Richard Eyster suggested contacting Brian Smith, TCEQ, because the tile drain are considered injection wells according to the TCEQ. Someone suggested contacting the local contractors who install the drains.

Dr. Uddameri discussed his method for monitoring the drainage ditches and that one of the goals was to measure flux during both low flow vs. high flow conditions. Brad asked how many drainage ditches contribute flow to the Arroyo Colorado. Laura said hundreds. Ray Prewett asked how do illegal dumps contribute to the water quality problem. Illegal dumps are associated with oil, bacteria and possible homeowner unused chemicals. Brad said that

there is opportunity to work with the counties on this dumping issue. However, part of the problem is existing regulations and lack of convenient dumping locations. This is a statewide problem.

Xavier Peries presented the proposed six sites for the ag BMP study for Dr. Enciso. Kevin asked for comments on site selection. Aaron asked if sites had WQMPs and Andy answered yes. With no objecting comments, Kevin said they will proceed with the six sites. Richard asked if pesticides would be sampled. Kevin answered no.

Aaron asked about future funding needs. Os said that he would like to see the soil sampling continued. Additional funding needs were also identified for education, additional monitoring, and cost-share assistance. There was additional discussion on the one-time rule and the \$10,000 maximum. Aaron asked what a reasonable amount might be and said he would discuss this with Jose Dodier. The elimination of the one-time rule could be sufficient and also increase the maximum to \$25,000 for cost-share assistance.

Brad Lamb said that special emphasis should be placed in targeted areas so that the model could be used to get better numbers. Level 1 and level 2 participation should be identified and refined for more interest.

Ray asked if this work group should send a letter to the TSSWCB. It was suggested that the letters should come from the farmers starting with the ones on the Steering Committee. It was also suggested that Jose Dodier come to the Valley to discuss this issue.

Aaron said that work on the FY08 goal should begin to increase the acres under WQMPs to 77,000.

Next meeting scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday in October.

## Adjourn

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### Arroyo Colorado Habitat Issues Work Group July 24, 2007 Meeting Summary

#### ATTENDANCE:

Tony Reisinger - Texas Sea Grant  
Kim Jones - Texas A&M Kingville  
Laura De La Garza – Watershed Coordinator, TWRI  
Paul H. Bergh – Coalition to Save the Arroyo Colorado  
Mary Lou Campbell – Sierra Club  
Lisa Williams – Texas Nature Conservancy  
Heather Harris – CH2M Hill  
Brad Lamb – EPA Region 6  
Fred Moore – EPA Region 6  
Elizabeth Heise - UTB

Ernesto Reyes – USFWS  
Amy Spaulding – Valley Land Fund  
Chris Hathcock – TPWD  
Aaron Wendt – TSSWCB  
Pamela Casebolt – TSSWCB  
John D. Wallace – USFWS/LANWR  
Martin Alcala, Jr. – TAMUK  
Fritz Jaenike – Harlingen Shrimp Farms  
Kevin Wagner – TWRI  
Cecilia Wagner – TWRI  
Abel Garza – TAMUK/STEI  
Kim Jones – TAMUK/STEI

#### Welcome and Introductions

Tony Reisinger, Co-Work Group Leader called the Habitat Issues work group meeting to order. The meeting was held in the Rio Red Classroom of the Texas A&M Kingsville Citrus Center. Self-introductions were made. Special guests included Brad Lamb and Fred Moore from the US EPA Region 6.

#### Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan

The first order of business was to review the 10 strategies listed in the habitat component of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan (ACWPP). Dr. Kim Jones outlined the 10 action items for water quality and habitat

restoration derived from the 3 main objectives listed in the Habitat portion of the ACWPP concentrating on wetland systems.

- Need to focus on what the process needs to be to accomplish these broad items
- Laura said focus needs to be on regional wetland and expand on Alan Plummer study
- Kim: we need to clarify what a regional wetland is...need to analyze other similar wetlands (like in California) but need to make it specific for the conditions in the Arroyo
- Potential sites include Port of Harlingen, San Benito, Rio Hondo Oxbow, sand pit near La Feria, Laguna Atascosa for shrimp farms discharges

Laura provided an update on the implementation status of the ACWPP including a review of education and outreach work group activities and projects. Laura reviewed O&E projects including the development of a physical watershed model of the Arroyo Colorado watershed. That the model was 3' x 7' x 6" high and that it would show the Rio Grande flowing into the Gulf of Mexico and the Arroyo Colorado flowing into the Lower Laguna Madre. She acknowledged funding provided by the Nueces River Authority through the Texas Clean Rivers program, project direction by Sky Lewey, and the engineering provided by Dr. Jude Benavides and Anthony Reisinger, Jr. of UTB. Laura briefly discussed the TCEQ/EPA funded compost demonstration project managed by the City of Weslaco, Texas Watch activities and the current grant writing activities. She discussed the development of two Coastal Management Program grant proposals. Aaron Wendt discussed agricultural issues and BMP implementation. There was a discussion on Cameron county LIDAR data and it was agreed that that information is essential for locating suitable wetland sites. Tony Reisinger agreed to contact the Cameron County regarding that data. Laura stated tidal section of the Arroyo Colorado has just recently been listed for high bacteria levels. She also stated that data may have been skewed as a result of increased rain events. -Tony said that fisherman have been catching large tropical species in the tidal segment of the Arroyo Colorado and that this is a possible indicator of good habitat.

#### **Project Updates**

Laura briefly reported on the individual 4 cities wetland project, that permitting issues have been addressed acknowledging the work done by the cities of San Benito, La Feria, Mercedes, and San Juan. She also acknowledged EPA Region 6 for their support of the project.

Chris Hatcock presented the TPWD Estero Llano Grande drainage ditch stabilization project.

- 2 mile drainage ditch flowing through Estero Llano Grande World Birding center.
- The ditch flows into the Arroyo Colorado
- The drainage ditch contained steep 1:1 slopes
- APAI conducted a bio-engineering study
- Looking at possibility of using California bullrush for sediment trapping

#### **Project Discussions**

Dr. Heise and Dr. Kim Jones discussed the Coastal Management Program pre-grant proposal; that there is ongoing work to develop the full grant proposal due October 10, 2007.

- Dr. Heise discussed site suitability for the wetlands

Dr. Jones then discussed the development of a regional wetland system and gave an overview of the different potential sites for regional wetland development.

- First focus was Llano Grande area
- Dr. Jones commented that there is a need to incorporate engineering ideas (to control flow and remove nutrients) with ecology to ensure habitat is created and not just monoculture of cattails
- a challenge in getting a regional wetland project on the ground is "knocking on the right doors"
- Dr. Jones present two existing regional wetlands, Loma Alta Shrimp Farm wetland and Imperial Valley, California Wetland
- Martin A. (TAMUK graduate student) discussed bio-retention cell technology using compost and it was decided that a demo project should be implemented at one or two site on the Arroyo ZOI and specifically at the facilities where dry fertilizer off-loaded.
- Rio Hondo/Port of Harlingen Oxbow was discussed- Paul H. Bergh said that a possible low cost way to deal with the pumping issue was the Sterling engine
- San Benito site expansion discussed as a possible regional wetland system
- La Feria Sandpit identified as a possible location
- Goat Island Resaca worth looking at

- Laguna Atascosa discussed as a potential site for permitted discharges from shrimp farms – it was agreed that although this was not in Phase I of the ACWPP that certain coastal wetland grants would be appropriate and that the option of the wetland system in this area could be pursued
- It was recommended that 3 sites be identified for the feasibility study
- Dr. Jones said there is a need to determine who will maintain the wetland systems; that that will be part of the feasibility study
- Nueces River Authority feasibility study for Cameron County colony was reviewed
- Need to determine land availability, ground-truth the sites, cost estimation, conceptual model, partnership/support, permitting, monitoring, modeling, and ownership
- Need to consult with Dr. John Day

#### **Discuss/Prioritize Future Funding Needs and Sources**

Cecilia Wagner reviewed the forecasted grant table. She said there was a need to develop scopes of work for the different RFPs. In regards to the Gulf of Mexico grant, she said that we are not going to pursue due to deadlines, small amount of funds and 1:1 match requirement. She highlighted the National Wetland Restoration Development (NWRD) grant with the August 10, 2007 deadline and the Estuary Habitat Restoration Program grant due August 20, 2007. It was noted that the NWRD grant could only be awarded to a NGO. Amy Spaulding of the Valley Land Fund said that she would see if her organization could be the lead agency and submit the application.

**Adjourn** at 4:40 pm.

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### **Arroyo Colorado Education and Outreach Workgroup July 17, 2007 Meeting Summary**

#### **ATTENDANCE:**

Laura De La Garza – Watershed Coordinator, TWRI  
Don Hockaday –UT- Pan American  
Brianna K. R. Carlson – TPWD  
Tony Riesinger – TCE, Cameron County  
Elizabeth Heise – UT Brownsville  
Christie Jo Lugo-Waldron - City of Weslaco  
Marcie Oviedo – LRGDC  
Ludy Saenz – LRGDC  
Paul H. Bergh – Coalition to Save Arroyo Colorado

#### **Via Teleconference:**

Cory Horan – TCEQ  
Kevin Wagner – TWRI  
Cecilia Wagner – TWRI  
Megan Meier – TWRI  
Jason Pinchback – Texas Watch, TSU  
Eric Medelman – Texas Watch, TSU

#### **Meeting**

Laura De La Garza called the Education and Outreach work group meeting to order at 4:10 pm. The meeting was held in the Texas Cooperative Extension Conference Room in the Texas A& M Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Weslaco, Texas with out of town members participating via conference call.

Introductions were made and the first order of business was to review the education and outreach goals outlined in the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan (ACWPP). An update on the WPP implementation status was provided by Laura for the education and outreach, and habitat work groups while Kevin Wagner provided the update for the agricultural workgroup.

Christie Jo (City of Weslaco) discussed the progress of the compost project (p103 of the ACWPP).

- Purpose for project is to teach community about composting since it conserves water, requires less fertilizer use and contributes less nutrients to runoff

- Have demonstration projects on athletic fields and urban areas
- Has 31 workshops scheduled that are open to the general public
- Project is involves the Cities of Weslaco, Brownsville, Alton and Brownsville, TCEQ, and EPA
- Laura suggested including the compost project in the newsletter
- The group suggested presenting the data collected thus far at a meeting in a few months
- Cecilia suggested creating/using fact sheets like with the TCEQ project with TWRI at compost.tamu.edu
- Brianna Carlson asked about private composting

Laura provided update on physical watershed model for Sky Lewey, which is fulfilling Strategy 5 of O&E component of the ACWPP.

- Nueces RA through the Clean Rivers Program provided funding for the model
- Paul Bond, from Texas State University, is the modeler
- UTB provided engineering services for model development
- Model should be finished by September 15<sup>th</sup>
- Elizabeth Heise described model: it is 3 ft X 8 ft X 6 in; water can actually be used on it as it has a plastic coating; had to paint on levees because would look like mountains if drawn to scale
- Laura asked the group how and where the model should be used.
  - Tony Riesinger said Master Naturalists are interested in using it as well as TCE agent using it in schools
  - UTB also has plans to use it
  - Jason Pinchback with TexasWatch has experience using models like this and offered assistance

Jason Pinchback with TexasWatch (Strategy 5) provided an update on their activity in the Arroyo Colorado watershed.

- Overall mission is to support components of ACWPP and maintain sustainable network of volunteer monitors
- Currently working with over 9 different Valley organizations
- Includes volunteer monitoring component
  - Over 32 trained volunteers on assessing stream health and monitoring E. coli at 14 sites across entire watershed
  - Measure oxygen, secchi depth, etc.
  - Cory from TCEQ asked about additional supplies for monitors and the response was yes, additional kits for universities, high schools and master naturalists are needed because the effort on the Arroyo is very intense
  - Jason suggested using Laura's office as hub for providing supplies to volunteers, Laura suggested the San Benito TCE office because of a space limitation
  - Elizabeth Heise from UTB had several students trained; might discuss with Cory about using the YSI meters purchased using TCEQ funds for another to provide more in-depth monitoring
  - Eric at TexasWatch suggested using YSI as providing quality control for TexasWatch kits
  - Had 2 trainings in the last few months with one more training in the fall
- Includes education and outreach component
  - Sent out announcement to teachers (about 112) in the watershed and will possibly participate at in-services to educate teachers
  - Including information about Arroyo Colorado watershed and how training/monitoring helps
  - Possible opportunity to include ACWPP/Arroyo Colorado pamphlets with TexasWatch materials for targeted audiences
- Discussed upcoming regional meeting (meeting on 9-22 in Weslaco; which is World Water Monitoring Day)
  - TexasWatch has been in coordination with several partners on getting agenda set-up for educating general public and associated partners on ACWPP
  - Need to include storm water task force group cities
  - TexasWatch would appreciate feedback on what to include in the meeting like specific agenda items
    - Tony suggested including monitoring results and comparing to historical data; C. E. Bryan has publication from 1960s on fauna in the Arroyo
    - Brianna Carlson also suggested acquiring water quality data from TPWD; requested a flyer from Texas Watch to distribute to fishermen
    - Rocky also has a database available
    - Mark Lingo (TPWD) has conducted recent surveys to compare to historical data

- Laura directed everyone to the graph on page 42 of the ACWPP that shows some improvement in dissolved oxygen in the past few years; these results may be from efforts of TCE working with farmers, as Tony suggested
- Elizabeth said with her experience that the public would like to see results, whether good or bad, because they are curious and would just like to see something happening
- Maybe entice people to attend by using door prizes or a meal; also Elizabeth will offer extra credit to students for attendance

Laura covered the storm water task force activity and implementation schedule.

- The task force has sponsored events over the last few years and the Partnership is planning on partnering with them over the next few years (especially with CHARM grant; p149 of plan; smart growth task)
  - Cory said strongest way to insure funding for CHARM would be for it to contribute to ACWPP
  - Need to look for money to develop PSAs in Spanish
    - partner with Alan Watt at TCEQ as he has funding for PSA development

Laura outlined the CMP Rio Hondo project pre-proposal and the regional wetland study.

- Rio Hondo will provide match in the form of land associated with their new wastewater treatment plant and adjacent to the Arroyo Colorado
- Tony thought it was a great idea
- Suggestion to add a boat ramp
- Don suggested monitoring that location
- Cecilia suggested giving work group a deadline to provide comments on all pre-proposals (end of August)
- Laura will schedule for group to visit the potential site and meet with city manager (before end of August)

Megan outlined Pesticide Education project pre-proposal.

- Basically using the pesticide education already established by TCE
- Providing funding for supplies and travel; match is TCE agents salary

Don Hockaday reported on NSF grant related to public education and will take the lead; informal science education program.

Megan covered various education and outreach funding opportunities.

- Work with Elizabeth Heise on Gulf of Mexico Grant
- Work with Don, Tony, and Briana for Endangered Species Grant

Laura discussed other business

- Kris Shipman expressed interest to work on proposal draft for VISTA volunteers
- Next meeting before grants are due; August 14<sup>th</sup> from 4-6 pm
- Cecilia suggested Laura sending contact information of workgroup to facilitate further discussions between group members between meetings.

The meeting ended at 6:10 pm.

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**Appendix B****Bi-Monthly Updates 2007  
July 19, July 31, August 15 and August 31**

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July 19, 2007

Dear Arroyo Partners,

First of all, I want to remind you of a series of Partnership meetings happening next Tuesday. The Agricultural Issues Work Group will meet from 9 am – 12 noon, the Habitat Restoration Work Group will meet from 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm, and the Steering Committee and general Partnership meeting will happen from 4:30 pm – 7:00 pm. All meetings are open to the public and all will be held in the Rio Red Classroom of the Texas A&M Kingsville Citrus Center located at 312 N. International Blvd., Weslaco, Texas. Meetings will highlight plan strategies and will essentially kick-off the implementation of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan. Updates on ongoing projects will be presented with the Four Cities Wetland Project highlighted at the evening Steering Committee Meeting. As usual, snacks will be provided at the 4:30 pm social with the actual Steering Committee meeting beginning at 5:00 pm. I hope you can make at least one of these meetings!

Another important notice is a job opening for Program Assistant. In the last update, I introduced you to Conrad Herrera who was to serve as our new grant writer/data analyst. He left for a more permanent job, therefore that position is open. As you may know, my position as program coordinator and the program assistant are grant funded positions. At this time, there is funding for two years with the intent of securing additional funds to keep these positions going. For that matter, part of my current job is to work with the Steering Committee to ensure the long-term sustainability of our Partnership and part of that means salaries for the worker bees. We have a few options such as establishing our own 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization or to umbrella with an existing organization. We will be figuring this out over the next year and for now, if you know of a qualified person interested in being Program Assistant for the implementation of the ACWPP, go to <http://greatjobs.tamu.edu>. Search positions and enter Texas Water Resource Institute (TWRI) as the hiring unit. Applications for this position will be accepted through August 8, 2007. Know that in the meantime, TWRI is providing a full-time staff person to assist on this project. Grants are being developed, and I am getting the needed support.

On a final note, many thanks go out to Texas Watch for their work in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV). Texas Watch now has about 30 newly certified volunteer water quality monitors in the LRGV. Partnering with Texas Watch to establish volunteer monitoring programs on the Arroyo Colorado and associated drainages is a part of our ACWPP. Texas Watch committed to establish at least 10 sites in the Arroyo Colorado Watershed. The volunteer monitors will provide basic water quality data such as temperature, pH, conductivity and dissolved oxygen, and the data will be accessible on their Web site, [www.texaswatch.geo.txstate.edu/](http://www.texaswatch.geo.txstate.edu/). Check out their Web site and let us know if you would like to be a volunteer monitor.

Hope to see you soon,  
Laura

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July 31, 2007

Dear Arroyo Partners!

Thank you for the good turn-out at last week's meetings. First of all, several individuals and organizations need to be recognized for contributing to the success of the meetings. Aside from the outstanding work of our work group

leaders, thanks go out to special guests from the U.S. EPA Region 6 office, Brad Lamb – Regional NPS Coordinator, and Fred Moore – Extension Service Liaison for attending all the meetings and for their guidance and support of this project. Thank Harlingen Waterworks System for providing the catered snacks and refreshments for the evening Steering Committee meeting. And thanks to Paul H. Bergh – Rio Radio Supply, Inc., for purchasing and lending a Morantz CD recorder used to record the Habitat Work Group and Steering Committee meetings.

The final groups to be recognized are the cities participating in the EPA and TCEQ sponsored individual wetland projects. Thanks to Martha McClain – City of San Benito, Darla Jones – City of La Feria, and Richard LeFever – City of Mercedes for presenting their individual wetlands project. You will be hearing more about this project as time progresses. At this point, all of these cities including the City of San Juan, are in the re-permitting stage of the process. This has been quite a process for all involved. However in the end these wetland systems should prove beneficial not only to water quality, but also, in the creation of additional aquatic habitat while providing facilities for outdoor education.

Project updates for work group activities were presented at the meetings. Two that have not been highlighted in these bi-monthly up-dates include the additional monitoring efforts of the Nueces River Authority in the Arroyo Colorado watershed through the Texas Clean Rivers Program (five additional in-stream monitoring sites have been added to the 7 existing sites) and the new grant awarded by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board for the SWAT (Soil and Water Assessment Tool) Model Project. This project will build on the current ongoing ag assessment project and will help with the reassessment of the needed loading reductions. The goal of this project is to simulate the current nutrient, BOD and sediment loading to the Arroyo Colorado using the SWAT model with up to date information.

There are additional ongoing projects and I will keep up updated as they progress.

On a final note, mark your calendars. On September 22, 2007, Texas Watch will host a regional meeting that will focus on the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan and Texas Watch activities in the watershed. It will be a half-day event held in Weslaco, Texas.

Laura

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August 15, 2007

Dear Arroyo Partners,

Work continues on the development of grant proposals. A task group from the Habitat Work Group has been researching and working to develop a proposal to apply for a grant for a site suitability/feasibility analysis for regional wetlands. A field trip to visit potential sites was scheduled for this Friday; however it is being rescheduled due to pending rain.

Another task group is working to further develop a proposal for an education and outreach center in Rio Hondo. A site visit was conducted last week which included a meeting with the Mayor Santiago Saldana, Jr. and Steering Committee Member, Minerva “Minnie” Martinez. All involved to date are enthused about the potential to convert an under-utilized parcel of land adjacent to the Arroyo Colorado into a learning facility.

Aside from working on grant proposals, ongoing project and activities that fulfill objectives and strategies of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan include:

- Continued implementation of agricultural best management practices (BMPs)
- Agricultural Nonpoint Source Assessment
- SWAT Model Simulation of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed
- Agricultural Outreach & Education of BMPs
- Four Cities Wetland Project
- Ongoing work by cities and water supply corporations to improve wastewater infrastructure

- *Texas Watch Volunteer Monitoring*
- *Development of a physical watershed model*
- *Clean Texas Greenscapes, a Weslaco led compost demonstration project*
- *In-stream water quality monitoring of the Arroyo Colorado*
- *Continued outreach and education through presentation to groups and through one-on-one meetings with community leaders*
- *Working on improving website*
- *Working on a Newsletter for distribution in September*
- *Ongoing Partnership development*

*In addition to the many projects, the Arroyo Colorado Website, <http://www.arroyocolorado.org>, is receiving a makeover under its new management at TWRI. During the next few weeks, we will be restructuring the site to include information on the many ongoing activities as well as potential projects or proposals under development. Announcements, attendance, memberships and minutes from our workgroup and steering committee meetings will be posted on this site. It is our intention that this be a one-stop shop Web site for the Arroyo Colorado. Therefore, if you have any suggestions or comments about the site as we re-develop it, please email Cecilia Wagner at [Cecilia@tamu.edu](mailto:Cecilia@tamu.edu).*

*On a final note, Mary Lou Campbell and I have been re-appointed as board members of the Lower Rio Grande Citizens' Forum. The Lower Rio Grande Citizens' Forum (LRGCF) was established in 2003 to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and members of the public about Commission activities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. As you know, the Rio Grande River is the main water supply for the LRGV and one of the responsibilities of the USIBWC is management and maintenance of the floodways including the Arroyo Colorado. The USIBWC is an important Arroyo Partner and I am honored to serve as a board member. As board members one of our responsibilities is to be available to the public to facilitate the exchange of information. In this light, I recommend that you go to the webpage, [http://www.ibwc.state.gov/Citizens\\_Forum/CF\\_Lower\\_RG.html](http://www.ibwc.state.gov/Citizens_Forum/CF_Lower_RG.html), which has links to meeting minutes and presentations that contains good information including one on the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Projects. Note that the USIBWC is seeking comments on a study of the Rio Grande Flood Control Projects and that a public hearing to receive comments is schedule for August 28, 2007, Four Point Sheraton Hotel, 2721 S. 10<sup>th</sup> St., McAllen, Texas, see attachment.*

*Stay cool,  
Laura*

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*August 31, 2007*

*Dear Arroyo Partners,*

*First of all, a couple of work group meetings are being planned for September. There will be an Outreach and Education Work Group meeting in Weslaco on Tuesday September 11th from 4:00 – 6:00 pm. The main topic of discussion will be redevelopment of the Coastal Management Program grant proposals based on the comments received from the General Land Office. We will also discuss a new TCEQ project to distribute existing successful program materials in impaired watersheds. One successful program is the Grow Green program that was developed by the Texas Cooperative Extension in cooperation with the Watershed Protection Development Review department of the City of Austin. This is good information about lawn care, landscaping, pests and products. You will be hearing more about this.*

*Another meeting being scheduled is the Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group meeting for Thursday September 20, 2007 from 10:00 am to noon. Work Group members, please save the date. It will be held in the Rio Red Classroom of the Texas A&M Kingsville Citrus Center. The main purpose of the meeting is to gather information on the efforts of the different cities and public utilities in regards to wastewater infrastructure improvement projects. Roger Miranda of the TCEQ will be on hand to provide a general overview of the plan and plan strategies as related to wastewater, permit issues, and monitoring. Roger has been the work group leader for this group but now has*

*commitments in other watersheds and can no longer participate in this capacity. We are currently taking nominations for a new Wastewater Infrastructure Group Leader and will also be discussing this at the meeting.*

*On a final note, the drafting of comments regarding the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact State (PESI) for the USIBWC Rio Grande Flood Control Project spurred good discussions between members of our Steering Committee in regards to one of our challenges of balancing competing uses: flood control, water quality, and habitat preservation. No one debates the need to maintain the capacity of the floodway system but we are asking that water quality be considered. How do we maximize flood water conveyance while improving the ability of the stream to remove pollutants?*

*With the approval of our Steering Committee, I made some general statements at the public hearing this past Monday. I informed the USIBWC that the Arroyo Partnership plans to submit formal written comments (due September 24, 2007) regarding this Draft PESI and that they will be along the lines of the need to address water quality with consideration of the added potential of creating environmental, recreational, and economic opportunities. This is in line with one of the USIBWC stated goals that include water use, quality, conservation, and multipurpose utilization of the projects in support of local and regional initiatives for recreational use or environmental improvement. Again, our Steering Committee (SC) acknowledges USIBWC's mandate for flood protection, boundary stabilization, and water delivery as priority. I will be working with the SC over the next couple of week to develop our statement.*

*Have a good weekend and safe Labor Day,  
Laura*

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**Appendix C****Texas Watch Regional Meeting (to be held Sept 22, 2007)  
Announcement and Draft Agenda**

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**ANNOUNCEMENT**

*In Coordination with the Arroyo Colorado Partnership  
Texas Watch and the River Systems Institute are hosting the*

**Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Meeting****Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10:30am-4:00pm**

Weslaco Citrus Center, Weslaco, TX • 312 North International Blvd

**Who should attend?**

Interested citizens	Teachers	City staff	Resource Managers
Researchers	Agency Staff	TMDL participants	Fishermen Beach Goers
Kayakers	Producers	Master Naturalists	Volunteer Monitors

Those interested in the health of the Arroyo Colorado.

In an effort to share information and promote advancement towards a healthier Arroyo Colorado watershed, Texas Watch and the River Systems Institute are joining forces with the Arroyo Colorado Partnership to host this event.

While the formal agenda is 1-4pm, a water quality monitoring demonstration will start at 10:30am, just before the free lunch. The monitoring demonstration, hosted by Texas Watch volunteer monitors and staff, will include opportunities to both observe and participate in environmental sampling and analysis. Lunch is sponsored by Texas State University's River Systems Institute.

The remaining meeting agenda includes the following topics: a perspective on the stream - current water chemistry and biological conditions; updates on wetlands development, pollution reduction plans, permitting activities, and drainage improvement projects; updates on the watershed protection plan and Texas Watch volunteer water quality monitoring activities; and updates on agriculture pollution reduction efforts.

Feel free to attend all or just part of this event, but if you do plan on coming please let us know in advance. Please RSVP to Terry Wendland at [tw05@txstate.edu](mailto:tw05@txstate.edu) or toll free at (877) 506-1401. Please let us know if you will be there for lunch. We look forward to seeing you all there!

Directions: From Highway 83, exit FM 1015 and go north about .1 miles to the first building and entrance to the Citrus Center, located on the right side of this road. We will be in the auditorium of the main building facing FM 1015. We will have signs placed outside along the road near the Citrus Center.

*Texas Watch supports citizen-based water quality monitoring and nonpoint source prevention education through a network of trained volunteers and partnering organizations.  
Texas Watch is predominantly funded by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality through grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.*

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**DRAFT AGENDA**

*In Coordination with the Arroyo Colorado Partnership  
Texas Watch and the River Systems Institute are hosting the*

**Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Meeting**

**Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10:30am-4:00pm**  
Weslaco Citrus Center, Weslaco, TX • 312 North International Blvd  
**Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Meeting**

10:30-11:30	Hands-on INTRO to Texas Watch monitoring methods;
11:30	Sign in
Noon	LUNCH with a speaker (I am looking for an historian or archeologist to provide some perspective on this watershed)
1pm	Introductions and Welcome
1:10 20 Minutes	Pollution Reduction Plan/Permitting Activities/4 Cities wetlands/any combination thereof – Roger Miranda 5 minutes of Q&A
1:35 20 Minutes	Regional Wetlands: Tony Reisinger or Dr. Kim Jones and TPWD Drainage Improvement Project – Chris Hadcock 5 minutes of Q&A
2:00 20 Minutes	Ag Workgroup activities: Encourage implementation of BMPs and participation in TSSWCB, NRCS, TCE and TAES programs; update on current ag. related activities – Andy Garza 5 minutes of Q&A
2:25 40 Minutes	Outreach & Education: General information about the WPP initiative, how impairments impact stakeholders, emphasize ways public can participate. Speaker – Laura (30 minutes). This will also include Texas Watch Activities and volunteer recognition, with an overview of data collected by volunteers. Speaker – Heidi (30 minutes) 5 minutes of Q&A
3:10 40 Minutes	Arroyo Colorado water quality and biology. Speakers - Bri Carlson, TPWD (20 minutes) and Rocky Freund (TBD) (20 minutes) 5 minutes of Q&A
4:00 20 Minutes	Speaker Panel – facilitate Q&A and/or open discussion
4:20	Meeting End Time

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## Appendix D

## Status of Funding Opportunities for the Arroyo Colorado

<i>Potential Funding Opportunities for the Arroyo Colorado</i>					
<b>Grant Title</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Funding Agency</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Status</b>
NAWCA US Standard Grants	July 27, 2007	Acquisition, establishment, enhancement and restoration of wetlands and wetland-associated uplands	USFWS	\$1,000,000 max; \$75,000 min	Will apply July 2008 because program not established yet
Fish America Foundation's Funding Conservation	July 31, 2007	Habitat Improvement; stream atabilization; aeration systems; fishing reeves; silt removal; litter pick-ups; heavy equipment usage; vegetation planting	Fish America	\$7,500 average	Will apply July 2008 because program not established yet
Gulf of Mexico Community-Based Restoration Partnership	Unknown	Coastal habitat restoration, creation or enhancement with community involvement; public education	GCRP	\$20,000- \$50,000	Will apply July 2008 because program not established yet
National Wetland Program Development Grants	August 10, 2007	Support and/or build any aspect of a comprehensive wetlands program; Address 1 or more of the 4 National Priority Areas: regulation; monitoring and assessment; restoration; and water quality standards	EPA	\$120,000 max; \$25,000 min	Not applicable because required submission by a non-profit organization
Estuary Habitat Restoration Program	August 20, 2007	Restoration and creation of estuary habitat; includes creation of riparian buffer zone in estuary	USACE	\$1,000,000 max; \$100,000 min	Will apply August 2008 after funding received to perform regional wetland site suitability analysis
Endangered Species Grant Program	August 24, 2007	Species and habitat conservation on non-federal land; includes habitat restoration, public education and outreach, land acquisition, and research/surveys	USFWS	Varies; typically between \$1,000 and \$24,000,000	Will apply August 2008 after funding received to perform regional wetland site suitability analysis
Environmental Technology Development and Demonstration	September 18, 2007	Develop and/or demonstrate technology to detect and quantify the impacts of human activity on coastal water quality, species, and habitats; develop and/or demonstrate technology to protect coastal water quality and/or restore coastal habitats.	Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Env. Tech.	Varies; typically between \$15,000 and \$220,000	Will apply September 2008 after funding received to perform regional wetland site suitability analysis
Community-Based Restoration Project Grants	September 27, 2007	Habitat restoration that benefits marine resources; educational and social benefits to the community	NOAA	\$50,000- \$200,000	Will apply September 2008 after funding received to perform regional wetland site suitability analysis
Coastal Management Program	October 10, 2007	Habitat restoration, protection, and enhancement; land acquisition; water quality improvement; research; education	Texas GLO	\$200,000 for small scale; \$800,000 for large scale; \$60,000 average	Submitted pre-proposals; developing 4 final proposals

OneStar Foundation-Americorps Grant	October 10, 2007	Engage citizens/students to serve/volunteer to meet community needs	OneStar Foundation	\$12,600/member service year	
ConocoPhillips SPIRIT of Conservation Migratory Bird Program	November 1, 2007	Habitat restoration; bird habitat management	NFWF	\$25,000 minimum	
NAWCA Small Grants	December 2007	Restoring or establishing wetlands, on-the-ground projects, land acquisition, and enhancement projects on private lands	USFWS	Unspecified	
Clean Water State Revolving Rund	Februrary 2008	Wastewater treatment facilities, nonpoint source pollution control, and estuary management projects	TWDB	Low interest loans	
Region 6 Wetland Program Development Grants	March 2008	Restore, protect and increase wetlands	EPA	\$250,000 max; \$25,000 min	
State Wildlife Grant Program	March 2008	Must be tied to Texas Wildlife Action Plan	TPWD	Unspecified	
Five Star Restoration Grant	March 2008	Habitat restoration	NFWF	\$5,000-20,000; \$13,000 average	
Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants	April 2008	Environmental restoration; nutrient and pesticide management; pollution assessment and prevention; watershed management; MUST address water quality issues in agricultural, rural, and urbanizing watersheds	USDA-CSREES	Unspecified	
Pass Through Grant Program	Spring 2008	Liter and illegal dumping cleanup; technical studies; education and training; solid waste management	TCEQ	Unspecified	
National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program	June 29, 2008	Acquire, restore, and enhance wetlands in coastal states	USFWS	\$1,000,000 max	
Coastal Impact Assistance Program	July 1, 2008	Habitat restoration; planning and administrative costs; conservation management plans		Unspecified	
Environmental Education Grant	Unknown	Education and outreach	EPA	Up to \$50,000; \$15,000 average	
Town of South Padre Island	Recurring	Water quality and pollution prevention awareness	Town of South Padre Island	\$20,000 max; \$5,000 min	