

Arroyo Colorado Steering Committee/Partnership Meeting

Texas A&M Kingsville, Citrus Center
Rio Red Classroom
312 N. International Blvd, Weslaco, Texas 78596
October 23, 2008 4:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

MEETING SUMMARY

ATTENDEES:

Ronnie Ramirez, TSSWCB
Narayanan Kannan, AgriLife Research
Joe Hinojosa, City of Brownsville and
Stormwater Task Force
Jaime Flores, TWRI

Megan Meier, TWRI
Cecilia Wagner, TWRI
Jim Tabak, Valley Land Fund
Laura de la Garza
Ernesto Reyes, USFWS

4:30 Social – Snacks and Refreshments

5:00 Welcome and Introductions..... Jaime Flores, TWRI

5:10 Work Group Updates:

Agricultural Issues Ronnie Ramirez, TSSWCB

- Cameron County has 94 WQMPs covering 1468 acres
- Hidalgo County has 30 WQMPs covering 2195 acres
- Total of 6363 acres certified
- Soil samples will be pulled from fields under WQMP as part of 319 project
- Also collecting data to be used in SWAT model
- Provided overview of what goes into a certified plan, including registering at FSA
- ***Need to include in bi-monthly update that applications for EQIP funds are due in December***
- ***Need to put copy of field day presentations on website***
- 7th RGV Irrigation conference will be on 10/29 in Mercedes

Waste Water Infrastructure (Three Cities Wetlands Project) Laura de la Garza

- San Juan has complete engineering designs and permits and request for proposal for wetland construction are out for bid. Construction is anticipated to begin Spring
- La Feria is still in design phase
- San Benito is also in design phase
- ***Will have Wastewater workgroup meeting before end of year***
- City of Harlingen has put aside money for 100% re-use of their treated effluent, approximately 6 MGD
- City of Alamo has the last lagoon system in area and now evaluating the feasibility of constructed wetlands for secondary treatment of municipal wastewater

Education and Outreach..... Jaime Flores, TWRI

Utility Inserts

- SWTF is currently reviewing a utility bill insert for the watershed cities
- Should be going out in November.
- McAllen is doing their own because they are getting a good rate. They are estimating 39,000 for themselves.

- Javier has a number of 50,000 for the rest of the Cities involved.

PSA/Classroom presentation

- TAMUK has a PSA that are currently being aired on channels 12 and 17 depending on the city.
- Funny cartoons about storm drains and storm water runoff geared for young kids.
- Also showing them in the classroom-they go with household hazardous waste classroom BMP and Toby Goby.

Storm Drain Marking

- TWRI is facilitating a bulk order for all of the cities in the watershed (2760 storm drain markers in 12 cities)
- SWTF is shooting for a Valley wide installation day sometime in December. The goal is to have 25% done in one year.
- There will also be some signage/billboards that will advertise this event.
- They will be ordered as soon as all of the cities submit confirmation letters to TWRI

Watershed Road Signs

- TWRI has ordered 10 road signs to be installed along major roadways entering the watershed. Should be installed by next week.
- TWRI is planning a media event to coincide with the installation of the roadsigns.

CREST-RESSACA Conference

- The Storm Water Task Force conference is coming up on Nov. 24-25, 2008.
- Encouraging all of the participating cities to send their Public works directors, WWTP and WTP personnel to attend the conference.
- Three state reps are going to attend-Armando Martinez, Eddie Lucio III and Dr. Tara Rios Ybarra. They are also trying to get Kino Flores.
- This is a great opportunity to voice your concerns and needs to the state reps.
- Registration deadline is November 5, 2008.
- The ACWP model will be there and the ACWP will likely be on the program agenda
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5:50 Feedback on Partnership’s Efforts to Date.....Megan Meier, TWRI

- Presentation on milestone charts for ag, wastewater/habitat and E&O

6:10 Long-Term Partnership SustainabilityJaime Flores, TWRI

- A summary from the last meeting:
 - It was voted on to form a 501c3
 - It was suggested that the new watershed coordinator (Jaime) be tasked with developing the materials/paperwork necessary to file for a 501c3 (the steering committee will be allowed to review the information prior to official submission of an application). The task group will provide assistance in this effort.
 - Jaime will also work with the SC to identify board members to support the application of the 501c3.
 - The SC should provide guidance on the nomination or appointees of the board.
 - Ray suggested members from city and county to serve on board since they will likely be supporting the effort
 - It was suggested that the task group focusing on this effort should meet soon to begin developing materials. It was suggested that the task group meetings include the potential board members (bring them in on the front end of the planning process rather than at the end)
- Moving forward:

- A task group consisting of Laura, Jim Tabak, Ken Jones and Cecilia Wagner had been meeting previously to develop the information on forming a 501c3.
- Given Jaime has recently joined the partnership, it is recommended that he lead the task group.
- Are there suggestions of board members?
- Should we put the suggestion list out via email to the SC?
- Follow up suggestions to today’s discussion?
 - Task group members: *Jaime, Laura, Jim, Ken Jones, Jude, Cecilia or Megan, and other interested board members*)
 - How will we finalize the board members?
 - Group suggested Jaime conduct one-on-one meetings with SC members after group email to determine commitment and engagement in being board member
 - When will task group meet? *(need to meet at least monthly if not more often to begin process)*
 - Jaime lead meetings of task group including organizing meetings and activities? *(Jaime lead group with first providing email forum for setting first meeting and a schedule of items to do)*
 - Suggested that board members need to be fundraisers or could raise money through:
 - Membership fees
 - Sponsorships
 - Fundraising event, like fishing tournament

6:20 Arroyo SWAT Modeling Update Narayanan Kannan, AgriLife Research

- Have identified BMPs to control poor water quality
- Provided overview of SWAT model
- Data collection is complete as they now have inventory of BMPs
- Cultivated land is dominant land use in watershed
- Within the model there are 17 subwatersheds and 475 HRUs
- Currently in calibration and validation phase
- Developing design scenarios to run in model to determine which scenario results in maximum water quality improvement

6:40 Grants Update.....Megan Meier, TWRI

- Submitted 2 grants for CMP funding through GLO for wetland development of 35 acre site at Port of Harlingen and 10 acre site at Rio Hondo
- TSSWCB 319 RFP was released –grants due Nov 21. Seeking funding for technician to provide follow-up support for producers who have implemented a water quality management plan or BMPs.
- Waiting for release of EPA environmental education grant and will work on polishing up grants submitted last year based on comments we received

6:50 Other Business Jaime Flores, TWRI

- The Pharr out nature day is geared exclusively toward kids this year. They are very proud of the fact that this the only large event that is for kids. They called to reserve the arroyo model. It was a big hit last year.
- SPI World Birding Center would like an AC physical watershed model of their own for permanent display

7:00 Adjourn..... Jaime Flores, TWRI