

Arroyo Colorado Steering Committee/Partnership Meeting

April 27, 2009

4:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

MEETING SUMMARY

Attendees:

Willy Cupit, TPWD
Rocky Freund, Nueces River Authority
David Day, Casa Engineering
Laura De La Garza, Comite Resources
Joe Hinojosa, City of Brownsville
Chris Hathcock, TPWD
Kim Jones, TAMUK
Ronnie Ramirez, TSSWCB
Narayanan Kannan, AgriLife Research
Albert Maldonado, City of Alton
Julio Villarreal Jr., City of Alamo
Rick Cuevas, City of Alamo
Roger Miranda, TCEQ
David Salinas, City of Weslaco
Javier Guerrero, TAMUK
George Quilantan, OMI

Filemon Olvera, OMI
Lorenzo Barron, City of Mission
Tony Hernandez, City of San Juan
Tony Reisinger, Texas SeaGrant
Alex De La Rosa, City of Alamo
Mario Zanelli, Moody Brothers Inc.
Joel Bleth, SolarBee, Inc.
Chris Knud-Hansen, SolarBee, Inc
Joanna Sanchez, STU/City of McAllen
Liz Verdecchia, IBWC
Martha Viada, City of Harlingen
Harvey Hibl, SolarBee, Inc.
Ken Moody, Moody Farms
Jaime Flores, TWRI
Cecilia Wagner, TWRI

4:30 Social – Snacks and Refreshments Provided by Solar Bee Inc.

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

5:10 Solar Bee Inc.....Presentation on Solar powered Long Distance Water Circulators

- Presentation will be provided and posted on AC Web site
- Estimated cost per mile to purchase: \$240K/mile. This is for 4 units and it would cover 2 miles. 1 mile upstream of the Rio Hondo Bridge & 1 mile downstream
- Estimated cost per mile to rent for 1 yr: \$180K/mile. This is to rent 4 units and it would cover 2 miles. 1 mile upstream of the Rio Hondo Bridge & 1 mile downstream
 - o If we decide to purchase later, SolarBee will apply the rent price to the purchase price

5:40 Work Group Updates:

Agricultural Issues Andy Garza, TSSWCB

- TSSWCB WQMP project: wrapping up the current 319 project implementing BMPs and developing WQMPs and are working on starting new one
- TSSWCB Education project, Ag assessment project and SWAT Model project: abstracts from most recent QPR were distributed.
- Roger Miranda asked about including the data collected from the ag assessment project in the SWAT model. It is the intent to do so upon completion of the ag assessment project
- Kannan provided a presentation on the SWAT model and the BMP mapping effort in conjunction with the Ag assessment project. **Presentation to be posted on AC Web site.**
 - o BMP Map update: maps denote where certain BMPs are installed; there was discussion about quantifying the acreage per the BMP as the data is point data rather than polygon. The acreage data is not included in the map, but the acreage

data is available and we can get it as a supplemental tool for quantifying BMPs installed and for SWAT model

- SWAT Model update: Simulated/predicted most parameters; current problem is overestimating nitrates and underestimating ammonia; still have to look at Phosphorus and DO
- Kannan will get from TSSWCB soon a design of future BMP scenarios to control water quality impairment
- Roger brought up an issue with the irrigation rates that Kannan used in SWAT model. Kannan used irrigation applied data from Enciso; Roger feels the data is underestimating the amount of irrigation applied.

Habitat IssuesDr. Kim Jones, TAMUK
Tony Reisinger, Texas Sea Grant Extension

- Two recent habitat grants (San Benito & Rio Hondo) for wetland restoration/building were not funded
- Currently proposing a project thru TAMUK to EPA regional wetland development program to work (groundtruth) LIDAR data for developing/accessing wetland areas
- Some research is showing (paper out of Florida) that rather than one large wetland, targeting pockets of smaller wetlands in an area can have water quality impact. Supports recent efforts of developing multiple small wetlands rather than one large wetland. Also, land availability and willingness to cooperate also supports effort of numerous small wetlands rather than one large one.
- 3 Cities wetland project: La Feria and San Juan are under construction; San Benito is dewatering and should begin soon.
- Grant (from IBWC) for potential wetland in Weslaco was not funded (lack of funding). **But IBWC has some funds now and may be able to partially fund something now.**
- Jim Tabak can not make Mondays; Habitat workgroup would like to meet more often and possibly need to move from Mondays. **Jaime to email group and propose alternate meeting date – possibly Tuesday (the morning after the SC meeting?)**

Water Quality Monitoring..... Rocky Freund, Nueces RA

- Rocky (Nueces River Authority) provided handouts of water quality data;
- Had Coordinated Monitoring Meeting on April 17, 2009;
- Chris Caudle will add a site at the sugargrowers dock at the Port
- TPWD requested a monitoring station in the North Floodway (El Sauz Ranch?)
- NRA continuing special study evaluating e.coli as indicator bacteria in tidal portion of the Arroyo Colorado. Have had 4 monitoring events to date (monitoring monthly). Provided data in handout of Jan, Feb and Mar data. Funding will end in August, but it is possible that CRP funds may continue it thru Dec.

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

- Met on April 14; 2009
- Discussing new ideas for outreach/education materials (caps, buttons, etc.)
- **Need more education fact sheets (brochures, Take a Walk on the Arroyo, WPPs)**
 - **Roger requested TWRI get a quote to print more plans (~1,000 more plans)**
 - **Also it was requested to redo the brochures (Little waterway with a big job)**

- Had a request for ag related educational materials from Barbee-Neuhaus Implement. For example, info on ag BMPs and cost share programs available. Neuhaus would be willing to distribute at their stores
- Cameron County will be installing watershed boundary signs for the arroyo. They are offering to put our signs on their pole.
- City of Weslaco is able to produce road signs in house and the SWTF has about \$3700 to produce the signs.

6:20 Long-Term Partnership Sustainability Jaime Flores, TWRI

- Possible board members identified: Joe Hinojosa and David Day. With 3 members, we can be able to draft the paperwork for filing 501c3 status
- Conduct assessment of whether we do something like the SWTF (a fee based thing) or 501c3
- **Need to have a meeting of the long-term sustainability task group soon (Laura, Jaime, Jude, Joe, David, Javier, Ken Jones, Cecilia). Jaime initiate time.**

6:40 Grants Update..... Cecilia Wagner, TWRI

- TWRI sent GLO 3 project ideas (similar to the proposals submitted to EPA Environmental Education Program) and they chose the PSAs for funding. Proposed to develop 2 PSAs (in English and Spanish)
 - o **Arroyo PSA Grant idea: talk to John Jacob about Don Aguas (Mr. Water) – he is a local celebrity so to speak**
- TWRI also worked with TAMUK and UTB to develop a proposal to collaborate with LRGVDC to monitor WWTPs. If funded, this will be funded by TCEQ 104b funds.

6:50 Other Business Jaime Flores, TWRI

- IBWC Coordinated Monitor Meeting in Harlingen - 1 to 3 on April 28
- Next steering committee meeting on July 27
- Ag Issues Workgroup Meeting on July 27
- E&O Workgroup Meeting on July 14
- **Habitat workgroup meeting will need to meet sometime in July (Coordinate date with Jim Tabak since Mondays do not work for him)**
- **Wastewater Infrastructure workgroup will also need to meet sometime in July (Perhaps schedule day of SC meeting in the afternoon in the afternoon slot that the habitat group used to use)**
- IBWC got funds for levee improvement – they want to include us on reviewing Environmental Assessment for the stretch of Arroyo
- Grant Workshop scheduled for July 24 in Pharr for cities to attend (SWTF sponsored) – more info to come

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