

Arroyo Colorado Steering Committee/Partnership Meeting

Estero Llano Grande World Birding Center
3301 S. FM 1015, Weslaco, Texas 78596

July 17, 2014 4:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

ATTENDEES

Jaime Flores, TWRI
Ashley Gregory, TWRI
Sam Sugarek, NRA
Ronnie Ramirez, TSSWCB
Tim Cawthon, TCEQ
Ashley Wendt, TSSWCB
Allen Berthold, TWRI
Willie Cupit, TPWD

Augusto Sanchez, TAMUK
Briana Saenz, TAMUK
Joe Hinojosa, Santa Cruz ID
Stephanie Mahathey, ACAS
Jude Benavides, UTB
Kim Jones, TAMUK

MEETING AGENDA

MEETING GOALS

- 1) Capture/verify all milestones/accomplishments implemented during Phase I
- 2) Identify proposed/planned activities to be implemented in next 5-10 years
- 3) Identify new/emerging BMPs not included in Phase I for inclusion in Phase II

Welcome and Introductions Dr. Jude Benavides, UTB

Work Group & Project Updates (5 minutes each)

Update on Modeling Activities Jaime Flores, TWRI

Jaime announced the QAPP Amendment has been approved and that the QAPP Annual Certification letter has been approved and executed.

-Modeling activities for bacteria can begin

SWAT model to include urban component; after they get all current components they will model future scenarios.

-Deadline for submitting current components is the beginning of August.

-Jaime needs to coordinate a follow up meeting to discuss future scenarios

Agricultural Issues Workgroup Ashley Gregory, TWRI, Ronnie Ramirez, TSSWCB
We want to list/name all new BMP's that have emerged since 2007 and agree that we will include them in the Phase II.

Waste Water Infrastructure Workgroup Jaime Flores, TWRI
Priority to verify information from WWTPs. Pharr had an excellent example of the past, present and future of their WWTP.

Jaime and Ashley are visiting with the individual WWTP operators and will continue to gather information from the WWTP to verify what has already been accomplished. The information being verified:

- Projected timeline for Infrastructure improvements based on plant capacity.
- Verify current WWTP Capacity
- # of colonias, connections, residents

The group decided that number of connections will be the unit used to report.

Questions from the group:

- Are there a high number of colonias within the watershed that still need to be connected?
- How much does it cost the homeowner to connect?

Could we come up with some type of cost share to help them pay for the cost of the connection?

Habitat Workgroup Dr. Jones, TAMUK
Jaime announced that the City of San Benito has entered into a partnership with the ACWP to submit a CMP grant to fund Phase II of the San Benito Wetland project. The project will consist of extending the effluent pipeline to the other 10 cells that comprise 11.60 acres. These cells are due North and adjacent to the 4 cell/6.36 acres that comprise Phase I of the San Benito wetland project. San Benito has plans to continue to develop Phase III (a 50.46 acre tract) and Phase IV (a 97.08 acre tract) in additional wetlands to treat the effluent from the WWTP, and will be able to capture and treat Ag NPS from the surrounding Ag fields (approximately 300-500 acres) adjacent to the wetlands. **We need to come up with scenarios for the model in time (depth, area, location, general assumptions, etc.).**

Jaime wants to include all additional Phases of the project in the Habitat/wetlands portion of the Update to the ACWPP.

Jaime and TAMUK met with the new City of Harlingen Parks and Rec. director, Javier Mendez; TAMUK has some preliminary drawings of the new system of wetlands and presented them to Javier and his staff. Jaime sent a copy of subcontract to Javier to review. Jaime feels confident that we are going to get the City of Harlingen to sign the contract.

Power plant wants to buy approximately 3 mil gal of water, maybe they will give some of it back.

Cameron Co. Drainage Dist. → 10 acres wetlands

La Feria → Tio Cano Subdivision/lake drainage project, canal improvement, possible intermittent storm wetlands

Original plan called for 300 acres of wetlands; accounting for existing wetlands

- Port of Harlingen
- Ramsey Park
- San Benito

We need to review the WHIP project by Martin Alcala/TAMUK PhD → help with future wetlands systems, come up w/ a strategy on how to implement at next Habitat Workgroup Meeting

- **Need to have a HWM before August 3rd, maybe conference call**
- Need to get scenarios for the model for the San Benito project
- Follow up with Jaehak → what does he need to model these things?

Wetlands can buffer Ag water and help with stream bank stabilization; can be modeled by SWAT.

Education & Outreach Workgroup Jaime Flores, TWRI
Model was used this spring more than ever. A total of 41 events and 12,619 people viewed the model throughout the watershed. These numbers verify that our partnership with the UTPA Coastal Studies Lab on the BWET Arroyo Colorado Teachers Workshops to “Teach the Teachers” is working. The O&E component of the ACWPP is making great strides in the watershed and the Arroyo Curriculum is making its way into local classrooms.

Urban Nonpoint Source Workgroup Tim Cawthon, TCEQ
Met on June 24th at AgriLife -review of meeting and data still needed for modeling.

- Asked all cities that are conducting street sweeping to provide data to be included in Urban BMP's to be modeled in SWAT
- Brownsville also provided street sweeping data
- TXDOT also provided street sweeping data
- TAMUK working on BMP inventory → GIS file with locations
- All of the information gathered is being loaded into the model
- NPS Annual report....highlight street sweeping in an article
- Moving into future scenarios that show the effect of future BMPs

A good code/ordinance to model may be the increase of the % of LID practices required for new construction in the next 5-10 years.

Need to meet in early August after the data is submitted for modeling.

- First and last week of August not good for the group

Jude advised the group that Aurora Algae has bought the shrimp farms and is setting up a facility to grow algae for the pharmaceutical and supplement industry. The company is making every effort to hire local people and have an impact on the community. They have asked us for names of people that they should talk to in an effort to be transparent in describing their operations and potential impact on the Arroyo and LLM.

Update/Phase II of the ACWPP.....Roundtable Discussion

- Review existing milestones, accomplishments and identify remaining implementation efforts
- Identify proposed/planned activities to be implemented

- Identify new/emerging BMPs not included in Phase I

Next StepsJude Benavides, UTB

- Review of Phase II ACWPP Timeline

Action Items for next Quarter Work Group and Steering Committee Meetings

- Jaime & Ashley-verify WWTP capacities and colonia connections
- Ronnie & Ashley-
- Jaime-obtain 911 shape files
- TAMUK/TF-LID inventory, ordinance/code inventory for input into the SWAT model
- Allen-Set up Google shared drive

Grants Update Jaime Flores, TWRI

CMP/San Benito grant proposal to extend effluent pipe to 12 acre/6 ponds North of existing wetlands. ACWPP will submit grant for project.

Dr. Wagner NRC/RCPP-LRGV Water Improvement Initiative-submitted pre-proposal, asked to submit full proposal 8/1/14.

Other Business..... Dr. Jude Benavides, UTB

Adjourn..... Dr. Jude Benavides, UTB