

Arroyo Colorado Steering Committee/Partnership Meeting

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

April 7, 2016 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

ATTENDEES

Jaime Flores, TWRI
Ronnie Ramirez, TSSWCB
Tim Cawthon, TCEQ
Sam Sugarek, NRA
Ashley Wendt, TSSWCB
Brenda Bazan, UTRGV
Jude Benavides, UTRGV
August Sanchez, TAMUK
Willy Cupit, TPWD
Kim Jones, TAMUK
Marcie Oviedo, LRGVDC
Ludy Saenz, LRGVDC

Richard Brooks, Stakeholder
Ernesto Reyes, USFWS
Rachelle Maldonado, UTRGV
Andre Munoz, UTRGV
James Martinez, UTRGV
Martha Viada, City of Harlingen
K. C. Kletcher, Stakeholder
Brad Cowan, Hidalgo CEA
Romero Rubiano, UTRGV
Patty Alexander, Stakeholder
Teri Salinas, LRGVDC
Maria Quiroga, UTRGV

MEETING AGENDA

Welcome and Introductions.....Dr. Jude Benavides, UTRGV

Jude asked everyone to briefly introduce themselves and who they were representing.

Update to the Arroyo Colorado WPP Jaime Flores, TWRI

Document Structure Overview and Discussion

Jaime began by projecting the Update on the screen so that everyone could go through the document together. The group began at the beginning and Jaime was pointing out the major changes made to the document based on stakeholder comments from the last meeting. Ernesto pointed out that Chris Hathcock had an updated Biotic communities map for the Habitat section and that Chris would review the section and provide comments/edits. Ernesto asked if we had included the IBWC, AC Vegetation Removal Project in Harlingen in the Habitat chapter. Jaime also mentioned that the IBWC still has yet to release the Hydraulic/telemetric survey and model that they ran after the Flood of 2010. When Jaime asked IBWC staff about it, he was told that he would have to submit a formal request from the IBWC office in El Paso in order to obtain the information. Ernesto also pointed out that USFWS & TPWD stated that if filter strips were to be applied to all Ag fields along the Arroyo, it would greatly reduce Ag NPS runoff entering the Arroyo. He is asking the ACWP to include a management measure that would place priority on filter strips/buffer strips being placed on as many Ag fields that are adjacent to the Arroyo as possible over time. He said the Filter strips would be extremely good at filtering NPS runoff from the fields.

Chapter 6 – Watershed Goals

Everyone agreed with the Goals and we started reviewing the Management Measures

Chapter 7 – Management Measures

Ronnie pointed out that TSSWCB & NRCS are promoting an Ag Field Pollinator project where they are promoting the planting of Milkweed to help offset the decline of the Monarch Butterfly through providing farmers with a conservation plan and technical and financial assistance to implement the plan. Several people suggested adding community clean-ups and illegal dumping issues. Martha mentioned the COH Illegal Dumping program and that harsh enforcement has helped reduce the problem. It was mentioned that a lot of Illegal dumping occurs over the weekend because the landfills are closed. Marcie said that the LRGVDC has grant funding for solid waste management and illegal dumping programs. She also mentioned the LRGVDC Regional Strategic Plan Update and wanted to include information about the Update in the Regional Plan and asked everyone to review the Regional plan and provide comments/edits.

-9 Element Appendices

Jaime will work on this. Tim stressed the importance of this Appendix to make it easier for EPA to conduct their 9 Element review. EPA has mentioned that this would be helpful for their review of the document.

-What is missing?

Stakeholders mentioned they wanted a strong Eco-tourism component

Conundrum in report-What about Urban Forestry?

Los Fresnos Resacas should be included

ACWP/ACWPP Implementation Project-Los Fresnos H.S. Stormwater Management project

Ramsey Park and any other WWTF Re-use Habitat Enhancement Projects

San Benito Wetland Phase's I, II & III

POH Dredge Spoils Wetland Project

POH Zone of Impairment Aerator project-use aerators only at night when low D.O. becomes a problem

TPWD/USFWS Managed properties

Message to residents-take ownership-AC is not just a ditch running through our city

Need lots of pictures

Colors on the Ag Map need work

Chapter 10 - Water Quality Monitoring Plan

MOU with PUB in order to have Bacteria samples run by PUB for the Update's monitoring plan

Additional Discussion Time

Timeline and Next Steps.....Dr. Jude Benavides, UTRGV
Send written comments to Jaime (preferably within a week)

Next draft sent to stakeholders (May?)
Modeling results added to WPP (May/June?)
Presentation of final modeling results to Steering Committee and Work Groups (June)
Additional stakeholder WPP draft reviews (May – August)
Steering Committee approves WPP and submits to TCEQ and EPA (August)

Grants Update Jaime Flores, TWRI
CIAP-Ramsey Park Update

Jaime had a slide show on the project. Pictures included the excavation and construction of the Bio-Retention basin and removal of the old parking lot and construction of the new parking lot.

CMP-San Benito Wetlands Phase II

CMP-San Benito Wetlands Phase III

Jaime informed the group that the project is moving forward and we expect the City to sign the sub-contractor agreement soon so that we can officially begin work on the project.

TCEQ-Arroyo Colorado WPP Implementation Coordination Project

This project will ensure continued coordination of the ACWP, continued implementation of the ACWPP and AC Curriculum Teachers workshops we will be hosting in partnership with Region 1 training center.

TCEQ- Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) Implementation-Los Fresnos Best Management Practices (BMPs) Implementation

Jaime informed the group that the TCEQ will execute the contract in the next couple of months and we will be working on this project over the next couple of years. The project consists of working with the Los Fresnos CISD, the City of Los Fresnos and TPWD to channel stormwater from the H.S. into a wetland area adjacent to the H.S. parking lot, develop a native park on property south of the school and to restore a Resaca by channeling stormwater into the Resaca.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

TCEQ NPS 319 FY 17 RFP-Lower Laguna Madre/Brownsville Ship Channel Watershed

The stakeholder group has decided to submit a grant to write a WPP for this watershed.

TSSWCB NPS 319 FY 17 RFP-Cost Share Education/Soil Health Demonstration Project

The ACWP will submit a grant to continue the Cost Share Education Project and add a Soil Health demonstration component.

Restore Act-Port Isabel Maxan Street Redevelopment/Stormwater project

WaterSMART-Funding Opportunity Available to Establish or Further Develop Watershed Groups from Bureau of Reclamation-LLM/BSC & ACWP.

ACC Foundation Grants

Jaime's contact info; jjflores@ag.tamu.edu 969-5607

Other Business Jaime Flores, TWRI
LRGV Regional Strategic Plan 2015-2020-Comment period

Adjourn Jaime Flores, TWRI