

5/12/2026 Arroyo Colorado Partnership Meeting

Samantha opened with highlights

- Website updates
 - Major updates to home page (What is a watershed, a WPP, etc.)
 - New content
 - Stay Engaged tab
 - Bird Survey Counts
 - News page
 - Mailing list update
 - 193 on list currently
 - Facebook page update
 - Highlight of content
 - Mostly from events
 - Reaching out to more contacts
- Partnership Success
 - San Benito Wetlands will be opening to the public
 - TPWD grant to open and create better facilities
 - Restroom and Parking
 - IMAS water events
 - Local city tree plantings
 - Harlingen TFS grant

Water News in the Valley

- Data Center concerns
 - Harlingen is in planning phase - no permits as of yet.
 - Plan to use wastewater for cooling
 - Rio Hondo
 - Current bitcoin running on wind energy
 - Plans to Expand and use closed loop cooling for AI data center
- Groundwater Desal
 - In McAllen – pilot projects in North Alamo Water Supply and Brownsville
- Seawater Desal
 - Laguna Madre - reports no adverse environmental impacts to planned project

WPP Working Groups

- Wastewater
- Education & Outreach
 - Lots of events in and around the Valley
 - Watershed model
 - Lots of big events: East Foundation, World Water Day, ISDs
 - Rainfall simulator
 - East Foundation, RGV stock show, plant sales, ISDs
- Habitat Restoration
 - Trees & Native Plant events
 - Rio Reforestation; City Tree Plantings; Plant sales and demo gardens
 - Community Clean Up Events
 - Arroyo near Arroyo City - Adolph Thome Park
 - Fire Dept, RGV Fishing, CBBEP donated supplies

- Next Event is July 11th
 - Agricultural Issues
 - Working on addressing priority issues
 - AgriLife projects
 - Evaluating new fertilizer recommendations for cotton to update 1958 recommendations
 - Demo/research with Lyford farmer in 2025 growing season
 - No increasing yield beyond 95lbs/ac
 - 84lbs found to be optimal rate
 - Expanding research to other farms and at Weslaco research plots
 - Also found deep soil nitrogen available
 - Soil moisture study
 - Determining spacing impacts on soil moisture
 - Looking to ID optimal spacing for soil moisture use
 - Business management & Tax Planning
 - Pasture management
 - Fertilizer & pesticide management
 - Met with individual producers
 - Local hay producer
 - Uses drone to monitor irrigation advance to reduce runoff
 - Row crop farmer using strip till
 - Spends less money vs. conventional till
 - 20% less fertilizer
 - Less seed cost
- NPS Management
 - Rio Hondo native landscape is up and running
 - After school science club is managing: Green Team
 - Weeding/ Maintenance
 - Planting
 - Clean ups
 - Also doing water quality testing at Spotted Sea Trout park (monthly)
 - Plant ID signs installed and stormwater sign too (5/12/2026)
 - Principal shared Arroyo newsletter
 - Commissioner Garza liked and commented on FB post
 - New Crossing the Arroyo signs installed at existing locations for replacement (5/11-12/2026)
 - New Arroyo signs in local parks are being finalized and will be installed
 - Watershed Boundary Update
 - Still getting project up and going
 - Should start boundary update work next month
 - Will be updating maps with new data and stakeholder input
 - Stay tuned for opportunity to provide your input
 - Patty has a map that she created and ground truthed showing flow directions from City of Santa Rosa
- Water Quality Issues
 - Still low DO concerns
 - Still high bacteria

- Citizen science efforts are getting ramped up
- Upcoming Programs
 - LSHS June 23, 2026
 - Landowner Riparian June 2, 2026
 - Coffee & Cows Pasture Walk - May 14, 2026
- Continuing Implementation
 - Efforts to ID and secure implementation funding
 - Keeping working with individuals to ID needs
 - Keep engagement efforts going with students

Stakeholder Comments and Discussion

- LRGV Stormwater Conference next Thursday/Friday with Fishing tournament on Saturday
- Harlingen Data Center
 - Energy co already has pieces moving
 - Land acquisition plan
 - 1800 ac of land near airport
 - Q: How much drainage issue will this site create?
 - A: Will have to plan for it: Need to create additional storage capacity for drainage water, real estate costs are a challenge, drainage engineers are working on it; additional green spaces will absorb
 - Wastewater secured from city -
 - 4.6 MGD not going to Arroyo now
 - May contain new pollutants?
 - Not much public knowledge/opportunity to comment about this facility yet
 - Lots of concern about lack of discussion on plans and the existing concerns with flooding, water quality, etc.
 - Irrigation District views favorably - huge income stream
 - Not without faults, but what they are seeing is decent planning to optimize water use
 - Irrigation District looking to capture drain runoff water; stormwater for supplying industrial users (essentially not using already stressed water systems)
 - USFW would like to see incorporation of green stormwater infrastructure into the planning for this type of facility
 - Constructed wetlands, bioswales, buffer strips, pollinator gardens, etc.
 - Same applies to farmlands too; any ground cover to filter water will be good
- How can community get more involved?
 - Clean up events are a great way
 - Can contact cities too; they host their own events too
 - Keep an eye on facebook for events
 - Expand advertising efforts to get more mileage from public
 - Local media does have some good options:
 - Take 5
 - Sunday community events calendar

- Using existing avenues: web, mailing list, etc.
 - Sync FB to Instagram
- Cities are doing a better job of distributing information in a streamlined fashion
 - Send to other entities and ask them to repost
 - LRGV Stormwater Taskforce distributes to 30 MS4 permittees
 - Can share events with them
- Santa Ana Refuge has a good meeting room that can be used for meetings
- LRGVDC has a good room too
- City of Alamo room also available
 - Move meetings around to minimize travel costs for attendees

East Foundation

- Ag Research Organization
- 6 ranches across the valley (200,000 plus acres)
- Youth education is a huge focus of the foundation
 - Since summer 2024, over 6,300 kids educated and 300 adults
- Youth are future landowners; pays to educate them now

Next Partnership Meeting:

- Any preferred locations?
 - Could do meetings in both ends perhaps? Or alternate from one end of the valley to the other from meeting to meeting.
 - No real preference