TEXAS CLEAN RIVERS PROGRAM
FOR THE RIO GRANDE BASIN

UPPER 2 RIO GRANDE COORDINATED MONITORING MEETING
(Forgotten Stretch in Presidio County to Amistad Dam)

April 27, 2011
9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Lajitas, Texas

MEETING NOTES

Meeting Participants:

Antonio Sanchez, USIBWC Presidio
Zeke Bustamante, USIBWC Presidio
Cary D. Carman, USGS San Angelo
Julie McEntire, TCEQ CRP
Chris Kolbe, TCEQ SWQM
Liz Verdecchia, USIBWC CRP
Leslie Grijalva, USIBWC CRP
Guy Falzarano, Sul Ross RGRC
Nelson Rodriguez, TPWD Big Bend
David Long, TPWD Big Bend
Jeff Bennett, BBNP
Billie Brauch, BBNP
Kelon Crawford, BBNP

(President George W. Bush and Lance Armstrong, honorary attendees 😊)

- Welcome and Introductions
- State-wide Watershed Action Planning Process:
  - Liz gave an introduction to the 2010 Texas Surface Water Quality Standards and segments that do not meet the standards are listed on 303d list (impairments). Concerns are listed for a parameter that either almost doesn’t meet the standards or for high values of parameters for which there are no standards (ex-nutrients). Upper RG in El Paso and Huspeth Counties includes Segments 2314, 2308 and 2307.
  - Julie discussed TCEQ’s new Watershed Action Planning Process (WAP), a long-term planning tool to strategize on addressing water quality issues, particularly those listed on the 303d list and concerns list. First phase was internal at TCEQ to determine what is being done to address impairments (TMDLs, Watershed Protection Plan (WPP), Standards Revision, additional monitoring). Second phase is stakeholder input (like this meeting) and third phase is finalization of strategies to begin implementation (funding, outreach, etc).
  - Question: How do we influence Strategies in WAP? Provide input at today’s meeting. Jeff expressed concern about the options of changing standards or just continuing status quo with monitoring and thinks that monitoring should continue in all phases.
  - Discussion of salinity in 2306 and 2307:
- TCEQ is currently undergoing Standards Review for Segments 2307 and 2306. Probably solution is to split Segment 2306 into two segments (through national park and then the beginning of the springs which changes the hydrology). If this happens, all segments would not be renamed but one of the segments would be 2315.
- Santa Elena has high TDS and the benthic community showing signs of stress, since it has one species of highly tolerant black fly larvae.
- Review found 2 reverse osmosis plant permits.
  - Lajitas permit is in reapplication phase. TCEQ asked for soil sampling. IBWC sent comments. Jeff requested a copy of the comment letter. This is a land application permit, not a discharge permit so there may not even be limits. Permit no. WQ0004378000
  - Study Butte permit – originally had no permit then let their permit lapse and now it is expired. They are discharging highly concentrated chloride without a permit, into a dry creek bed which complicates permits. Permit no. WQ0004766000
- Sewage plants include Study Butte (Big Bend Resorts) and Lajitas resort which is mixing water. Wastewater plants do not have TDS limits. When reviewing permits, can ask TCEQ customer service who the reviewer is and then ask for effluent limits. Can find previous permits on EPA’s ECHO website.
- Ability to regulate needs to be addressed. Jeff recommends a WPP to address TDS impairment in 2306. What's the salt load in 2306? Needs to be determined.
  - Suggestion: Coordinate meetings. There are lots of meetings going on where very similar issues are discussed (Senate Bill 3 meeting for environmental flows, Global Initiative, CEQ cooperation, and now these WAP meetings). WAP meetings should be coordinated with these other meetings to increase participation and efficiency.
  - Comment: There are deficiencies in the WAP process if it is addressed by Segment (Jeff).
- Discussion of Monitoring Schedule
  - Station 17407 in Candelaria was added to the schedule in late 2010 to be collected by Sul Ross. This filled a data gap in the forgotten stretch.
  - Another data gap is the Wild & Scenic Stretch. Discuss with NPS after meeting to match stations they sample on canoe trips with TCEQ stations to add to IBWC QAPP. NPS can send in field data only for these and conductivity can be used for TDS assessment. Data prior to QAPP approval data cannot be included.
  - TDS is being dropped from the sampling and TCEQ is going to use conductivity instead because it is more accurate (Chris).
  - Last year we discussed Santa Elena 13228 possibly moving to where the CWQM site is (18482) for ease of sampling. Jeff asked if the CWQM sites going to remain
with all the budget cuts? Chris and Cary – yes. Access and sampling logistics is no longer an issue so will be left as is.

- TPWD has an extra cooler; they sampled for the first time this FY in April. Liz will ask lab to hold off on next cooler until they catch up. They are having problems again shipping their samples with UPS. Will reduce sampling frequency to 4x a year instead of 6.
- Guy said he samples from Vado, TX NM to Eagle Pass, TX quarterly and could pick up samples along the way if needed for any data gaps. He may not meet the 48 hour HT though.
- Organics in sediment samples (pesticides, etc) will be continued for another year at sites where there have been detections, provided USIBWC CRP has the funding available.
- TCEQ El Paso collects at La Linda. There are pesticides sprayed on the river at La Linda (glyphosate). This isn’t one of the parameters we are testing for though.
- Mercury sampling. USIBWC lab is accredited in Hg so we want to add this twice a year to stations upstream and downstream of Big Bend. (This will be instead of the TCEQ metals kits we trained on last year; we never sampled with these.) The mines study in the early part of the decade showed high Hg in the area (above human health standard. USGS Big Bend mines report is worth looking into. It’s linked from USIBWC CRP studies webpage http://www.ibwc.gov/CRP/documents/BigBendMines_USGSsir2008-5032.pdf.

- Instructions for sampling Hg: must wear gloves. Glass bottle must be ultra-clean and in a bag. Opened, filled, and closed under water. Put back in bag and shipped. Lab preserves it. Doesn’t have to be iced. 7-day HT. Conditions with clearer water is better (highly turbid waters are not recommended). Will have a new COC and when there is no glass bottle, Hg will have to be crossed out on the COC.
- NASQAN data available through USGS and has metals data.
- After meeting, Presidio staff mentioned that Ojinaga WWTP is discharging downstream of the sites they collect bacteria at. We will look at where the effluent is and see if we need to adjust monitoring station locations.

**Other:**

- Who is participating in the silvery minnow sampling in June? Chris and NPS. Please provide pictures of sampling for annual highlights report to Liz.
- NPS staff recently conducted a gain/loss study with USGS and couples with study conducted in 2006. Spring flow is greater than in 2006 but TDS values are also higher than in 2006. Funding to write up reports. USGS salinity report still not out. No update on that.
- Last year we discussed the possibility of salinity study. This was tabled because we are waiting for the USGS salinity report as well as TCEQ’s standard revision project. USGS does have a report on a compilation of geodatabase of salinity data available in the Rio Grande from NM down to Presidio.
o Another resource is the USACE and TCEQ Forgotten Stretch report. Jeff commented that this discusses large-scale restoration, but that would require bulldozers and probably loosen salt in sediment in the process.

o NPS staff conducted study in the Lower Pecos this winter. Ken Saunders in TPWD caught pupfish but all were hybrids. Doesn’t seem to be any non-hybrids left.

o Continuous station at Castolon will be under construction soon to better situation the equipment. USGS will coordinate with NPS.

o Shafter mine permit – the community asked the mine people to put the discharge into Cibola, which does have water. Liz has shafter mine permit notification. TPDEES permit No. WQ0004297000.

o Any security issues in this part of the basin? No. Presidio has no more issues now that the license plates are changed.

o TPWD announced that on Nov 12 they will host a river cleanup with the NPS. They will have pamphlets available. Liz said USIBWC CRP could probably support it with trash bags, trash picker-uppers, safety vests with end of the year money.

o Liz will notify the lab to provide bubble wrap that has bubbles still, since Sul Ross’ bottle broke. Labels are provided in inconsistent amounts, some have more and some have less. Please use labels on glass bottles at the minimum.


o Meeting was interrupted midway by celebrity sightings of Lance Armstrong and President George W. Bush, conducting a press conference after completing the George W. Bush 100K Wounded Warriors bike race. Coolest CMM ever!

Changes to the FY12 Monitoring Schedule:

- Reduce PW frequency at 18441 and 16862 to 4 instead of 6.
- Tentatively add 20625, 20626, 20632, 20623, 13224, 13225, 13226, 16276, 20619, in 2306, sampling entity BB, frequency 1. (Complete list to be finalized with NPS staff)
- Add Hg to 18841, 13228, 13229, 13230, 16730, 16862, 17407, frequency 2.
AGENDA

09:00 Welcome/Introductions

09:15 Watershed Action Planning Process (TCEQ)
   - Discussion of TCEQ’s Draft 2010 Integrated Report
     and 2010 Texas Surface Water Quality Standards
   - Identification of water quality issues, data gaps, sources

09:45 Monitoring Schedule
   - Discussion of current monitoring & FY 2012 Monitoring Schedule
     - 17407 Candelaria added in FY10
     - Forgotten Stretch and Wild and Scenic stations
     - Station 13228/18482
   - Potential future projects and potential new sites
     - Salinity study?
   - Discussion of sediment organics sampling
   - Mercury sampling
   - Segment 2306 Benthics and salinity projects updates
   - Silvery Minnow sampling in June

10:30 Miscellaneous updates/announcements:
   - TCEQ permits for Lajitas, Study Butte, Shafter Mine
   - Security/safety of sampling along the border and current security situation
   - Updates to the Basin Highlights Report and USIBWC CRP calendars
   - Training needs and audits of USIBWC partners
   - Equipment Inventory for USIBWC partners

10:50 Final comments and adjourn meeting portion

11:00 YSI Refresher Training for USIBWC CRP partners and anyone interested
   - Go over USIBWC YSI multiprobe Standard Operating Procedures for
     maintenance and calibration. Please bring your probes so we can go over DO
     membrane replacement, etc.
   - Keeping a Maintenance log
   - Chain of Custody forms for routine monitoring and organics in sediment

12:15 Answer questions and review monitoring procedures, as requested

12:30 Adjourn (Sandwich lunch provided)