

MINUTES

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Orange County TMDL Project, SAG Meeting #9
Sabine River Authority of Texas
Authority General Office, Orange, Texas
Tuesday, April 25, 2006, 2:00 – 5:00 PM

Welcome & Introductions (Ann Galassi, Sabine River Authority)

Notebook Handouts (Miles Hall, SRA)

- Agenda
- December 13, 2005, SAG Meeting #8 Notes (DRAFT)
- Slide Presentation
 - The Orange County TMDL Project (Ward Ling, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality)
 - Adams and Cow Bayou Water Quality Modeling Results (Kirk Dean, Ph.D., Parsons)
- Orange County TMDL Project Advisory Groups, as of April 25, 2006

Approve Minutes from December 13, 2005, SAG Meeting #8 (Ann Galassi, SRA)

Meeting notes unanimously approved.

Project Status Report (Ward Ling, TCEQ)

The current stage of the TMDL Process is 5: Model Analysis. The Draft TMDL Report will be presented to the SAG (Stakeholder Advisory Group) and TAG (Technical Advisory Group) prior to a 30-day public comment period.

Discussion Items

Q. How does public comment work?

A. The SAG and TAG do an informal review of the Draft TMDL Report. The availability of the Draft Report for a 30-day public comment period is posted on the TCEQ Web site and in the Texas Register. After the 30-day public comment period, TCEQ modifies the report as it sees fit to address the public comments.

Q. How does TCEQ interface on the Implementation Plan?

A. The Implementation Plan does not go to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). There will be a timeline and job list; TCEQ tracks these to ensure tasks get funded and accomplished.

Q. How is enforcement of the Implementation Plan done?

A. It depends. Agricultural issues are done with the Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). Permit actions done by the TCEQ enforcement process.

Q. If a goal is set to a percentage reduction, will the modeling show this can actually be achieved?

A. It possibly can, depending upon the location.

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Adams and Cow Bayou Watershed Modeling Results (Dr. Kirk Dean, Parsons)

An update to the modeling software should fix some problems encountered with DO and pH.

Discussion Items

Q. Were studies done to see if bacteriological impairments are due to natural conditions (non-human warm blooded animals)?

A. Bacteria are a natural part of the environment and occasional elevated levels occur from rainfall events. Some watersheds, such as Nichols Creek (Reach 2, out of TMDL Project area), have low DO and elevated bacteria levels that appear to be due to natural conditions. In the tidal portion of the TMDL Project area, samples for enterococci have exceeded the numerical criteria in Stream Standards, but samples for *E. coli* have not exceeded the limits. The use of enterococci as an indicator of fecal waste from warm blooded animals including humans does not appear to be as reliable in freshwater as in saltwater. A rookery located in the Blue Elbow Swamp upstream of these locations is the probable source of the enterococci group of bacteria. Texas A&M University Galveston is doing a virus study in tidal waters using new technology that could better distinguish natural vs. anthropogenic causes. Any preliminary results of this study won't be used in the TMDL Project.

The point was made that it may be possible to acquire Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP¹) air violation funds for water quality improvements.

Additional Item: Outreach Update (Eric Mendelman, *Texas Watch*²)

A local curriculum coordinator was contacted to arrange September training. A package will be prepared that will be provided to participating teachers. A speaker list for workshops and a service project list are being developed. An effort to acquire funding is necessary. Local companies often contribute small operational funds. The Outreach Committee could obtain a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status³ or as a possible alternative use a university foundation to facilitate obtaining monetary contributions from local industry and businesses. An Outreach conference call is planned for the end of summer. The next public meeting should be to present the Draft TMDL Report, possibly in the fall.

Public Comment/ Discussion (Ann Galassi, SRA)

No public comments.

Planning for Next Meeting (Ann Galassi, SRA)

The next SAG/TAG meeting was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, July 25, 2006, from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM at the SRA Authority General Office. Potential presentations and topics of discussion include additional results of modeling and status of the Draft TMDL Report.

Adjourn

¹ <http://cfpub.epa.gov/compliance/resources/policies/civil/seps/>, referenced June 29, 2006.

² <http://www.texaswatch.geo.txstate.edu/>, referenced June 29, 2006.

³ <http://www.irs.gov/charities/nonprofits/index.html>, referenced June 29, 2006.