

MINUTES

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Orange County TMDL Project, SAG Meeting #8 Sabine River Authority of Texas Authority General Office, Orange, Texas Tuesday, December 13, 2005, 2:00 – 5:00 PM

Welcome & Introductions (Ann Galassi, Sabine River Authority)

Notebook Handouts (Miles Hall, SRA)

- Agenda
- June 28, 2005, SAG Meeting #7 Notes (DRAFT)
- Slide Presentation
 - The Orange County TMDL Project (Ward Ling, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality)
- Orange County TMDL Project Advisory Groups, as of December 13, 2005

Approve Minutes from June 28, 2005, SAG Meeting #7 (Ann Galassi, SRA)

Meeting notes unanimously approved.

Project Status Report (Ward Ling, TCEQ)

The current stage of the TMDL Process is 5: Model Analysis.

Hurricane Rita's Impact on Water Quality (Miles A. Hall, SRA)

Tidal streams went anoxic due to 6-8 inches of rain after a dry period. Organic debris was washed into the waterways creating a high biological oxygen demand (BOD). There was additional BOD due to a fish kill caused by the lowered oxygen levels, compounding the problem.

Discussion Items

Q. How far up the Sabine River did the anoxic conditions reach?

A. Between Highway 12 and Deweyville, Texas, (Ruliff) and Highway 190 at Bon Weir, Texas.

Q. Could the amount of trees down in the waterways affect the TMDL?

A. Yes. The Orange County Drainage District (OCDD) is working on removing fallen trees.

Q. What affect could the massive debris piles adjacent to Cow Bayou have on water quality?

A. Could be considerable especially when the material starts decomposing. TCEQ needs to address this. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the debris piles belong to the county. Orange County can give chips away but not sell them. A West Lake, LA, company could use chips; 5,000 cubic yard minimum.

Q. Are there any control structures in place to contain the debris piles and their affect on water quality?

A. No.

Q. Where are we on the TMDL, post Hurricane Rita?

A. There has been a substantial change to conditions. It might be possible to simulate Rita's affects if the number/percentage of timber down were known.

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Q. What are the current water quality conditions on the Bayous?

A. There has still not been significant rain to wash stuff out. In the lower end of the Bayous, the dissolved oxygen (DO) is back to summertime levels; the color is still different. Blacks Bayou is back to normal; there are not as many trees down in this subwatershed. The SRA-TX Tidal Study shows that conditions are similar to pre-Rita, parameter-wise.

Q. Is there data that would help with estimating the acreage of forest down?

A. Yes; the U.S. Forest Service has data that would allow for this.

Adams and Cow Bayou Watershed Modeling Results¹ (Dr. Kirk Dean, Parsons)

There has been difficulty calibrating the in-stream water quality portion of the model; it is not yet done.

Discussion Items

Q. How does the model handle the flat topography in the boundary of the TMDL project?

A. It is deficient.

Q. Has the Regional Planning process modeled any land use changes due to Rita?

A. No; they are looking at a larger scale.

Q. Does the land use data reflect septic systems vs. treatment plants?

A. No; used U.S. Census Block data. It continues to be difficult to find septic tank data. SRA-TX asked to provide data from a 1990 study.

Q. How far back to “grandfathered” septic systems go?

A. There is no such thing as “grandfathered” anymore. However, according to TCEQ there is no program to force homeowners to upgrade. Upgrades must be made at time of property sale to get loans. The system is complaint-driven.

Comment made that Census data could be backed up with Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CNN) data.

Comment made that the number and density of cows used in the model were too high (10,500 as compared to a more reasonable 4,000). Also, cows do not tend to spend that much time in streams in Orange County rangeland due to bank steepness, especially north of I-10.

Q. How well has the model preformed in tidal areas?

A. It has done well, even addresses ox-bows.

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, April 4, 2006, from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM at the SRA Authority General Office. **This has since changed to Tuesday, April 25, 2006.** Potential presentations and topics of discussion include additional results of modeling.

Adjourn

¹ Slide set available online at <http://www.sra.dst.tx.us/srwmp/octmdl/>.