

# TEXAS CLEAN RIVERS PROGRAM FOR THE RIO GRANDE BASIN

## MIDDLE RIO GRANDE COORDINATED MONITORING MEETING

April 8, 2014  
12:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
Laredo, Texas

### MEETING MINUTES

#### Meeting Participants

Lisa Ramirez, USIBWC Clean Rivers  
Christine Kolbe, TCEQ Surface Water Quality  
Agustin Boone, CILA Nuevo Laredo  
Juan Uribe, USIBWC Falcon  
Jose Chavarria, City of Laredo Utilities  
Arnaldo Lanese, TCEQ Laredo  
Victor Wong, TCEQ Border Affairs  
Andres Martin, USIBWC Laredo  
Rebecca Castro, City of Laredo Health Dep Lab  
O. Daniel Maldonado, City of Laredo Health Dept

Leslie Grijalva, USIBWC Clean Rivers  
Sarah Eagle, TCEQ Clean Rivers  
Mario Gomez, USIBWC Laredo  
Eli Mendoza, USIBWC Falcon  
Guadalupe Luna, City of Laredo Health Dept  
Elsa Hull, TCEQ Laredo  
Dr. Tom Vaughan, RGISC  
JV Perales, City of Laredo Health Dep Lab  
Ivan Santoyo, Env Services Dep City of Laredo

#### Meeting Notes:

- Lisa Ramirez opened meeting and began with introductions from all participants.
- Sarah began the meeting by explaining the Watershed Action Process. She mentioned that there are some strategies on the WAP tables for the Middle Region but the majority of strategies will be on hold until the Lower Rio Grande Water Quality Initiative is complete. No new updates for impairments in the region since 2012.
- Sarah explained the online tool for the WAP will be available soon.
- TCEQ Laredo (Elsa Hull) announced that due to an increase in reports of fish population decline in Lake Amistad they will be doing a round of sampling. Water and sediment collection will be done in April, fish tissue will be collected in June. Results will be released after sampling is completed.
- This same issue was discussed at the Upper 2 CMM in Alpine in March.
- Low flows may be to blame.
- CILA: We received complaints from Mexican residents about the same issue occurring at the Falcon reservoir. Restocked fish may not be reproducing (CILA has some reports on this). Does TCEQ know anything about this?
- Laredo TCEQ: No, we don't know anything about this and have not done any studies. TCEQ Laredo to CILA: There were reports that the Mexican side had identified a fish parasite. Does CILA have any information on this?
- CILA: We've heard that too, but we have no confirmed reports on this.
- Seems that the same issues are being reported at both reservoirs.

- Dr. Vaughan, of RGISC, inquired what species of fish were in decline and TCEQ Laredo did not know. Chris Kolbe, TCEQ SWQM, mentioned it may be related to salinity in the water or low flows.
- Leslie asked TCEQ Laredo about water quality issues in the Rio Bravo Water Treatment Plant and Wastewater treatment plant. TCEQ Laredo said no new incidents have been reported at the WWTP in the Rio Bravo area in the recent months. As to the WTP, TCEQ responded that nothing has changed and problems are still plentiful. They will check to see if the plants are exceeding limits on their effluent but that most issues have been addressed. Residents are still complaining although the County is claiming issues have been addressed. 27 total violations issued by TCEQ, but they were unable to tell us at the meeting exactly how many of these violations have been addressed or corrected. They also could not tell us how long the treatment plants were given to correct the violations.
- Representative from the Laredo Utilities Department asked if the water was potable. The answer was that the standards to lift the boil advisory are not the same as the compliance standards for health, but there had been no reports of illnesses and the water was not considered bad enough to continue the boil advisory.
- It was mentioned that a representative of Webb County should be invited to this meeting. Webb County is now handling all environmental services independently from the City of Laredo. David Garza will be in charge of setting up the environmental program for the County.
- Leslie asked CILA for an update of the infrastructure repairs that are ongoing on the Mexican side. There are four plants in Nuevo Laredo, including the Nuevo Laredo International Water Treatment Plant. Three of these plants discharge to Arroyo Coyote. A new plant is being built in Nuevo Laredo and is almost finished (95% completed). It is a small plant, about 200 L/s will be treated. Should have been finished in 2013, administrative changes prevented that.
- The broken collector that is currently discharging into Arroyo La Jolla is on private property, and the landowner had been denying access to CILA and others trying to carry out repairs. CONAQUA had to step in and is now in the process of purchasing this land from the landowner. Once it is purchased the necessary repairs can be made and should be completed in 30 days, and it will no longer discharge into the river, but into Arroyo Coyote. Currently discharging 127 L/s.
- Americas Drain is currently discharging 56 L/s. This arroyo carries water coming from the center of Nuevo Laredo. The repairs are at 13% progress and it should be complete within 5 months. The goal for all repairs to be completed was initially 2013, but the change in administration in Mexico prevented that; the goal now is the end of 2014.
- The Guatemala collector is now discharging at 1 L/s, down from 13 L/s.
- The representative from the Laredo Utilities Board asked how many Water Plants are on the Mexican side. There are 4 total plants.
- USIBWC Laredo Field office does receive updates on a monthly basis for the repairs on the Mexican side. CRP asked to be kept in the loop on the progress from the field office.
- Dr. Vaughan reported on research that his Masters student Bianca Rojas is doing on the Texas Fawns foot mussel that is found in the Rio Grande just above Laredo. This species was thought to be extinct but they have found a few. He has other students looking at the

Texas Hornshell, which is also endangered. There is a population of them at La Boca Ranch and several studies are happening in that area. The City of Laredo still wants to put in a weir above this location. If that happens the population could disappear because the mussels cannot survive in impounded water.

- Leslie reviews the Coordinated Monitoring schedule:
  - Dr. Vaughan, RGISC: no changes
  - City of Laredo Environmental: Construction is over at Manadas Creek and there are no issues or updates for sampling
  - Falcon Dam Field Office: only issues with FEDEX on shipping samples but no other updates.
  - Laredo Health Department: City of Laredo and Webb County had a bitter parting in August 2013. The County no longer works within the city limits and is no longer taking samples to the City of Laredo Health Department lab. City of Laredo Health Department employees cannot sample outside of city limits. They can't sample the Rio Bravo site or the Quintero site. Dr. Vaughan and Mario from the USIBWC Laredo field office offered to pick these up. The County will be starting its own environmental services program; contact was named at the meeting, David Garza.
  - Laredo Health Department Lab: No update.
  - TCEQ Laredo: They have been sampling at 18792 instead of 20999. They will update CMS. They also have been doing sediment sampling which needs to be added to schedule as well. They were sampling 20999 in lieu of 18792 because of access issues but those have been resolved. They asked if sampling should occur near new mine North of Eagle Pass. Group though might be a good idea so TCEQ Laredo will look into this.
- FEDEX has been giving partners in Laredo area issues with shipping water samples in coolers. TCEQ Laredo had these issues too and was able to fix the issues. They forwarded the contact information for the Local Manager and CRP staff will attempt to solve the issues. As of now, all partners in the Laredo area will use UPS.
- CILA had some questions and comments:
  - After infrastructure repairs are complete, they are still proposing a repeat of the bacteria study 6 months later. This had been discussed at the 2013 CMM, and they are still on board with it.
  - Asked if we had sites where we collected pesticides and metals. In 2008, CRP did 2 years of collecting metals and pesticides at many sites. However, no significant results were found except for Manadas Creek in Laredo, and a few other sites throughout the basin, so it was kept in those sites only and cancelled everywhere else. The sampling remains for metals in water and sediment at Manadas Creek.
  - Biological sampling- is that done? CRP does not do this but TCEQ does on as-needed basis.
- Utilities asked if Manadas Creek was high in metals and we reported yes especially in Antimony.
- Utilities is planning on building a Wastewater Treatment Plant on Manadas Creek in about 3 years. It will discharge into Manadas Creek.
- Fracking will begin in Mexico. The country will allow foreign companies to do this and that will require lots of water. Where will this water come from?

- Meeting adjourned

### Training Participants

Mario Gomez, USIBWC Laredo

Juan Uribe, USIBWC Falcon

Eli Mendoza, USIBWC Falcon

Guadalupe Luna, City of Laredo Health Department

Dr. Tom Vaughan, RGISC

O. Daniel Maldonado, City of Laredo Health Department

Adrian Gause, City of Laredo Environmental Services Department

Francisco Rosales, City of Laredo Environmental Services Dept.

### Training Notes:

- Leslie went over her tips/concerns list.

12:00 Welcome and Introductions

12:20 TCEQ Watershed Action Planning Process

- Discussion of TCEQ's Integrated Report/303d list
- Identification of water quality issues, data gaps, sources

12:40 Ongoing research and projects in the area addressing issues

- Laredo Bacteria study update/Project Update
- Any projects or research in the Middle Rio Grande Basin

1:15 Monitoring Schedule

- Discussion of statewide Coordinated Monitoring Schedule (CMS) <http://cms.lcra.org/> - current and FY 2014 monitoring
  - Rio Bravo/Quintero
  - safety/security issues
- Potential future projects and potential new sites

1:50 Other announcements and information

- 2013 Basin Summary Report for the Rio Grande Basin
- 2014 Basin Highlights Report

2:00 Final comments and adjourn

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2:30 USIBWC CRP Partner Refresher Training and Monitoring Guidance Updates

- Go over USIBWC YSI multiprobe Standard Operating Procedures for maintenance and calibration. Please bring your probes
- Review of Chain of Custody forms field forms
- Cooler Shipment and Proper Procedures and Tips
- Sampling techniques and bottle configurations for coolers

- Answer questions and review monitoring procedures, as requested

4:00

Adjourn refresher training portion

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