

# TEXAS CLEAN RIVERS PROGRAM FOR THE RIO GRANDE BASIN

## MIDDLE RIO GRANDE COORDINATED MONITORING MEETING

April 7, 2015  
1:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
Laredo, Texas

### MEETING MINUTES

#### Meeting Participants

Leslie Grijalva, USIBWC Clean Rivers  
Robin Cypher, TCEQ Surface Water Quality  
Mario Gomez, USIBWC Laredo  
Eli Mendoza, USIBWC Falcon  
Guadalupe Luna, City of Laredo Health Dept  
Elsa Hull, TCEQ Laredo  
Victor Wong, TCEQ Border Affairs  
JV Perales, City of Laredo Health Dep Lab  
Rebecca Castro, City of Laredo Health Dep Lab

Sarah Eagle, TCEQ Clean Rivers  
Francisco Rosales, City of Laredo Env. Services  
Lucky Roncinske, City of Laredo Env. Services  
Bianca Garcia, TCEQ Laredo  
Sarah Whitley, TCEQ Surface Water Quality  
Tricia Cortez, RGISC  
Dr. Tom Vaughan, RGISC  
Daniel Maldonado, City of Laredo Health Dept

#### Meeting Notes:

- Leslie Grijalva opened meeting and began with introductions from all participants.
- Leslie briefly explained the handouts and other materials available.
- Mario: Brief update on the infrastructure repairs that are occurring on the Mexican side. He and Dr. Vaughan went out in January, and the infrastructure repairs are not done. There was a meeting with MX officials last week, and the most complete any of the projects are is 90%. MX says they lack funding.
  - Leslie asked, didn't they receive BECC funds for these repairs? How can they be lacking funding? Mario answered he didn't know what was going on.
  - Leslie then said she had received instructions to schedule sampling in May because MX had notified the IBWC that all repairs were complete. With Mario's update, this is not true.
  - The largest of the discharges, Las Americas discharge, the pumping stations are not working. Once the lift station is fixed, this discharge will be about 80% fixed. Due to recent rains, there are new breaks on the sewer line. The repairs will require a long-term plan and significant funding that is not currently available. MX indicated it may be possible to get some funding this year, but Mario doesn't think this discharge will be repaired anytime this year.
  - La Joya is still discharging about 3 million gal/day. This is by far the largest problem right now.
  - Arroyo Las Alazanas wasn't flowing or a problem before, but is now flowing just as bad as La Joya. Discharging about 1 million gal/day. Mario said this discharge currently has four sewage line breaks. COMAPA feels that these breaks are smaller

- in magnitude than Las Americas. MX was optimistic about securing funds and completing these repairs within the next 90 days, thereby eliminating this discharge.
- Both La Joya and Las Alazanas are above the WTP intake.
  - Mario indicated that they've fixed many of the small discharges, but for the large ones they are doing "band-aid jobs"- they put a temporary fix, and then when it rains two more pop up in its place somewhere else.
  - Rio Bravo WWTP and WTP: TCEQ Laredo says these plants still have numerous problems, even with new officials.
  - Rio Bravo WWTP: Rebecca said that the new plant manager (Mr. Mojica) has been bringing in bacteria samples to test, for his information so that he can monitor how the plant is doing. She said she is getting counts of >850,000, extremely high.
  - Dr. Vaughan gave a brief summary of the mussel research going on in the area. Laredo Community College and TAMIU were out that very day on the river doing a study. This area is concerned mainly with the TX Hornshell and the Mexican Fawnsfoot.
    - Leslie told him about the projects the NMISC brought up at the Pecos meeting, and that she had passed along his name to them as a contact for mussel research on the Rio Grande.
    - The City of Laredo has long been proposing a weir just upstream of what is currently the only TX mussel community, which would wipe them out. The species would go extinct if this happens. The weir is proposed upstream of the World Trade Bridge.
  - Tricia shows a PSA for the new plastic bag ordinance that Laredo just passed. This will have a significant impact on the trash problem in the area that winds up in the river.
  - Tricia and Dr. Vaughan talked about the Las Palmas Nature Trail that exists by Bridge 2. Border Patrol vehicular traffic has increased due to illegal activity in the area. RGISC has been meeting with BP to try to curb this to minimize damage to the trail and negative impacts to the river.
    - Tricia said a letter had been sent to IBWC (addressed to Gilbert) about the construction of an outlet mall that is being proposed, and that would cut through the Las Palmas Nature Trail. This would substantially increase vehicular traffic near the river.
  - Leslie reviews the Coordinated Monitoring schedule:
    - Dr. Vaughan, RGISC: no changes
      - May soon need a new lab space. Can't use the Laredo FO because Safety would not give Dr. Vaughan a key to the building because it's a security risk. Need to figure something out.
    - City of Laredo Environmental: No issues or updates for sampling. Only issue is low flows at times.
    - Falcon Dam Field Office: ongoing issues with FEDEX on shipping samples.
      - Arroyo Los Olmos is usually dry, but he goes every time he's scheduled to make sure.
      - Station 17596, the road has washed out, making access difficult. Last time they were locked out, so they are trying to coordinate with the landowner. May need to request permission from the landowner to grade the road a little.

- RG City station may need to be moved. BP will be building a boat ramp near there, but it is upstream of a plant discharge, so it will require a new station. Leslie visited this area when she audited them in November, and she agrees it is a better location. Eli will get the GPS coordinates.
    - The Falcon Dam FO will be getting a new hydrotech that will require training.
    - No changes requested to change anything about sampling.
  - Laredo Health Department: No changes and no issues. They have made a schedule with the lab that will have them sampling the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month.
    - Rebecca asked if they could change that to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month. Danny and Lupe said they would discuss it with their supervisor.
  - Laredo Health Department Lab: No update. They need a new water bath, and a new sterilizer for the fecal supplies. Leslie asked Rebecca to send her some quotes and she would talk to her supervisor.
  - TCEQ Laredo: They have been sampling at 18792 instead of 20999 (no sampling at 20999). There is much better access here again, and it's a much better site for sediment sampling. This is now reflected on the CMS (email received from Elsa)
- 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 can use UPS.
- Leslie said that after infrastructure repairs are complete on the MX side, the IBWC is still proposing a repeat of the bacteria study 6 months later. This had been discussed previously at other meetings, but she wanted to let everyone know that MX is still on board with this and we are just waiting for repairs to be completed.
  - Will require a massive coordination effort, as this will be a binational effort.
  - Please consider if you would like to participate, and Leslie will keep everyone informed.
  - In the meantime, Leslie will report on the information received from Mario about the status of the infrastructure repairs on the MX side. This study will probably not happen for another 1-2 years.
- Meeting adjourned

### **Training Participants**

Mario Gomez, USIBWC Laredo

Eli Mendoza, USIBWC Falcon

Dr. Tom Vaughan, RGISC

Lucky Roncinske, City of Laredo Environmental Services Department

Francisco Rosales, City of Laredo Environmental Services Dept.

### **Training Notes:**

- Leslie went over the new equipment that will be purchased.
- Leslie took notes on partners who needed supplies, etc.

- 1:00 Welcome and Introductions
- 1:15 Discussion of various water quality topics
- TCEQ Watershed Action Planning Process
  - Discussion of TCEQ's Integrated Report/303d list
  - Identification of water quality issues, data gaps, sources
- 1:45 Ongoing research and projects in the area addressing issues
- Laredo Bacteria issues: Updates
  - Any projects or research in the Middle Rio Grande Basin
- 2:10 Monitoring Schedule
- Discussion of statewide Coordinated Monitoring Schedule (CMS)  
<http://cms.lcra.org/> - current and FY 2016 monitoring
    - Reactivated Rio Bravo site- any issues
    - Shipping issues
    - safety/security issues
  - Potential future projects and potential new sites
- 2:40 Other announcements and information
- 2015 Basin Highlights Report for the Rio Grande Basin
- 2:50 Final comments and adjourn
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- 3:00 USIBWC CRP Partner Refresher Training and Monitoring Guidance Updates
- Go over new equipment CRP partners will be receiving this fiscal year
  - Review of Field form and Chain of Custody forms
  - Cooler Shipment and Proper Procedures and Tips
  - Sampling techniques and bottle configurations for coolers
  - Answer questions and review monitoring procedures, as requested
- 3:30 Adjourn refresher training portion
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### LIST OF ATTENDEES

NAME	AGENCY/ADDRESS	PHONE NO.	FAX NO.	EMAIL ADDRESS
Sarah Ege	TCEQ 2100 Park 35 Cir 78757	512-239-6329		Sarah.Ege@tceq.texas.gov
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Maric Gomez	COL Health Dept 2600 Cedar	795-4904		maric.gomez@ibwc.gov
Oscar D. Maldonado	CITY OF LAREDO	794 16 50		
Tricia Cortez	REGISSC	718-1063	91A	tricia@regissc.org
Julia V. Perales	COL HDBLAB	795-4908	795-2188	jperales@ci.laredo.tx.us
Leslie Grijalva	USIBWC - CRP	915-832-4770		leslie.grijalva@ibwc.gov