

**SULPHUR RIVER BASIN AUTHORITY AND TCEQ
CLEAN RIVERS PROGRAM
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 22nd, 2015
1:30 P.M.**

STAFF & MEMBERS: Dr. Mike Buttram, Texarkana College
Patricia Harman, Texarkana College
Dr. Ken Crane, Texarkana College
Nancy Rose, SRBA
Pat Wommack, SRBA
Alexandra Smith, Project Manager/TCEQ
Michele Blair, TCEQ
Adam Whisenant, Texas Parks & Wildlife
Greg Conley, Texas Parks & Wildlife
Paul Prange, ATCOG
William (Bill) King, TWU
J. D. Phillips, TWU
Rick Barton, TWU
Anne Redelfs, FUSE
Jo Ann Duman, FUSE
Dr. Jane Morris, FUSE
Robert Speight, NETMWD
Sandy Cash, UTRWD
Jennifer Harland, AEP SWEPCO
Linda Price, Region D
Greg Bishof, Texarkana Gazette
Andra Williams, FUSE

ITEM # 1: CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order by Dr. Mike Buttram. He welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the 15th steering committee meeting of the SRBA.

Dr. Buttram asked that attendees introduce themselves and state their affiliation or interest for attending this meeting.

ITEM # 2: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Buttram asked if there were any comments or questions regarding the minutes of the last steering committee meeting held July 30, 2014. Pat Wommack made a motion to accept minutes as presented. Bill King seconded that motion. The motion carried with all members present voting AYE.

ITEM # 3: PRESENTATION ON WATER QUALITY ISSUES

Adam Whisenant, biologist for TP&W and member of the Region 2 Kills & Spills Team was introduced by Dr. Mike Buttram as the next presenter.

He started his presentation with a video entitled "Watchdogs for Wildlife" that documented a spill event that he and his team worked in the basin last summer in Talco, TX. This was an example of one of the 22 events that have occurred in the last 10 years that contributed to \$39,000 worth of fish killed in the Sulphur River basin. He also explained how the value associated with loss of wildlife was determined.

Adam further discussed the problems associated with golden algae bloom events statewide. Although not common in the SR area, these blooms cause substantial fish kills in winter and early spring.

Michele Blair asked if these algae blooms seem to be on the increase. Adam responded that it could be that they are getting more attention and perhaps that drought conditions are a factor. Michele also asked if there were contractors that could be called in to rehab areas that are impacted by spills like the one in Talco.

Adam responded that the responsible party usually hires contractors and crews for the cleanup – usually a very expensive endeavor. Andra Williams commented that it was ironic that the cleanup costs were huge compared to the very low value assigned the lost wildlife. Dr. Morris asked if volunteer groups were ever used for cleanup. Adam replied not usually, but volunteers were very helpful with observations and reporting events.

ITEM # 4: PRESENTATION ON SOIL, WATER ASSESSMENT TOOL (SWAT)

Dr. Ken Crane was introduced by Dr. Mike Buttram as the next presenter.

Dr. Crane gave a progress report on the SWAT model that he is currently developing to use in the Sulphur River Basin as a soil and water assessment tool. He is using a variety of sources including USGS, National Land Cover Database, TCEQ data, etc... to acquire relevant data to develop this valuable modeling tool. Once all the “inputs” have been added, “outputs” of specific variables can be generated that project results or provide predictions. Ken indicated that the software is running and he is in the process of learning to use it.

Adam asked if students were involved in the model development process. Ken said not at this time. There are ARC & GIS courses available on campus. Michelle asked where the data used in the presentation was from. Ken responded that simulated data was used for the presentation, but that historical data would eventually be run. Dr. Morris asked Ken to explain the implication of the model re: SRB. Ken replied that hypothetical situations could be “run” with the model to project results of specific parameters. He additionally told the audience that the model is being prepared specifically for the Sulphur River Basin. Sedimentation in the river is one of the issues discussed that the tool could be applied to and possibly generate solutions.

ITEM # 5: PRESENTATION ON THE FY2015 BASIN SUMMARY REPORT

The next presentation was given by Dr. Mike Buttram.

Dr. Buttram started his discussion of the report by explaining how Wright Patman Lake is divided up into 10 assessment units. Each unit is important in that it has a particular use importance (ex. North Shore site is close to the water intake for Texarkana Water Utilities) or is representative of a different region of the lake.

Wright Patman Lake is on the 303-D list for pH criteria. Other regions in the lake are included on the 303-D list for additional parameters. The North Shore site has been added this year for chlorophyll-a and temperature criteria.

Dr. Buttram's discussion of Wright Patman Lake included summary information gleaned from extensive amounts of data collected by multiple entities. Much of the collected data was graphically represented in the report. The graphs indicate that long-term trends for dissolved oxygen at most sites on the lake were fairly level. However, the trends for chlorophyll *a* values are increasing. He included a new graphic - windroses - to illustrate predominant winds at different times of the year and how this could influence dissolved oxygen. Shifts in wind direction can affect DO and result in fish kills. He cited a specific kill event (May 4, 2015) that was apparently due to a wind shift.

ITEM # 6: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

There was a general discussion of the lake's condition and what steps needed to be taken to address some of the issues. Dr. Buttram's response was that a Watershed Protection Plan was needed. This effort would require a great monetary investment, community involvement, and possibly legislation. Perhaps looking at some other models (ex. Cedar Creek Reservoir) could be of benefit.

ITEM # 7: ADJOURNMENT

At the conclusion of the question and answer session, Dr. Buttram thanked the attendees for coming to the steering committee meeting and adjourned at that time. Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.