

TEXAS CLEAN RIVERS PROGRAM FOR THE RIO GRANDE BASIN

UPPER RIO GRANDE 1 COORDINATED MONITORING MEETING (El Paso/Hudspeth Counties)

March 18, 2019

10:00 a.m.

USIBWC Headquarters, El Paso, Texas

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Participants

Jose Mendoza, El Paso Community College

Robin Cypher, by phone, TCEQ Surface Water Quality

Kelly Rodibough, by phone, TCEQ Clean Rivers Program

Arturo Leyva, TCEQ Region 6

Veronica Guerrero, TCEQ Region 6

Carlos Rincon, EPA Region 6

Bryan Monroe, EPA Region 6

Samantha Stiffler, USIBWC Clean Rivers

Leslie Grijalva, USIBWC Clean Rivers

Meeting Notes:

- Leslie Grijalva opened the meeting and began with introductions from all participants.
- Robin Cypher gave an update on the status of the 2016 and 2018 Integrated Reports.
- Robin mentioned that this is her last attendance as the Rio Grande's SWQM assessor, Terra Lindgren will be taking over the Rio Grande Basin.
- Leslie went into an explanation of the 303d list, and what segments in this reach are impaired. She went over the handout that Samantha had developed, which showed all impairments and concerns for the basin in a much simpler format. She then went into detail as to what the impairments are for (parameters), and there was discussion on this (impairment vs concern, location of the segments, etc), since there were many new people at the meeting.
- Discussion of 303d list sparked conversation again on the bacteria counts around the Sunland Park WWTP. Things have not improved, based on bacteria counts from samples.
- El Paso is more heavily monitored now, but we still have data gaps.
- Data gaps: The Forgotten Stretch is still not being monitored. Currently the last station is in Ft. Hancock, upstream of the Forgotten Stretch. The next station isn't until Candelaria, which is at the end of the stretch.

- Station at Ft. Quitman would put a station in this reach, but it was never added by the USIBWC CRP due to work being done.
- Dredging work, due to landowner concerns regarding sediment loading. The additional sediment was leading to ponding and flooding. Major dredging work being done, we can reassess once it's completed.
- Dr. Rincon asked how much historical data is available at this site?
 - TCEQ stopped sampling around 2012, 2014. IBWC stopped in 2009. Will look into this.
- San Eli station is still off the schedule, banks are too steep and soft and present safety concerns.
- There is significant dredging going on above American Dam. All vegetation and habitat have been destroyed. Will be interested in seeing what the TDS and turbidity values come back as.
 - Noticed water in the river coming from above Sunland Park- do we know where this water is coming from? Will have to look into this.
 - Could El Paso Water be dewatering? Could it be dewatering from all the construction?
- NRSA was requesting assistance for sampling in the Forgotten Stretch, but this was canceled due to the remoteness of the stations.
- EPCC: working on a project involving antibiotic resistance, will be publishing a paper soon. The students are starting another study on Salmonella. EPCC will be partnering with UTEP on a study focusing on the Ft. Hancock area, to see what may be coming in from MX. Will probably be contacting CRP to assist with river access.
- UTEP: Not in attendance, but Leslie Grijalva stated she knew they had projects on isolating radioactive isotopes, PCP's in water, and endocrine disruptors. The last study UTEP did showed acetaminophen, ibuprofen, etc., in the water. Another study had showed endocrine disruptors had an effect on amphibians and reptiles in the river.
- EPA: Working on the section of the river from Falcon down (Water Quality Initiative). Also, EPA is concerned with the border water infrastructure here (sewer by Tornillo/Clint areas).
- Paso del Norte Watershed Council: Leslie stated she had been working with them to submit a proposal for a partial WPP, from El Paso/NM state line to Ft. Hancock, but the project did not get selected for funding.
 - Planning a Rio Grande Water Task Force meeting in July, will send information to Leslie as it becomes available.

CMS

- Coordinated Monitoring Schedule was discussed next.
 - No current monitoring in Forgotten Stretch.
- San Eli site was discussed. This station is still not being monitored by the IBWC or TCEQ.
 - Banks are still steep and unstable.
 - Lots of dense vegetation
 - Staff cited safety concerns
 - Leslie stated that a re-evaluation of the site the previous year had determined that this site was still unsafe, and CRP has kept it off the schedule. TCEQ has as well.

- Fabens/Tornillo: Access issues require coordination with Border Patrol, but other than that, no issues. No changes.
- Site at Alamo Grade was discussed. The IBWC added this station back for FY16 and has had no issues.
 - No changes to the IBWC monitoring.
- Site at Fort Quitman still remains a remote site. However, it carries enough water for sampling, and the USIBWC CRP is considering adding it quarterly once the dredging is completed.
 - Would give us some monitoring in the large gap of the Forgotten Stretch.
- American Dam has lost staff, currently no one is sampling. Can CRP pick these up for now? Should we send the samples to DHL?
 - Samples would still have to go to EPW due to the MOU between the IBWC and EPW.
- TCEQ is also having issues shipping out of the parks and Presidio area (past holding time because they don't ship on time). USIBWC CRP partners also have issues. Need to figure out how to address this. USIBWC contracting department has taken this on.
- TCEQ brought an issue to our attention, seems like we're duplicating sampling at some stations during particular months (possibly 13276). Leslie will look at the schedule and adjust.
 - TCEQ, no other changes to their monitoring schedule.
- CRP gave a very quick update on the 2019 Basin Highlights Report.
- Leslie let everyone know that the annual presentation to the public will happen at IBWC in July at the Citizens Forum.
- Meeting adjourned at 11:15 am.
- No YSI training given.

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March 18, 2019
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
USIBWC Headquarters, El Paso, Texas

AGENDA

- 10:00 Welcome/Introductions
- 10:10 Discussion on various water quality topics
- Discussion of TCEQ's Integrated Report/303d list
 - Identification of water quality issues, data gaps, sources of pollution
 - Ongoing research and projects of interest in the basin
- 10:30 Monitoring Schedule
- Discussion of statewide Coordinated Monitoring Schedule (CMS)
<http://cms.lcra.org/> - current and FY 2020 monitoring
 - Upper stations of interest (San Eli, Fabens, and Fort Hancock stations)
 - Update/discussion on safety and security issues
 - Issues with current sites, if any
 - Changes to monitoring in FY2020
- 11:10 Other announcements and information
- 2019 Basin Highlights Report for the Rio Grande Basin
- 11:20 Final comments and adjourn
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- 11:30 **As Needed:** USIBWC CRP Partner Refresher Training and Monitoring Guidance Updates
- Answer questions and review monitoring procedures as needed.
- 12:00 Adjourn refresher training portion
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