

**Lower Neches Valley Authority**

**Clean Rivers Program**

**Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Location:** LNVA Saltwater Barrier

6790 Bigner Rd

Beaumont, TX 77708

**Date:** June 29, 2023

**Time:** 1:30 pm

**Attendees:**

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| Jeannie Mahan Bowlen- LNVA | Brielle Patronella- LNVA |
| Bethany Stanton- LNVA | Jason Watson- LNVA |
| Terry Stelly- Clean Air and Water | Paul Bertrand- Texas Master Naturalist |
| Katrina Smith-TCEQ | Dale Parish-LSNSWCD#446 |
| Jennie Knapp- Big Thicket Association | Melissa McKelvy-TCEQ |
| Sarah Whitley-TCEQ | Melissa Sealy-TGLO |
| Bruce Walker- Big Thicket Association | Jami Brown- TGLO |
| Jan Ruppel- Big Thicket Association | David Ford-Edge |
| Madgellen Cleary-TAMU  | Jian Fang-Lamar University |
| William Baule-TAMU | Sabrina Servy-TAMU |
| Victoria Elliot- SRCC | Alison Tarter-SRCC |
| Noah Callahan-LNVA | Reese Cruz-LNVA |

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

A sign in sheet was provided for attendees to fill out as well as a copy of the meeting’s agenda. Jeannie Bowlen, LNVA CRP project manager, welcomed everyone who joined the steering committee meeting.

1. **2023 Lower Neches Basin Highlights**

*Speaker: Jeannie Bowlen, Brielle Patronella, Bethany Stanton, and Brian Fife*

*LNVA*

Jeannie introduced the Texas Clean Rivers Program and reviewed the LNVA Clean Rivers Program monitoring.

Question raised about what kind of entities pay water rights fees.

Brielle went over the 2023 Basin Highlights Report. Copies of this report were provided to the stakeholders that attended the meeting.

Bethany reminded the group to keep an eye out for alligator snapping turtles. A picture of the turtle at the LNVA saltwater barrier was shown. She also gave information about how a siting of these turtles can be reported.

Brian highlighted the various projects taking place regarding certain species of mussels in the basin.

1. **Texas Rural Water Association: Benefits to Water and Wastewater Systems**

*Speaker: Donnie Stanton, TRWA*

Donnie Stanton, an FMT Assistance Specialist with TRWA, presented a power point presentation about the Texas Rural Water Association and the types of benefits they provide for their customers.

A question was raised about the PFAS, or Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances, regarding a lawsuit with DuPont. Donnie offered to talk more about it at the end of the meeting.

Another question was asked if TWRA is part of the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

1. **Big Thicket Association and Neches River Adventures**

*Speaker: Bruce Walker, Big Thicket Association*

Bruce gave a power point presentation about the Big Thicket Association and its many activities that take place throughout the year. He also talked about the Eco-tours education program and events that take place aboard the Ivory Bill.

1. **Closing Remarks and Eco-Tour of Neches River**

Jeannie thanked everyone for attending the steering committee meeting.

The meeting attendees were then treated to an hour-long tour on the Ivory Bill of the Neches River and received information about their education program from Jennie Knapp of the Big Thicket Association.