



**Lower Neches Valley Authority
Clean Rivers Program**

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Format: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Date: August 31, 2021

Time: 2:00 pm

Attendees:

Ryan Lytle- General Land Office	Bruce Walker- Big Thicket Association
Randy Rushin- Water Monitoring Solutions	Taylor Shelton- City of Port Neches
Rebecca DuPont-TCEQ	Mandi Gordon- University of Houston-Clear Lake
Matthew Pyne- Lamar University	Tim Cawthon-TCEQ
Luis Medina- TCEQ	Terry Stelly- Clean Air and Water
Leila Melancon- Texas Stream Team	Michael Schramm- TWRI
Heather Low-General Land Office	Jason Watson-LNVA
Dale Parish- Lower Sabine-Neches SWCD#446	Brielle Patronella-LNVA
Jeannie Bowlen-LNVA	

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jeannie Bowlen, LNVA CRP project manager, welcomed everyone who joined the virtual steering committee meeting and asked everyone to sign in on a google sign in form. The link was provided in the chat box.

2. Aquatic Life Monitoring Results in Segment 0608

Speaker: Randy Rushin, Water Monitoring Solutions, Inc.

First speaker, Randy Rushin, shared his screen with a power point presentation about the Aquatic Life Monitoring results that were found on Beech and Cypress Creeks. His presentations summarized the parameters collected during the monitoring. Monitoring took place from 2019-2021. The main obstacle that took place during the monitoring was planning around rain events that took place. Both streams scored well in spite of the rain events so in spite of not meeting some current water quality standards, that the overall aquatic health of both streams are very good.

Question for Randy: "How long before you can monitor after a rain event?"

- "TCEQ says 2 weeks and we try to stay within the time limits."

Question: "Were the flows close to each other at testing spots?"

- "Stream flows are all close, typically 5-10 CFS"

Stakeholder comment: "The systems seem to be in good shape overall, given the amount of rain and still getting high ratings."

3. Status Update of the Total Maximum Daily Load and Watershed Planning Projects in the Lower Neches Basin

Speaker: Michael Schramm, Texas Water Resources Institute

Next speaker, Michael Schramm, shared his screen and gave an update on the status of the TMDL and I-plan projects going on in the lower Neches Basin. The current projects include Wolf and Sandy Creek as well as Hillebrandt Bayou and Neches River Tidal. His presentation gave some background on how these projects developed as well as their progress so far.

Question for Michael: "Is it too late to become part of the stakeholder groups for these projects since the project plans are reaching the comment period phase?"

- "No, anyone can still join the stakeholder groups during this process. It's not too late."

4. Texas Aquatic Turtle Surveys: 13 Years of Exploration

*Speaker: Mandi Gordon, Environmental Institute of Houston,
University of Houston - Clear Lake*

Mandi Gordon was next up on the agenda and spoke about the work she and her team are doing looking for chicken turtle and alligator snapping turtle species. Her presentation covered all the resources they are using to locate turtles including a public reporting tool.

She mentioned all the agencies involved with the project. She has also been working with LNVA (Jason Watson and Terry Corbett) on interagency GIS reporting tool. Another type of turtle, the diamond back terrapin turtle, is a favorite turtle of Mandi's. She displayed a large skull of an alligator snapping turtle that was found and given to her.

Question for Mandi: "Can you estimate the weight (of the turtle) based on skull size?"

- "It's hard to estimate the weight, but it would be about 5-6 feet long. Very large."

5. Texas Stream Team Volunteer Monitoring Program Training

Speaker: Brielle Patronella, Lower Neches Valley Authority

Brielle Patronella, LNVA and CRP's Quality Assurance Officer, presented an update on the Texas Stream Team and how people can volunteer for citizen stream monitoring. Brielle will be scheduling an upcoming training soon at the saltwater barrier. Her contact information was provided at the end of the presentation.

6. Overview of the 2021 Lower Neches Basin and Neches-Trinity Coastal Basin Summary Report

Speaker: Jeannie Bowlen, Lower Neches Valley Authority

Jeannie Bowlen highlighted the 2021 Basin Summary Report for the lower Neches and Neches Trinity Coastal Basins. Stakeholders were encouraged to read the report and contact her with any questions. The report is located on LNVA's website under the Clean Rivers Program tab.

7. Closing Remarks

Jeannie thanked everyone for signing on to the meeting. She also thanked TCEQ project manager Rebecca Dupont for all her guidance and assistance over the last year and welcomed incoming project manager, Luis Medina.