



**Lower Neches Valley Authority
Clean Rivers Program**

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Location: LNVA Administrative Office

7850 Eastex Freeway

Beaumont, TX 77708

Date: August 25, 2022

Time: 2:00 pm

Attendees:

Jeannie Bowlen- LNVA	Brielle Patronella- LNVA
Bethany Stanton- LNVA	Jason Watson- LNVA
Terry Stelly- Clean Air and Water	Paul Bertrand- Texas Master Naturalist
Leila Melancon- Texas Master Naturalist	Terry Corbett- LNVA
Jennie Knapp- Big Thicket Association	Diane Thompson- Big Thicket Association
Bruce Walker- Big Thicket Association	Jami Brown- Texas General Land Office
Jan Ruppel- Big Thicket Association	Luis Medina- TCEQ

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 and presentations. Jeannie Bowlen, LNVA CRP project manager, welcomed everyone who joined the steering committee meeting both in person and virtually.

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

Speaker: Michael Schramm, Texas Water Resources Institute

Michael Schramm briefly updated stakeholders on the status of the TMDL and implementation plans currently active in the lower Neches Basin. These included projects on Wolf and Sandy Creek as well as Hillebrandt Bayou and Neches River Tidal. These projects aim to reduce bacteria and protect recreational safety in the lower Neches Basin.

Question for Michael: "Are Sandy Creek and Wolf Creek out of compliance?"

-Yes, both Sandy and Wolf Creek are out of compliance however, from what I can remember the numbers were not horrible.

Question: "What is the reason these creeks are out of compliance?"

-There is almost never just one issue that causes a creek to be out of compliance. However, the main reason is nonpoint source pollution. This includes livestock, wildlife such as hogs, and septic systems. While wolf creek is more rural, Sandy creek also has a wastewater treatment facility for Jasper to keep in mind.

Question: "What kind of stakeholders are showing up for the Neches segment?"

-Some of the stakeholders we've seen are from AgriLife, LNVA, City of Beaumont, and Stormwater for Jefferson County. Coastal participants have made up the majority of the stakeholders.

Question: "Wasn't there a slaughter house being built in that area?"

-There was a slaughter house that was meant to be built in Tyler County but it did not go through due to a big community uproar.

Question: "How will the impairment be corrected when you can't control wildlife?"

-E. coli is the current indicator to the presence of bacteria in water. More research is going into figuring out the source of the e. coli whether it be human or specific animals. Human e. coli is the most dangerous. When we can look at what makes up the e. coli in a stream we can decide if it is mainly caused by animals or humans. If it's caused by humans, we know there is an issue that needs to be resolved.

Question: "Why am I required to get my septic system inspected in College Station?"

-Septic system inspection requirements are determined county by county in Texas and there is no current movement to enforce septic inspections. Resources available is the main determining factor on whether a county will require septic inspections.

3. Water Quality of the Lower Neches Basin and FY 23 Clean Rivers Program Monitoring Updates

Speaker: Jeannie Bowlen, Lower Neches Valley Authority

Jeannie Bowlen presented a power point presentation with an overview of LNVA's Clean Rivers Program. She highlighted the results found in the 2022 Texas Integrated Report for the lower Neches Basin and went over their concerns and what they mean. She presented how each concern would be addressed, such as whether a TMDL is awaiting approval or if more data needs to be collected. She provided her contact information along with a link to the CRP coordinated monitoring schedule.

Question for Jeannie: "What are the sources for copper?"

-Copper is one of the parameters that needs more data. A lot of concerns are carried over from results that were gathered years ago. LNVA plans to collect more metals data in hopes to gather more representative data for future integrated reports.

Question: "Is Texas Stream Team data used in the integrated report?"

-No, Texas Stream Team data is not collected under a TCEQ-approved QAPP and therefore cannot be used in the Texas integrated report. However, Texas Stream Team data is open to the public and is a great source for research projects. It also acts as another monitoring tool for LNVA to know where monitoring should be focused in the future.

4. Water Quality Data Sources and Texas Stream Team Updates

Speaker: Brielle Patronella, Lower Neches Valley Authority

Brielle Patronella, LNVA and CRP's Quality Assurance Officer, presented a power point showcasing different sources for water quality data that is open to the public. These sources included links to SWQMIS, USGS, LNVA's Website, CAMS749, SETX R.A.I.N, and Texas Stream Team. She also announced an upcoming Texas Stream Team training to be held at the LNVA saltwater barrier on October 25th, 2022. She provided her contact information for anyone wanting more details on the training.

5. Current Clean Rivers Program Equipment and Technology

Speaker: Bethany Stanton, Lower Neches Valley Authority

Bethany Stanton, CRP's Data Manager, presented a power point on the new technology being used for LNVA's Clean Rivers Program. The presentation highlighted the new Q-boat that is used for collecting flow along with the pros and cons of the new technology. She showed the differences in the old YSI 6920 sondes versus the new EXO sondes. She also highlighted new software being used by LNVA.

6. The Biology of Mussels

Speaker: Brian Fife, Lower Neches Valley Authority

Brian Fife, LNVA and CRP's environmental analyst, presented a power point on the biology of freshwater mussels. He focused on the species richness found in southeast Texas along with the unique characteristics found in freshwater mussels.

7. Mussel Projects in Southeast Texas

Speaker: Alison Tarter, Southern Regional Climate Center

Alison Tarter presented a power point on the research she's done concerning freshwater mussels in southeast Texas. She focused on how climate change has impacted mussels from extreme heat and drought to flash floods.

8. Closing Remarks

Jeannie thanked everyone for attending the steering committee meeting. She also informed attendees that a copy of the presentations could be requested by email.