

## **Arroyo Agricultural Issues Workgroup Meeting**

Meeting Summary – December 15, 2003, 2:00pm  
Attending Work Group Committee Members – 12/15 Meeting

Kevin Wagner – TSSWCB  
Jaime Longoria – Hidalgo SWCD  
Andy Garza – TSSWCB  
B. Eduardo Mendez – TSSWCB  
Roger Miranda – TCEQ  
Kenny Buford – NRCS, Rio Grande City/Edinburg  
Steve Bearden – TDA  
Terry Lockamy – Texas Cooperative Extension

### **Call to order/welcome/introductions – Andy Garza:**

Mr. Garza gave the opening remarks.

### **Establish workgroup membership and leadership – Andy Garza:**

Mr. Garza recommended that Wayne Halbert chair the Workgroup. The Workgroup reviewed the list of invitees and recommended the addition of representatives of Citrus, Cotton, Sugar Cane, and Grain Producers, as well as Texas Farm Bureau.

### **Goals and Objectives – Andy Garza:**

Mr. Garza explained that the goal of the Workgroup is to develop Agricultural Component of Watershed Action Plan. He stated that agriculture is a step ahead of the process because of the SB503 Program that has been addressing the agricultural NPS pollution since 1995.

### **Arroyo Colorado TMDL – Roger Miranda:**

Mr. Miranda gave a brief review of the effort and history of the project. Included in the presentation, Mr. Miranda presented the following information.

In 1998, the Arroyo had the following impairments – bacteria, D.O., toxicity and legacy pollutants. In 2004, the Arroyo will be listed for the following impairments - bacteria and D.O. The impaired area is 4.5 miles in length and located in an area where the hydrologic regime changes (tidal interface). A 2002 study concluded:

1. D.O. dynamics are highly influenced by hydrology.
2. The necessary load reductions (90%) are not realistically achievable.
3. Further study is needed.

As a result of these conclusions, TCEQ directed staff to:

1. Develop a watershed action plan (WAP).
2. Base load reductions on realistically achievable goals.

3. Conduct further study to:
  - a. better define role of pollutants versus physical modification,
  - b. define appropriate D.O. criteria, and
  - c. reduce uncertainty of TMDL analysis.

Workgroups were created to assist in the development of the WAP. The workgroups created are: Agricultural Issues, Wastewater Infrastructure Improvement, Habitat Restoration, Outreach and Education, TMDL Refinement, and Water Quality Standards Review. Mr. Miranda stated that the pollutants to be addressed by the WAP are BOD and Nutrients. Agricultural Issues are currently being addressed utilizing programs such as SB503, 319, 6217 and EQIP along with efforts to increase irrigation efficiency.

**Watershed Action Plan Components – Kevin Wagner:**

Mr. Wagner discussed the Federal Guidance for development of watershed action plans. The Workgroup requested a copy of the Federal Guidance.

**Arroyo Colorado Project Timeline – Roger Miranda:**

Mr. Miranda then discussed the timeline for development and implementation of the WAP. The WAP will be completed 12-18 months from time Watershed Coordinator comes on board, probably in March or April, 2004. WAP approval will take 6-8 months. Following approval, 2-4 years will be required for WAP implementation, criteria assessment and further TMDL study control. Following implementation, an additional 2 years will be needed for assessment of the effectiveness of the control measures implemented.

**Discuss Information Needs – Andy Garza:**

An analysis of load reductions from implementation of BMPs, such as SWAT modeling, is needed. Specific parameters that should be assessed include NO<sub>3</sub>, NH<sub>3</sub>, PO<sub>4</sub>, TP, sediment, and BOD. All improvements in on-farm irrigation efficiency thru all projects need to be captured. All work completed since 1995 and all work planned should be documented in WAP, as well as an assessment of additional measures needed.

**Open Discussion – Andy Garza:**

Mr. Garza stated that Senate Bill 503 should form the foundation for Ag Implementation. Mr. Garza provided handouts and an overview of 503, 319, CMP, EQIP Implementation. Discussion followed regarding the need to estimate load reductions from implementation. Use of the SWAT Model was one method discussed. Edge of field monitoring and monitoring at IBWC irrigation canal gates (avoiding colonias) to provide subwatershed level monitoring was also discussed. It will be important to coordinate these monitoring activities with those initiated by the other workgroups.

**Wrap Up – Andy Garza:**

The next meeting was planned for either late March or early April 2004. Development of a timeline will be discussed among other topics. The Workgroup requested that a presentation on the SWAT Model be provided. Finally, the Workgroup stressed the need for more participation and the importance of bringing in Ag groups and producers.