

Arroyo Colorado Outreach and Education Workgroup

January 15, 2008

4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Attendees

Don Hockaday

Bertie Salinas (McAllen)

Ouina Rutledge

Briana Carlson

Tony Reisinger

Elizabeth Heise

Cory Horan

Kris Shipman

Sky Lewey

Cecilia Wagner

Megan Meier

Jason Pinchback

Laura de la Garza

Meeting Notes

Welcome and IntroductionsLaura De La Garza, TWRI

Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan:

Project HighlightsLaura De La Garza, TWRI

- Ag/Habitat/Wastewater workgroup projects
- Current focus is becoming a sustainable group
- Upcoming workgroups and Steering Committee meetings on January 24, 2008

O&E Project Updates:

City of McAllen O&E Projects.....Ouina Rutledge, City of Mcallen

- New O&E environmental coordinator for brush, compost and recycling divisions
- Programs include save the greens program (compost greens from grocery stores and nurseries), pay as you throw (pay for garbage and recycling free), McAllen Goes Green
- City is currently using trade shows, media, schools and other forums to get word out
- Methods of outreach: appeal to parents through kid-friendly products and freebies
- Working with LRGVDC on O&E grants mainly addressing stormwater
- Cecilia suggested putting link on AC website under the "Projects" link

Texas Watch ActivityJason Pinchback, Texas Watch

- Volunteer training on Feb 2nd at UTB and continue to have active monitors sampling throughout watershed. Training will also provide supplemental information/data at the UTB monitoring sites for the Clean Rivers Program

EPA Education Grant Submittals.....Megan Meier, TWRI

- 2 proposals submitted on December 20th including:
 - AC PSA involves developing and broadcasting radio/TV PSAs about AC (in English/Spanish)
 - Arroyo Colorado Curriculum involves polishing existing curriculum created by IMAS and McAllen and hosting workshops to "teach" teachers how to incorporate lessons into their classroom
 - Dr. Edwards (UTPA) offered to trial IMAS existing equipment in biology lab
 - Laura will check on equipment use with IMAS as the equipment was purchased by TCEQ and they would like us to assist in "better utilizing" it

Project Discussion:

Draft Script for Physical Model DemoLaura De La Garza, TWRI

- Julie Tauson (TXWatch) assisted with developing the demonstration script. It includes different activities for different age levels
- Laura developing kit to demo model - Sky suggested including wool, felt cloth or sponge in the kit to be used as a wetland area that shows how wetlands absorb water
- Laura is tracking approximate number of those participating in demo at various events – need to include this in the directions for using the model (or script). This is important for documenting benefit of model developed and impact generated by model
- Need people to demo model and events to demo model at:
 - Sky suggested going to retired teachers association to find skilled people to demo the model (maybe pay them)
 - Laura will also send invite and announcement to County Extension Agents letting them know about the availability of the model and script.
 - Ocelot Festival – Feb 9 (Harlingen)
 - Coastal Expo – March 13-14 (Edinburg)
 - Hummingbird Days - April 19 (McAllen Birding Center)
 - Wild Walk - October (McAllen Birding Center)
 - Wildlife expo – Feb 2 (South Padre Island)

Draft O&E Evaluation Form..... Cecilia Wagner, TWRI

- We have a draft survey. Request group to include/suggest questions:
 - Jason suggested adding questions about attitude about Arroyo/environment
 - Cory suggested keeping questions simple for now and maybe asking more complex questions later on in implementation effort
 - Ouina made suggestions on making questions more specific
- Need comments ASAP to get ready by early spring
- Once all comments are received, we will polish survey to remove any bias

Discuss/Prioritize Future Funding Sources and Needs Amy Rangel, TWRI

.....Laura De La Garza, TWRI

- CARE EPA grant - move partnership into sustainable entity; maybe submit with LRGVDC
- NOAA environmental literacy discussed, but group determined it was not applicable

Other Business.....Laura De La Garza, TWRI

- Adding Arroyo Colorado to Wikipedia; Amy will work on with Laura and Don

- Outreach in the form of watershed signage is needed. Megan will contact TXDOT about watershed signs as this is a deliverable of the partnership in the TCEQ grant
- Other outreach is storm drain stenciling. Ouina offered to work with us in getting various city contacts for the stenciling effort.

Next Meeting Date/Adjourn.....Laura De La Garza, TWRI

- Next quarterly meeting date is April 15th