

MEETING NOTES

Upper Colorado River Basin, Texas Clean Rivers Program

Water Quality Advisory Committee Meeting

April 11, 2024

Welcome & Introductions, *Ellen Groth, UCRA*

Groth welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those in person and online to introduce themselves.

Water Quality Reports, *Lexi Woods, Environmental Specialist, UCRA*

Woods provided an overview of water quality in the upper basin. Historical data and trends through 2024 were provided for Twin Buttes, OH Ivie, OC Fisher, Brady Creek Reservoir and JB Thomas. Information was given in regard to the current North Concho Bank Stabilization Project. Routine monitoring was discussed, and data points were furnished. Sample collection frequency was discussed, and additional site maps were shown. For specific site locations, visit: waterquality.lcra.org

Concho & San Saba River Environmental Water Transactions, *Kyle Garmany, Water & Agriculture Program Director, The Nature Conservancy*

Garmany offered an overview of TNC showing agency milestones and discussed the importance of healthy rangelands. Garmany talked about the importance of conservation partnerships and explained how conservation agreements with landowners work. There are currently seven landowner agreements in the Colorado River Basin. Garmany highlighted the San Saba River Basin Grazing Project, TNC's partnerships with the NCRCS & TSSWCB and the High Plains Mobile drip.

Lower San Saba River Bacterial Source Tracking, *Zoe Nichols, Water Quality Coordinator II, LCRA*

Nichols provided background information on the history of impairments in the San Saba river based on E.coli levels. She explained that TCEQ added a new monitoring station in 2012 and LCRA staff conducted an informal study to monitor bacteria with the impaired AU in 2015. The study determined that bacterial source tracking was needed, and that the data will be included in the 2024 Integrated Report, if timing can support it. BST showed various data points and a formal study was proposed with the goal of identifying the major sources of bacterial loading in the San Saba river. The study will include three sites with ten isolates to be analyzed per site to collect during ambient and stormwater conditions. Data will be used as a primary step to address impairments and to educate Stakeholders. Data could then be used to develop BMPs, bacterial TMDLs or WPPs.

Upper Colorado River Updates, *Aaron Richter, Water Quality Coordinator, LCRA*

Richter showed the group maps that included average chloride, sulfate, E.coli, nitrates and chlorophyll levels. Richter explained that the data indicates a trend of higher levels of chlorophyll, nitrates and E. Coli near urban areas. Discussion ensued regarding what could account for these variances and what classifies a site as impaired.

Community Outreach Initiatives, *Charlotte Anderson, Executive Director, Keep San Angelo Beautiful) & Cash Coy, Jr. Ambassador*

Anderson explained that KSAB's mission is to create awareness, maintain, clean, green and beautiful spaces through art, science and education, The results from the 2023 Annual Report were provided. Highlights included, but were not limited to: annual cleanup events, a tire drive, hazardous waste collection events and education and outreach programming targeted to the schools. KSAB has also received the 2024 Texas Environmental Excellence Award for the Tires to Go Project.

Cash Coy, spoke about the role that he has had in KSAB and the function that the Junior Ambassador program has provided for the community. The mission of the KSAB Jr. Ambassador program is to bring awareness to the youth of San Angelo and to foster a love for the environment.

Intern Life, Marissa Nordland, 2023 Intern, UCRA

Nordland shared her experience as a UCRA Intern during the summer of 2023. She discussed the work performed while interning under CRP, which included field monitoring with UCRA staff, conducting a research project, creating an education & outreach program for the agency and learning about the environmental grant process. Nordland expressed that the internship provided valuable insight into the field of environmental science and helped give her direction for the next steps in her future.

The Impact of Genetics and Water Level Fluctuations on Trophy Bass Production in OH Ivie Reservoir, Texas, Lynn Wright, District Fisheries Biologist, Inland Fisheries Division, TPWD

Wright gave the background of the TPWD ShareLunker program at OH Ivie that began in 1986. The water level history for O.H. Ivie was explained and Wright showed how this, coupled with the introduction of Florida strain bass genetics correlates with the success of the program. Wright stated that during the previous four years, following a large inflow of water in 2020, conditions have been ideal for lunker bass production. During the previous two years, O.H. Ivie Reservoir has been considered the best bass lake in the nation. However, due to consistently declining water levels, the numbers of ShareLunker bass recently caught at O.H. Ivie, while still high, have started to dwindle. Nevertheless, because Florida strain genetics are prevalent, he believes that history will continue to repeat itself with boom and bust cycles based primarily on the response to water level changes.

LCRA and US Fish and Wildlife Native Mussel Conservation Agreement Lisa Benton, Water Quality Protection Supervisor, LCRA

Benton's presentation began with the freshwater mussels that are proposed for protection under the Endangered Species Act . It is anticipated that formal protection should be in effect any day now. The ESA proposed Colorado River mussels include the Texas Pimpleback, Texas Fatmucket, Balcones Spiek and the Texas Fawnsfoot. Benton showed the group an overview of the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances, as well as the requirements and the benefits of a CCAA. The conservation strategy includes avoidance and minimization measures and conservation measures. Additional components are; monitoring and reporting, adaptive management plan and program, covered activities, incidental take tracking, regulatory assurances, and changed or unforeseen circumstances.

Comments, Discussion & Dismissal:

There was no further discussion or questions. Groth thanked everyone for participating both in person and online, especially those presenting, and the meeting was concluded.



These meeting notes provide summary of the meeting and its presentations

To view entire presentations with details, visit the project webpage at:

<https://www.ucratx.org/crp-wqac>

List of Acronyms

UCRA	Upper Colorado River Authority
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
TSSWCB	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board
LCRA	Lower Colorado River Authority
TCEQ	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
AU	Assessment Unit
BST	Bacterial Source Tracking
BMP	Best Management Practices
TMD	Total Maximum Daily Load
WPP	Watershed Protection Plan
KSAB	Keep San Angelo Beautiful
CRP	Clean Rivers Program
TPWD	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
ESA	Endangered Species Act
CCAA	Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances

Upper Basin CRP 2024 WQAC Meeting Attendees

Scott McWilliams	UCRA, San Angelo
Ellen Groth	UCRA, San Angelo
Lexi Woods	UCRA, San Angelo
Che Stone	UCRA, San Angelo
Marissa Nordland	UCRA, San Angelo
Lisa Benton	LCRA, Austin
Zoe Nichols	LCRA, Austin
Aaron Richter	LCRA, Austin
Kelly Kukowski	ELS Labs, Austin
Robin Cypher	TCEQ, Austin
Kiran Freeman	TCEQ, Austin
Robyn Gaston	TCEQ, San Angelo Region
Kyle Garmany	TNC
Lynn Wright	TPWD, San Angelo
Blake Thornton	TPWD, San Angelo
Vanessa Chapman	TPWD
Charlotte Anderson	COSA KSAB, San Angelo
Cash Coy	COSA KSAB, San Angelo
Joanna Coy	COSA, KSAB, San Angelo
Kyle Wright	NRCS USDA
David Villareal	TDA, Austin