MEETING NOTES

Upper Colorado River Basin, Texas Clean Rivers Program
Water Quality Advisory Committee Meeting
April 10, 2025

Welcome & Introductions — *Nancy Blackwell, UCRA Chairperson*

The Curious Complexity of Frogs — *Dr. Michael Dixon, Associate Professor Curator Collection of Reptiles and Amphibians Angelo State Natural History Collections, ASU*

Dr. Dixon described the diversity of reproductive and parental behaviors among differing frog species in the Americas. His presentation also gave general information on the life cycle of frogs and the key role they play in our environment and world at large.

UCRA NPS Program Updates — *Scott McWilliams, General Manager, UCRA, Lexi Woods, Environmental Specialist, UCRA Ellen Groth, Administrative & Financial, UCRA*

Brady WPP Implementation Project, Phase II:

McWilliams reported that installation of the BMP is almost complete. Despite some challenges along the way, (mostly due to the groundwater elevation at the site), everything appears to be working well. Details about the installation process were provided and it is noted that the City of Brady staff was instrumental in the installation process. UCRA staff will be returning to Brady to finish the installation in a couple of weeks. Once the samplers are activated, sampling can begin with the first storm event. Groth reported that the E & O efforts are kicking off with a partnership campaign now that the BMP is near completion. A second stakeholder meeting is being planned for late summer.

Green Infrastructure Project:

Woods presented information on the Green Infrastructure Project - formerly Bank Stabilization. After COSA was unable to continue with the original project, UCRA was given an opportunity to come up with an alternative plan to address issues on the Concho. The new project goal is to create a green infrastructure road map for the downtown area along the river. An overview of green infrastructure and its benefits was provided. Woods showed the project area, the methodology for surveying and how results will be formulated. Staff is currently working on completion of the new QAPP, survey development and outreach efforts. Groth explained that part of the project will provide funding for educational signage and pet waste stations. One of the outreach opportunities will involve UCRA getting a sheep! The large sheep statues throughout the city are an integral part of the community and highly visible way to promote messaging for the project.

McWilliams expressed his appreciation to TCEQ Project Managers, Kristin DeBone & Savannah Hernandez, present at the meeting.

Community Outreach Initiatives — *Charlotte Anderson, Executive Director, KSAB*

KSAB's mission is to create awareness, maintain, clean, green and beautiful spaces through art, science and education. Results from the 2025 Annual Report were provided. Highlights include but are not limited to: an annual trash cleanup event, a tire drive, a hazardous waste collection event, tree distribution, awareness, education and outreach programming and other opportunities. KSAB's "Tires to Go" program won statewide recognition at the Texas Environmental Excellence Awards banquet for the community and civic category in

2024. Anderson announced she will be retiring next week and thanked the UCRA and its staff for the support they have given KSAB over the last three years. UCRA expressed gratitude in return to Anderson for her tireless vision to build up the community through her enthusiastic dedication to the vision of KSAB.

Water Quality Reports *Scott McWilliams & Lexi Woods, UCRA*

Woods provided an overview of water quality in the upper basin. She discussed the impaired water bodies from the 2024 TCEQ integrated report. Woods then presented the sample collection frequency metrics that UCRA has been recording since 2021, stating that there is little difference in sample frequency from last year to this year. Trends in water levels and specific conductivity in the upper basin reservoirs were shown at: Twin Buttes Reservoir, OH Ivie, OC Fisher Lake, EV Spence, Oak Creek, Brady Creek & Lake JB Thomas and discussed by McWilliams. Routine monitoring was addressed, and an upper basin monitoring site map was displayed with changes in the aquatic life monitoring sites from FY24 to FY26.

ALM & San Saba Bacterial Source Tracking *Zoe Nichols, Water Quality Coordinator II, LCRA*
Lexi Woods, UCRA

Aquatic Life Monitoring

ALM is a category of biological monitoring that is routine and conducted to give baseline data on environmental conditions and determine if criteria for aquatic-life use or dissolved-oxygen are being attained. The routine monitoring acquires baseline data on fish, benthic macroinvertebrates, and physical habitat and determine if designated or presumed ALU is being attained. ALM is conducted only during the index period of the year (March 15 – October 15). Habitat and ALM fish collection methods were discussed. The ALM stations selected in 2024 were on the Concho River & Dove Creek.

The Concho River is impaired for chlorophyll-a in water and has a “high” aquatic life use designation. Results concluded that the fish, habitat and bug scores during the non-critical index period were “high” and were “intermediate” for fish and bugs but remained “high” for habitat during the critical period (July 1 – September 30).

Dove Creek has no impairments, but the aquatic life use designation is “high”. During the critical period, the fish and habitat score was “high”, and the bug score was “exceptional”. The critical period reflected “high” fish and habitat scores, and the bug scores were “intermediate”. It was concluded that both sites met their aquatic life use score during the non-critical period and bug scores were decreased during the critical period. The HQI scores at each site were consistent.

Question: How are the sites chosen?
Sites are chosen if they provide the best variance. Habitats are also driven by water. Site access is a factor. If there are concerns, sites could be monitored again to determine a baseline.

Question: Where are you looking at Elm Creek?
In Ballinger, downstream of US 67.

Question: Do you count shellfish?
Not at this time; there isn’t a TCEQ protocol for freshwater mussels. The LCRA conducts separate freshwater mussel studies.

There was some further discussion LCRA’s Drought Contingency Plan (part of the LCRA Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances) to allow for relocation during extreme drought conditions.

San Saba Bacterial Source Tracking

Nichols gave a timeline for bacterial source tracking on the San Saba River. In 2012, TCEQ added a monitoring station twenty miles upstream of Station 12392 and in 2015, an informal LCRA study was conducted. The goal then was to use BST to identify the major source of bacterial loading. Identification and assessment of fecal pollution sources was the first step in targeting the impairment. At this point in the study, three sites and ten isolates were analyzed per site. Site map and graphs were shown to explain the study results. Data will be used as a preliminary step to address the impairment, to educate stakeholders at future WQAC meetings, and in BHR's and potential development of BMPs, bacterial TMDLs or WPPs to address the problem.

Texas Parks & Wildlife Updates and News — *Lynn Wright, Fisheries Management Supervisor Inland Fisheries Division, TPWD*

A press release was issued recently regarding the presence of zebra mussels in Lake Nasworthy. Veligers have been detected, and an adult zebra mussel shell was found at one location. It was determined that a breeding population is present, and it is a new infestation. While the lake is not currently densely populated, an increase in density is anticipated and signage is in place to increase awareness. Wright stated that TPWD does not have experience with infestation in a constant level lake and can't predict what the long term ramifications will be. He mentioned the possibility of a dense population enhancing light filtration which might cause an overgrowth of vegetation due to shallow bottom depths in Lake Nasworthy. The message is still "clean, drain and dry." Wright said the infestation could be a result of construction barges or it could be general boat traffic.

Question: What is CRMWD seeing in their area?
Alision Strube (CRMWD) said they are present in the O.H. Ivie pipeline from O.H. Ivie to Midland Odessa. They have also been found in other of CRMWD's earthen reservoirs. It is large operational issue for them as they have had to increase running pipeline pigs from once every two years to four times a year. They will see massive peaks and then they settle down.

Wright said they will likely work their way all the way down the Concho River, which will affect those irrigators who divert river water.

Comments, Discussion & Dismissal:
There was no further discussion or questions. Woods thanked everyone for participating both in person and online, especially those presenting, and the meeting was concluded.

These meeting notes provide a summary of the meeting and its presentations

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

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

List of Acronyms

UCRA	Upper Colorado River Authority
ASU	Angelo State University
NPS	Nonpoint source
WPP	Watershed Protection Program
BMP	Best Management Practices
E & O	Education and Outreach
COSA	City of San Angelo
QAPP	Quality Assurance Project Plan
TCEQ	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
KSAB	Keep San Angelo Beautiful
ALM	Aquatic Life Monitoring
LCRA	Lower Colorado River Authority
ALU	Aquatic Life Use
HQI	Habitat Quality Index
BST	Bacterial Source Tracking
WQAC	Water Quality Advisory Committee
BHR	Basin Highlights Report
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
WPP	Watershed Protection Plan
TPWD	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
CRMWD	Colorado River Municipal Water District

Upper Basin CRP 2025 WQAC Meeting Attendees

Dr. Michael Dixon	Angelo State University
Steven Hoelscher	Citizen
Donna Madrid	City of Colorado City
Corey Lelek	Concho River Conservancy, Citizen
Charlotte Anderson	COSA, KSAB
Alison Strube	CRMWD, Big Spring
Jesse Ortega	CRMWD, Big Spring
Lisa Benton	LCRA, Austin
Zoe Nichols	LCRA, Austin
Lucas Graunke	LCRA, Austin
Kelly Kukowski	LCRA, ELS Labs, Austin
Kyle Wright	NRCS USDA
Kristin DeBone	TCEQ, Austin
Savannah Hernandez	TCEQ, Austin
Robin Cypher	TCEQ, Austin
Kiran Freeman	TCEQ, Austin
Trent Jordan	TCEQ, San Angelo Region
Matthew Perez	TCEQ, San Angelo Region
Lynn Wright	TPWD, San Angelo
David Villareal	TDA, Austin
Nancy Blackwell	UCRA, San Angelo
Scott McWilliams	UCRA, San Angelo
Ellen Groth	UCRA, San Angelo
Lexi Woods	UCRA, San Angelo