

SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Brazos River Authority's (BRA) public outreach activities include involving our stakeholders in planning water quality and watershed protection activities in the Brazos Basin as well as education and outreach programs.

Brazos River Basin Clean Rivers Program Steering Committee

The size and diversity of issues across the Brazos River Watershed presents a challenge for the large group of stakeholders in our basin. The Brazos River Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Steering Committee participants represent diverse interests that are represented by government agencies, municipalities, industry, agriculture, organized local stakeholder groups, individuals, and environmental groups. The BRA holds an annual meeting that provides the Steering Committee with an opportunity to hear results of water quality monitoring and CRP special studies and gives them a forum where they may voice opinions, make recommendations and interact with other stakeholder participants and BRA staff. Steering Committee members also participate by providing input into planning water quality monitoring activities, prioritizing problems within the basin for prospective CRP special studies, identifying problem areas and developing actions to address potential problem areas in the basin.

How to get involved with the Brazos Basin CRP?

BRA promotes communication and participation from the general public. If you are interested in serving on the Brazos River Basin CRP Steering Committee, send an email addressed to jbarrett@brazos.org. Please indicate what topics you are interested in and provide an email address so that you can receive electronic notices of meetings and reports. In addition, the information you provide will help us to develop more effective meetings and provide direction to the program. We highly encourage participation in our meetings and input on water quality issues in the basin.

Watershed Protection Plan for Lake Granbury

In May 2002, a study began to monitor and assess water quality in the canals and coves of Lake Granbury. The canals are backwater areas that have little or no circulation and mix slowly with the main body of the reservoir. The result can mean stagnant conditions where pollution problems have the potential to persist. The on-site sewage facilities located along the many canals and coves of Lake Granbury may be a significant source of bacteria and nutrients to the reservoir and may cause water quality concerns in many of the canals. The BRA and TCEQ are currently developing a Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) to address the concerns that these canals present. The Lake Granbury WPP has a large, active stakeholder group with representatives from government agencies, local, state and federal government, municipalities, and other locally interested parties. In addition, a Technical Advisory Group made up of agency representatives provides technical input to the plan development. The Lake Granbury WPP is expected to continue for three to four years.

Watershed Protection Plan for Lake Granger and the San Gabriel River

In 2006 the BRA collaborated with the Little River-San Gabriel Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to receive an Environmental Protection Agency grant through the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board. The grant provided funding for the Authority to develop a WPP for the Lake Granger Watershed and funding for the SWCD to implement best management practices on agricultural lands.

The WPP will identify all water quality stressors in Lake Granger and the San Gabriel River Watershed, and attempt to develop management strategies to protect the long-term future of the watershed.

Watershed Protection Plan for the Leon River

The BRA was asked to undertake this project by members of the Leon River Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Stakeholder Committee. The BRA received overwhelming support for the project from individuals and interest groups in the watershed as well as a resolution from both Comanche and Hamilton County Commissioners Courts. In October 2007, the BRA began to facilitate stakeholder meetings, monitor water quality, evaluate water quality data and modeling scenarios, and work with local stakeholder groups in the Leon River Watershed to select appropriate management strategies to reduce bacteria and nutrient loading to the Leon River. The expected completion date of the Watershed Protection Plan is April 2009.

National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference

In 2001, the 77th Texas Legislature passed HB 2912 requiring that all data used by TCEQ for commission decisions regarding permits or other authorizations, compliance matters, enforcement actions, or corrective actions be from an accredited environmental laboratory.

HB 2912 also transferred authority for environmental laboratory accreditation and drinking water certification from Texas Department of Health to the TCEQ, and required that the state's environmental testing laboratory accreditation program be consistent with National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC). This transfer of authority became effective on September 1, 2001.

Prior to NELAC, the existing state programs varied widely in scope and requirements. The NELAC Standard provides uniform requirements for accreditation of environmental laboratories to ensure that decisions being made are based on data that is scientifically accurate.

The deadline for all environmental laboratories that submit data to the TCEQ to become NELAC accredited is June 1, 2008. Since 2006, the BRA's Environmental Services Laboratory has been working diligently on obtaining its NELAC accreditation. Laboratory personnel have attended NELAC training workshops to prepare for the NELAC accreditation. The BRA's Environmental Services Laboratory has submitted the application, which includes the completion

of proficiency testing for all parameters that are analyzed under the Clean Rivers Program and are awaiting results of the on-site assessment conducted by the TCEQ.

Brazos Basin CRP Website

The BRA maintains both a river authority website (<http://www.brazos.org>) and a CRP website (<http://www.brazos.org/crpHome.asp>) as a mechanism to keep the public informed via the internet. These websites provide information on topics of interest in the basin. The websites provide links to a range of information, including:

Water quality data

Water quality data generated by the BRA is available in a searchable format and can be easily downloaded to an Excel file. A link to the TCEQ data website is also provided.

Special Studies Reports

Available for download in .pdf format.

Quality Assurance Information

The Quality Assurance Project Plan for CRP and Data Management Plan are available for download in .pdf format.

Schedule of Monitoring Activities

A link is provided to the coordinated monitoring website, which contains a list of the water quality monitoring locations in the state.

Information on Non-CRP Water Quality Projects

Information is provided on a variety of water quality related projects sponsored by the BRA that are not conducted as part of the CRP.

River and Reservoir Levels

An interactive map provides information on USGS Stations in the basin, flood stage at each station and current flow at each station.

Current Drought Status

An updated Palmer Drought Index map is provided along with copies of the BRA's Drought Contingency Plan and Water Conservation Plan.

Water Supply Data

Information is provided on reservoir locations, elevations, and capacities and surface area.

Technical Assistance Program

Information is provided on services offered by the BRA to municipalities and utility districts in the basin, including: Industrial

Pretreatment Programs, Regulatory Reviews, and Operations Assistance.

Completion of the 2007 Basin Summary Report

The BRA was proud to present its 2007 Basin Summary Report. The report was in a completely different format from previous summary reports. After discussing what would be the most useable format for a report of this magnitude, and after considering usability, development and distribution costs, BRA decided to go with an all-electronic report format (interactive CD) with a companion booklet that included the Executive Summary and a user's guide for the CD.

Response to the report has been overwhelmingly positive. Users are saying it is the most user-friendly water quality report they have used. They like the fact that they can print any maps they want from the report. The data tables are easy to read and easily printed. BRA plans to produce all future reports in this same type of format. A copy of the report is available online at:

http://www.brazos.org/BasinSummary_2007.asp.

Clean Texas Marina Program

The Clean Texas Marina Program was established in 2001 in partnership with the marina industry, federal and state agencies and civic organizations. The program is coordinated by the Small Business and Environmental Assistance Division of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality through a collaborative partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Marina Association of Texas, Texas A&M University Sea Grant Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, General Land Office (Coastal), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other local agencies.

The goal of the Clean Texas Marina Program is to provide technical assistance to implement pollution prevention programs, improve compliance with environmental regulations and enhance water quality. The program also promotes clean boating public education and outreach efforts to promote improved sewage handling and other environmental impacts.

The BRA has administered this program for TCEQ at Possum Kingdom Reservoir and Lake Granbury since 2004. To date, six marinas on Possum Kingdom Lake and two marinas on Lake Granbury have been certified as Clean Marinas. Currently, one additional marina on Lake Granbury has pledged to join the program and is in the process of making necessary repairs and upgrades. Upon completion of upgrades and repairs, they will have a confirmation inspection.

Clean Water Sticker Program

The Clean Water Sticker Program is a legislatively-mandated program aimed at reducing sewage inputs into freshwater lakes from boats and sewage pump-out facilities. In 2004, the TCEQ delegated authority to the BRA for performing annual inspection and certification activities for sewage pump-out facilities at marinas on Possum Kingdom Reservoir and Lake Granbury. Since the

delegation, the BRA has inspected seven pump-out stations annually at Possum Kingdom Reservoir and two at Lake Granbury. During these inspections, Authority staff have identified compromised pump-out systems and provided technical assistance to the systems owners to bring them into compliance and eliminate the release of sewage from these systems.

Beginning in 2007, the BRA has also been designated authority by TCEQ to perform Clean Water Sticker inspections and certify that boats with onboard marine sanitation devices are not capable of discharging sewage into the environment. Boats subject to this program include: houseboats, boats longer than 26 feet with permanent sleeping quarters, and any boat with a permanently installed marine sanitation device. The goal of the boat inspection is similar to that for the pump-out stations, to reduce sewage discharged from boats that may degrade water quality and to ensure that designated vessels are in compliance with federal and state laws.