

Cypress Basin Clean Rivers Program

3 28 2018 Stakeholders meeting

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 10 am at NETMWD Executive Offices in Hughes Springs Texas. There were 27 attendees present and Rebecca DuPont, TCEQ Clean Rivers PM and Michelle Blair, TCEQ SWQM leader were in attendance.

Walt Sears, NETMWD General Manager thanked everyone for attending and asked everyone to introduce themselves and share their interest in the Basin activities.

The first presentation was the 2017 Basin Highlight Report update by Randy Rushing with WMS. Randy went over the 2014 IR, new listings, listings that had dropped off and sampling locations in the Basin. He mentioned the ongoing battles with aquatic invasive species such as Zebra Mussels and Giant Salvinia. He also talked about our upcoming Basin Summary Report for FY 2019 explaining that would be the time when we compile all available data and look at trend analysis for things such as DO, Bacteria, etc.

Keith Cook with the Corps of Engineers gave an update on activities in and around Lake O' the Pines (LOP). As a result of flooding in 2015-16 there were a number of trees killed due to inundation for a long period of time. The Corps has been doing a salvage harvest and is in the process of replanting these areas with water tolerant species such as Oak and Cypress. They no longer plant Green Ash due to the presence of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) being discovered recently in East Texas. Keith talked about the dewatering / inspection of the Spillway on LOP. Over 100 paddlefish were recovered during the dewatering and relocated downstream. Over 1000 fish of all species were seined and relocated as well as a number of mussels.

The third presentation was by Laura-Ashley Overdyke. She is the new Executive Director of the Caddo Lake Institute (CLI), a position she has held for 8 months. CLI continues to work in the environmental community in our Basin. They are involved with water and air quality issues throughout our area. Laura-Ashley lives in Shreveport, grew up on Caddo Lake and has as one of her goals to educate and encourage more people on the Louisiana side of that lake to become more involved with issues concerning our Basin. CLI continues to be a partner with NETMWD and USACE on a number of projects in the watershed. Environmental Flows, Paddlefish restoration, Nutrient loading and overall water quality will continue to be a main focus of that organization going forward

Tim Bister, District Fisheries Biologist with TPWD was next. His staff works on all the lakes in the Cypress Basin looking at fish populations and habitats. . Tim gave a lake by lake update on activities and the amounts of each invasive species on the lakes and any control efforts that took place within the last year. Caddo Lake has the most problem with aquatic invasives due to the large amount of Giant Salvinia on that lake. Lake O the Pines has for the first time has an established population of Giant Salvinia. The area impacted is the upper lake upstream of the Hwy 155 Bridge. NETMWD, USACE and TPWD have an

MOU in place for aquatic herbicide applications and were able to spray about 50 acres in September and October of 2017. The infestation was brought in on boat trailers from other lakes but thanks to USACE personnel who have regularly patrolled all the ramps at the lake since the 2006 infestation at Caddo Lake, this is the first time it has become established in LOP. It is hoped that the severe winter we had will reduce or eliminate what remains on LOP.

Mike Montagne with USFWS presented information about the ongoing Paddlefish restoration project going on below LOP spillway in Big Cypress. During the dewatering of the Spillway, USFWS was able to implant transmitters in 15 large paddlefish and release them downstream. These fish were originally released a number of years ago but their transmitter batteries had died. These new ones should last about 4 years. USFWS and TPWD has an agreement to release paddlefish into Caddo Lake each year for the next 10 years. They also have new acoustic transmitters available that will last 10 years so they plan to recapture some additional paddlefish next year and implant those as well.

Robert Speight gave the group an update on the Implementation Plan of the TMDL for Dissolved Oxygen on Lake O the Pines. Robert reported that as part of this I Plan, NETMWD is continuing to administer OSSF regulations and septic permitting in Upshur, Morris, Marion and Cass counties. Robert also shared the results of the 2017 Phosphorus monitoring. The Total Phosphorus Load Agreement is a contract between the Cities and Industry with WWTPs that flow in above LOP, NETMWD and TCEQ. The contract states all the WWTP's must reduce their phosphorus output by 56% of their permitting amount and will submit data to NETMWD on their flow and Total Phosphorus releases monthly and NETMWD will track these releases to ensure compliance with the TP reductions outlined in the TMDL. Robert showed the spreadsheet used in this tracking. The data shared by the entities shows an overall reduction in Total Phosphorus well beyond the requirements of the TPLA. Most of this is due to the improvements that Pilgrims has made to its WWTP. Two of the entities had levels that were above their allocated limit. Walt Sears led a discussion on how the stakeholders wanted to address this situation because the TPLA stipulates that noncompliance can result in fees being charge to those entities per pound of phosphorus they are over their limit. The consensus of the group present was to reach out to the cities and work with them to see if they can get their numbers down by the end of 2018, letting them know the fees would be assessed if they were not in compliance by that time

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 pm