

Cypress Basin Clean Rivers Program

3 24 2022 Stakeholders meeting

Minutes

This meeting was a hybrid, both in person and virtually via zoom. It started at 10am

Robert Speight welcomed all the participants and Randy Rushin gave a quick tutorial of the features of Zoom in case anyone was not familiar with them.

There were 15 people who registered for the Zoom meeting ahead of time and 14 who attended in person including Jenna Wadman, TCEQ CRP Project Manager for the Cypress Basin.

The first presentation was by Mandi Gordon, University of Houston Clear Lake. She gave a presentation on her work for the Comptroller's office looking for Western Chicken Turtles and Alligator Snapping Turtles in East Texas. Both species are being considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Mandi is using a variety of detection technics such as visual using binoculars, trapping, eDNA and canine scent detection. Her team is working in the Cypress Basin as well as in the Sulphur, Sabine and Neches basins.

Weldon Dent with Texas Forest Service was up next. His presentation was on the need for prescribed fire on the landscape and funding opportunities available in the Cypress and Neches Basins.

Randy Rushin with Water Monitoring Solutions went over our Basin Highlight Report in detail. The BHR is longer than normal this year due to the reporting on the recent pH studies in Lake O the Pines. The pH study report is in 2 parts. One is utilizing the data collected at our constant monitoring stations at the US259 bridge and at our water intake. The second part is using data collected from our 24 hour diel study where we put sondes out for 24-48 hours at locations in the mid and lower lake sections. One was placed at the City of Longview intake and one at the swim beach near the dam. The results of these studies showed among other things a correlation that super saturated DO and high pH occurred at the same time during the study. For more in-depth information, please see the draft BHR on our website, netmwd.com

Tim Bister, District Fisheries Leader for Texas Parks and Wildlife gave a presentation next. His staff works on all the lakes in the Cypress Basin to maintain and improve fish habitat. Tim gave a lake-by-lake update on the status of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in the basin as well as other activities of note. 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 a smaller but well-established population of Giant Salvinia now. Ellison reservoir and Town Lake in Mt. Pleasant are the latest to have Giant Salvinia.

Robert Speight gave the group an update on the Total Phosphorus Load Agreement. The Total Phosphorus Load Agreement is a contract between the Cities and Industry with WWTPs that flow in above LOP, as well as NETMWD and TCEQ. This contract states all the WWTP's must reduce their phosphorus output by 56% of their permitted amount and will submit data to NETMWD on their flow and Total Phosphorus releases each year and NETMWD will track these releases to ensure compliance

with the TP reductions outlined in the TMDL. Robert presented a graph showing the last 5 years of data for each plant. 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 \$11 Million worth of improvements that Pilgrims has made to its WWTP. As had happened last year, three of the entities had levels that were above their allocated limit. Walt Sears, NETMWD executive director, led a discussion on the program and how the Pilgrims efforts had gone above and beyond their requirements resulting in an overall reduction of TP in excess of 78%. Walt relayed to the group that our Board of Directors would take up the subject of the overages at their next meeting to determine what actions to take.

Next, Robert gave a breakdown of the Onsite Septic Facilities program that NETMWD administers for Marion, Upshur, Morris and Cass counties.

Robert then opened the floor for questions and or comments.

Several comments relating to the success of the Phosphorus agreement were verbalized.