

Nolan Creek WPP Advisory Stakeholder Meeting – Minutes

Date: Tuesday March 6, 2018

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:10 pm

Location: Transportation Building – Killeen, Texas

Participants:

TIAER – Anne McFarland, Leah Taylor

City of Harker Heights – Mark Hyde, Joe Hines, Richard Fierro, Billy Cude

City of Belton – Jeremy Allamon, Angellia Points

City of Killeen – Kristina Ramirez, Israel Garza

TCEQ – Megan Henson

TSSWCB – Mitch Conine

Bell County WCID #6 – Glen Grandy

Texas A&M Forest Service – Lori Hazel

Fort Hood – Riki Young, Gerald Hawkins

Yalgo Engineering – Scott Brooks

Nolan Creek Farm – Diane Connell

TPWD – Jennifer Bronson-Warren

Topics Discussed: Focus – Discussion of Draft Watershed Action Plan (WAP) – copies distributed at the meeting but also available via the project’s website

(<http://nebula.wsimg.com/d54bd35767bb75c8abcc813c8ac263e5?AccessKeyId=D291B218237505B931BF&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>)

Watershed Action Plan vs the Watershed Protection Plan – As there has been some confusion, Anne McFarland with TIAER presented the difference between the WAP and the WPP. The watershed action plan (WAP) is the backbone of the watershed protection plan (WPP) presenting the management measures the group thinks need to be done to reach the goal of getting the bacteria levels below the primary contact recreation standard (126 cfu/100 mL). The full WPP will also include “front matter” giving more background characterizing the watershed and evaluation of sources. The WPP also requires an ending chapter outlining water quality monitoring plan to evaluate effectiveness.

The question was asked, “What could happen if we don’t get the WPP in place?”

- The WPP is a voluntary plan. If it does not work long term, a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) could be developed and implemented in its place. However, if the partnership is showing positive involvement in the planning and implementation process, a TMDL is less likely.
- A WPP mainly addresses non-point source pollution (NPS), while a TMDL focuses more on regulated sources and typically comes with permit implications.

Outline of the WAP –

TIAER provided a brief outline of the WAP.

- Section 2 – Provides the management measures broken out into general categories. Human sources were listed first, because they are more prominent health risk. Non-human sources, such as pet waste, were then listed. (*Note: This listing does not indicate a*

priority listing for implementation. The priority for implementation [high, medium or low] is addressed in Table 5-1 starting on p. 53)

- Section 3 – Educational Outreach – (EPA requirement)
 - Discusses ways educational outreach can be addressed for each management measure
 - There are a lot of educational programs that could be put on in the watershed – AgriLife Extension could help with many of these.
- Section 4 – Discussed the financial and technical assistance that is out there to help.
- Section 5 – Overall schedule and summary table

Provides measures that TIAER has heard from the group that people would like to see implemented in the watershed.

TIAER advised the group that if there are things the municipalities or other entities have planned, these can be added to the WAP. If in the WPP, this could help in leveraging funding. For example, the City of Nolanville asked to include the addition of Bioswales.

- Question: Can it read so the Bioswales can pertain to any entity or municipality, not limited only to Nolanville?
 - TIAER Response: Yes, bioswales are included under the management measures. Appendix C just lays out Nolanville’s specific plan.
 - TCEQ indicated that the WAP can have specific and general location(s). If each city has a general area they would like to add Bioswales, it can be added into the plan. The specific locations do not need to be given at this time.
 - TCEQ also indicated that cities can apply individually. An application does not have to be watershed-wide, but can be specific to a location within the watershed.

TIAER advised that it was very important to receive feedback to make the WAP as complete as possible. TIAER provided a goal for a draft WPP ready for the group’s review by summer.

- Question: Two recent groups have come to the Nolan Creek Farms to survey about flooding. Is this part of anything this group is working on?
 - TIAER Response: Yes, the Central Texas Council of Government (CTCOG) has a flood planning grant that is being worked on to see how they can minimize flooding in the future. This is given a “nod” in the WAP on page 26 (reference of the flooding management going on in the watershed).
- Question: The section on reservoirs seems to just address Soil Conservation Reservoirs. Could verbiage be added to include private, high-hazard dams?
 - TIAER Response: Yes, we will look at the wording and make sure it is inclusive to address management measures for SCS reservoirs and private dams.

TIAER provided examples of types of feedback received already received on the WAP:

- From Bell County Health Department regarding the OSSFs
 - Clarification of terminology
 - Hard failure vs soft failure
 - Centralized vs decentralized waste systems
- Suggested Additions for Others

- Include aerial assessment using drones to identify illegal dumping areas prior to trash pickup efforts along the creek
- Example mentioned before regarding City of Nolanville and its proposed Bioswales

Stakeholders discussed the amount of illegal dumping in areas:

- Lots of dumping at Levi Crossing – When a big flood comes and it washes it all down.
 - Question: How can we integrate something in the plan to eliminate the illegal dumping?
 - Response: Illegal dumping is addressed to a certain level (page 15) with signage and clean up to address more with public awareness.
 - It was a stakeholder’s opinion that enforcement will be the only thing to solve this problem. The stakeholder suggested using game cameras to help the sheriff’s office with prosecution.
 - Also noted was that the fine in Texas for illegal dumping was just increased.
- City of Killeen noted seeing a reduction in illegal dumping when cameras were used.
- Harker Heights added that their transfer station is free.

City of Killeen – Under items for wildlife – there is signage that states do not feed, has the group talked with entities to remove signs that promote feeding?

- No, the group has not. Believe that signage & feeding stations have been removed.

Bioswales

- Question: What is the typical percent reduction?
 - TIAER Response: Do not know but could get answer
 - TCEQ advised that Bill Carter would be a good contact for this.
 - Harker Heights – Bioswales require long term maintenance. If it is not maintained or taken care of, it could potentially fail.
 - TCEQ – The average Bioswales commitment is 10 years for any project funded via TCEQ. Anyone working with Bioswales signs up to operate and maintain them appropriately and work with TCEQ. The percent reduction really depends on the area from which water funnels into the bioswale and the volume you are trying to filter. This would be something we would need to get with an environmental engineer to help determine and provide details on operation and maintenance.
 - City of Killeen – Providing guidelines for structures, such as bioswales, is something entities could work towards and adopt for region. Good examples of such guidelines are available from the North Central Texas Council of Governments and the San Antonio River Authority, so there are already guidance documents out there that could be revised and adopted.

How to Implement the WPP

TIAER emphasized the important missing piece in moving forward toward implementation is funding. This is a somewhat unique watershed with multiple entities/municipalities. How do we move forward with organizing funding for implementation? This is something to start thinking

about as it will take time, if funding is to be requested via municipalities or other government bodies.

- An example was provide of how the Plum Creek watershed was able to organize under an Interlocal Agreement among the various counties and cities to aid in implementing its WPP. Anne McFarland with TIAER indicated that she was not familiar with the details of this agreement, but that it is a potential example to consider. (see <http://plumcreek.tamu.edu/wpp/> for a copy of this Interlocal Agreement).
- Matching funds through TCEQ's 319 Clean Water Act funds are an excellent opportunity to fund a watershed coordinator.
 - A 40% match would be needed for this position – Ideally, the person should be local to the watershed. There is a question then of where to house this person, so he/she represents the watershed and not just one given entity and who that person then reports to.
- Question: *(Based on the timeframe given in the WAP for management practices) Are we committing to 10 years?*
- Response: Each 319 grant is for 3 years – would be nice to see a 10 year commitment for the coordinator. These 319 grants can rollover into new grant funding under the same program.

TIAER – The CWA 319 RFP through TCEQ should be available this summer, likely in June. Working with the municipalities may take several months to get everyone to come to an agreement, so this may not be an option at this time but something to consider in the future. We will need to keep this going in order to make progress.

TCEQ – The CWA 319 funding is an annual RFP that generally comes out in June.

Harker Heights – How would we set this up for financing? By larger area? More stream access?

- City of Killeen – previous groups have set up by:
 1. Contribution area
 2. Population
 3. Impact (*Bacteria amounts*)

Harker Heights – How do we know what other management costs are?

- Varying costs depend on efforts chosen and what is covered under the MS4 permits, thus, already being done. This is up to municipalities to use resources available to them. City of Killeen provided an example of how they use volunteers for stream clean up (low cost).
 - Important to look at hidden costs such as tipping and dumping fee once trash is collected for practices such as stream cleanups.

Harker Heights - Estimated cost items – Is there a way to pay for these and how many are just associated with this process so we can find the “real dollar”?

- May not be high because some practices are already covered under MS4 permits
- TCEQ noted: Dollar figures are estimates – Once the group gets into writing the grant, numbers can be drilled down.
 - May want to keep prices high because there is a cost to even just writing a plan.

- Example noted – Lampasas WPP had each entity provide what they are each doing and did get into more detail on costs. Suggested that TIAER look into the Lampasas WPP to see how its budget might aid the Nolan WPP process.

Question: Who does the watershed coordinator report to?

- This must be defined among the group. The coordinate could have someone local to report to but also, if funded under the 319 funds, would report or refer to the TCEQ project manager.
 - What about the CENTEX group?
 - TIAER will explore that option.

It was suggested to approach AgriLife in Temple regarding housing a watershed coordinator. While Temple is not in the watershed, it is very close. Other suggestions included:

- CTCOG housed a watershed coordinator once. Could housing another be a possibility? It would be “mutual territory.”
- Central Texas A&M campus – There are other properties that could be “neutral” housing options. AgriLife office in Belton, Forest Service, all part of the A&M System with plenty of placement options.

City of Belton – spoke on understanding and supporting the idea of watershed health and reiterated that their city is already doing many of these implementation measures. They asked if they approve the WPP, what are the implications to the City? Belton expressed that they have limited funds that they need to allocate other places, because they are already allocating so much to help improve the water quality. Belton also expressed that they are nervous to put more bureaucracy in place and do not want to make it so hard on themselves.

- TIAER’s feedback – The WPP is a voluntary effort, but it still takes money for implementation. The idea is not to duplicate efforts but add and also look at alternative (*grants*) for funding. As mentioned previously, perhaps the group can work out a formula, so that the City of Belton does not put in as much? There will need to be a “sales pitch” put forth to the various city councils for any type of funding.
- City of Killeen agrees and adds that each city needs to go back and take a look at what they are all doing. Nolan Creek has been on the Texas 303(d) List since 1996. A TMDL is sitting imminent. WPP is a way to say “this is what we want” rather than “this is what you will get.”

TPWD suggested that the group take a look at what state funded programs are already in place that could be brought in.

- An example dealing with water quantity is SWIFT funding through Texas Water Development Board. In this case, it is important for measures to be part of the regional water plan as regional water boards have a lot of “power” to then aid in getting these measures funded.

TIAER asked work with municipalities to break down their budget and identify programs and practices already being implemented and related costs.

Question: If a specific city, say Harker Heights, does not buy into the plan, how will this affect financing and implementation of the plan?

- Response from TCEQ: This could put a large block on implementation with grant funding.

Harker Heights – A regional plan is the way to go. Clearly what we are doing now is not working, and we don't want TCEQ to tell us what we have to do.

A stakeholder posed that he has trouble understanding this “shotgun” approach and expressed that the problem (where/what kind of bacteria) still has not been clearly defined. Putting resources everywhere is wasteful. The source needs to be identified first, then put funds in addressed and eliminating the source. The number one priority for money should be spent on is microbial source tracking to define the source.

- TCEQ - Because this is a NPS issue, one cannot pinpoint an exact source. This is why everyone needs to go back to their MS4s to see what is already funded so measures are not duplicated. Part of the work of a watershed coordinator is to develop funding to put new management measures in place. It could be a little of everything causing the problem. This is why there are so many options, so the group needs to prioritize but not eliminate any options.

The previous “characterization project” has all the information regarding sources ([http://tn.tarleton.edu/docs/nolan_creek/publications/SourceSurvey_Report_\(revDec2015\)FINAL.pdf](http://tn.tarleton.edu/docs/nolan_creek/publications/SourceSurvey_Report_(revDec2015)FINAL.pdf)). The modeling information that shows linkages to sources is lacking in the WAP but will be part of the WPP.

TCEQ – There will be milestones and adaptive management systems built into the final WPP. The WPP should be revisited at least every three years if not annually. This allows the group to reassess what is working and what is not.

TIAER announced that it was past noon. They will try to follow up with everyone individually. If there are any thoughts or anything else missed to please let them know via email or let us know and we will set up a visit to talk one-on-one.

Meeting adjourned at 12:10pm.