



UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY

Bacteria Reduction Plan for the
Upper Guadalupe River

Communication Plan

Final
July 20, 2012

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Introduction

As the lead surface water steward for the Upper Guadalupe River (Segment 1806), the Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA) applied for and received a funding through the Clean Water Act §319(h) program administered by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to implement management measures outlined in the Implementation Plan for One Total Maximum Daily Load for Bacteria in Guadalupe River Above Canyon Lake (Segment 1806). The goal of this Bacteria Reduction Plan is to put best management practices (BMPs) in place to reduce bacteria loading in the impaired reaches of the Upper Guadalupe River.

Background

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 303(d) List prepared by TCEQ identified reaches of the Upper Guadalupe River, in Kerr County, as occasionally exceeding the contact recreation criterion for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) bacteria. The Upper Guadalupe River is an urbanized watershed located wholly within Kerr County.

There exist few known point source discharges in the Upper Guadalupe River, and nonpoint sources are suspected to contribute the majority of the bacterial load causing the impairment. Data and information about the relative contribution of bacteria from animal sources and other nonpoint sources has been developed by Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) activities conducted by the TCEQ and added to through the TMDL Implementation Plan Project.

The TMDL is a requirement of the federal Clean Water Act designed to determine the capacity of the planning area streams to assimilate bacterial loadings and allocate the allowable bacterial loading to contributing sources in the watershed. A TMDL identifies possible sources and causes of water quality impairments and utilizes a water quality model to establish bacterial load allocations and respective load reductions. The TMDL process also requires the development of an I-Plan that identifies the appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) to achieve the desired load reductions and provides a detailed plan for implementation.

TCEQ adopted a TMDL for the Upper Guadalupe River in July 2007. The EPA approved the TMDL in September 2007. Seeking local input, TCEQ awarded a Clean Water Act §319(h) grant to UGRA to assist in developing an Implementation Plan. This process was initiated in 2008 with the goal of facilitating local participation in developing an Implementation Plan for the Upper Guadalupe River TMDL as a locally-derived solution to a regional problem. The public was engaged in this process through various outreach activities including public service announcements, publications, information booths, summary reports and a stakeholder group derived of local participants interested in the water quality of the Guadalupe River. The local participation was crucial in developing, selecting, and designing the BMPs recommended for inclusion in the

Implementation Plan. UGRA successfully completed the Implementation Plan Project in August of 2010 and TCEQ approved an Implementation Plan in August 2011 that was based nearly entirely on the recommendations developed by the stakeholder group.

UGRA applied for a second Clean Water Act §319(h) grant to implement the BMPs identified in the Implementation Plan. This project called the Bacteria Reduction Plan was initiated in October 2011 and will conclude in August 2014. The project tasks include project administration, water quality assessment, bird deterrent BMPs, pet waste BMPs, waterfowl management BMPs, on-site sewage facility BMPs, stormwater runoff BMPs, public participation, and a project summary report.

Goals

To facilitate local participation in executing the Bacteria Reduction Plan for the Upper Guadalupe River and to increase the public's awareness of the problem of *E. coli* bacteria pollution in the watershed. Additionally, local participation in developing, selecting, designing, and implementing control and management measures increases the level of success and acceptance of implementation.

Stakeholders

As the grant recipient, UGRA Board of Directors identified a list of potential stakeholders representing diverse interests. The stakeholders roles are to stay involved in the project's progress through communications and periodic meetings, assist in the dissemination of information to the public and where appropriate assist with the implementation of the BMPs outlined in the Bacteria Reduction Plan. Their participation is critical to the success of the Bacteria Reduction Plan and the TCEQ Implementation Plan.

Representatives of the following groups and organizations will be contacted and asked to participate.

1. City of Kerrville Parks and Recreation Department
2. City of Kerrville Public Works Department
3. Comanche Trace Homeowner's Association
4. Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority
5. Headwaters Groundwater Conservation District (GCD) Board Member
6. Hill Country Flyfishers
7. Hill Country Master Naturalists
8. Kerr County Commissioner's Court
9. Kerr County Environmental Health Department
10. Kerr County Soil and Water Conservation District
11. Kerrville Convention and Visitor's Bureau
12. Kerrville Kayak and Canoe
13. Rio Robles Homeowner's Association

14. River Guide Village Professional Campus
15. Riverhill Homeowner's Association
16. Riverside Nature Center
17. Texas AgriLife Extension Service
18. Texas Department of Transportation
19. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
20. Texas Stream Team Kerr County Volunteer
21. Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)
22. UGRA Board Director
23. UGRA Volunteer Summer Study Volunteer
24. USDA NRCS

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Stakeholders will serve as an Advisory Committee to:

- Provide input and feedback on the Bacteria Reduction Plan activities;
- Stay informed and apprised of all Bacteria Reduction Plan activities; and,
- Assist in disseminating accurate information on the Bacteria Reduction Plan.

Public Participation

A public participation program will be conducted to keep the public informed of the activities and progress of the project. The program will be used to enhance partner, stakeholder, and public understanding of the Bacteria Reduction Plan and encourage their participation in implementing and maintaining appropriate control measures. UGRA has identified a stakeholder list composed of partners, special interest groups and interested citizens and will utilize the communication plan to disseminate information. The basis of the stakeholder list will be the stakeholder group established during the TMDL Implementation Plan Project. The current stakeholder group will meet to be informed of the project's progress and as a component of the communications plan, will be asked to help disseminate information to the public.

Task: Public Participation

Objective: A public participation program will be conducted to keep the public informed of the activities and progress of the project and establish a system to foster their input and involvement.

Communication Plan – UGRA will prepare an effective communication plan to inform and educate the public about nonpoint source pollution and solicit their input. The plan will be implemented through workshops, public meetings, emails, public service announcements, newspaper articles and/or press releases.

Stakeholder List - UGRA will identify potential partners, stakeholders, special interest groups and interested citizens and utilize the communication plan to solicit input. The basis of the stakeholder list will be the stakeholder group established during the TMDL Implementation Project.

Public Outreach and Stakeholder Participation - UGRA will host annual stakeholder meetings and communicate through the methods outlined in the communication plan to obtain stakeholder input and convey study results. Additional activities may be engaged to provide information about the project to the public. Updates will be provided for the TCEQ web site and the UGRA web site. Success will also be measured by public participation and change in attitude and behaviors, as indicated by the attendance rosters at meetings and results of public awareness surveys (draft survey is included in the Bacteria Reduction Plan for the Upper Guadalupe River Quality Assurance Project Plan).

UGRA Publication Update – UGRA publications will include information regarding the ongoing BMP implementation work. This will include the annual Clean Rivers Program Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority Basin Highlights Report.

UGRA Web Site Updates - UGRA will update the agency website to include implementation progress and assessment activities.

Outreach

Providing timely, accurate information to the public is essential. Local media is anticipated to play a major role in information dissemination.

- UGRA staff will serve as the contact for all media inquiries and releases.
- Local media including newspapers, cable television, and radio stations will be kept apprised of project progress and stakeholder activities.

- Current information regarding the TMDL Implementation Plan, Bacteria Reduction Plan, as well as, background information will be posted on the UGRA website.
- UGRA will contribute an update on Bacteria Reduction Plan activities to the annual Clean Rivers Program Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority Basin Highlights Report and other applicable publications.
- UGRA will provide information on the Bacteria Reduction Plan at any venues where it maintains an information booth.

Bacteria Reduction Plan Communication Flow Chart

UGRA project managers will act as a hub for communication regarding Bacteria Reduction Plan activities. Communications will be transmitted primarily via email, but additional forms of communication may be employed as well.

