

# **Arroyo Colorado Education and Outreach Workgroup Formed Under The Arroyo Colorado Watershed Steering Committee**

Meeting Summary – September 21, 2004

## **ATTENDING WORK GROUP COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Paul H. Bergh  
Don Hockaday  
Mark Lingo  
Tony Reisinger  
Roy Rodriguez  
Joe Hinojosa  
Sandra DeLeon  
Laura De La Garza

Present at Austin through video-conferencing:

Kris Shipman  
Earlene Lambeth

## **CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS:**

Laura De La Garza opened the sixth meeting of the Education and Outreach Work Group that was located in the Board Room of the Science and Technology Bldg on the Texas State Technical College (TSTC) campus in Harlingen, Texas. Video-conferencing was set up for participants through the Austin TCEQ and TSTC.

The minutes from the previous meetings on June 15, 2004 and July 20, 2004 were approved.

The next item on the agenda was a presentation by Joe Hinojosa, Environmental Services Director of the City of Brownsville. Mr. Hinojosa talked about the Lower Rio Grande Valley TPDES Storm Water Task Force and their work with Phase II communities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. He also talked about the MS4 Permit and their requirement for outreach and education. Part of their outreach and education includes the “No la Riegues” campaign. Mr. Hinojosa showed the public service announcements (PSAs) made for television and stated that they were currently being shown on local stations. Work is being done to reach a broader audience. Currently, the PSAs are only in Spanish however there are plans to include English sub-titles. Final discussions included the opportunities for collaboration between the Storm Water Task Force and the Arroyo Colorado Group. We agreed to work together on non-point source pollution outreach and education efforts.

Roy Rodriguez was introduced as a new group member. He is one of the valley's most experienced master naturalists and is currently working with the Rensselaerville Institute (RI). Mr. Rodriguez discussed some of the RI's activities in the Valley including their blind birding program and small community wastewater project. RI had also just received 15 kayaks and that they were obtained to give more people access to the Valley waterways and outdoor natural resources. We discussed the need for additional access points on the Arroyo and identified potential boat put-in sites at McKelvey and Ramsey Parks in Harlingen. We acknowledged that there is lots of room for coordination and collaboration between the Arroyo watershed group and the RI in regards to outreach and education and wastewater issues.

Our discussions lead to the listing of groups such as the Lions Club, Texas Master Naturalist, the Rotary Club, the Arroyo Audubon Society, the Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Realtors, and the Sierra Club as groups that we need to present our Arroyo WPP project to. We discussed the need for a "canned" presentation. Ms. De La Garza said that she had put one together from the PowerPoint presentations Roger Miranda had done and that Amy Winters, Director of the World Birding Center was working on a couple of other presentations, one designed for school children and another for the general public. Ms. De La Garza requested volunteers to assist in getting the word out. Don Hockaday and Tony Reisinger identified themselves as available to do presentations. Paul Bergh with Rio Radio offered duplication services including the reproduction of CDs or DVDs and the use of their equipment.

Kris Shipman of the TPWD was introduced and asked to discuss the Coastal Expos planned for this area. Ms. Shipman talked about the McAllen Wild Walk scheduled for October 7-8, 2004. They would have 6 activities and that they expected at least 3,000 kids. We acknowledge the Arroyo O&E participation and that Ms. De La Garza would be there with the travel display and brochures. We discussed the possibility of conducting an informal survey to determine people's awareness and knowledge of the Arroyo Colorado. Ms. De La Garza agreed to work with the survey produced by Don Hockaday and distribute it to the group for comment. Earlene Lambeth volunteered to gather and send TCEQ educational materials that would be distributed at the event. We asked if attending group members would be able to participate. No one would be available at the scheduled times and we discussed the recruitment of other volunteers. Ms. Shipman said that she would talk with the area Master Naturalist. Coastal Expos are also scheduled for November 13-14 during the Harlingen Birding Festival, February 2-5 at the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, and March 2-3 at the World Birding Center in Edinberg. We agreed that our participation would be beneficial to the promotion of the Arroyo WPP effort.

Ms. De La Garza gave updates on the Arroyo Colorado outreach and education efforts. The travel display and brochures financed by the TCEQ, Small Business Division were received. The display was set up for viewing and it was well received. Thanks to Roger Miranda, Earlene Lambeth, and the TCEQ Small Business Division. Ms. De La Garza stated that she will house the display and that it is available to any Arroyo Group

members for events. Ms. De La Garza encouraged the group to look for opportunities to promote the Arroyo project using the display. One thousand "Get to Know the Arroyo Colorado" brochures are also available. Ms. De La Garza requested additional copies. Earlene Lambeth volunteered to look into obtaining additional brochures. She will attempt to get an additional 5,000 brochures.

The status of the 106 Grant proposal was discussed. Ms. De La Garza stated the Roger Miranda had review the proposal and stated that the TCEQ felt that there was duplication in effort in the separate task descriptions and that the proposal needed to be reworked and resubmitted. The TCEQ TMDL group agreed to fund the project however they suggested that the deliverables be divided into 3 tasks:

1. Market Survey (i.e. demographic assessment of public and stakeholder levels of knowledge and attitudes).
2. Short-term promotion of the Arroyo WPP effort (prior to establishment of WPP).
3. Recommendations for the outreach and education component of the Arroyo WPP.

Ms. De La Garza identified recent O&E activities. This included: Chris Caudel's Arroyo Presentation to the Harlingen Rotary Club, the News Channel 5 interview and request for information, network activities with the McAllen International Museum of Art and Science (IMAS) and the Valley Proud Environmental Council. Ms. De La Garza wrote an article about the Arroyo WPP to be included in the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council Newsletter and will do a presentation for the Region M Planning Group who expressed interest in the project and who requested to be informed of the group's progress.

There was a suggestion that we involve the Boy Scout group from Camp Perry and to contact Bud Layne. Ms. De La Garza volunteered to do that. The Valley Land Fund was also identified as a group to work with. Ms. De La Garza volunteered to start a contact list and send out for review and additions.

The final agenda item was the status of O&E component of the Arroyo WPP. Ms. De La Garza identified the progress made in regards in following the EPA "Getting in Step" program. Goals and objectives have been identified but we are at an impasse in regards to defining the attitudes of the target audience. The supplemental grant money would be used to do a market survey and assist in getting the word out about this planning effort. Again, the need to coordinate with the Ag and Habitat group was identified. Ms. De La Garza stated that she was working on that coordination effort and said that she would send a notice to the O&E workgroup informing them of their next meetings and would also schedule a separate meeting with the Ag and Habitat workgroup leaders.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm and we agreed on the next meeting date of October 19, 2004.