

Texas Watershed Planning Short Course
Planning Team Meeting
June 22, 2007
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Meeting Summary

Planning Team Members Present:

- TCEQ NPS Team – Jennifer Delk
- Texas River Systems Institute – Eric Mendlemen
- EPA – Randy Rush (via telephone)
- TCEQ TMDL Team- Arthur Talley
- TWRI – Kevin Wagner
- TSSWCB – Aaron Wendt
- TAES – Clint Wolfe

Others In Attendance:

- Pamela Casebolt – TSSWCB
- Anju Chalise – TCEQ NPS Team
- Laurie Curra – TCEQ NPS Team
- Lucas Gregory – TWRI
- TJ Helton – TSSWCB
- Louanne Jones – TCEQ TMDL Team
- Megan Meier – TWRI
- Jason Pinchback – Texas River Systems Institute
- Cecilia Wagner – TWRI (via telephone)

Introductions:

- The Planning Team was introduced and given an overview of the meeting's purpose.

Purpose of meeting:

- Review Project Purpose
- Review Existing Training Programs
- Discuss Teaching Approach
- Develop DRAFT Short Course Curriculum
- Develop Preliminary List of Potential Instructors

Project Background

- **Why do WPPs?** Incremental Clean Water Act 319(h) funding is tied to watershed plans, but more importantly, watershed plans are an important step to restore and protect watersheds.
- **Where do WPPs apply?**
 - This is outlined in the TCEQ/TSSWCB MOA.

- Can develop WPP to implement TMDL for 5a. The load allocation is determined through TMDL.
- For waterbodies where a TMDL hasn't been initiated, need to develop WPP w/in first 6 years of listing on 303(d) list. WPPs must demonstrate sufficient progress in achieving water quality to prevent TMDL.
- For 4b waters, EPA guidance lays out plan for use of WPP
- **Why training is needed?**
 - *The Best Watershed Plans in the Nation* identifies several deficiencies in plans developed to date.
 - No EPA training is currently scheduled and Dov Weitman, Chief of EPA's Nonpoint Source Control Branch, highly stressed that he's pleased that TX has training.
 - Randy Rush stressed that the course shouldn't lose Texas focus even if other states participate. The course should focus on issues around the state.
- **Who is training for?**
 - First course for all active watershed coordinators and invited agency personnel from GLO, TWDB, TPWD, TCEQ, TSSWCB, future grantees, and maybe TXDOT and river authorities.
 - Agencies should develop list of participants they would like to be invited from their agency and send to Kevin
 - Mix and match attendees
 - May need prerequisite/pre-training packet for non-water professionals
 - Big challenge to bring city participants to common ground on knowledge
 - Maybe use Texas Watershed Steward program or Texas Watch as pre-requisites
 - Also include pre-course self-evaluation (best if online) before the course
 - Put short course materials online or send course overview with general watershed information for participants to review
 - Possibly cater 1 course towards municipalities/phase I stormwater cities
 - Do one for Houston/Galveston, 1 for DFW, 1 for smaller cities
- **Future program development**
 - Texas Watershed Steward Program got CEUs from TDA and for teachers
 - Could look at CEUs for engineers and others (TDA)
 - Web casting of short course
 - Develop college course at TAMU
 - Create certification program like Texas State Certified Public Manager program for mayors, council members, etc
 - Participate in helping with Nikki's Texas watershed steward program in order to maintain certification
 - Look at developing water modules

Existing Training Programs

- Did an extensive search and not much out there
- *Watershed Partnership Seminar*, EPA
 - Texas attendees included Aaron Wendt, Laura Delagarza, Will Hatler, Bill Bethel, Ellen Caldwell, Mike Bira, Bobby Hernandez, and others

- Laurie suggested “marrying” good points of EPA training with the watershed planning process
- Randy doesn’t want to just see a course that totally focuses on 9 elements because we’d lose elements like community and culture. He suggested setting up the framework on the process (step-by-step approach) and how it satisfies the 9 elements and then blend in other issues (i.e. stakeholders, etc.) with the course.
- Pros
 - Community Culture and Environment Presentation (Trainer)
 - very useful
 - Meeting Facilitation (Fluharty)
 - Financing Successful Watershed Implementation (Jarocki)
 - Big issue and could use help with
 - State of Ohio has done good job of getting funding, as well as Maryland
 - Include SRF and Foundation discussions
 - The Human Dimension (Nowak)
 - Breaking the Cycle: Moving the Data from the Desk to Daylight (MacPherson)
 - Possibly could include Schueller (great on urban watersheds); however, Texas’ John Jacob and Tom Davenport could cover this.
- Cons
 - Needed better case study/development of WPP
 - Never saw a completed WPP
 - Team building and personal development not good use of time
 - Focus not on 9 key elements
 - Too much focus on urban issues
- *Essential Elements for Successful Watershed Planning*
 - Heavy on geomorphology
 - Needed more emphasis on 9 key elements
 - Randy doesn’t want whole program on 9 key elements but definitely wants more than 1 morning
- Programs provided by the Watershed Institute, Indiana Watershed Leadership Program, and others were briefly mentioned but not discussed

Teaching Approach

- Kevin discussed organizing the short course much like a college course and focusing on the biggest challenges faced by coordinators and making them the most important elements to be included in training.
- Two approaches were discussed, an elemental approach and a stepwise approach:
 - Element-by-Element Approach
 - The Planning Committee voted against this approach
 - Committee suggested that the course not be framed on 9 key elements, but set up on process and how it satisfies elements.
 - Draft 1 Agenda was axed in favor of using the planning process

- Step-by-Step Approach
 - Need to flow through WPP process from start to finish
 - Should include overview of 9 elements up front on beginning of first day
 - Could have inspirational speaker at beginning to set stage
 - Describe why we are doing this – water quality; economic growth
 - Or could have inspirational speaker as part of evening activities
 - Other evening activities could include:
 - Photographer (Gail Rothe has contact info)
 - Lena Beth Carmichael – Was this in my job description? Experiences of Watershed Coordinator in East Tennessee
 - TPWD Land Stewards
 - TSSWCB to discuss ag BMPs
 - Consultant displays
 - Need to discuss evening activities with Mayan Dude Ranch
 - For Partnership Building:
 - Look at driving forces behind partnerships
 - Why stakeholders may want to be included
 - WWTP regulations.
 - MS4 regulations
 - Stress that first stakeholder meetings are critical
 - Discuss identifying who major decision makers are
 - Possibly describe what should be addressed at each meeting
 - Discuss and provide example ground rules for committees
 - Include info on working with media
 - Include presentation on “Culture”
 - Implementation of WPPs could be discussed on last day after discussing EPA Watershed Plan Builder
- Case Studies vs. WPP development exercises OR COMBO
 - Committee liked using the same case study throughout the course
 - Could use existing plan like Sabine River Authority’s Orange County Plan
 - Parsons and TIAER have much experience with watershed plans. But, Parson’s San Antonio plan may not be suitable since it is only urban.
 - Randy stated he’s wavering between whether it’d be better for students to develop plan or do case studies (with good questions)
 - Could select parts of plans from different states to use as case studies
 - Need good plans (examples of what to do) and “not so good” plans (examples of what not to do)
 - Randy said examples from local and state governments may be better because they took the time to ensure successful and these plans are more community oriented
- Roundtable Discussion/Development of Curriculum
 - Involve TCEQ-SBEA, TCE, and TSU/River Systems Institute educators in teaching
 - Possibly form subcommittee/TAG to review curriculum

- Need to include:
 - Lecture, brainstorming, work groups and case studies
 - Assignments (Arkansas Lego assembly was suggested)
 - Quizzes/daily assessments
 - Ways to address barriers to having a good WPP such as:
 - Insufficient financial resources and data
 - Who/where are the resources
 - Networking time
 - Expectations of agencies (EPA, TSSWCB, TCEQ) – this needs to be a big part as people don't know this. Zero in on expectations
 - Entry and exit test
 - Issue board/community message board for participants
 - Set aside time for group discussion
- Watershed coordinators need to understand where resources are, the science, and the expectations for each element
- Randy sees training as ideally a way to develop marketing tool for watershed (not just way to get 319 funding)

Potential Instructors

- It was recommended that a process be developed for identifying and interviewing potential instructors
- Once instructors are identified, they should be sent a list of points they must cover in order to qualify for the honorarium
- Potential Instructors discussed include:
 - Stewart Lehman, EPA
 - Theresa Trainor, EPA
 - Charlie MacPherson, Tetra Tech, Inc.

Potential Locations

- Committee supported having course in a natural setting such as:
 - Bandera (Mayan Dude Ranch)
 - LCRA – 3-5 places available but would have to contract with local vendors for food. However, Buchannan LCRA has good cook.
- Could potentially have regionally located meetings later as follow-ups (i.e. Houston/Galveston Area, DFW Metroplex, etc.)

Course materials – CD or hard copy

- In course, integrate how to use resources and include materials like:
 - Sample invitation letters to stakeholders meeting
 - Sample ground rules, etc.
- *Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans* – Hard copy
- Watershed Plan Builder – good resource
- Copies of Presentations (CD)
- Getting in Step – Hard copy
- Example WPPs
- Watershed Steward Program Materials

Project Timeline

- Committee recommended targeting week of March 3-7 for first course
- Once date confirmed, need to send “save the date” to selected participants
- Next quarterly meeting
 - Include watershed coordinators
 - Have a roundtable discussion
 - Have each coordinator give an overview
 - Discuss how agencies can help now
 - Discuss what is needed in training
 - Possibly have on August 20th or 21st
 - Rotate venue (August in Temple and October in Austin)
 - Avoid August 7-9, 13-16, and last week (monitoring conference in Austin)
 - Avoid October 4, 15-19 and TSSWCB meeting (October 22-24)

Things To Do:

- Email our agenda with speakers inserted and times removed
 - Request lengths for each subject
- Discuss evening activities with Bandera
- Talk to Theresa Trainor and Tom Davenport regarding training and recommendations. Can conference call Planning Committee in if needed.
- Evaluate potential pre-workshop primers
- Look at setting up subcommittees to delegate tasks to specific groups – work with Louanne
- Need to lay out schedule of activities to get program prepared by March
- Request list of participants for 1st short course from each agency
- Visit River Systems Institute ASAP to initiate contract