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?
  o 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 prerequisites
    - 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 (Trainor)
  - 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

**Teaching Approach**
- Kevin discussed organizing the short course muck 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, Buchanan 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.
- 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