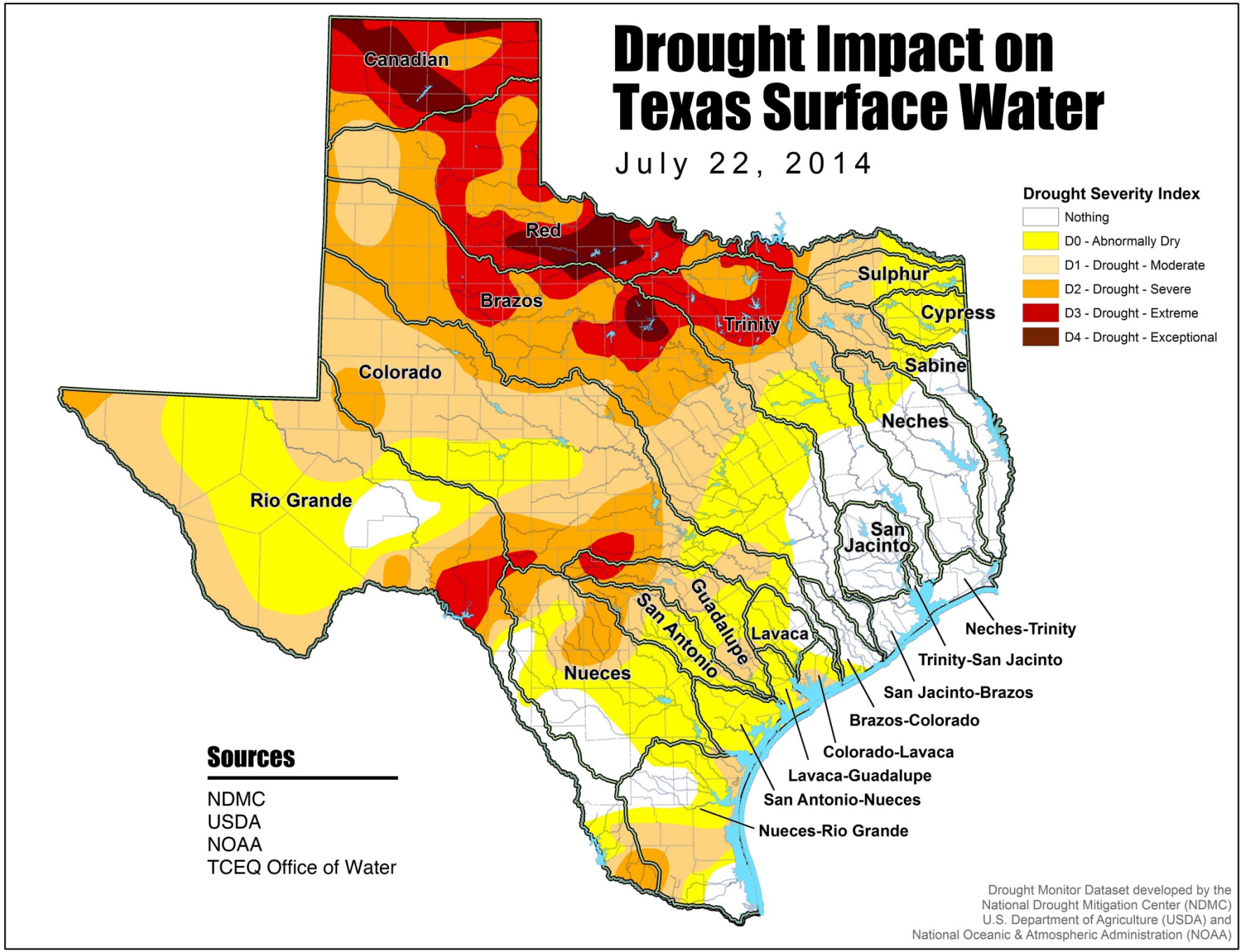
Outcomes of March 2014 Workshop on *Improving Watershed Program Efficiency & Success*

Texas Watershed Coordinator Roundtable

July 31, 2014

Key Questions Discussed

- How can we do more with less?
  - i.e. be more efficient
- How can we be more successful?
  - i.e. more effective; improve water quality


Drought Impact on Texas Surface Water
July 22, 2014
Drought Severity Index
Nothing
D0 - Abnormally Dry
D1 - Drought - Moderate
D2 - Drought - Severe
D3 - Drought - Extreme
D4 - Drought - Exceptional
Canadian
Red
Brazos
Trinity
Sulphur
Cypress
Sabine
Neches
Colorado
Rio Grande
San Jacinto
Guadalupe
San Antonio
Lavaca
Nueces
Neches-Trinity
Trinity-San Jacinto
San Jacinto-Brazos
Brazos-Colorado
Colorado-Lavaca
Lavaca-Guadalupe
San Antonio-Nueces
Nueces-Rio Grande
Sources
NDMC
USDA
NOAA
TCEQ Office of Water
Drought Monitor Dataset developed by the
National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC)
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Workshop Goals:

1. Identify watershed-based solutions to the complex water quality issues facing Texas
   - Specifically **target 2-3 tangible items to address over next year** to improve watershed planning and their effectiveness.

2. Discussion focused on two topics
   - Improving the planning process
   - Improving stakeholder engagement

Improving Planning Efficiency
Background Questions/Considerations

There's Not Enough Watershed Plans

- How can we increase the numbers of plans to implement?
- How do we get watershed plans done in the spirit of new guidance but with reasonable costs and timeframes?

Key Questions To Consider Regarding **The Planning Process**

How do we make planning more efficient?

- What is the proper sequencing of planning & implementation processes?
  - RUAAs, basin approach, etc…
- How long does planning (timeframe) need to be?
- What is the bare minimum that is needed in a plan to drive implementation?
  - What's important & what's not important?
  - How do we alleviate the technical onerous of watershed plans?
  - How can the rigorous expectations from agencies be reduced?
  - How can we make watershed plans shorter and more concise?
- Need agreement on simplistic approaches to modeling/data analysis.
  - Is detailed modeling needed? What degree of modeling is needed?
  - Need models that get us to actual loads that are easy/efficient.
  - Need bacteria loadings and reductions in-stream for reductions in plans
  - What are background loadings and how do we account for them
- How do we get more/better data
  - Need usable data on sources and standard practices for assessing

Solutions Offered

Improve The Planning Process By:

- Having standard practices on data and calculations of loads and load reductions
- Sharing developed standard practices on calculations of loads and load reductions, plan writing, education activities.
- Develop a watershed plan template.

Key Questions To Consider Regarding **Stakeholder Engagement**

- How to reach out to people?
- How do you keep them engaged?
- Finding the people and keeping them engaged?
- Do we need to reach out to everyone?
- How do we get people to buy in that watershed planning is important to them?
- Why don't people care and what can we do to get them to?
- Tools are needed to more effectively engage the development community to design for water quality as well as water quantity during development. This might be as far reaching as local code, or just some guidance on issues to consider.
- How do we get more stakeholders interested in being involved in and implementing? What incentives could help with this?

Solutions Offered

Improve Stakeholder Engagement By:

- Having standard practices
- Increasing water quality awareness before initiating planning
- Providing more info on benefits of plan
  - Specific info regarding expected financial benefits (grants, etc.)
- Providing educational activities
- Specifically targeting those responsible for implementation
  - Less emphasis on “public” and greater emphasis on decision makers

Workshop Action Items

- Develop WPP template
- Develop guidance and best practices for:
  - Stakeholder engagement, education and outreach
  - Plan development
- Develop mentoring program

Progress to date

- None

- Need to:
  - Form small group to draft guidelines & template
  - Form larger committee to serve as reviewers

FUTURE TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Improving Implementation Success
Background Questions/Considerations

There's Not Enough Success

- Why haven't we seen successes in the past from plans?
- What is the key to success? What are we missing?
- How do we make this work?
- How effective are current efforts in accomplishing the goals they set out to?

Key Questions To Consider Regarding **Implementation Incentives**

- What economic incentives make practices worthwhile adopting
- How do we redirect the ship to head towards practices with higher success rates?
- Should we target funding for specific high impact BMPs and addressing point sources?
- Do we need a heavy handed “stick” to get stakeholders to implement BMPs more aggressively?
- Watershed-based permitting. Potential interest in this issue from entities that own and operate WWTPs, and could serve as a means of providing funds needed to implement plans.
- Guidance for BMP implementation planning and capital improvement programs for watershed plans
- How can private entities be incentivized to include BMPs as part of the development process, with more consideration to post-construction/long-term BMPs

Possible Solutions to Discuss

Improve Implementation By:

- Targeting incentives to:
  - High impact measures
  - High impact zones (i.e. riparian)
- Increasing incentives in targeted areas

Key Questions To Consider Regarding **Implementation Monitoring**

- How do we better monitor the effects of our BMPs?
- Can we improve our success rate thru better monitoring?
- Issues with how we're monitoring – i.e. effectiveness monitoring used for listing purposes which exasperates the problem.
- How do we get greater value placed on watershed improvements beyond water quality improvements?
  - More value needs to be placed in watershed plans besides water quality improvements to give stakeholders pride in what they're doing.

Possible Solutions to Discuss

Improve Implementation Monitoring By:

- Decrease reliance on routine monitoring
- Use paired watershed approach
- Increased use of volunteer monitoring
- Use surrogate parameters to reduce monitoring costs

Key Questions To Consider Regarding **Implementation Funding**

- How do you fund implementation?
- With less $, what are alternative sources and avenues to achieve success?
- How can we better use SRF to tackle some of the big $ problems associated with watershed plans?
- What are the issues with using SRF and how can they be alleviated?
- What are the impediments of getting 319 $ on the ground?

Possible Solutions to Discuss

Improve Implementation Funding By:

- Increased integration of water programs
  - Wildlife habitat improvement
  - Water conservation plans
  - State Water Plan
- Greater use of volunteers
- Increased engagement with private entities

Thoughts?


I HAVE INVESTED ALL OF MY SELF-ESTEEM IN THIS POWERPOINT PRESENTATION.
Dilbert.com DilbertCartoonist@gmail.com
IT IS ALL THAT I AM AND ALL THAT I WILL BE. IT IS A DIGITAL RECKONING OF MY VALUE.
9-17-09 ©2009 Scott Adams, Inc./Dist. by UFS, Inc.
DID THEY CATCH THE CHIMP WHO MADE YOUR SLIDES?
OW. OW. OW.