

## **Texas Watershed Planning Short Course** *Instructor Biographies*

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**Michael R. Bira** is with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 Water Quality Protection Division, in the Watershed Section. Mike graduated from the University of Tampa with a BS degree in Marine Biology and Chemistry. He then earned his MS in Aquatic Biology from Southwest Texas State University.

After college, Mike worked for five years as an Aquatic Biologist/Field Investigator for the Texas Water Commission (now Texas Commission on Environmental Quality), performing inspections and sampling of domestic, municipal, industrial, and agricultural wastewater dischargers, and coordinating the Commission's North Central Texas surface water monitoring program.

Mike began his career with EPA as an Environmental Scientist at Region 6 in Dallas in 1988. As a Hazardous Waste Enforcement Coordinator, his duties included coordination of Federal enforcement actions against violators of regulations under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Since 1990 Bira has been in the Water Quality Protection Division and worked in the Clean Lakes Program, Nonpoint Source Program, water quality standards, watersheds, nutrient criteria development, and water quality outreach.

As Volunteer Monitoring Coordinator for the region, Bira has been actively involved with citizen monitoring programs and assisting states and communities with addressing water quality problems through education and the watershed protection approach. He has helped conceptualize and develop volunteer water quality monitoring programs in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas. He has assisted with training of State personnel and volunteer monitors and has assisted with federal financial support for citizen monitoring efforts.

Bira's current responsibilities for EPA Region 6 include Nutrient Co-Coordinator, Volunteer Monitoring Coordinator, and Program Manager for the Nonpoint Source Program in the State of Texas.

Mike lives in the Dallas area with his hottie wife, Kristi. He also has two grown unmarried daughters who are out of the house but still in his wallet. Mike loves to get outside whenever he can, and immensely enjoys fishing, hunting, and shooting, and fishing some more. He has always needed to be near or in water. When he was very young, his Mom worried that he might grow gills. In his 30's he finally realized he could never be a fish, so he took up hunting. He eats a lot better now.

**Thomas E. Davenport** is presently an environmental consultant on projects in Vietnam and US. He worked for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 1984-2015 and was EPA's National NPS Expert since 1991. He administered the Section 319 National Nonpoint Source Monitoring Program and provided technical and program assistance to the watershed, urban storm water wetlands, lakes, and TMDL and NPS programs nationally.

Davenport received a Bachelor of Science in Forestry and Natural Resource Management from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in 1977 and a Master of Science from the University of Washington in Forest Hydrology in 1981. In 1982, he received a Master of Public Administration from Sangamon State University.

Davenport led the Water Program for the Great Lakes/Baltic Seas Watershed Management Capacity Building Project and was technical manager on the Chile Free Trade Environmental Project, EPA's Alberta Lake Management Program, Venice Lagoons Assistance, and Panama Canal Expansion Training. He served as a resident faculty member and co-designer/manager of the Watershed Partnership Seminar for the Office of Personnel Management. He also worked with Canada on the implementation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement's Annex 4 provisions, and provided management and technical assistance to EPA Programs at the regional, national, and international levels.

While at the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Davenport assisted in the development and establishment of the State's Watershed, Clean Lakes and Nonpoint Source Programs. His responsibilities included the management of the USDA Rural Clean Water Program's Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Project for Highland Silver Lake and the Blue Creek Special Water Quality Project.

Davenport authored "The Watershed Project Management Guide" and coauthored the urban management measures chapter of the "Coastal Zone NPS Management Guidance". He authored the urban nonpoint source management chapter in the UNESCO publication, "Assessment and Control of Nonpoint Source Pollution of Aquatic Ecosystems/A Practical Guide." and "The Framework for Managing Lakes in the US" chapter in *The Lakes Handbook, Volume 2: Lake Restoration and Rehabilitation*

He previously served on the editorial board of EPA's Nonpoint Source News Notes newsletter and the Center for Watershed Protection's Watershed Protection Techniques Bulletin, and was agency advisor to the Conservation Technology Information Center and an associate research editor of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*, as well as editorial board member.

**Nikki Dictson** is an Extension Program Specialist III for the Texas A&M Institute for Renewable Natural Resources and Texas Water Resources Institute in College Station. She received her bachelor's, with a double major in Wildlife Science and Fisheries Science, at New Mexico State University and her master's in Wildlife and Fisheries Science at Texas A&M University. Dictson is coordinating the Texas Stream and Riparian Ecosystem Education and the Texas Watershed Planning Training programs, while also working on watershed planning and TMDL projects at the institute. Dictson coordinates a variety of professional and landowner trainings through these programs, as well as roundtables, group presentations, and conferences across the state. In addition, she manages the programs websites, listserv, and outreach efforts of each program. During the previous seven years with Texas A&M University's Soil and Crop Sciences Department, Dictson was the Coordinator for the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan and Implementation Program, developed many educational publications and outreach programs, and was on the team conducting the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Protection Plan

and the Texas Watershed Steward Educational Program. She has been on the planning team, a facilitator, and instructor at the Watershed Planning Short Course since the course's beginning.

Dictson has been with Extension for almost 14 years, beginning in the Rangeland Ecology and Management (RLEM) Unit where she coordinated the Water for Texans Educational Program — a statewide educational program of paired plot watershed demonstrations evaluating various management practices on runoff and sediment loss. While with the RLEM Unit, she also developed rangeland stream, riparian and upland health educational materials; developed an online RLEM 101 agent training course; and conducted field day trainings and educational programs across the state. Dictson has also been an instructor for workshops of the Texas Riparian Association and is currently on its Board. Prior to working with Extension, she was a Natural Resource Consultant in Seattle, working on a variety of watershed issues with a focus on biological assessments of major construction projects for endangered species issues with local, state and federal agencies.

**Dr. Lucas Gregory** currently serves as a research scientist and the quality assurance officer for the Texas Water Resources Institute. In this role, he develops effective and efficient projects and provides leadership for multiple watershed assessment, planning and implementation projects, focusing on water quality impairments in rural Texas water bodies. He is also leading efforts to develop a research program at Texas A&M that is focused on investigating how degradation of water quality will affect human health.

Gregory's research Interests include: 1) bacteria fate and transport in aquatic and soil environments, 2) watershed assessment, planning and management, 3) watershed assessment tool application and development, 4) water quality monitoring, 5) efficient water resource utilization, 6) implications of water policy on local watershed decision making, and 7) groundwater hydrology.

**Dr. Larry Hauck** has recently retired from his full-time position of Lead Scientist at the Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research (TIAER) at Tarleton State University located in Stephenville, Texas and currently has a half-time position as a Senior Research Scientist. He has been employed at TIAER for almost 25 years. Prior to his present employment, he worked for various governmental agencies and environmental consulting firms resulting in 40-plus years of professional experience. The duties of Dr. Hauck's current position including mentoring of young professionals and management of several projects funded by Texas river authorities and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Dr. Hauck's research interests include landscape loading of nutrients and indicator bacteria, biological and chemical response of receiving waters to nutrient enrichment, connection of land management of agricultural and urban practices to receiving water quality, and development and application of watershed loading models and hydrologic/water quality models. He is currently involved in several total maximum daily load (TMDL) projects regarding impairments due to excessive levels of bacteria and depressed dissolved oxygen, computer modeling of Texas reservoirs, and investigations into response of macrophytes to nutrients in wadeable streams.

**Tina Hendon** is the Watershed Program Manager for Tarrant Regional Water District. She has over 25 years of experience in watershed protection. Previous work includes Nonpoint Source Program Manager and Water Quality Standards Coordinator with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, environmental consulting, and research on the effects of land use practices on Texas receiving waters.

**Michael Jones** currently serves as a Water Resource Specialist for the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment. In this role, he provides support for Texas Stream Team's Citizen Science Program, and the Meadows Center's Watershed Services Program, including program development and reporting, conducting training and educational outreach activities, water quality and environmental monitoring, maintenance of supplies, assistance with data analysis and report generation. Additional activities include conducting research with the use of GIS for data analysis of water quality, water quantity and surface/groundwater interactions and using GIS to integrate water quality data and environmental, geographic and other data sources into maps for research and publications.

His research interests include: 1) physical, chemical, and biological processes operating within aquatic ecosystems, 2) nature and behavior of dissolved organic matter in karst aquifer systems, 3) active microbial processes that could affect carbonate weathering and water quality in caves and karst systems.

Education: B.S. - Geography Water Resources, Minor in Geology, Certificate in Geographic Information Science.

**Brian Koch** received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Range and Wildlife Management from Texas A&M University Kingsville in 2003. After a short stint in the commercial nursery business, Brian joined the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board in 2005 as the Regional Watershed Coordinator serving TSSWCBs Wharton Regional Office service area covering 47 counties in Southeast and South Central Texas. As Regional Watershed Coordinator, Brian has aided in the development and implementation of several WPPs and TMDL I-plans, including; Plum Creek, Geronimo Creek, Mill Creek, Cedar Bayou, Double Bayou, Bacteria Implementation Group, Mission and Aransas Rivers, and Upper San Antonio River, and is currently assisting and has assisted in development and implementation of several more. Brian also represents the agency on the Coastal Coordination Advisory Council, Galveston Bay Estuary Program, and Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program, and assists with the TSSWCB's Water Quality Management Plan Program