



- **GS** – Does seismicity affect the river in any way? **JB** – This is not my specialty. **JH** – Seismicity could potentially be of concern because a big enough event could rupture or change the direction of a stream and could have chemical influence (frack fluid). Techniques to obtain gas are only a decade or so old, we don't know how this could affect the watershed.
- **JD** – Noted working with other River Authorities in the surrounding areas and congratulates the River Authority on the work and depth that projects go scientifically to address issues.
- **MS** – As a research specialist at the Texas Water Resources Institute, Matt leads projects related to stakeholder engagement and monitors water quality throughout the state. He would like to invite more engagement into restoration projects and is part of a robust outreach program and would make for a great possible connection.
- **JH** – From a chemical perspective, what is the biggest problem for the watershed. **RR** – 73% of our impairments are *E.coli* according to the latest report from TCEQ (2022). **SD** – While nutrients are not impairments, they are still identified as concerns because effluent is not strictly regulated. The plant shown in the slides at Dos Rios discharges high levels of nitrate, a lot of nitrates can be a cause for concern but is not state regulated so is therefore not an impairment. **VC** – The San Antonio River Authority does have an in-house water quality model that shows us which regions of the watershed encounter specific nutrients and what the water quality is like in a specific area.

### 3. Illegal Dumping Issues

Shaun Donovan, Manager Environmental Sciences

**SD** provided a presentation on defining illegal dumping and its impacts to fish, mussels, aquatic insects, water quality, and flooding. Illegal dumping is a very difficult thing to monitor and enforce. Bexar county does have a system in place for cleaning these dump sites although there are rarely ever any prosecutions. Tracking illegal dumping includes aerial helicopter sightings/staff on kayaks. A bulk of incidents occur in Bexar particularly due to its population density in comparison to other counties.

- Explained how to report illegal dumping.
- Discussed how the River Authority tracks illegal dumping incidents.

#### Post Presentation topics discussed:

- **GS**- In regard to the example of a landowner establishing his own access point to the river that in turn created a land bar, affecting sediment and stream flow, Glynis asks who gets fined for this. **SD**- The landowners are held accountable.
- **JH** -If litter being washed into a certain area by storms, etc., is not to be considered illegal dumping, in the case that this happens on private property, what happens? Is the landowner responsible for cleaning that up? **SD**- Landownership ends at the top of the bank of the river (the River Authority owns bed and banks of the river system). The River Authority does not go onto people's private property to clean it, all clean ups conducted by the river authority are on public land. Our Watershed Park staff will also do shoreline clean-ups. **KH** – Our Water Parks Operation department has a program that allows citizens to call in debris/litter for staff to assess the situation and will send someone to

clean it up or address the situation as necessary. **GS**- How would you go about making an environmental incident report? **SD** – Located on the very bottom of the front page of the San Antonio River Authority website, you may find “Contact Us” which upon clicking will provide an option for filling out an Environmental Incident Reporting Form.

- **JD** – Coming from the coast, what doesn’t get cleaned up we do end up seeing on our shores and bays and estuaries. I appreciate knowing that there are efforts being done to clean large dump sites up. To clarify, ownership of the bed and banks only extends to the jurisdiction of the 4 River Authority counties. **SD** – That is correct. With exceptions such as areas around Goliad (a 5-mile radius around downtown Goliad), but for the most part, it is perennial water bodies found in the four counties of the River Authority.

#### 4. **Water Quality in the Southern Basin of the San Antonio River**

Rebecca Reeves, Senior Quality Assurance/Monitoring Scientist

Discussed the 2022 TCEQ Integrated Report and impairments in the Lower Basin.

- Nutrients such as nitrogen are 33% of the San Antonio River watershed concerns and phosphorus is about 27% of concerns.
- Discussed dissolved oxygen impairments in the lower basin and its impact on aquatic organisms.
- *E. coli* bacteria is the most common impairment in the San Antonio River basin (73% of the watershed’s impairments).
- According to bacteria source tracking, southern counties are impacted most by wildlife (Wilson & Karnes counties – 53% is wildlife, Goliad County – 56% is wildlife).

#### **Post Presentation topics discussed:**

- **GS** – Where on Escondido Creek are the high levels of phosphorus? Is that okay for our drinking water? **SD** – This is approximately less a mile from the Confluence of the San Antonio River. From the treatment plant, it is about 6-8 miles. **RR**- We are involved with surface water as the River Authority. For drinking water, you may contact the groundwater district.
- **JH** – What kind of things can we do as a community to decrease nutrient levels? **RR** – The biggest contributors of nutrients would be wastewater but without that water, our creeks would run dry. It is not entirely in anyone’s control until TCEQ creates nutrient standards for streams and rivers. Reducing runoff would be a way that communities could decrease some of these nutrients. Installing cisterns that collect water, installing raingardens, and even simple acts such as checking your home’s rain gutter and fixing it to drain onto a part of your yard that will infiltrate can help reduce runoff. In regard to dissolved oxygen, flow is important and for example, in the upper San Antonio River, canoe shoots were created mainly for recreation but also create oxygen in the water. **MP**- From an education perspective, we have an Education and Engagement team and in the last year have spoken to more than 16,000 students. Our team has a watershed model to showcase runoff and speak on the different ways individuals can help. Our Engagement team coordinates with the Texas Stream Team to train community members to become citizen scientists who check out kits to test water quality at sites within the watershed.

- **JB** - If the biggest source of *E.coli* is wildlife, is it possible that some of those nutrients are contributed by wildlife as well versus wastewater plants. So, they may be contributing a considerable amount, how far back do we have this water quality/data on nutrients for the river? **RR** – It certainly could be, Salado Wastewater Treatment Plant was running into the San Antonio River before it was re-routed. Our first monitoring was from approximately 1968. The website goes back to 1996.

**5. Future meetings dates and items for future consideration:**

Discussed next meeting time, date, location:

**JB** – Is there a preference of the committee of meetings occurring on the second or third Friday of the month? For the committee, what other topics of interest would you like to hear about from the San Antonio River Authority? Opportunities to help with identifying some of these topics you may find through the San Antonio River Authority blog. The blog is released about twice a month.

**JD**- Conservation easement access, surface water rights.

**JB** – A review of all the outreach being done. Building on potential partnerships and communication from outreach with colleges/students.

**GS** – Interested in any studies pertaining to water quality of wells and saltwater disposal wells.

**JB** – This is the last meeting of this year, the financial year is shifting for the River Authority (from July to October), there will then be 5 meetings for the fiscal year. The first meeting will begin in October.

**MP**- What is the interest in attending supplemental experiences to our meetings (such as that of visiting Escondido Creek Park), is this something the committee would like to do going forward?

**JD**- Coming down to the coast could be an option.

**MP**- All meetings can be moved up by one month and the January meeting could be held at the coast.

**JB** – The next meeting will be held on **October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 in Bexar County at the San Antonio River Authority Board Room.**

**Q1** – October 18<sup>th</sup>

**Q2** – January 28<sup>th</sup>

**Q3** – April 18<sup>th</sup>

**Q4** – July 18<sup>th</sup>

**Meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM**