6WQ ALL BRANCH WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT
Date of Report: 02/12/2018 - 02/16/2018

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS BRANCH

Project Officer Activities: PROJECT OFFICER ACTIVITIES: Approved the Pueblo of Laguna's revised Tribal Assessment Report (TAR) and reviewed and approved seven tribal quarterly progress reports. Contacted HQ EPA to get a copy of the Pueblo of Santa Ana's competitive non-point source grant application from 2017, at the Pueblo's request. Began reviewing tribal applications for fiscal year 2018 Section 106 funds. Kara Alexander, 5-7312
Kara Alexander, 214-665-7312;

FY18/19 U.S./Mexico Border Water Infrastructure Prioritization Coordination call with Mexico's CONAGUA: Community Infrastructure Section staff will have a conference call with Mexico's Comision Nacional del Agua (CONAGUA) to discuss a number of Mexican projects that will be considered for project development and design as part of the U.S./Mexico Border Water Infrastructure Program. The purpose of the call is to seek CONAGUA's agreement and commitment to these projects. Projects in Mexico that currently lack wastewater treatment processes and discharge raw wastewater to the Rio Grande watershed are being considered as a high priority for the U.S./Mexico Border Program. In addition, a number of future possible projects will also be discussed.
Salvador Gandara, 214-665-3194;

FY18/19 U.S./MEXICO BORDER WATER INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIZATION COORDINATION CALL WITH MEXICO'S CONAGUA: Community Infrastructure Section staff had a conference call with Mexico's Comision Nacional del Agua (CONAGUA) on Friday, February 16, 2018 to discuss a number of Mexican projects that will be considered for project development and design as part of the U.S./Mexico Border Water Infrastructure Program. The purpose of the call was to seek CONAGUA's agreement and commitment to these projects. Projects in Mexico that currently lack wastewater treatment processes and discharge raw wastewater to the Rio Grande watershed are being considered as a high priority for the U.S./Mexico Border Program. In addition, a number of future possible projects were also discussed.
Salvador Gandara, 214-665-3194;

ECOSYSTEMS PROTECTION BRANCH

WOTUS TRIBAL CONSULTATION: The Pueblo of San Felipe requested Government-to-Government Tribal Consultation regarding the proposed Waters of the United States (WOTUS) Rulemakings revising the definition of WOTUS, following staff-level discussions which took place on January 16, 2018. This Tribal Consultation has been scheduled to take place on Monday February 26, 2018 at 12:00 CST by teleconference. EPA Headquarters will lead the Consultation, but Region 6 will participate in the teleconference. Participants will include the Pueblo of San Felipe Governor Anthony Ortiz, Pueblo of San Felipe Natural Resources Department management and staff, several EPA Office of Water representatives including Lee Forsgren, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Water; Department of Army; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; EPA Office of General Counsel; and EPA Region 6, including David Garcia, Acting Water Division Director. While the EPA Office of Water will provide some brief information and a status update on the WOTUS rulemakings, the majority of the consultation meeting

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will be an opportunity for the tribal leadership to ask questions and provide comments. Maria Martinez, 665,2230; Alison Fontenot, 665-7482
Alison Fontenot, 214-665-7482;

REGION 6 DROUGHT UPDATE/STATUS: In general, dry conditions are expanding throughout Region 6. Drought areas are classified as no drought, abnormally dry, moderate drought, severe drought, extreme drought, and exceptional drought. The categories for the states are reported on a weekly basis in the US Drought Monitor. For the past week, areas of extreme drought exist in western Oklahoma and the Texas panhandle. A small area of Northcentral Arkansas is also considered in extreme drought with about 30% of the state considered in severe drought. Approximately 50% of the state of Oklahoma is classified in severe drought conditions. About 80% of the state of New Mexico is classified in severe drought conditions and all of the state is considered to be in some drought category from abnormally dry to exceptional drought conditions. Approximately 25% of the state of Louisiana is considered in severe drought conditions but 40% of the state is not considered in any drought. Patricia A. Taylor, 665-6403
Patricia Taylor, 214-665-6403;

HYDROLOGIC RESTORATION AND VEGETATIVE PLANTING IN THE LAC DES ALLEMANDS SWAMP (BA-34-2) FINAL INSPECTION: On February 2, 2018 representatives of the Marine, Coastal and Analysis Section (6WQ-EC) attended the final inspection of the project features for the EPA sponsored CWPPRA project, The Hydrologic Restoration and Vegetative Plantings in the Des Allemands Swamp (BA-34-2). This project is located approximately 58 miles east of New Orleans and approximately 5.0 miles northwest of Lac des Allemands in St. James Parish, LA and is bounded by LA Hwy. 20 on the west, by Board Road and the Vacherie Canal to the north, and by Bayou Chevreuil on the south. The project attempts to restore the hydrology of a semi-impounded 2,395-acre cypress-tupelo swamp. The specific project goals include restoring the hydrology of the cypress-tupelo forest to mimic the water levels in Bayou Chevreuil; increase the productivity, survivorship, and function of the cypress-tupelo forest; increase the canopy cover of the cypress-tupelo forest by the end of the twenty-year project life; increase regenerative success of both canopy and mid story species; increase the rate of mineral accretion within the southern segments of the project area adjacent to the Bayou Chevreuil shoreline and enhance the survival rate of artificially planted seedlings. The BA-34-2 project features include constructing eight strategically designed cuts along the northern Bayou Chevreuil spoil bank; sixteen spoil placement areas extending from the banks of each channel (2 per gap) and nine hundred bald cypress and three hundred water tupelo saplings covered by protective housing and installed in the freshly constructed spoil areas. Magnolia Dredge & Dock, LLC was awarded the construction contract as lowest bidder ($519,562) and a notice proceed was issued September 26, 2017. Construction on the project began on October 25, 2017 and was completed on January 22, 2018. The fully-funded cost of the BA-34-2 project is approximately $7.8M which includes $2.4M for engineering and design, $2.6M for construction and $2.8M for operation, maintenance and monitoring of the project for the duration of its 20-year life. The project will be extensively monitored over the 20-year life to determine the success of the BA-34-2 project to satisfy the project goals listed above. Adrian Chavarria, 665-3103; Patricia Taylor, 665-6403; Sharon Osowski, 665-7506; Brad Crawford, 6655-7255; Karen McCormick, 665-8365
Adrian Chavarria, 214-665-3103;

CITY OF ROUND ROCK WWTP (NPDES TX0101940, TPDES 10264-002) - WATER QUALITY STANDARDS VARIANCE: The City of Round Rock's facility discharges to Brushy Creek, which currently has a designated use for aquifer protection and public water supply. TCEQ has determined that

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this reach is downstream of the recharge zone for the Edwards Aquifer and that there are no surface water intakes. TCEQ will propose removal of these uses in its next triennial revision (tentatively planned in 2021). The temporary variance to the water quality standards allows TCEQ's TPDES permit to be reissued, without numeric limitations for nitrate that would be required under these designated uses. EPA plans to approve the water quality standards variance by February 28, 2018. The response letter will be signed by the divisional director. Diane Evans, 214-665-6677
Diane Evans, 214-665-6677;

REGION 6 GIS USERS GROUP MEETING, FEBRUARY 8, 2018: Region 6 held its first GIS Users Group Meeting of 2018 on February 8th with Nancy Dorsey conducting training on story maps. The meeting was conducted in person and via Adobe Connect with 19 people in attendance. During the meeting, business items were covered such as ArcGIS updates for Desktop, Pro, and Excel, upcoming events, OEI Geospatial Support move to SharePoint, request for data updates and services, and an overview of remote work requirements. Nancy Dorsey's interactively formatted training covered the creation of a story map from the selection of a template to editing the format. The next Region 6 GIS Users Group meeting will be conducted in the April or May. Bob Kirkland, 665-6798; Nancy Dorsey, 665-2294
Robert Kirkland, 214-665-6798;

AERIAL IMAGERY PROCUREMENT FOR R6 WETLANDS SECTION, FEBRUARY 9, 2018: The Surface Water Team worked with Paul Kaspar and Maria Martinez of R6-WD to provide aerial imagery for a wetlands enforcement project in Needville, Texas, Fort Bend County. Michael Daniel, 665-8374
Michael Daniel, 214-665-8374;

NPDES PERMITS AND TMDLS BRANCH

Engineers' Week at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science: A presentative from the NPDES Permits and TMDLs Branch in the Water Division is participating in the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) program sponsored event is next week. EPA Region 6 will be one of the exhibitors for Engineers' Week at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, February 20-22, 2018. The event will allow students, educators, and families to build, break, and create as they explore the field of engineering firsthand through interactive demonstrations, experiments, and gallery experiences with professional engineers and educators.
Monica Burrell, 214-665-7530;

City of Fort Worth - Texas Regional Water District MS4 draft permit: EPA has withdrawn our Interim Objection to the City of Fort Worth - Texas Regional Water District MS4 draft permit based on the following:EPA Comment 1: Draft Permit Part III.B.2.f, MCM 6, Construction Site Stormwater Runoff:In response to comment 1, item 1) a new paragraph Part III.B.2.f.ii.H with the following language was added: "procedures for site plan review of sediment and erosion plans" and Part B.2.f.ii.H was renumbered to Part B.2.f.ii.I.In response to comment 1, item 2) a new paragraph Part III.B.2.iv.C with the following language was added: "The permittee shall ensure that all staff whose primary job duties are related to implementing the construction stormwater program (including permitting, plan review, construction site inspections, and enforcement) are informed or trained to conduct these activities. The training may be conducted by the permittee or by outside trainers." In addition, Part VII.F of the fact sheet

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was updated to include the changes made to the draft permit. EPA Comment 2: Draft Permit Part III.B.2.h.iii.B, MCM 8, Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting:In response to comment 2, a new paragraph Part III.B.2.h.iii.A.1 was added with the following language: "The program must include an inspection program to look closely at the activities of facilities capable or discharging industrial and high-risk runoff to the MS4. The inspection plan must identify the facility, risk level, and an inspection schedule." In addition, Part VII.F of the fact sheet was updated to include the changes to the draft permit.
Greg Valentine, 214-665-3111;

Action Items and Meetings for Wednesday, February 14, 2018: City of Galena Park (TPDES Permit No. WQ0010831001, EPA No. TX0057185), State Permit Review. This draft permit is currently under review. It is expected that a No Objection letter will be approved; however, worst case scenario, this draft permit will be submitted as an Interim Objection, by its regulatory deadline of Friday, March 9, 2018Northwest Harris County Municipal Utility District Nos. 21, 22, & 23 (TPDES Permit No. WQ0012144001, EPA No. TX0079821), State Permit Review. This draft permit is currently under review. It is expected that a No Objection letter will be approved; however, worst case scenario, this draft permit will be submitted as an Interim Objection, by its regulatory deadline of Friday, March 9, 2018
Greg Valentine, 214-665-3111;

HEALTHY PLACES FOR HEALTHY PEOPLE (HP2) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: In response to a request by the EPA Office of Sustainable Communities (OSC) for regional input, Region 6 submitted information regarding prior and/or current efforts with the Region 6 communities/organizations that submitted applications to receive technical assistance under the HP2 program. Of the 31 applications OSC received nationwide, six applications were received from Region 6 communities. Regional input will assist the EPA, Delta Region Authority, and Appalachian Regional Commission Review Committee select the communities that will receive technical assistance for the 2nd round of the HP2 program. Selected communities will receive planning assistance centered around a two-day community workshop and a team of experts to help community members develop an implementable action plan that will focus on health as an economic driver and catalyst for downtown and neighborhood revitalization.
Suzanna Perea, 214-665-7217;

DMR Coding Collaboration with Enforcement for the Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas General NPDES Permit: Daily collaboration between the NPDES Permits Branch and NPDES Enforcement has been taking place in order to appropriately code all the reporting conditions in the recently finalized OCS Oil and Gas General Permit. Specifically, toxicity reporting requirements which have proven to be challenging to code in the past, and therefore have yielded incomplete reported data, were recoded in collaboration with R6 and a team in headquarters. The Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs) are in the final stages of preparation and will be shared with the permittees, and made available through NetDMR in the upcoming days.
Silvia Bogdan, 214-665-2749;

LOOP, LLC N/LPDES Permit Related Cross-cutter and CAA Update: On February 7-8, 2018, Region 6 NPDES and TMDL Branch Staff met separately with LDEQ, NOAA, and US FWS regarding the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port Services, LLC (LOOP) to address issues related to cross-cutting statutes (Endangered Species Act, Magnuson-Stevens Marine Habitat Protection, etc.). The in-person meetings provided an opportunity to initiate and partially conclude consultations and move forward on cross-cutters

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related to the N/LPDES permit. Additionally, issues raised by the Maritime Administration (MARAD) and U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) on EPA permitting authorities and jurisdiction under the Deepwater Port Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Clean Water Act on the proposed bi-directional change for the LOOP were discussed on a conference call held February 12, 2018 with LOOP's outside counsel. 6MM, 6RC and 6WQ staff participated on the call. The discussion centered on the NPDES and CAA permit requirements covered in a letter transmitted to LOOP on February 5. 6MM is scheduling a follow up call with LOOP technical staff, LOOP outside counsel, and LDEQ to address CAA permitting obligations.
Taimur Shaikh, 214-665-7181;

Oklahoma Public Comment Period and Public Meeting for the Draft 2016 Integrated Report: Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) has released the draft of the 2016 Integrated Report to the public which contains the CWA 303(d) and 305(b) lists. The 303(d) list contains the waters in the state that have been assessed as impaired. The full assessment of all waters in the state is known as the 305(b) list. The draft version of this Integrated Report of both lists has a 30-day comment period that will end February 23, 2018. The public has been invited to learn more about the Integrated Report at a public meeting held on February 20, 2018 at 3:00pm in the ODEQ conference center in Oklahoma City.
Lindsey Griffin, 214-665-2797;

TPDES Permit Review: Oxy Vinyls (TPDES Permit No. TX0007412, WQ0000305000): The NPDES Permits and TMDLs Branch issued a withdrawal of objection letter to the TCEQ regarding the reissuance of a TPDES draft permit for Oxy Vinyls, LP. The TCEQ submitted a revised permit package that addressed the EPA's previous concerns pertaining to updates to their water quality screening analysis for effluent toxicity and for the protection of aquatic life and human health. This draft permit is one of several pending permits that the EPA and the TCEQ continue to coordinate in reducing the overall permits backlog in Texas. The applicant operates a chemical manufacturing plant located in Harris County, Texas. The discharges are to the Houston Ship Channel Tidal, Segment No. 1006 of the San Jacinto River Basin. Kilty Baskin, (214) 665-7500.
Kilty Baskin, 214-665-7500;

EPA/TCEQ LEAN Project - Permitting Review Process: EPA/TCEQ LEAN Project - Oversight Permitting Review Process: On Tuesday, February 20, 2018, the EPA and the TCEQ will conduct their 60-Day follow up LEAN meeting to review and further discuss progress in achieving the goals and targets of the LEAN NPDES Oversight Permitting process. One of the goals/targets of the project is to reduce the number of permits reviewed and the time of the review process. The overall target is to reduce the number of permits reviewed by 50% and the amount of time to conduct the review by 30%.
Kilty Baskin, 214-665-7500;

2015 NPDES Electronic Reporting Rule – Electronic Reporting for MS4 Permits: On February 13, 2018, an NPDES Permits and TMDLs Branch representative attended a conference call with the EPA NPDES MS4 Electronic Reporting Rule Workgroup. The technical workgroup is helping to define the reference values, business rules, and other data standards for the data elements in the reporting of MS4 permits according to the 2015 NPDES Electronic Reporting Rule (see Appendix A to 40 CFR 127). The workgroup also discussed options for data access so that they are useful for program management. Recommendations from the technical workgroup will be documented in a "Technical Paper," which will be used as a starting point for future IT development. The draft paper from this technical workgroup will be reviewed by all EPA Regions and states and then posted on EPA's website when final.
Nelly Smith, 214-665-7109;

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The Trash Free Waters Program: On February 13, 2018, an NPDES Permits and TMDLs Branch representative attended a conference call with the EPA National Trash Free Waters Program Workgroup. The Trash Free Waters program is creating a "trash compendium" for MS4 permit writers which will consist of examples of good trash provisions in MS4 permits from around the country, BMP efficiency and cost information, case studies articulating how challenges were surmounted to include good provisions in permits, and possibly economic benefits information.
Nelly Smith, 214-665-7109;

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROJECT PLAN FOR LOUISIANA COASTAL WATERS DISSOLVED OXYGEN CRITERIA DEVELOPMENT: The critical ecologically relevant endpoint for dissolved oxygen (DO) criteria in the state of Louisiana's coastal waters requires evaluation and refinement. In cooperation with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, regional staff with the Permits (PT) and Ecosystems (EW) Branches conferred with state staff on Thursday, 8 February, regarding their preparation of a quality assurance project plan for all primary and secondary data collection activities for the Louisiana coastal DO criteria development. The state of Louisiana has one of the largest coastal regions in the Gulf of Mexico. Seasonal hypoxic conditions in coastal waters represent a threat to the system's water quality and productivity. There are many scientific studies aimed at the development of models to understand nutrient cycling for nutrient control strategies; a critical component to those models is the ecologically relevant endpoint of DO. Paramount to any management plan to address nutrients in coastal ecosystems is an understanding of the interactions between nutrient inputs, impacts on DO and the resultant hypoxia.
Forrest John, 214-665-8368;

New Mexico Submits Pre-Public Draft 2018 303(d) List for EPA Review: On Thursday February 8, 2018, the New Mexico Environmental Department (NMED) submitted their pre-public draft 2018 303(d) list to the Assessment, Listing, and TMDL (ALT) section for review. New Mexico develops the 303(d) list every two years under provisions of section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act. The term "303(d) list" or "list" is short for a state's list of impaired and threatened waters (e.g. stream/river segments, lakes). For each water on the list, the state identifies the pollutant causing the impairment, when known. In addition, the state assigns a priority for development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) based on the severity of the pollution and the sensitivity of the uses to be made of the waters, among other factors (40 C.F.R. §130.7(b)(4)). In order to stay on schedule with a planned April 2, 2018, public comment release, the state has requested input on the draft list by COB March 2, 2018.
Laura Hunt, 214-655-9729;

Tribal Assessment Report Review in the New ATTAINS System: Assessment, Listing and TMDL staff completed review of the Sac and Fox Nations Tribal Assessment Report that was submitted via ATTAINS. Issues noted with the package submittal through ATTAINS were in line with packages submitted via conventional methods. Comments were submitted to the Assistance Branch project officer.
Selena Medrano, 214-665-2776;

SAFE DRINKING WATER BRANCH

Letter Approving Texas' Capacity Development Annual and Triennial Reports: EPA Region 6 has received and is approving the 2017 Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Capacity

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Development Annual Progress Report and the Triennial Capacity Development Report to the Governor. Region 6's review and approval of the state capacity development program's progress reports are part of our routine oversight function and is not anticipated to generate issues.
Nichole Foster, 214-665-7248;

RESULTS OF SECOND PUMP-OUT PROCEDURE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT R6 CONCLUSIONS ON BIRD CREEK: On February 6 and 7, oil operators under the three administrative orders issued by the Region for contamination in and near Bird Creek in Osage County conducted a second pump-out procedure at the location of the creek with the highest remaining salinity at the site. The purpose of the test is to show if the Bird Creek contamination was a result of a one-time release that impacted only the alluvium near the creek. The results of this test are almost identical to the first pump-out on December 5 and 6, 2017, contrary to what would be expected if the cause was a surface release, where salinities would be expected to drop with time and continued flushing from water flow. Instead, initial salinity was measured at 36,000-37,000 ppm tds, very consistent with the initial December readings. Contact Philip Dellinger 665-8324
Philip Dellinger, 214-665-8324;

NEW MEXICO LEGISLATURE APPROVES FUNDING FOR PREVENTING COLLAPSE OF CARLSBAD BRINE MINING WELL: In an attempt to prevent $1 billion worth of damages, both chambers of the New Mexico Legislature have approved funding to attempt to backfill a large cavern in Carlsbad before it collapses. The cavern was created by the long-term operation of two UIC permitted solution mining wells that dissolved a salt layer to make brine used in the oil industry. Multi-year funding by the State, Eddy County, the City of Carlsbad, and FEMA represents approximately $40 million over the next four years. The Governor has until Friday to sign the bill. Timing is critical as the state estimates collapse may occur in 3-4 years.
Michael Overbay, 214-665-6482;

EQUISTAR CORPUS CHRISTI'S UIC NO MIGRATION PETITION REISSUANCE PROPOSED APPROVAL ROUTING: On February 14th the package began routing for concurrence and signature. Once the proposed approval is signed, the demonstration, public notice and fact sheet will be made available for the required 45-day review and comment period. If approved, this reissuance will lengthen the operational life of Equistar's two Class I hazardous waste disposal wells until 12/31/45. Without these disposal wells the plant could not operate. Equistar's Corpus Christi plant produces ethylene, propylene and related products which are used to manufacture a wide range of materials for consumer durable products, flexible packaging and automotive applications such as tires and antifreeze. The Corpus Christi plant, which typically has 370 employees and contractors on site, has an estimated annual economic impact of $852.6 million on the local economy.
Brian Graves, 214-665-7193;

R6 UIC PROVIDES AQUIFER EXEMPTION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO R8: On February 9, 2018, as requested by Region 8-UIC group, a member of Region 6-UIC section participated in a conference call to provide technical assistance on how to determine the boundary for aquifer exemption, specifically how the direction of groundwater flow in the area would impact the evaluation of the boundary location. Lisa Pham, 665-8326
Lisa Pham, 214-665-8326;

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