

Possible Organizational Frameworks and Decision Making Processes

Kevin Wagner, PhD
Texas Water Resources Institute



Reason for Structure and Importance of Decisions

- To gain as much input and support from the local stakeholders as possible and allow them to make decisions that benefit everyone within the watershed
- Decision making process is critical to the development of the I-Plan
- Mechanisms used affect the efficiency of the process
- Number of decision makers can have a significant Influence
- Decision making process dictates what is included in the TMDL I-Plan



Possible Rule Development if Desired

- Formal
 - Established bylaws that govern the actions of the committee
 - Adhere to Open Meeting Act Requirements
- Informal
 - Develop a set of ground rules that will be used to govern the committee
 - Committee members approve ground rules and their use



Bylaws Example

**Lake Granbury
Watershed Protection
Plan
STAKEHOLDERS GROUP**

BYLAWS

Adopted
March 24, 2006
Amended
February 13, 2007

- Outline:
 - Organization
 - Voting Membership
 - Selection of additional groups/members
 - Designated alternates
 - Decision Making
 - Adopting and amending bylaws

Ground Rules Examples

- Gilleland Creek
 - Goals
 - Timeframe
 - Participants
 - Steering Committee
 - Work groups
 - Science and Monitoring advisory group
 - Approved meeting minutes and action items
- Geronimo Creek
 - Goals
 - Powers
 - Timeframe
 - Membership Selection
 - Steering Committee
 - Workgroup
 - Technical advisory
 - Replacement/additions
 - Alternates
 - Decision making
 - Quorum
 - Facilitators

Ground Rules Example

- Upper Gulf Coast Oyster Waters
 - Speak up
 - Disagree respectfully
 - Silence is presumed consent
 - Listen during discussions
 - Respect opinions and don't criticize people
 - Be open to new ideas
 - Silence cell phones
 - Have fun



Source: Google Images

Potential Decision Making Structures

- Consensus Building

- Overall stakeholder group is utilized to come up with recommendations that everyone can agree on



- Work Groups

- Stakeholders that can contribute to a topic grouped together to develop solutions
- Work Groups focus on specific topics
- Work Groups make recommendations to include in TMDL I-Plan
- Recommendations presented to the Coordination Committee

Buck Creek Example

Stakeholder Group Representatives

Texas AgriLife Extension Agent

Landowners

TPWD

River Authority

SWCD Board Members

County Commissioners

Other Citizens

- Watershed Characteristics:
 - Almost exclusively rural watershed
 - Very limited human influence with low population
- Structure:
 - Utilized consensus building and used overall stakeholder group to make recommendations that everyone can agree on

- Watershed Characteristics:
 - Multiple Issues/parties involved
 - Significant Growth
 - Multiple environmental concerns
- Structure:
 - Established Steering Committee with representatives from various Workgroups including:
 - Habitat
 - Agricultural Issues
 - Wastewater Infrastructure
 - Education and Outreach
 - Steering Committee typically has final say of activities in watershed

Arroyo Colorado Example

25 Steering Committee Reps

RGV UT-Brownsville	USFWS
Coastal Conservation Assoc.	TPWD
Watershed Resident	Arroyo Property Owner
Texas Department of Ag	Cameron Co. DD #5
Nueces River Authority	City of McAllen
TSSWCB	Texas Citrus Mutual
City of Harlingen	Coalition to Save the AC
TWDB	Sea Grant Marine Advisory Committee
LRGV SW Task Force	Military Highway WSC
Harlingen Irrigation. District	Cotton Growers Assoc.
Texas State Bank	Valley Land Fund
LRGV Dev. Council	Sugar Growers
Sierra Club	Port of Harlingen Authority
TAMUK	

Carters and Burton Creek Example

- Watershed Characteristics:
 - Changing watershed with multiple influences
 - Rapidly urbanizing
 - Diverse potential *E. coli* sources
- Coordination Committee made up of representatives from different interests
- Goal is to be equally representative of watershed stakeholders
- Coordination Committee determines the work groups needed:
 - Natural Resource Work Group
 - Planning and Development Work Group
 - Stormwater and Transportation Work Group
 - Waste Water Work Group

18 Coordination Committee
Reps Total

City of College Station

City of Bryan

TXDOT

Texas AgriLife Extension

Brazos County

TPWD

Brazos County Health Dept.

TAMU Faculty

Landowners

TAMU Environmental Health
and Safety Office



Roles of Stakeholder Group, Coordination Committee, and Work Groups

- Full Stakeholder Group
 - Meet periodically to discuss progress and provide input and comments on coordination committee recommendations
- Coordination Committee
 - Balanced representation from various viewpoints and interest groups
 - Represents the overall interest of those groups
 - Responsible for developing and recommending implementation actions and strategies to be included in the I-Plan (when no work groups are utilized)
 - Responsible for involving public throughout development and implementation process
- Work Groups
 - Focus on work group-specific issues and draft recommendations for Coordination Committee and inclusion into I-Plan
 - Ex. Natural Resources group focuses on solutions to agriculture, habitat, and wildlife related *E. coli* loading

Decision Making Strategy



Preferred Framework?

Option 1

Coordination Committee

Option 2

Coordination Committee

Workgroups



Option 3

Comments from Full
Stakeholder Group



Coordination Committee

Workgroups



Work Groups Used in Other Watersheds

- Agricultural Issues
- Coordination and Policy
- Education and Outreach
- Habitat
- On-Site Sewage
- Ordinance and Planning
- Natural Resource Management
- Science and Monitoring
- Urban Storm Water
- Waste Water Infrastructure
- Wildlife

•

•

Next Steps

- First agree on the number of representatives on the Coordination Committee
- Second, agree on the interests that will be represented by each representative
 - The representatives are there to represent all of the interests for the specific group (not just themselves)
- Third, determine the individuals that will be the representatives

This may take some time to ensure a balanced representation of the interests in the watershed





Questions/Discussion

Kevin Wagner, PhD
Texas Water Resources
Institute
klwagner@ag.tamu.edu
979-845-2649

Allen Berthold
Texas Water Resources
Institute
taberthold@ag.tamu.edu
361-318-8780