

**Medina River WPP
Work Group Meeting Notes
April 23, 2024**

Agriculture and Rural Concerns Work Group

Livestock, Cattle

Realistic population estimate is likely between the estimates based on NASS (13,028) and FSA (6,835) methods. Drought has impacted grazing resources and small operations are especially affected. Over-grazing is common in many areas.

Medina County appraisal district aligns ag valuations with NRCS Conservation Plans and Wildlife Plans. Do other counties have a similar process? What are the ag valuation requirements and flexibility for each of the counties in the watershed?

Potential management measures include prescribed grazing, additional cross fencing, alternative water sources for livestock, and riparian area plantings.

Wildlife, Deer

Deer Management Unit numbers do not represent this watershed very well. TPWD will provide updated deer density estimates.

It was noted that white-tail depredation permits are common in dry years in crop land areas.

Is there a resident domestic duck population in the local parks that could be considered a source of bacteria?

Potential management measures should include education & outreach about feeding wildlife.

Feral hogs

Population estimates, ranging from 2,100 to 5,356, may be refined with data from Texas Wildlife Services on removal activities.

Potential management measures include trap share programs, and education/outreach on hog control and wildlife feeding.

Cropland

Irrigated cropland may be a source of bacteria during rainfall runoff conditions.

Potential management measures more common in the watershed include buffer strips and grassed waterways. Less common measures in the watershed include conservation tillage and cover crops. Identify producers who are trying new methods or systems. Education and outreach activities could include a field day.

Other topics

Landfills and composting facilities could be potential sources of bacteria if not well managed. Nelson Gardens landfill is very close to the impaired portion of Medio Creek. It may be helpful to know if sampling has been done in the vicinity of identified facilities.

Wastewater Work Group

Wastewater Treatment Facilities (WWTF)

Major upgrades have been made to the Medio Creek WWTP facility and collection system. Much of the currently discharged effluent will soon be sent back to San Antonio as reuse water, therefore will not be discharged to Medio Creek. Flows from the facility will decrease over time as more flow is diverted for reuse. Actual discharge from the plant is expected to drop from 9 MGD to 4 – 6 MGD (30-day average).

For the Medio Creek WWTP, the group agrees with calculating potential load using Reported Flow and Reported constituent values, rather than the considerably higher permitted values.

Upgrades and improvements at the Castroville plant are on hold until resolution of a TCEQ enforcement order.

The Portranco Ranch Subdivision WWTF recently started discharging from a new facility in the past few weeks.

New WWTFs are planned north and west of Castroville and will likely be owned by one of the utility companies (not an HOA). It's anticipated that the growth observed and anticipated in the area will substantially increase future wastewater treatment needs.

On-Site Sewage Systems (OSSF)

The estimated number of OSSFs (8,111) are likely low. Medina County estimates 12,341 permitted OSSFs in the county, with almost 9,000 of those permitted in the last four years.

Medina County estimates that approximately 12% of OSSFs in the county are aerobic and 88% are conventional systems. Most aerobic systems are in the northern part of the watershed, in rocky areas. It's noted that the northern part of the watershed is also the Edwards Aquifer contributing and outcrop zone. An estimated 50%-80% of the aerobic waste water treatment systems in the county may not be maintained correctly and/or are not functioning properly.

A significant challenge to maintenance is the lack of service providers in the area to do needed maintenance.

Contact Bexar County staff for data on the number and types of systems.

Urban Development & Planning / Stormwater & Flooding Work Group

Urban Stormwater

Over-fertilization of lawns is a problem, especially in subdivisions.

Medina County does not currently require stormwater management outside of the floodplain. New subdivision rules are in process and will likely be in place by the end of the year.

Medina County floodplain areas have stormwater detention/retention requirements. Most recent floodplain maps were updated in 2020, with only miniscule changes from prior versions developed in the mid-1970s.

Would like to see more information about requirements in Bexar County and how they're being implemented. Contact MS4 entities for more information.

Pets, dogs

The estimated number of dogs (3,749) is likely low, since there is a problem with strays in the area. Medina County euthanizes about 1,300 dogs annually.

Education & Outreach Work Group

Additional stakeholders and expertise

Need to include the development community, if possible. Invite someone from the County to provide more information to the work group about the role of County and developers in the permitting process, existing outreach activities (if any), and how to reach the development community.

Several nonprofit organizations are already working in the region on natural resource protection & conservation and related issues. Invite those who have programs in the San Antonio area to provide more information on their programs and education/outreach resources.

Invite someone from the Medina County Appraisal District, preferably the Ag Appraiser, to help inform work group on agricultural/wildlife valuation requirements and flexibility.

No active agricultural commodity or irrigation associations in the county/region were identified. No other stakeholders or interest groups were identified at this time.

Methods to inform the public and stakeholders

Regarding potential outreach and educational activities, the group would like to have more information on typical activities and examples of what has been included in other watershed plans.

The group would like more information about local entities, if any, that may already have public outreach campaigns that stakeholders may be able to partner with for targeted messaging or campaigns, e.g. water bill inserts.

Recommendation, selection and delivery of E&O materials should be sensitive to the perception of landowners and the agricultural community of historic land management regulations, such as irrigation restrictions and endangered species. Many in the community may believe that inviting environmental groups to the watershed planning process could result in additional restrictions on landowner rights.