

Coordinator's Watershed Corner December 2011

A note to the Clean Water Committee, Paso del Norte Watershed Council and Stakeholder Group from the 319(h) Grant Watershed Coordinator, Brian Hanson

Hello all,

On December 13 the Watershed Coordinator visited the “TechH2O Center” in El Paso, Texas. The mission of the Center is to provide education and training to foster understanding and appreciation of total water management in the Chihuahuan Desert to customers, visitors, researchers and El Paso Water Utilities employees. The Watershed Coordinator visited to get ideas for outreach for the 319 project. The exhibit is filled with interesting facts presented in a format that is effective for many different age groups. The Center offers a place for groups and schools to meet and they can speak to groups at the site and at other locations. Anai Padilla, the Water Conservation Manager was very helpful. <http://www.tech2o.org/welcome.html>



The Watershed Coordinator completed a draft report “Monitoring Dog Waste in La Llorona Park at Picacho Bridge in Las Cruces, New Mexico”. The goal of the study was to calculate *E. coli* (from dogs) loads to the river and improve management so that dog waste is reduced. The majority of the dog waste collected were from small dogs and a maximum of 6 ½ pounds of waste per 20,000 square feet was collected during sampling. Recommendations include installing a trash can and dog waste bags at 350 feet south of Llorona Park since the majority of the dog waste documented was in that area along the walking path.

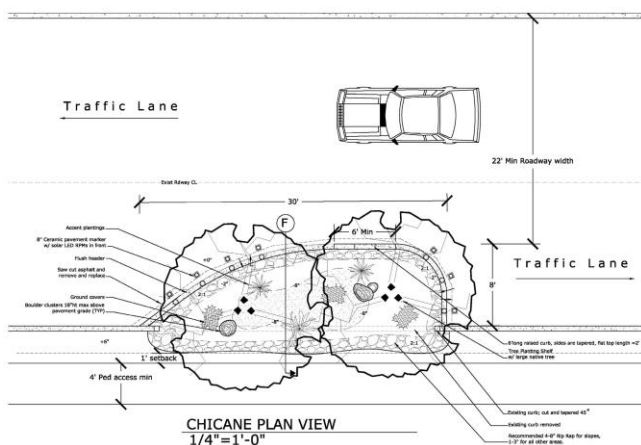
Watershed Tip: Confined Feeding Operations

Confined Feeding Operations (CAFO) is a possible source of *E. coli* bacteria for the Rio Grande. The EPA Region 6 CAFO General Permits for New Mexico require that lagoons be certified to have no hydrological connection to rivers, streams and lakes. Regulations generally prevent the discharge of contaminated runoff from animal production areas and apply manure to agricultural land in a way to benefit from its nutrient and soil building characteristics. Regulations apply to large operations such as feedlots that exceed 1,000 cows, dairy operations exceeding 700 cows etc. Smaller operations can protect water quality by also adopting best management practices. Management addresses lot and storage areas; nutrient management; manure application and other land management practices such as sediment control basins etc. For more information see the below websites.

- <http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6en/w/cafo/home.htm>
- http://extension.usu.edu/waterquality/files/uploads/PDF/Step8_BMPTables.pdf

One of the nine possible sources of *E. coli* is addressed as the Watershed Tip in each monthly edition of the "Coordinator's Watershed Corner". Nine possible sources of bacteria in the lower Rio Grande are : Impervious surface/parking lot runoff; Municipal point source discharges; Urbanized high density areas; On-site treatment systems; Runoff from confined animal feeding operations (CAFO); Rangeland grazing; Pet waste; Waterfowl waste; Wildlife waste, other than waterfowl.

Many municipalities are employing **green infrastructure** into their planning process to improve their environmental quality. **Green infrastructure** is an interconnected network of natural areas and open spaces. By preserving and restoring natural landscapes (planting vegetation, establishing natural flow areas) communities can improve water quality while providing outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat. At a small scale, practices include rain gardens, porous pavements, green roofs, infiltration planters, trees and tree boxes, and rainwater harvesting. Benefits of green infrastructure include reduced and delayed runoff, enhanced ground water recharge, stormwater pollutant reductions, reduced sewer overflow events, reduced air temperatures, creation of wildlife habitat and green space, improved human health, improved air quality (plants remove carbon dioxide), and increased land values. The Environmental Protection Agency has developed a strategic plan to implement **green infrastructure**. For more information see http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=2



http://watershedmg.org/sites/default/files/greenstreets/WMG_GISWNH_1.0.pdf

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