



Coordinator's Watershed Corner August 2011

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

Hello all,

As you know, we have been actively engaging our 319(h) stakeholders in discussions regarding the composition of the Watershed Based Plan (WBP), which we anticipate will be completed next year. The monthly stakeholder meetings have been well attended, and the discussions have been very helpful in moving forward with the WBP. We encourage participation from members of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council and the Clean Water Committee. Thank you for your continued interest and support.

Our public outreach initiatives are well underway, and we have been working very hard in preparation of the upcoming events. We will be participating in the Whole Enchilada Fiesta in Las Cruces on September 23-24 and could use some help from our Council members. If you would like to volunteer for this event, please contact me at 575-646-2642.

Next, I would like to draw your attention to the photo below. This flood channel, which drains Las Cruces and the levee east of the city, could potentially carry contaminants directly to the Rio Grande. Peter Bennett with the City of Las Cruces and I toured this flood channel on August 12. As part of 319(h) outreach initiatives, I plan to educate the residents of Las Cruces on the importance of only allowing rainfall into the storm drains, which flow to channels such as this one.



Las Cruces Flood Channel to the Rio Grande, August 12

August Events

*Aug. 9: 319(h)
Stakeholder Meeting @
Mesilla Park Recreation
Center*

September Events

*Sept. 17: Outreach @ NM
State Fair, Albuquerque*

*Sept. 19: Watershed
Council Meeting*

*Sept. 23, 24: Outreach @
Whole Enchilada Fiesta
w/Peter Bennett, Las
Cruces*

Watershed Tip: Waste From Wildlife Other than Waterfowl

Wildlife has been identified as one possible source of *E. coli* in streams and rivers, as Virginia farmer, Roger Buyrn learned the hard way. When the Virginia Division of Shellfish Sanitation warned him that his clam beds, worth approximately \$2 million, were close to being condemned due to contaminants found in the clams, Buyrn worked tirelessly for over two years to find the cause of the *E. coli* that was plaguing his farm. The culprit... raccoons. Farmers in the area began hiring trappers to control the raccoon population, and since, the waterways have been reopened, and *E. coli* levels have dropped throughout the watershed. For more, visit <http://www.bayjournal.com/article.cfm?article=547&print=yes>.

There are a number of ways to decrease exceedences of *E. coli* posed by non-domestic animals by way of eliminating attractants or harassing nuisance species. Harassment programs can be implemented to deter wildlife from valuable surface waters. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S.E.P.A), some methods include habitat modification, decoys, noisemakers, and scarecrows or plastic owls. Daily human presence can keep wild species away as well. These methods, however, should only be implemented with thorough understanding of the animal population in question. Contact fish and wildlife agencies regarding such matters.

http://www.epa.gov/safewater/sourcewater/pubs/fs_swpp_petwaste.pdf

Sources of *E. coli*

The 319(h) project is working to improve watershed health in the Paso del Norte Watershed. The New Mexico Environment Department's Total Maximum Daily Load report of June 2007 specified nine possible sources of bacteria in the lower Rio Grande:

- Impervious surface/parking lot runoff
- Municipal point source discharges
- Urbanized high density areas
- On-site treatment systems
- Permitted runoff from confined animal feeding operations (CAFO)
- Rangeland grazing
- Pet waste
- Waterfowl waste
- Wildlife waste, other than waterfowl

In each monthly "Coordinator's Watershed Corner", one of these possible sources of *E. coli* is addressed as the "Watershed Tip." If you have tips that you would like to add, please contact me at BHanson@nmda.nmsu.edu.

Stakeholder Meeting: August 9, 2011

Stakeholders at the August meeting reviewed chapters of the 2007 watershed plan, "Paso del Norte Watershed Restoration Action Strategy." Some of the information in this plan will be used in the Watershed Based Plan (WBP) that will be written over the next several months. It has been suggested by the stakeholders that I look at other WBPs produced by various watershed groups in order to make recommendations for a format of our own plan.

A Doodle poll has been emailed to select a date for the next stakeholder meeting in October. If you did not receive email notification of the Doodle, please contact Sumer Guffey at sguffey@nmda.nmsu.edu.

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www.pdnwc.org