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## TSSWCB and TCEQ Establish Task Force on Bacteria TMDLs

TEMPLE, Texas, September 29, 2006 — The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) convened for a joint meeting and work session on Wednesday, September 27 at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station–Blackland Research and Extension Center to renew their partnership in cleaning up impaired bodies of water.

Commissioners and Board Members authorized their Executive Directors to sign a revised Memorandum of Agreement on Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), Implementation Plans, and Watershed Protection Plans (WPPs). This framework for collaboration between the two agencies describes the programmatic mechanisms the agencies will employ to develop and implement TMDLs and WPPs.

The Board and Commission established a joint technical Task Force on Bacteria TMDLs. The Task Force, chaired by Dr. Allan Jones with the Texas Water Resources Institute, is charged with (1) examining approaches other states use to develop and implement bacteria TMDLs, (2) making recommendations on cost- and time-effective TMDL development methodologies, (3) making recommendations on Implementation Plan development approaches, including modeling and bacterial source tracking (BST) methodologies, (4) evaluating the variety of models and BST methods and recommending under what conditions which approach is more appropriate, and (5) describing a science and research roadmap to reduce uncertainty in what we know about how bacteria behave under water conditions in Texas.

Invited Task Force members include Drs. George DiGiovanni with Texas Agricultural Experiment Station–El Paso, Larry Hauck with the Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research, Joanna Mott with Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, Hanadi Rifai with the University of Houston, Raghavan Srinivasan with Texas A&M University, and George Ward with the University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Jones and the Task Force will have 120 days to complete their assessment and report back to the Commission and Board. Stakeholders with expertise on bacteria related issues will have significant opportunity to provide input to the Task Force during the process. Additionally, local,

state, and federal agencies with jurisdictions impacting bacteria and water quality will offer guidance to the Task Force.

Recommendations from the Task Force will be used by the Board and the Commission to keep Texas at the national forefront of implementing water quality prevention and abatement projects that lead to cleaner water for drinking, swimming, and fishing.

For more information, contact John Foster, NPS Team Leader, TSSWCB, at [jfoster@tsswcb.state.tx.us](mailto:jfoster@tsswcb.state.tx.us).

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