



Brazos River
Authority

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Texas State Soil & Water
Conservation Board

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North Bosque Newsletter

PRESENTED BY THE AUTHORITY IN COOPERATION WITH THE TSSWCB

Watershed Coordination Begins

Overview

The Brazos River Authority (Authority), under contract with the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB), has begun a watershed coordination effort in the North Bosque River Watershed. In 1998, the North Bosque River was judged to be impaired under water quality guidelines for nutrients and aquatic plant growth and placed on the State of Texas Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list. As a result of this listing, the watershed has received a high degree of environmental, political, and regulatory scrutiny. Currently, there are many activities occurring throughout the watershed that reflect new

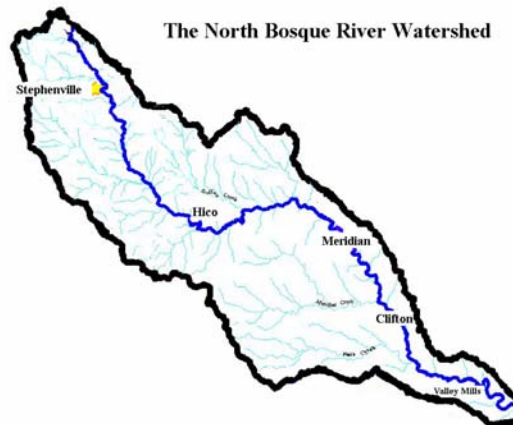
rules and regulations, new best management practices development and implementation, improved agricultural waste management, and municipal treatment plant renovations. This coordination project was initiated as a means of bringing all of the various activities together into a single view for communication, potential cost savings, transfer of information, and increased overall

effectiveness and speed in improving water quality. The project started in December 2003 and is expected to continue until March 2006. TSSWCB is funding the project through an EPA Clean Water Act, Section 319(h) Grant.

Project Goals

The main goal of the coordination project is to provide a single point of contact for all activities in the watershed related to: pollution prevention projects, applicable Federal and State rules and regulations, and water quality data. The coordination will also provide for increased communication between stakeholders through newsletters (such as this one), brochures, meetings, and our project website.

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CAFO Rules Approved for Public Comment by TCEQ Commissioners

The proposed Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) guidelines were approved for public comment by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) on February 25th, 2004. The new rules will amend Chapter 321 Subchapter B of the Texas Administrative Code and incorporates the new federal CAFO regulations. The proposed rules also in-

clude special requirements for dairy CAFOs in the North Bosque River Watershed (Section 321.42).

The rules were published in the Texas Register (<http://texinfo.library.unt.edu/texasregister/>) on March 12th. The public comment period will last 30 days from the posting in the Register. Public meetings were scheduled for Apr. 1 in Stephenville, Apr. 6 in Amarillo, and Apr.

13 in Austin. See TCEQ's website www.tceq.state.tx.us for additional time and location information.

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Compost Incentives Passed Along to Agricultural Producers

There are currently 8 crop producers in Comanche County that will be using compost purchased in this program...

The Compost Manure Incentive Program (CMIP), funded by the TCEQ, is a program that offers a \$5 rebate for each cubic yard of compost purchased. Eligibility for the compost rebate program is open to all state agencies, as well as Texas cities, counties, regional planning agencies, special districts, school districts, and universities.

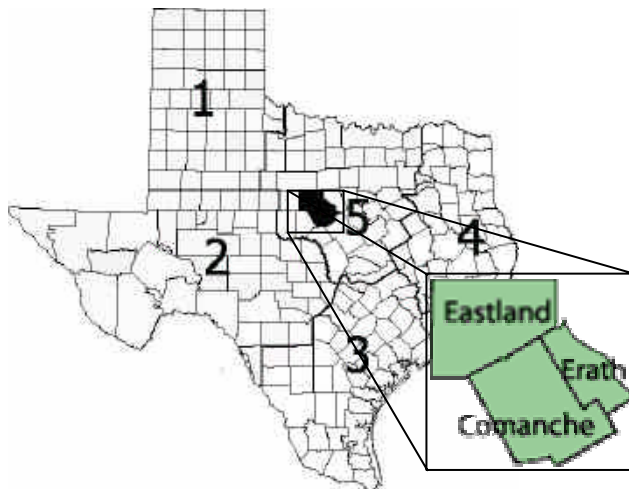
Until recently, however, agricultural producers interested in applying compost to their cropland did not qualify for the rebate. Now, thanks to a

program administered by the Upper Leon Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) (see map below), this rebate is being passed along to farmers who wish to use the compost outside of the North Bosque Watershed.

The Upper Leon SWCD is eligible under current rules for the compost rebate. They purchase the compost from a local facility and sell it to farmers, passing along the \$5 rebate. There are currently 8 crop producers in Comanche

County that will be using compost purchased in this program on their crops this year. The compost rebate offered by TCEQ is scheduled to last until August 31, 2004.

More details about the CMIP may be found on TCEQ's Website at: <http://www.tnrcc.state.tx.us/water/quality/nps/compost/>.



Areas served by the Upper Leon SWCD in State SWCD district 5.

Improving Water Quality by Developing, Implementing, and Field Testing Innovative Animal Waste Treatment Methods

A new project conducted by the Texas Cooperative Extension and Texas Water Resources Institute and funded by the TSSWCB through an EPA CWA, 319 NPS Grant will provide for the testing of new technologies designed for reducing water pollution associated with animal production systems, principally dairies. The focus is

restricted to reducing phosphorus in dairy manure effluent applied to the waste application fields.

An advisory group assembled for the project met in Stephenville on January 27, 2004. Several technology providers were in attendance and gave a brief overview of their systems.

A request for proposed technologies was sent out in February. Proposals were due by March 31, 2004. A technical advisory group will meet and select demonstrations consistent with the overall goal of the project. It is expected that two technologies will be selected and demonstrated per year for the next three years.

TSSWCB Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) Program

TSSWCB has already certified one CNMP and expects more to come in the near future as the (CAFO) rules take effect.

The TSSWCB Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) Program was developed in response to a control measure recommended by the North Bosque River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan. The implementation plan recommended that dairy producers in the watershed voluntarily develop and implement a CNMP.

A CNMP is a resource management plan containing a grouping of conservation practices and management activities which, when combined into a conservation system, will help ensure that both agricultural production goals and natural

resource concerns dealing with nutrient and organic by-products and their adverse impacts on water quality are achieved. A CNMP incorporates practices to utilize animal manure and organic by-products as a beneficial resource. To be certified, a CNMP must cover all lands that constitute the conservation management unit.

Under the proposed CAFO rules scheduled to take effect this September, CNMPs are required for all dairy CAFOs in the North Bosque Watershed. TSSWCB has already certified one CNMP and expects more to come in the near future as the

rules take effect. The rules stipulate that CNMPs for all CAFOs need to be implemented no later than Dec 31, 2006.

Agricultural producers who receive TSSWCB certification of their CNMP may be eligible for cost-share through their local SWCD. Financial assistance may also be available from some Texas universities and institutes. The NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) also provides cost-share for the development and implementation of conservation measures.

Dairy Waste Management Demonstration Project Brings Agencies Together for Common Goal

Dairy producers in the North Bosque Watershed are faced with the challenges of reducing phosphorus in their waste stream and preventing animal manure from entering their lagoons or implementing changes in their waste management practices. A project currently underway on a Hamilton County dairy will utilize both solid and liquid dairy waste through an anaerobic digester in

a multi-step process that will produce both electricity and compost, while reducing phosphorus in the liquid waste stream by approximately 80 percent.

A number of agencies and private firms have come together to make the new digester project a success. Funding has come from EPA grants administered by both TCEQ and TSSWCB, along with contributions from USDA-NRCS,

Brazos River Authority, Texas Farm Bureau, and Altria. United Cooperative Services, a rural electric cooperative in Cleburne, has agreed to compensate the producer for the amount of electricity produced by the digester for a period of two years. This will help to offset the costs of operation and maintenance.

The Brazos River Authority is managing the project and has accepted a design submitted by Cascade Earth Sciences (CES). TIAER will be conducting edge-of-field monitoring and providing technical assistance to the producer as needed. Monitoring stations have been installed and will begin operation upon approval of the QAPP by TCEQ and EPA. TSSWCB has certified the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan for the dairy operation.

The Brazos River Authority has requested bids for the construction of the digester. Construction will begin soon after a bid has been approved.

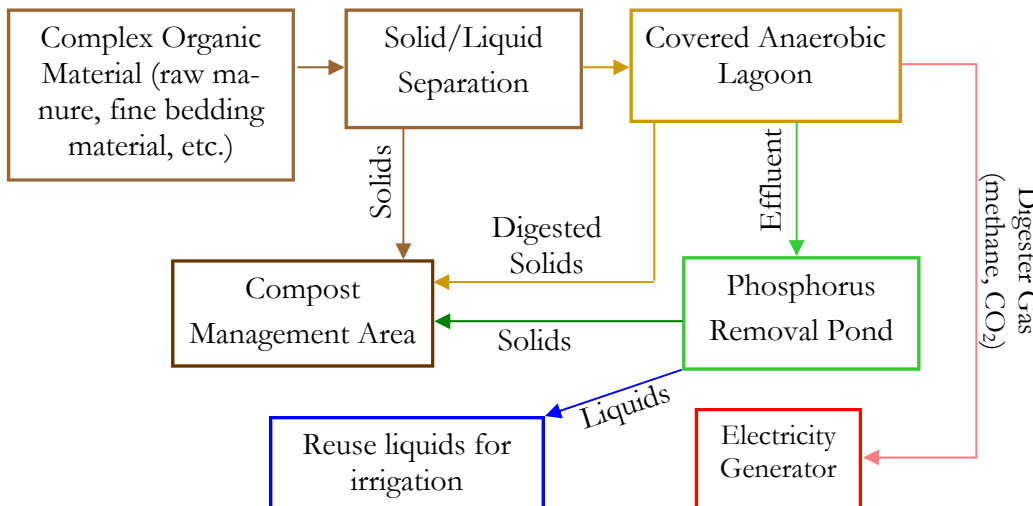


Diagram of proposed dairy waste management demonstration. The process will remove approximately 80 percent of phosphorus from the waste stream and produce methane gas that will be used to power an electricity generator.

Watershed Coordination Begins

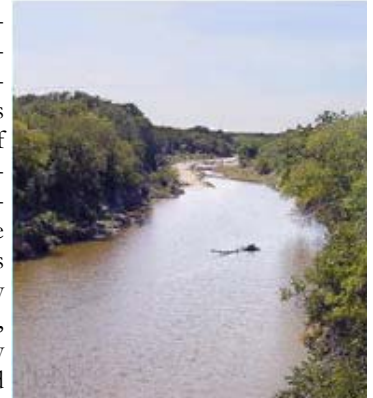
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The project website, hosted by the Authority, will provide the framework in which the goals of this project are to be met. The website will include a background on the watershed, fact sheets for agencies and projects operating in the watershed, and links to appropriate rules and regulations. The website will also provide a New and Emerging Technologies Project Proposal Form, which we hope will facilitate efforts to implement new and innovative methods for dealing with the problem of nutrient loading in the North Bosque River. The proposals may be evaluated at stakeholder meetings and be considered

for funding by the appropriate agencies. With this increased level of communication, the potential benefits include more efficient use of federal, state, and local resources by reducing redundant activities and a more rapid advancement towards measurable water quality improvements. To that end, we will also work to identify areas within the watershed that may not have received the attention necessary to reduce potentially detrimental impacts to water quality.

What's Next?

Currently, the content for the website is being finalized and the Information Technology personnel at the Authority are working to



The North Bosque River at Iredell, Texas

make the site operational. When this has been completed, the Authority will most likely host a stakeholder meeting to familiarize the group with the website and get feedback on content, appearance, etc.

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Brazos River
Authority

This newsletter is produced for the benefit of the North Bosque River Watershed Stakeholders. Its purpose is to inform the readers and to highlight activities taking place within the watershed. If you're involved in a project in the watershed or hosting an event related to pollution prevention or water quality enhancement and you'd like to see it in a future issue of this newsletter, please contact Gary Henry (ghenry@brazos.org) or Kyle Headley (kheadley@brazos.org) by email or by phone at 254-761-3167.

**ISSUE 2 OF THE NORTH
BOSQUE NEWSLETTER
WILL SPOTLIGHT THE
TEXAS COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION AND THEIR
EFFORTS IN THE
WATERSHED**

THESE NEWSLETTERS, ALONG WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT, WILL SOON BE LOCATED ON THE AUTHORITY'S WEBSITE (WWW.BRAZOS.ORG) UNDER THE TAB LABELED "NORTH BOSQUE RIVER WATERSHED COORDINATION"