

A Message from the Executive Director

By Carol Batterton, Executive Director



EPA announces plans to revise water quality standards

The US EPA announced plans to propose a limited set of targeted changes to the federal water quality standards regulation. EPA expects to publish a proposed rule in the Federal Register in summer 2011. Prior to publishing a proposed rule, EPA will hold informal “listening sessions” inviting members of the public to express their views on the possible changes EPA is considering for the rulemaking as well as offer additional suggestions. Specifically, EPA is considering providing clarity in the following key areas: 1) antidegradation implementation methods, 2) Administrator’s determination, 3) designated uses, 4) variances to water quality standards; 5) triennial review scope and requirements, and 6) updating the regulation to reflect court decisions.

Additional information, including the Federal Register notice and instructions for submitting written comments, can be found at the following EPA website: <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/rules/wqs/>

TCEQ adopts revised water quality standards

The TCEQ adopted the revised water quality standards on June 30, 2010. WEAT, along with TACWA, TWCA, and TML, participated in TCEQ’s stakeholder process to develop revisions to the standards. These revisions establish criteria for nutrients for reservoirs, update numerous toxic criteria, and most significantly create new categories for recreation standards so that Texas’ waters are protected and classified based on appropriate recreational uses. There are now four tiers of recreational standards which include primary contact, secondary contact 1 and 2, and non-contact. Public participation will be an integral part of the use attainability process for the classification of water bodies for secondary contact. The commissioners asked the staff to propose mechanisms to streamline the process for determining the specific level of recreational use for a specific water body.

TCEQ staff had proposed a change in bacteria criteria for primary contact recreation in freshwater to 206 E. coli per 100 milliliters, but TCEQ Commissioners chose to retain the existing 126 E. coli per 100 milliliters limit.

Additionally, for the first time the TCEQ has established numerical nutrient criteria for 75 reservoirs in Texas. This new criteria will protect many major reservoirs by inhibiting excessive growth of aquatic vegetation.

TCEQ announces intent to develop pesticides general permit

At a recent Water Quality Advisory Committee meeting, TCEQ announced their intent to develop a pesticide general permit with a goal to have permit coverage by April 2011. Activities proposed to be covered by this general permit

include mosquito and other flying insect control, aquatic weed and algae control, aquatic nuisance animal control, and forest canopy pest control. Next steps in this process will be to hold a stakeholder meeting to get comments and then develop a draft permit. Stakeholder meetings are open to anyone and more information is available at: http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water_quality/stakeholders/pesticide-permitting-stakeholder-group

Legislative and Regulatory Specialty Conference

Mark your calendars for Thursday **November 4, 2010**. WEAT and TACWA will be hosting a specialty conference in Austin at the beautiful Long Center to get a forecast of issues and topics in the upcoming legislative session along with updates on current regulatory topics. WEAT’s Government Affairs Committee and TACWA representatives have been working on creating an outstanding agenda of key elected and regulatory officials to give us a peek into the future.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2010

September 9	WEAT Webinar – Update on New Water Quality Standards and Implementation Procedures for TPDES Permitting
September 15	Longview/Tyler/Texarkana Section Meeting, US Steel
September 15	Bioenergy: Getting the Most Out of Your Biosolids Seminar in Waco, TX
September 16	San Antonio Section Meeting, SAWS, San Antonio, TX
September 16	Houston/Galveston Section Meeting
September 21	Central Texas Section Meeting, Austin, TX
October 1	Abstract Deadline Submission for Texas Water 2011
October 2-6	WEFTEC.10, New Orleans, LA
October 4	WEAT Executive Board Meeting, New Orleans, LA
October 4	Texas Reception at WEFTEC, New Orleans, LA
October 15	4th Annual Operations Challenge Cook-Off
November 1	WEAT and WEF Awards State Level Nomination Deadline
November 4	Legislative and Regulatory Outlook on the Texas Water Environment, Austin, TX
November 19	Dallas/Fort Worth Section Meeting, Texas Star, Euless, TX
November 18	Houston/Galveston Section Meeting
December 2	San Antonio Section Scholarship Dinner

2011

January 12-13	Collections System Conference, San Marcos, TX
January 28	Water Reuse in Texas: Extending our Water Frontier Conference, San Antonio, TX
April 5-8	Texas Water 2011, Fort Worth, TX
July 1	Deadline for V.M. Ehlers Scholarship Application
August 3-4	Biosolids and Odor and Corrosion Conference, San Marcos, TX