

A Message from the Executive Director

By Carol Batterton, Executive Director



EPA Office of Water

Peter Silva, the new EPA Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water, was a featured speaker at WEFTEC.09 in Orlando, FL. Mr. Silva is a registered professional engineer and is past vice chair of the California Water Resources Board. He has worked the past ten years for the City of San Diego and brings extensive knowledge and experience in wastewater operations to his position at EPA.

During his presentation, Mr. Silva emphasized that he was committed to carrying out EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson's priorities for EPA which include:

- Sound science
- Rule of law
- Transparency

For the Office of Water, Mr. Silva stated that he would be focusing on nonpoint source pollution and nutrients. The Office of Inspector General has recently stated that EPA should accelerate the adoption of numeric nutrient criteria. The report also stated that EPA should prioritize waters needing nutrient criteria and determine if EPA and not the states should set the criteria.

Clean Water Enforcement Action Plan

As a result of a recent article appearing in the New York Times criticizing EPA's clean water enforcement, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, directed the Office of Water and the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance to develop a clean water enforcement action plan. The plan, released on October 16, 2009, contained the following key steps for EPA:

- Develop more comprehensive approaches to ensure enforcement is targeted to the most serious violations and the most significant sources of pollution.
- Work with states to ensure greater consistency throughout the country with respect to compliance and water quality. Ensure that states are issuing protective permits and taking enforcement to achieve compliance and remove economic incentives to violate the law.
- Use 21st century information technology to collect,

analyze and use information in new, more efficient ways and to make that information readily accessible to the public. Better tools will help federal and state regulators identify serious compliance problems quickly and take prompt actions to correct them.

The full text of the report can be viewed at

<http://www.epa.gov/oecaerth/civil/cwa/cwaenfplan.html>

TCEQ Update

TCEQ has postponed indefinitely the proposal of surface water quality standards rules and implementation procedures (IPs) originally scheduled for November 18, 2009. TCEQ has delayed proposing the rules and IPs while they continue to work with EPA Region 6 to find a mutually agreeable approach for implementation of sub-lethal WET limits in permits. WEAT and a coalition of other water organizations have been working on this issue with TCEQ and Region 6, and we will follow these developments closely.

TCEQ announced initiation of the pharmaceutical disposal study required by SB 1757 at a recent drinking water advisory group meeting. SB 1757 by Sen. Watson requires the agency to conduct a study and make recommendations regarding the methods to be used by consumers, health care providers, and others for disposing of unused pharmaceuticals so that they do not enter a wastewater system. The commission is required to submit a report of the results of the study to the legislature by December 1, 2010. TCEQ plans to appoint an advisory group and are soliciting interested persons to serve on the advisory committee. Once the advisory group is appointed, they will identify current disposal methods for pharmaceuticals in Texas, identify approaches used in other states, and determine what approaches could work best in Texas. If you are interested in serving on this advisory committee, contact Elston Johnson at TCEQ, eljohnso@tceq.state.tx.us.



Barbara and David Luedecke, one of the sponsors of the Wild Wild West Texas Reception and WEAT Vice-President, David Briggs



Folks enjoying themselves at the Texas Reception