

# Tres Palacios Watershed Coordination Committee



**GROUND  
RULES**

# 1. PURPOSE

- Provide local input into the Tres Palacios watershed-based plan.
- The watershed plan will be developed by the stakeholders through the Committee with support from the Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI).
- TWRI shall serve as the Watershed Coordinator

## 2. GOALS

The overarching goal of the Committee is to develop a watershed-based plan to restore water quality in Tres Palacios Creek. Basic goals of this public input process include:

- ensuring that a local perspective is included in the development of the watershed-based plan;
- encouraging an open dialogue on water quality issues; and
- pursuing the successful implementation of the watershed-based plan once developed.

# 3. POWERS

- The Committee shall have the responsibility for providing input and information with respect to selecting, designing, and implementing water quality management measures.
- Foremost among those responsibilities shall be identification of areas and issues with the greatest concerns and selecting appropriate measures.

## 4. LIFE OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

- The Committee will continue until the watershed-based plan is completed (tentatively August 2016).



## 5. MEMBERSHIP

- **Representation:** Members include both individuals and representatives of organizations. A variety of members serve on the committee to reflect the diversity of interests within the Tres Palacios watershed.
- A membership roster is provided as Exhibit A.

# 5. MEMBERSHIP

- **Selection:** Members were selected by stakeholders in attendance at the Tres Palacios Creek watershed-based plan stakeholder meeting on ~~XXXXXX~~, 2015.
- **Replacements and Additions:** Committee members may replace members unable to continue serving or add members to increase the diversity of the group. A new member must be recommended by an existing Committee member and approved by consensus of existing members (RE: rule 8).

## 5. MEMBERSHIP

- **Substitutes:** Those unable to attend a meeting (an absentee) may send a substitute. An absentee can provide advance notification to the Watershed Coordinator at the Texas Water Resources Institute of the desire to send a substitute.
- A substitute attending with prior notification from an absentee will serve as a proxy for that absent member. A substitute attending without advance notification is considered an observer (see definition of observer under Meetings).
- Absentees may also provide input via another Committee member or send input via the Watershed Coordinator. The Watershed Coordinator will present such information to the Committee but may not argue in its favor.



# 5. MEMBERSHIP

- **Absences:** Three absences in a row of which the Watershed Coordinator was not informed of beforehand and without designation of a substitute constitutes a resignation.



## 6. MEETINGS

- **Observers:** Meetings are open and observers welcome. Observers will be recognized by the Watershed Coordinator prior to making comments during the meeting.
- **Open Discussion:** Participants express their views candidly, but without personal attacks. Time is shared because all participants are of equal importance. Texas Water Resources Institute personnel will take notes during the meetings and provide meeting summaries.
- Meeting summaries will be based on notes. A Committee member can ask to go off record; an observer cannot go off record.

## 6. MEETINGS

- **Location and Arrangements:** The Watershed Coordinator is responsible for making meeting arrangements.
- **Timing:** Meetings start and end on time. Meetings will generally be held every other month but this schedule may be amended as needed based on watershed-based planning milestones.
- Meetings are scheduled to allow time for member input to be considered for incorporation into plans and reports.
- Meeting times will be set to permit maximum attendance. The Committee can decide time and date of meetings.

## 6. MEETINGS

- **Agenda:** The Watershed Coordinator, in consultation with Committee members and the TCEQ project manager, develops the agenda.
- The anticipated topics are determined at the previous meeting. A draft agenda is sent to the Committee with the notice of the meeting. Agenda items may be added by members at the time of the draft agenda is provided. The draft agenda will provide an estimation of meeting duration.
- The Watershed Coordinator reviews the agenda at the start of each meeting and amends if the group agrees. The Committee then follows the approved agenda unless they agree to revise it.

## 6. MEETINGS

- **Quorum:** A quorum of the Coordination Committee shall be a simple majority of the Committee Membership or those represented by proxy. At least a quorum shall be necessary to conduct any business of the Committee.
- **Meeting Notes:** Texas Water Resources Institute personnel draft meeting notes and distribute them to the Committee for their review. The Committee revises if needed before they are distributed publicly.

# 7. ROLES

- **Members:** Members identify and present insights, suggestions, and concerns from a community, environmental, or public interest perspective as they carry out the objectives of the Committee in the development of the Tres Palacios watershed-based plan.
- The members offer their advice to the Committee and Watershed Coordinator.
  
- **Watershed Coordinator:** The Committee operates without a chair but with a Watershed Coordinator. The Watershed Coordinator serves to help the Committee organize its work, run meetings, draft notes and other materials if requested, and work to send notices and mailings.
- The Watershed Coordinator encourages dialogue and candid input and transfers Committee recommendations into the watershed plan.

# 7. ROLES

- **Speaking in the Name of the Committee:** Individuals do not speak for the Committee as a whole unless authorized by the Committee to do so. Members do not speak for the Watershed Coordinator, and the Watershed Coordinator does not speak for Committee members. If Committee spokespersons are needed, they are selected by Committee members. Plan materials are not released in the name of the Committee unless the Committee agrees to the release.
- **Draft Documents:** Members will review draft watershed-based plan documents and respect the fact that they are in draft form. No watershed-based plan documents will be released to the public until final or unless okayed by the Committee.

## 8. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- The Committee shall attempt to make decisions by consensus to the maximum extent possible. If consensus cannot be reached, then an affirmative vote of a simple majority of Committee members present or represented by proxy will be required to make a decision, pass an action, etc.



## 9. DEVELOPMENT AND REVISION OF GROUND RULES

- The ground rules were drafted by the TWRI Watershed Coordinator.
- This draft was presented to the members for their review, possible revision, and adoption.
- Once adopted, ground rules may be changed by consensus among Committee members (RE: rule 8) as long as a quorum of the Committee and Watershed Coordinator are present for the discussion.



**Exhibit A:** TENTATIVE List of Members of Tres Palacios Creek Watershed Coordination Committee

# Possible Members *(nobody contacted to date)*

- Citizen(s) – **Cathy Wakefield** 361-404-1198; [cathywakefield78@gmail.com](mailto:cathywakefield78@gmail.com)
- City of El Campo (WWTP) – **Jerry Lewis**
- City of Palacios – **David Kocurek**
- Landowner(s) – **Lawrence Brown** (Wharton Co.); **Dave Duncan** (Matagorda Co.; 979-240-8460; [dunham.dcj@gmail.com](mailto:dunham.dcj@gmail.com)); **Dan Tucker** (Matagorda Co. 361-972-2537; [dan@trullserve.net](mailto:dan@trullserve.net))
- Matagorda County Extension Agent – **Brent Batchelor**
- Matagorda County Health Inspector – **Gilbert Perez**
- Matagorda County Commissioner – **James Gibson**
- Matagorda County Judge – **Nate McDonald**
- Matagorda County Soil & Water Conservation District – **Chuck Baker**
- Palacios Chamber of Commerce – **Leland Singer**
- Vaquero River Estates Subdivision – **Betty Vacek** ([bvacek2001@yahoo.com](mailto:bvacek2001@yahoo.com))
- Tres Palacios Oaks Subdivision – **Ralph Conklin** (361) 588-7088; [Kingpave@hotmail.com](mailto:Kingpave@hotmail.com)
- Texas Parks & Wildlife Department – **Leslie Hartman**
- Texas Sea Grant – **Bill Balboa**
- Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board – **Brian Koch**
- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service – **Kristela Sanders & Kyle Wright**
- Wharton County Extension Agent – **Corrie Bowen**
- Wharton County Health Inspector – **Monica Martin**
- Wharton County Judge – **Phillip Spenreth**
- Wharton County Soil & Water Conservation District – **Arthur Priesmeyer**
- Matagorda Co. Navigation District) – **Debbie Morris**