

North Central Texas Council of Governments

SUMMARY

Upper Trinity River Basin Coordinating Committee (UTRB-CC)

9:30 AM, Tuesday, April 7, 2026

6021 W Arkansas Ln, Arlington, TX 76016

Meeting Attendance:

- Erin Blackman, North Central Texas Council of Governments
- Joy Douglas, North Central Texas Council of Governments
- Umair Khan, North Central Texas Council of Governments
- Christ Upton, North Central Texas Council of Governments
- Megan Paliwoda, City of Fort Worth
- Samantha Webster, City of Fort Worth
- Ram Gopal, IEA Inc.
- Tanner Carr, IEA Inc.
- Hannah Parks, City of Irving
- Jeff Shiflet, City of Irving
- Kale Oakley, City of Irving
- Joe Trammel, Tarrant County
- Aaron Hoff, Tarrant Regional Water District
- Samantha Gonzalez, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Rachel Ritcher, Texas Parks and Wildlife
- Bardia Heidari, Texas Water Resources Institute
- Anthony Rust, Trinity River Authority
- Heather Firm, Trinity River Authority
- Ryan Seymour, Trinity River Authority

1. Welcome and Introductions

Joy Douglas (NCTCOG) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Upper Trinity River Basin Coordinating Committee Overview. NCTCOG will provide a brief background on the purpose of the UTRB-CC.

Joy Douglas mentioned that the purpose of the UTRB-CC is to gather stakeholders to share information, successes, challenges, and updates on projects that impact water quality and bacteria. The UTRB-CC is scheduled to meet twice a year and features a member or topic presentation and project update/roundtable session. NCTCOG's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program supports the UTRB-CC.

2. Project Updates and Roundtable.

NCTCOG and members will discuss ongoing and planned activities and watershed-level challenges.

- North Central Texas Council of Governments
Joy Douglas requested input from the group regarding interest in a cooperative purchase of Texas Stream Team (TST) water quality testing kits and any associated training needs. The discussion indicated general interest in TST training and a potential cooperative purchase of testing kits; however, participants

emphasized several challenges that would need to be addressed before moving forward. The challenges identified include limited access to available training staff, funding constraints, potential unavailability of certain testing kit components, and difficulties recruiting and retaining volunteers within the communities.

One city shared that it currently has testing kits available for volunteers to check out through the local library. It was suggested that the nature center in Fort Worth could serve as a potential training location, and that the Meadows Center may be able to assist with training efforts. Additionally, a future presentation from the Trinity River Authority (TRA) was recommended to discuss challenges and lessons learned from the Texas Stream Team program.

- City of Arlington
- City of Dallas
- City of Fort Worth

Megan Paliwoda reported that the City of Fort Worth has not yet received a new municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permit. She noted that long-term monitoring data from Sycamore Creek indicate a decreasing trend in bacteria levels over the past 10 years. This improvement may be attributed to several efforts, including rehabilitation of sanitary sewer lines; conversion of a former golf course into a public park; remediation of illegal campsites; strengthened compliance oversight of select industries; and the establishment of a cross-departmental task force to improve coordination and information sharing on pollution reduction measures, such as pet waste management and riparian zone protection. Megan also noted that a TMDL is expected for Marine Creek, as elevated bacteria levels have re-emerged.

- City of Grand Prairie
- City of Irving

Jeff Shiflet reported that they are working with Texas A&M AgriLife to conduct bacteria source tracking to better identify potential contributors within the waterways. Results from testing for human and dog sources generally indicate low concern, with intermittent findings. Future efforts will include evaluating avian sources. Jeff emphasized the importance of these results to direct more efficient and effective efforts to help curb bacteria.

Hannah Parks reported that efforts to address floatables are underway, including the installation of interceptors and the promotion of grow zones to reduce erosion.

- City of Plano
- North Texas Municipal Water District
- Tarrant Regional Water District

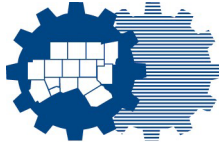
Aaron Hoff reported that two Watershed Protection Plans (WPPs)—the Eagle Mountain WPP and the Richland Chambers WPP—are expected to be completed by the end of the summer. He noted that the Cedar Creek WPP will follow.

Coordination with soil and water conservation districts (SWCD) is ongoing, and TRWD is available to share successes with those interested.

- Texas A&M AgriLife

Bardia Heidari reported on behalf of Dr. Fouad Jaber (AgriLife) that two WPPs are in the works—Rowlett Creek WPP, currently being reviewed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and White Rock WPP.

- Trinity River Authority



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Ryan Seymour noted that a Clean Rivers Program (CRP) stakeholder meeting will be held virtually on April 14, 2026 at 9:00 am to 11:00 am. Presentation topics will include the City of Dallas' efforts to identify bacteria sources, as well as updates from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the TRA. He also reported that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has been in contact with TRA regarding a potential CRP funding source in the Legislature's next funding cycle, although details are not yet clear.

Ryan further shared that TRA is working with Texas A&M AgriLife to evaluate the impacts of water quality on freshwater mussels in the Trinity River. As part of the Village Creek–Lake Arlington WPP, TRA has replaced 11 septic systems and will fund 18 additional replacements. TRA is also initiating a forestry project with Texas A&M in Soap Creek to help mitigate nitrate and bacteria concerns and reduce streambank erosion.

Heather Firm reported progress on the rain garden project in the Joe Pool Lake watershed, with up to four rain gardens planned in Midlothian, Mansfield, Grand Prairie, and Cedar Hill. Dalworth SWCD staff are working with landowners to implement water protection practices. She also noted that a trash cleanup event with the City of Fort Worth at Lake Arlington is forthcoming.

Heather asked whether any attendees represented smaller communities within the Village Creek–Lake Arlington watershed (e.g., Everman). Joe Trammel of Tarrant County introduced himself and noted that he was attending the meeting to report back to these smaller communities.

- Upper Trinity Regional Water District
- Other Stakeholders

3. **Special Presentation.** Members will receive an overview of the rain gardens, including key features that will be showcased during the tour.

Bardia Heidari presented on a project funded by the TCEQ to implement a measure from the Village Creek–Lake Arlington WPP that calls for the installation of rain gardens. The project is funded by TCEQ and is a partnership between Texas A&M AgriLife, TRWD, TRA, and City of Arlington.

He provided a brief overview of watershed conditions, including stormwater and water quality concerns, and discussed rain gardens as one approach to watershed management using blue/green infrastructure and nature-based solutions. Project development included data acquisition that identified four potential sites and the evaluation of multiple decision factors. An environmental justice screening tool was used during the evaluation process, although it is no longer active. Public involvement was incorporated by asking stakeholders to rank the decision factors. The highest-scoring sites included Richard Simpson Park, which was visited during the tour, and a nearby location.

Lessons learned from the project included the importance of collecting plants as close to the planting date as possible, selecting appropriate plant species, ensuring proper

maintenance, and collaborating with local communities. The next step is to monitor water quality entering and leaving the rain gardens.

TRWD emphasized the importance of having a mulching plan in place and maintaining clear communication with contractors, based on personal experience.

- 4. Raingarden Tour.** Members will explore and expand their understanding of green infrastructure design specifications during the site visit. Pictures from the tour are included below.



- 5. Schedule for the next meeting.** The next UTRB-CC meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 2026. The location for this meeting is to be determined.
- 6. Adjournment**