



North Central Texas Council of Governments

SUMMARY

Upper Trinity River Basin Coordinating Committee (UTRB-CC)

Wednesday, August 12, 2026

9:30 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.

In-Person at NCTCOG

William Pitstick Conference Room, First Floor

Centerpoint Two Building

616 Six Flags Drive, Arlington, Texas, 76011

Megan Paliwoda - City of Fort Worth

Johnathon B Allen - City of Irving

Tyler Spence - City of Irving

Jeffrey Shiflet - City of Irving

Alejandra Torres - City of Irving

Lauren Plunk - North Texas Municipal Water District

Danny Flores - Tarrant Regional Water District

Hermilo Munoz - Tarrant Regional Water District

Jessie Silverstein - Tarrant Regional Water District

Michelle Wood-Ramirez - Tarrant Regional Water District

Kate Zielke - Tarrant Regional Water District

Fouad Jaber - Texas A&M AgriLife

Samantha Gonzalez - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Rachel Richter - Texas Parks and Wildlife

Heather Firn - Trinity River Authority

Angela Kilpatrick - Trinity River Authority

Jack Newton - Trinity River Authority

Hong Wu - Trinity River Authority

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting summary was approved unanimously by the Coordinating Committee.

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

NCTCOG 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.

3. Collaborative Discussion. NCTCOG will facilitate a collaborative discussion with water resources professionals who are invested in watershed coordination, stormwater permitting, and water quality to develop focused efforts around regional water quality coordination.

NCTCOG led a three-part collaborative session using an interactive real time survey software, sticky notes and an activity sheet. The purpose of the exercises was to identify common goals across programs and identify where regional stakeholders and programs have gaps, have overlapping or competing programs, and how regional stakeholders can better synergize efforts.

- 4. Project Updates and Roundtable.** NCTCOG and members will discuss ongoing and planned activities and watershed-level challenges.
- 5. Schedule for the next meeting.** The next UTRB-CC meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 2027. The location for this meeting is to be determined.

6. Adjournment

If you have any questions regarding the meeting or agenda items, please contact Joy Douglas at (817) 422-5876, or by email at jdouglas@nctcog.org.

An Analysis of a Discussion at the Upper Trinity River Basin Coordinating Committee:

Opportunities for Collaboration Across the Region on Water Quality

Executive Summary

On August 12, 2026, professionals in the water quality field from agencies across the region met to discuss opportunities for collaboration. The DFW region demonstrates strong collaboration across stormwater, wastewater, and watershed programs, but parts of that collaboration remain fragmented. Agencies share goals and often coordinate technically, yet data, outreach, funding, and implementation efforts remain decentralized. Participants repeatedly advocated for a One Water approach and stronger regional integration.

Where Programs Are Working Together

- Shared water quality monitoring and bacteria source tracking.
- Collaborative testing efforts and CRP participation.
- Nature-based solutions, including green stormwater infrastructure, riparian restoration, and watershed protection.
- Regional coordination through COG, WPPs, and TMDL activities.

Key Silos

- Data and monitoring information is scattered across organizations.
- Stormwater, wastewater, and watershed programs operate under different regulatory drivers.
- Outreach campaigns often duplicate similar messages.
- Cities/Agencies compete for limited grant funds and implementation resources.

Suggestions to Break Down Silos

- Create a regional water quality dashboard and data clearinghouse.
- Coordinate monitoring schedules, parameters, and methodologies.
- Develop shared One Water outreach campaigns and educational materials.
- Pursue regional grant applications and pooled implementation projects.
- Align programs under a One Water Framework.

Thematic Overlap Heat Map

Theme	Watershed Protection Plans	Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load	Stormwater (MS4s)
Monitoring	5	4	4
Public Outreach	3	4	5
Regional Collaboration	5	5	4
Sediment Reduction	4	5	5
Bacteria Reduction	4	5	4
Water Conservation	5	5	5
BMPs	5	3	5
Nature-Based Solutions	3	3	5
Implementation Funding	5	3	2
WPP Planning	5	2	1
MS4 Programs	1	3	5
Data Dashboards	2	3	5

Table 1. Themes are listed by most expressed first and show how frequently these themes were expressed across programmatic fields.

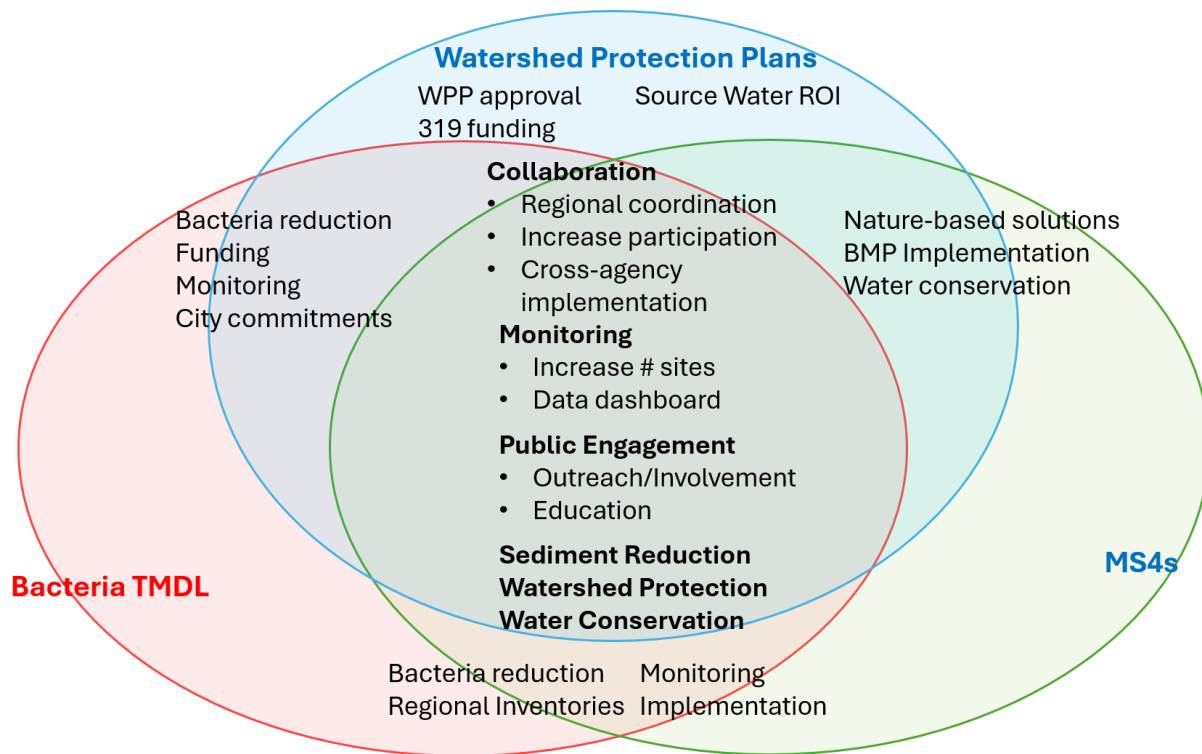


Image 1. A Venn Diagram looking across Watershed Protection, Bacteria TMDL, and Stormwater MS4 programmatic themes.

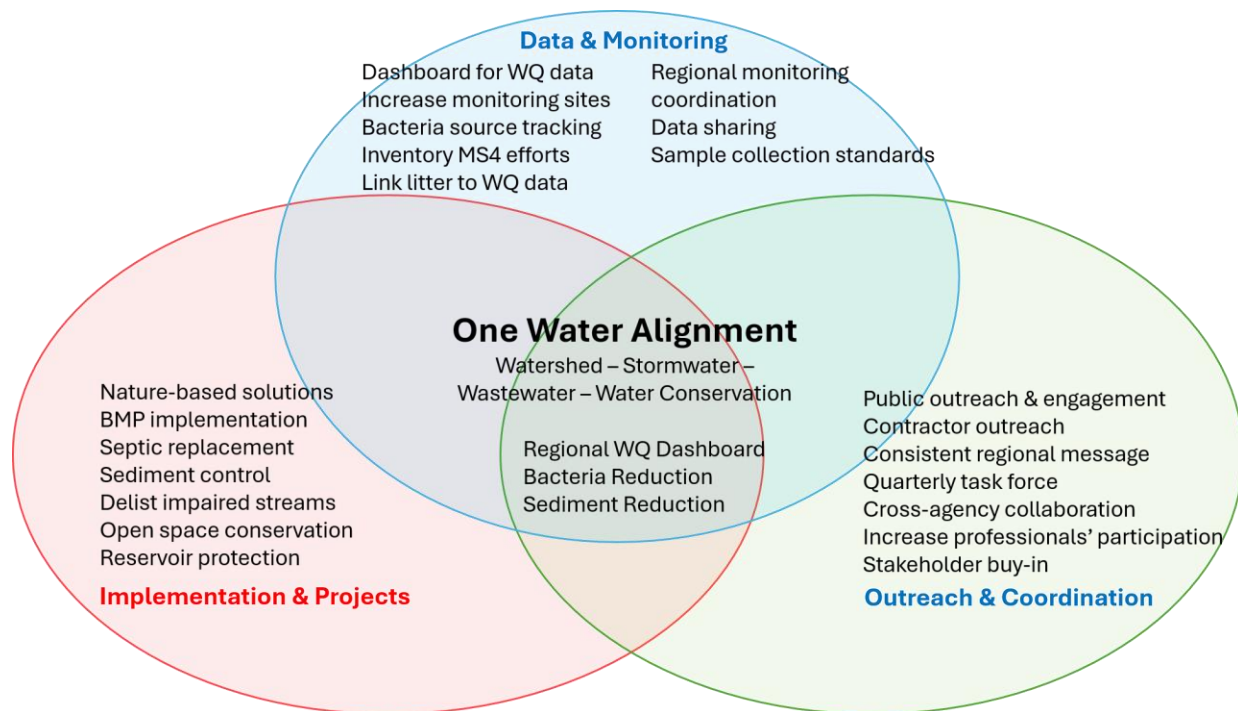


Image 2. A Venn Diagram looking across the functions of each of the programs to monitor water quality, implement projects to address water quality problems, and keep the public informed and involved in the process of improving water quality.

Top 3 Priorities for NCTCOG to Facilitate Highest Value

- The largest recurring issue expressed during the meeting was the collaboration of water quality data. **Create a Regional Water Quality Coordination Hub:** dashboard, monitoring inventory, BST tracking, and implementation tracking.
- Adopt a **Regional One Water Program:** shared messaging, communication tools, and implementation programs.
- The current model is leading to jurisdictions competing rather than collaborating. Create a **Collaborative Implementation Program:** regional grants, project bundling, and implementation partnerships.

The meeting concluded with requests to continue the conversation in this type of highly collaborative discussion format to illicit best ideas and practices for communities to share information, break down silos, and strengthen programs.

All Responses to Guided Discussion Items

Discussion Around Guided Questions

Participants were asked a series of questions and encouraged to first discuss the question(s) in a group setting, then write answers and further discuss the responses in a larger group setting. These are the participants' responses.

What does your program do exceptionally well?	- Coordinates with other agencies and COG - Monitoring - Collaborating with partners - Long-term thinking about regional needs - Bacteria source monitoring - Monitoring - Educational programming - Develop WPPs - Monitoring, developing cohesive plans, long term thinking, navigating the red tape of funding - Monitoring streams - Design green infrastructure - Rapid Bioassessment program and monitoring providing healthy habitat - Construct GSI - wq monitoring - Making the connection between water supply and water quality. - Education and outreach to school students and landowners. - robust construction inspection program - We engage rural landowners by giving them money to implement conservation practices with producers - Innovation - leverage stakeholder funding and participation for large projects - community buy in - stewardship programs - data analysis - long-term vision - Communication to cities. - Coordinate with local and regional entities to leverage state funding. We also try to respond to the findings of the TCEQ integrated report. - Demonstrate what BMPs actually look like - We're good at sample/data collection. - Our watershed program uses engagement and education.
Where do you/does your program struggle?	- Public education/outreach - Cross-team collaboration - Finding long-term data sets - High deliverable number from grants - Finding qualified employees - Effective outreach

	Watershed and MS4 coordination - works well with established cities, not with rapidly growing ones. Limited staff and time Pet Waste staff changeover Actually completing writing watershed protection, plans and successfully submitting them for review and having them accepted change of behavior "Red tape" limiting proactively addressing needs Turnover Funding Lack of time/resources/funding to improve. Just enough to meet requirements. High turnover Budget Outreach Turnover, staff and elected officials. Volunteer coordinating no ownership from stakeholders or general public Limited resources. Fixed funding and rising costs. Limited ability to search for and identify sources of pollution. Finding volunteers to alleviate budget shortfalls Differing regs across cities and counties Staff turnover, managing different regulations in different municipalities Budgetary issues Partner/staff/elected official turnover Volunteer coordination Nature based solution implementation - both on the maintenance ownership and ROI to prove the case. Struggle all around. Bacteria source tracking. Finding the source.
What project do you wish another program would help you accomplish?	more avenues to collaborate and share data volunteer recruitment Data sharing collaboration between improving wastewater or drinking water infrastructure or general infrastructure improvements, how do you incorporate green infrastructure/NBS I'd love to get our MS4 permit from TCEQ finally ONE WATER MINDSET - water conservation is associated with water quality that is associated with wastewater and stormwater. Everyone is working towards similar goals but not in unison. Finding reductive measures for bacteria in water way. Data collection from water districts/cog We wish cities were more engaged with us on implementation. Collaborative testing efforts Collaborative efforts in testing. Citizen science collaboration https://texasbst.tamu.edu/ Getting permits cleared by state or federal agencies

Table 2: A series of introductory questions.

Monitoring: 1. Are we collecting the same data? 2. Where are we duplicating effort? 3. Where are we missing data entirely? 4. Could monitoring plans be coordinated regionally?	Different entities reach different parts of the basin Redundant data can be good for comparison between entities Bacteria source tracking on a regional effort. Involving more cities. Discussed lab options and quality Need a better understanding of all the monitoring needs different agencies need Eurofins lab Getting more cities and districts on board with bacterial source tracking. Regionally coordinating what and WHEN we sample (wet weather, seasonality) Coordinating seasonal/timely sampling May be some overlap in monitoring between regional entities. For non-CRP data there isn't one clearinghouse for the data. Participate in CRP and provide data to TRA. We collect survey data through our Irrigation Checkup to gauge knowledge and behavior change Need a better understanding of all the sampling needs everybody has. Are they using the same method? What kind of data do they need? Are they in compatible geographic areas? Our water sheds don't overlap Pfas/pfos lack of nelac certified Heavy focus on conventional - which is great but (not necessarily source water protection focused areas). Sourcing micro-litter is near impossible Data centers
Identifying Sources: 1. What sources continue to surprise us? 2. Which are the hardest to address? 3. What information is each program collecting that others could use?	wildlife are hardest to address sediment is the number pollutant How do you address bacteria load in an impaired watershed when avian is the source ?? Data sources E.coli tests are not specific enough, and there is a delay in receiving results. Birds Estimate of animal population is data we are collecting Inconsistent sources that may not show up in routine programs. Stream sediment as a source of bacteria. Interdepartmental collaboration and respect hardest to address is development, construction and their sediment contributions Data centers We use modeling to determine this. SWAT, hawqs. But you need good data to input in order to get good outputs. How good is data?

	bacteria is an indicator of water quality concerns but the main pollutant is sediment Sediment pollution is the attention getter for decision makers, not bacteria. Sediment limits water supply and increases flooding. Both hot topics. Participate in CRP to be able to identify pollution concerns in 5 sub-watersheds that are urbanizing so we can focus our public outreach to focus on those pollution sources Feral cat populations -not eligible for 319 funding (catch, neuter, release) Sediment (ag, construction practices) It doesn't seem that there's any bmp that helps in reducing bacteria.
Best Management Practices: 1. Which BMPs actually reduce bacteria? 2. Which ones have the strongest evidence? 3. Which are easiest for cities and entities to use? 4. Which have not worked?	Bioretention areas ; A167:A186 septic system replacement programs reduce bacteria Rainwater harvesting no mow policies Education is the most important bmp Riparian area restoration Engagement- engaging and educating practically about bacterial loading, storm drains, etc. if people don't know, they won't care education and outreach should be targeted to the operators, practitioners, contractors No mow zone - high ROI a menu of options or a toolbox of solutions is the most effective Having an effective preventative maintenance program and aging infrastructure replacement on sanitary sewer systems especially in urbanized areas. Do whatever Fouad says Do we know which ones are most effective? EPA wants us to do before and after monitoring and upstream downstream monitoring once we get to implementation to see what is and isn't working. Education and public outreach Focused outreach to regional decision makers (city manager level). The rest will follow. Nature based solutions and incentives for developers to protect riparian corridors Industrial stakeholder engagement Failed maintenance make all bmp not work MS4 programs work! BMPs may not fully address an issue but most help reduce multiple pollutants so it balances out. BMPs may be hard to implement in heavily developed areas
Public Outreach: 1. Are we sending different messages?	the messages are similar but the platforms used differ Those of us that are allowed to disseminate information are consistent. Most commonly seen outreach is for conservation, bacteria, flushable wipes, etc

2. Could we build one regional campaign? 3. What audiences are underserved?	Consistent regional messages would help but getting all the cities to agree will be difficult Avoid creating more trash Maybe establish a regional Stormwater quality mascot to represent in educational campaigns. One speaker sharing the message regionally - well funded, highly effective unified message. Not just for bacteria but all water related environmental topics. Low income areas are overlooked water conservation, FOG, wipes, zebra mussels seem to be the most prominent messages - can we transition to a one water message and have everyone share similar messages Support scientific data dissemination Rural audiences are underserved for us. But then they are not in your I plan area. Homeless encampments are underserved
Funding: 1. Where are grants competing? 2. Where could projects be bundled? 3. What regional projects are too large for one city?	319 program is competitive outreach campaign is to large for one city and should be regionalized Grant writing is difficult Regional GSI projects with multiple stakeholders. Contributing funding together Pool resources for educational advertising campaigns DFW region folks compete against one another for individual implementation projects, we COULD co apply and widen implementation. We need a txshare contract for BST. Also, it would be helpful if there were some regional employee who could do regional grant applications instead of individual cities, esp for under resource cities Would be best if everyone did what was best for the watershed instead of trying to get as much money as they can snag bundling projects - flood mitigation and water quality improvement Can nctcog host a regional program outside of their service area?
Measuring Success: 1. How do we know we're actually improving bacteria conditions? 2. What metrics matter besides E. coli? 3. How should we track implementation metrics?	how do we know? 303 d list and monitoring what metrics matter? sediment, sediment, sediment, sediment, nutrients we need a standard for tracking implementation metrics TCEQ monitoring result export should be improved Updated survey on people who pick up or would be willing to pick up pet waste. Need before and after studies of implementation projects. Lower sediment amounts in water and protected riparian buffers Communication between departments. Track land use changes over time in relation to changing sources of bacteria. How to measure behavior changes Dashboard for summarizing data Implementation of BMPs like planting cover crops, filter strips, Bioswale, silt fencing, etc could improve

4. Which behavioral changes, watershed conditions, or trends over time matter most?	trends that matter - our source water is reliable and protected, water quality has improved How to measure good intentions Graduate students for data collection and analysis
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Table 3. A guided discussion on common aspects of each program.

Participants were then asked to write on a sticky note ideas for regional collaboration, using a color-coded sticky note by program. These are the responses. A guided discussion was held after the responses were placed on a board and organized around topics.

watershed protection plans

competition in utilities as it relates to water quality
 urban tree planting grants
 high stakeholder engagement/community buy-in for incorporating WPPs
 green space conservation
 animal signage for education and outreach
 protect reservoir capacity
 align watershed and water conservation (including stormwater and wastewater initiatives)
 get WPPs submitted and approved
 get 319 implementation funds for the WPPs
 coordinate with partners to implement because this has to be a collaborative process for robust outcomes pertaining to the WPPs
 decrease erosion in reservoirs (urban and rural)
 develop a region wide watershed protection plan
 reduce the amount of litter in the waterways
 reduce the impacts of OSSFs
 getting public involved on non-point source pollution management
 commitment from cities to implement approved plan
 expand septic system replacement program
 regional WPP implementation grant co-applications
 reducing sediment loading downstream (not technically a part of a WPP yet)
 return on investment on source water/watershed protection
 implement BMPs on the land (urban and rural)
 increased regular monitoring sites for flow, nitrogen, phosphorus, ecoli, pH, etc., sediments

TMDL programs

green stormwater practices that reduce pollution and flood risks
 better lawn care practices to reduce overwatering and pollution
 link local litter data to water quality data/bacteria testing
 better and consistent stormwater standards across the region

- Porta-poties bacterial impairment monitoring
- Riparian buffer protection
- regional involvement in TMDL COG meetings and other COG meetings
- delist impaired streams
- preserve open space and ag land from development
- creating a quarterly taskforce for all depts involved in TMDL strategy implementation want to increase communications and program progress
- continue to complete bacterial source tracking to find a more common source and attempt to reduce that source
- align watershed and water conservation (including stormwater and wastewater initiatives)
- reduce the impacts of OSSFs
- address bacteria concerns
- commitment from cities to implement approved plan
- reducing bacterial loading
- increased regular monitoring sites for flow, nitrogen, phosphorus, ecoli, pH, etc, sediments
- more buy in for implementation projects
- cross agency collaboration

Stormwater

- pet waste campaign with consistent regional messaging
- more companies/larger workforce for nature based stormwater solutions not just landscaping companies
- nature based solutions
- update our outreach program to be more effective
- rapidly developing cities need more stormwater council collaboration
- develop dashboard to present the water quality data we have collected
- sediment control (BMPs)
- outreach with contractors
- public outreach
- increase public engagement
- get new MS4 permit approved from TCEQ
- reduced sediment entering waterways
- regional inventory of MS4 implementation efforts
- green stormwater infrastructure and blue green infrastructure for flood hazard mitigation
- begin quantifying pollution from local storms drain inlet protection programs such as trinity river water district adopt a drain and defend our drains
- green stormwater infrastructure and blue green infrastructure for air quality, H2O quality, wildlife ecosystem services
- align watershed and water conservation (including stormwater and wastewater initiatives)
- decrease erosion in reservoirs (urban and rural)
- reduce the amount of litter in the waterways
- getting public involved on non point source pollution management
- reducing sediment loading downstream (not technically a part of a WPP yet)
- reduced sediment loads
- increased regular monitoring sites for flow, nitrogen, phosphorus, ecoli, pH, ec, sediments

Table 4. Sticky note responses.