



LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY - TEXAS POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM STORMWATER TASK FORCE

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LRGV TPDES TASK FORCE

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The Storm Water Runoff Pollution Prevention Awareness Program

The Storm Water Runoff Pollution Prevention Awareness program developed by the Lower Rio Grande Valley TPDES Storm Water Task Force comprised of twenty (20) Valley local governments, is a project facilitated by the Civil Engineering Department at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Valley cities are mandated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Environmental protection Agency (EPA) to develop a storm water management plan (SWMP) that, in part, requires each city to outreach their respective communities using best management practices (BMPs) like classroom presentations, workshops, and conferences.

The Task Force developed the SWMP with assistance from UTRGV. In order for the cities to comply with the mandates, they will need to develop partnerships with local organizations like school districts. Polluted stormwater runoff is polluting our local waterways like the Arroyo Colorado and the Laguna Madre. Both are listed as impaired waterways by the TCEQ and EPA. Educating our community, and our children, about storm water runoff will provide a valuable means of minimizing the polluting of our waterways. If our region is not successful in accomplishing the goals of the SWMP, urban runoff pollution will eventually detrimentally impact our potable water, recreational water activities, and operating costs of municipal wastewater treatment plants.

The classroom presentation BMP includes a series of presentations that are aligned with school curriculums. The SWMP is a five (5) year plan. During the first and second year, the BMP was developed, evaluated and modified. UTRGV staff and City officials worked with school specialists to assure the presentations met school requirements. This program has been implemented throughout Valley school districts. The Task Force started these presentations in the year 2008.

This program has the potential of being a mutually beneficial instrument that can highlight science, engineering, environmental and physical science, and mathematics. Each presentation attempts to "seed" the desire to become a science professional, a much needed profession. The school districts are not mandated to partner with the City, but your school district needs to realize the importance of minimizing storm water runoff pollution. Urban runoff pollution causes flooding, impacts water quality of our recreational and drinking water, and costs the city significantly to address. It impacts everyone. Outreach and education is one important tool that can minimize the adverse effects of this pollution. Local ISD TV Channels provide us with another tool that allows us to successfully and effectively outreach our communities. This program has been working with Valley ISD TV channels for many years now.

This coming school year, Valley Cities and UTRGV will continue developing the classroom environmental outreach/recruiting programs in the local school districts. This year we have added more topics. The presentation topics will include wastewater treatment plant operations, desalinization, composting, landfill operations, watersheds, storm water, engineering, tire recycling, household hazardous waste and much more. Many of these activities require the classroom to follow-up with a site visit to a related facility, to a business or to an environmental event.

We look forward to partnering with your ISD this year. We can start scheduling some classroom activities as soon your teachers and your schools are available. This school year we would like to promote our engineering/stormwater 4-year scholarships (civil engineering) at high schools. These scholarships are only available to our partnering ISDs. We look forward to visiting your schools.

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