

Who's Monitoring the Water – A Web Based Tool for Tracking Water Quality Monitoring in Texas

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Biographical Sketch of Author

David Cowan coordinates the Clean Rivers Program for the Lower Colorado River Authority in Austin, Texas. Prior to his experience as a Program Manager, he was a Fishery Biologist, Laboratory Analyst and Industrial Pretreatment Specialist.

Abstract

Entities often monitor water quality without knowing that others are monitoring the same sampling point – duplicating efforts and wasting resources. This lack of awareness is a result of poor communication among sampling entities, something that should not take place with today's Internet environment.

The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) created an interactive Web-based water quality monitoring schedule that increases communication between monitoring entities and creates an awareness of geographically dispersed water quality monitoring activities. The schedule is in a table format that displays site location, entity responsible for sampling, monitoring frequency and parameters. Although anyone with Internet access can view the data, only the monitors can edit their information, ensuring that the database contains accurate, comparable data.

The electronic schedule reduces duplicative monitoring, freeing resources to monitor at sites where data may not be collected otherwise. It is updated annually simplifying budget preparation and planning for monitoring associated with 305(b) assessments.

A Texas Clean Rivers Program partner, the Lower Colorado River Authority uses the schedule to track ten entities that monitor water quality in the 42,000 square mile Texas Colorado River basin. This tool has increased personal communication among those monitoring entities, led to resource sharing, data sharing and a better understanding of what monitoring is occurring in the Colorado River basin.