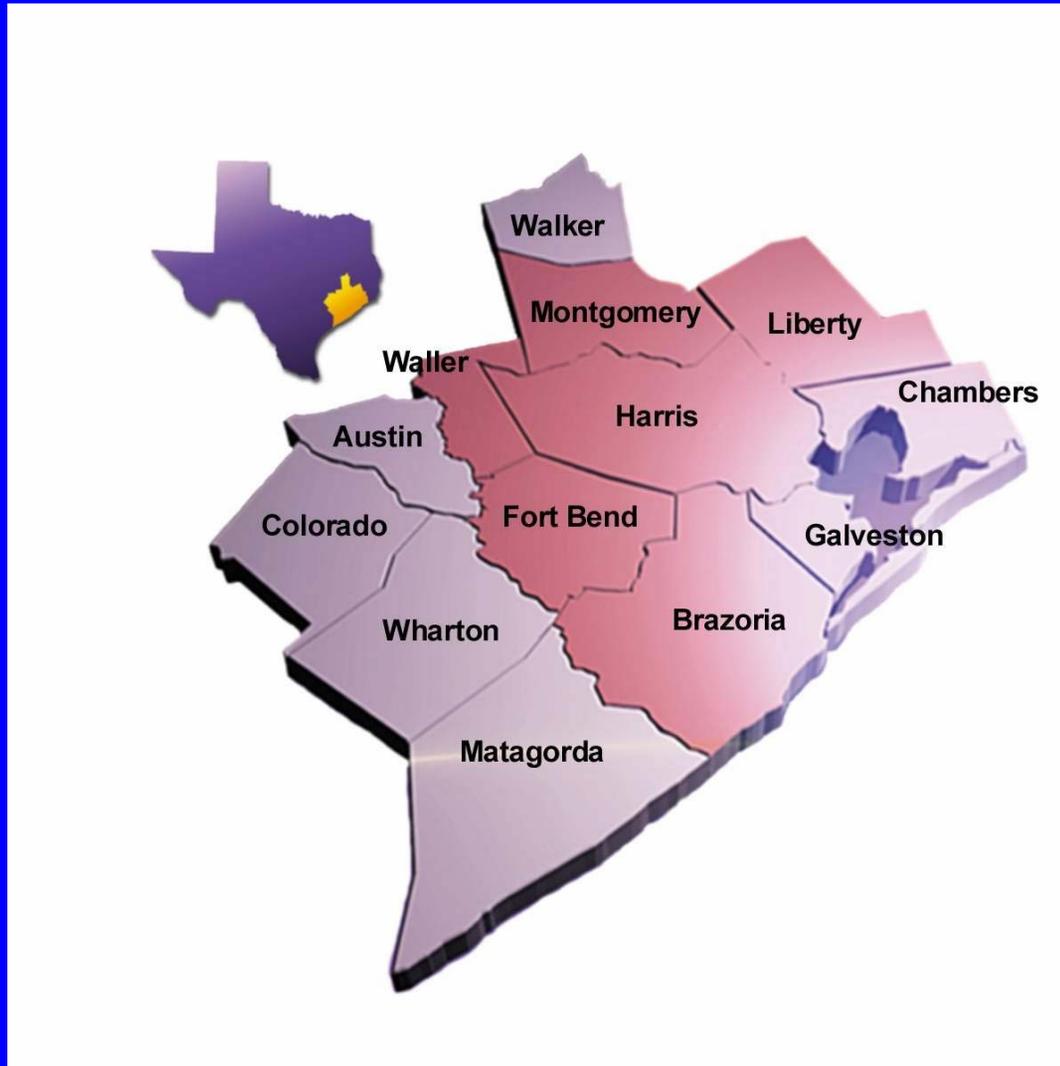


Sustaining Long Term Regional Coordinated Monitoring Programs

Todd Running, H-GAC

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The H-GAC Region



Typical Houston Sampling



History of the Texas Clean Rivers Program

- Started in 1991
- 16 Partners conducting comprehensive water quality assessments across the State (River Authorities, Water Supply Districts, International Boundary and Water Commission and one Council of Government)
- Local stakeholders making decisions about water quality assessments

H-GAC's Role

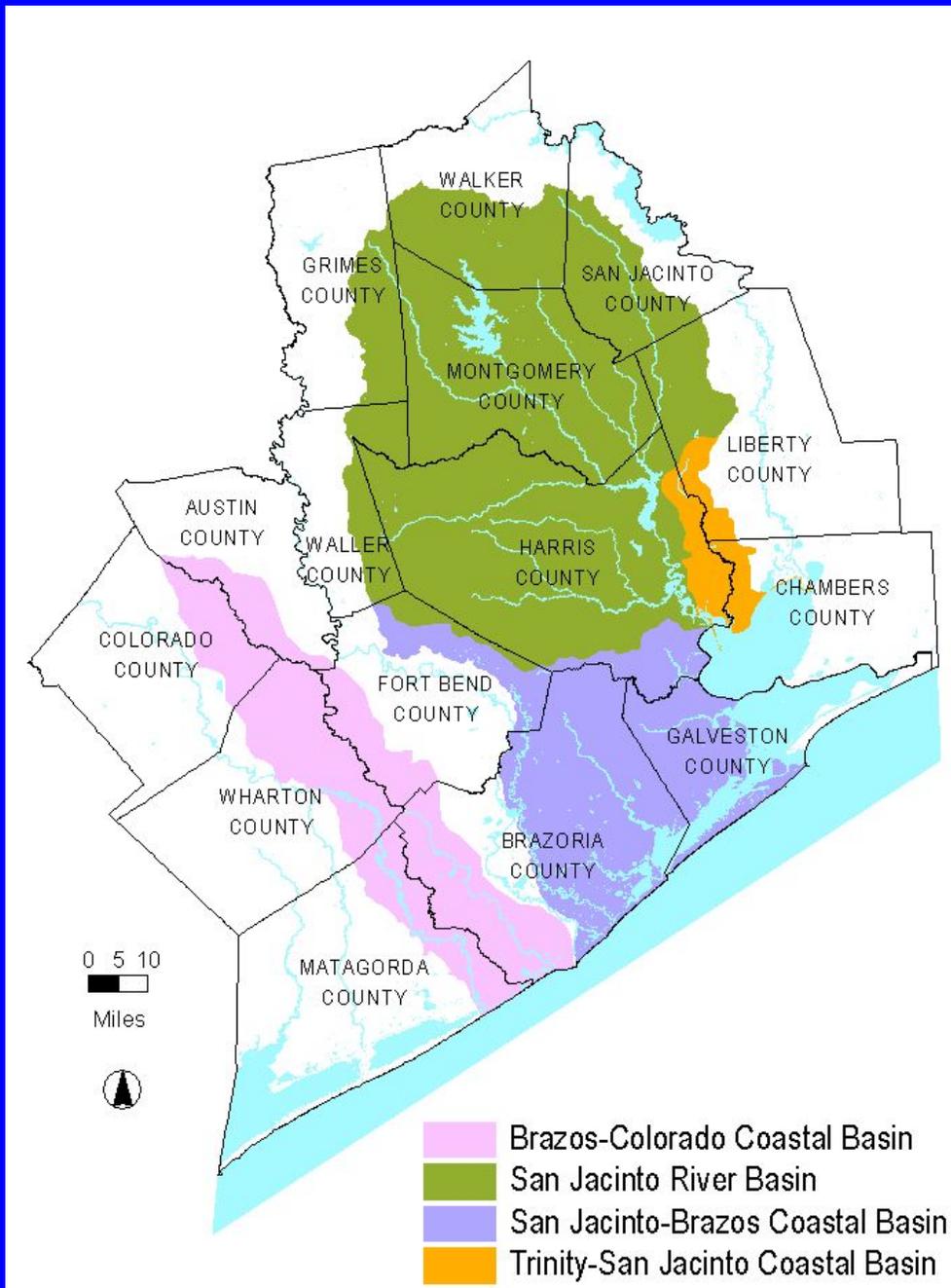
- Approached by local agencies to run program in four area basins
- No monitoring program in place
- No lab facilities
- Forced to find local agencies involved in WQ Monitoring
- Brought those local agencies to the table to discuss their monitoring programs

H-GAC's Role (cont.)

- Started with 16 agencies that conducted some sort of WQ monitoring
- Created Regional Monitoring Workgroup that meets every other month
- Worked with local agencies to develop a Regional QAPP that was agreeable to most
- Signed first Regional QAPP in 1997 with five local agencies participating (400+ sample sites)

H-GAC Assessment Areas

- 4 Basins
- 15 Counties



Initial Challenges

- Data Comparability
 - different methods
 - different databases
 - different detection limits
- Different Monitoring Objectives
 - human health concerns
 - bypass and overflow
 - illicit connections
 - compliance

Initial Challenges (cont.)

- Quality Assurance
 - large number of groups
 - limited staff
 - trust of local agencies

How Has H-GAC Sustained Its Monitoring Program?

- Built trust between local agencies
- Reduced duplication of monitoring sites
- Provided training and Quality Assurance for local agencies
- Gave local agencies access to data
- Gave local agencies a voice in monitoring strategy
- Made sure local data was used in assessments by the State

Training Events



Quality Assurance



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How Has H-GAC Sustained Its Monitoring Program? (cont.)

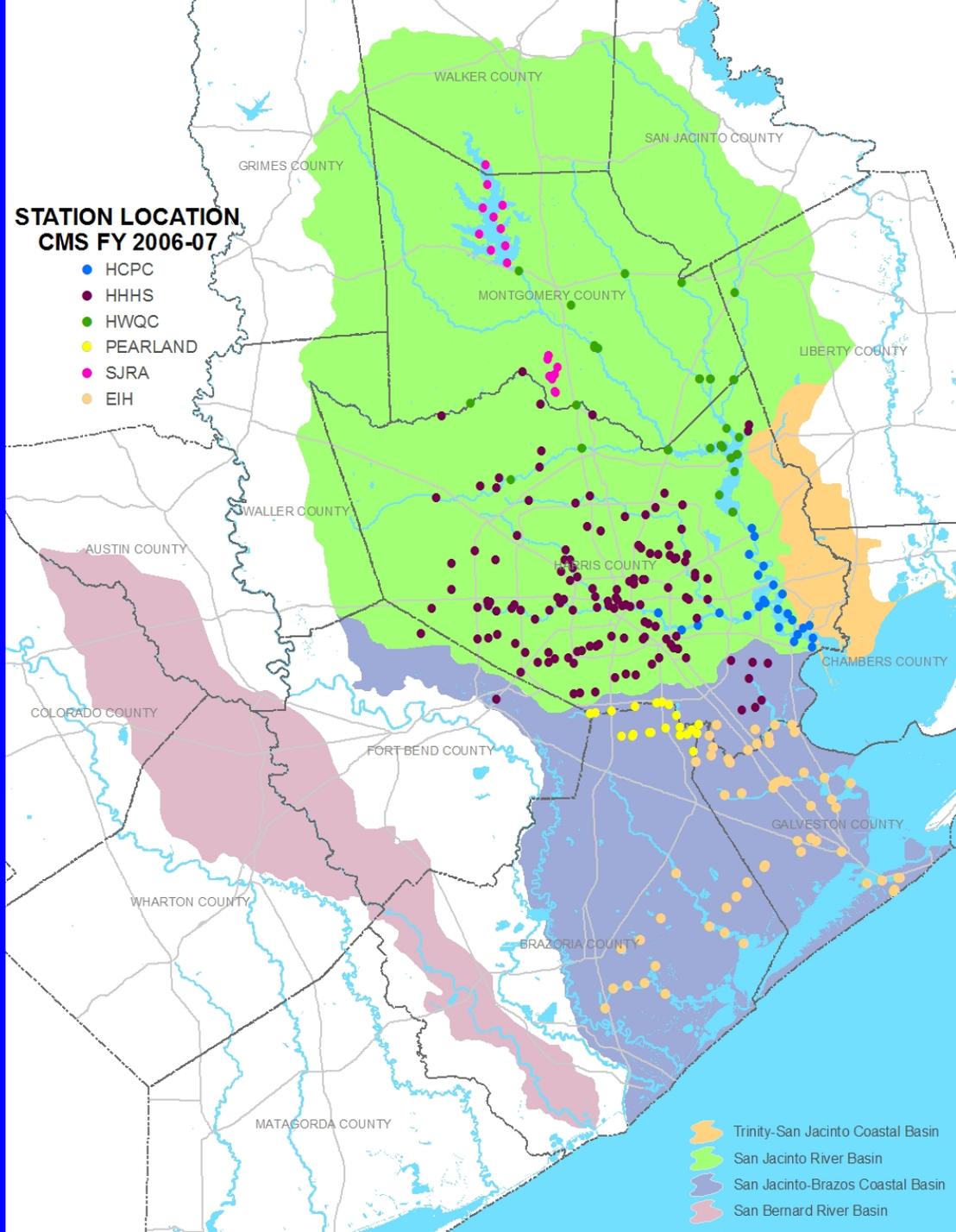
- Gave local agencies access to latest monitoring technology
- Implemented habitat assessment at all monitoring locations
- Gave training and support in database design and management
- Brought in staff to assist local agencies in receiving NELAC accreditation

Where Are We Now?

- Six local agency partners
- 280 Ambient Monitoring Sites
 - 2/3 sampled monthly
 - 1/3 sampled every other month
- 12 – 15 Parameters monitored at each site
- Over 34,000 data points collected each year
- Total Cost to H-GAC = \$150,000
- Total value of about \$550,000
- That is \$400,000 in in-kind services

STATION LOCATION CMS FY 2006-07

- HCPC
- HHHS
- HWQC
- PEARLAND
- SJRA
- EIH



- Trinity-San Jacinto Coastal Basin
- San Jacinto River Basin
- San Jacinto-Brazos Coastal Basin
- San Bernard River Basin

What's Next?

- Continue to refine monitoring site selection
- Secure NELAC accreditation for local laboratories
- Expand habitat assessments at monitoring sites
- Work new parameters into sampling schedule

You people have monitored this stream to death! When are you going to do something about the problem?

Standard Response

The State funded program that we run does not allow us to use our funds for implementation. We will try to secure funds in the near future, through other funding sources to help solve this problem.

Address The Nine Elements of a
Watershed Protection Plan
Whenever Possible

Nine Elements that Must be Included in Any Watershed Protection Plan

1. Identification of sources that need to be controlled to achieve load reduction
2. Estimate of the load reduction expected
3. Description of the Non-point Source measures needed and where they need to be implemented, to achieve load reduction
4. Estimate of the assistance (financial & technical) and participants needed to implement the plan

Nine Elements that Must be Included in Any Watershed Protection Plan (cont.)

5. Public education and involvement
6. Schedule for implementing the nonpoint source management measures
7. Schedule of measurable milestones
8. Set of criteria that can be used to determine if progress is being made toward attaining water quality standards
9. Monitoring to evaluate effectiveness

Challenges Ahead

- Keep up with demands of TMDLs
- Develop monitoring partnerships in rural areas
- Continue ambient monitoring program at consistent levels without increased funding

For More Information

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