

Development of an Estuary Management Program for the San Antonio Bay/Guadalupe Estuary System



By

James Dodson
Principal/Water Resources Consultant
GroundSwell Enterprises

Facilitator

San Antonio Bay Partnership

San Antonio Bay System (Guadalupe/San Antonio Estuary)



Wikimapia: Courtesy of Norman Boyd, TPWD

San Antonio Bay System:

A Large, Complex Watershed



Steps in Developing a Stakeholder-Driven Management Plan

for the San Antonio Bay/Guadalupe Estuary System

- Build Commitment to the Collaborative Process
- Establish Purpose and Goals
- Define Organizational Structure & Status (501(c)3?)
- Determine Availability of Information; Identify (and fill) Information Gaps
- Characterize Status of Resources (Status and Trends Reports)
- Identify and Analyze Priorities
- Prepare Appropriate Strategies and Action Plans
- Build Commitment to Actions
- Implement Strategies and Projects
- Monitor and Evaluate Progress – Adapt as Necessary

Building Commitment to the Collaborative Process

- Stakeholder Meetings
- Steering Committee and Subcommittee Activities
- Local Governments Advisory Committee (being formed)
- Information Sharing:
 - SABP Website: www.SABayPartnership.org
 - E-mail communications
 - Newsletter
- Involvement/partnering in related programs:
 - EARIP
 - SB3 BBASC & BBEST
 - SB1 Regional Water Planning
 - Watershed Protection Planning Programs
- **Secure funding to support the process!**

Purpose and Goals Established

- Stakeholders approved a *Purpose and Goals Statement* on June 24, 2010:
- Purpose:

The purpose of the San Antonio Bay Partnership is to create and sustain a working partnership of committed stakeholders in order to *protect, restore and enhance* the natural resources of the San Antonio Bay/Guadalupe Estuary System for the benefit of the ecosystem and its human uses.
- Goals:
 1. Provide Opportunities for Increased Stakeholder Involvement in the Management of the San Antonio Bay/Guadalupe Estuary System
 2. Maintain a Sound Ecological Environment in the San Antonio Bay/Guadalupe Estuary System
 3. Enhance Human and Economic Uses of the San Antonio Bay/Guadalupe Estuary System
 4. Promote Education and Outreach Activities

Characterize Status of Resources and Availability of Information (and information gaps)

- Prepared an Outline of Proposed Characterization Studies (“Status and Trends Reports”)
- Held a 2-day “Science and the Stakeholder Conference,” on November 1st & 2nd, 2010 to get scientists and stakeholders together to:
 - Report on recent and current research in the SA Bay/Guadalupe Estuary and in the SA-Guadalupe watersheds
 - Identify information and data gaps, and
 - Identify additional studies needed
- Status and Trends Reports due for completion Summer 2012
- Next Step: Identify and Analyze Priorities

Summary of Available Data for the San Antonio Bay System

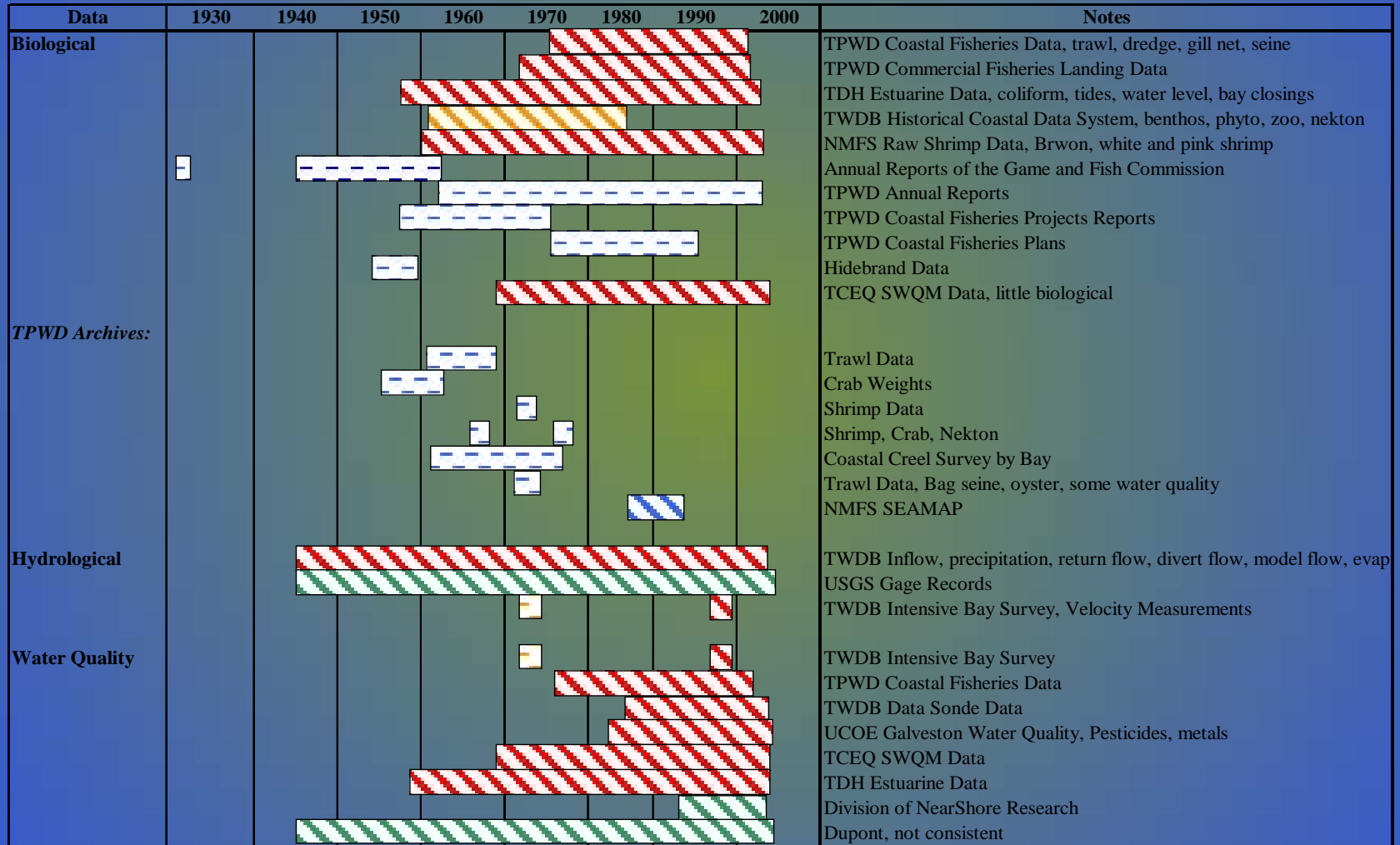
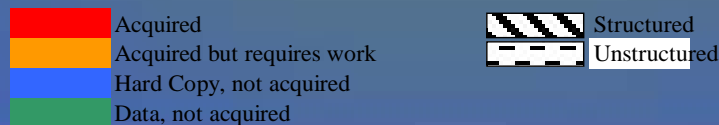


Chart Courtesy of
Dr. George Ward



Prepare Appropriate Management Strategies and Action Plans

- Based on priorities identified in previous step, and working in a collaborative framework, use best available science to develop a “San Antonio Bay/Guadalupe Estuary System Management Plan”
- Use the planning process to Build Commitment to Actions (next step) – including program and project funding!

Implement Projects Supporting Management Strategies

- Use Partnership model to involve various stakeholder groups in implementing projects designed to support the strategies identified in the SABP Management Plan (and other San Antonio Bay/Guadalupe Estuary System management plans – i.e., SB3 management plan)
- Develop project management expertise and efficiencies
- Seek funding for “on-the-ground” projects
- Coordinate on-going monitoring designed to measure project outcomes
- Review project outcomes and revise approach as necessary

Ongoing, Iterative Steps: “Adaptive Management”



San Antonio Bay Partnership: What are the Challenges?

- Scope?
 - Need to “Swim Up Stream” in management scope because activities throughout the watershed impact the San Antonio Bay System
 - “Tidewaters to Headwaters” Approach: appealing in concept, but complex in reality
- Funding?
 - Not likely to be included in the NEP
 - State funding is being sought, but no assurance it will be available or sufficient
 - Operating on a shoe-string budget
- Stakeholder Focus?
 - Will require significant time commitments
 - Numerous other planning programs underway, competing for stakeholder time and attention (i.e., SB3 BBASC/BBEST, SB1 RWPG, EARIP, TMDL’s, WPP’s)

Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement

- General Stakeholder Meetings: held quarterly; next meeting will be on May 22, 2012 at UHV
- SABP, Inc. Board meetings: held periodically; next meeting will be on May 22, 2012 at UHV
- Project Stakeholder Work Groups: now meeting monthly to provide input to the CMP-funded *Habitat Conservation and Coastal Public Access Planning for the San Antonio Bay Area* project; next meeting will be on May 22, 2012 at UHV
- Steering Committee and Subcommittees: meet periodically to assist in developing programs, activities and policy
- Local Governments Advisory Committee: in formation – please ask your local elected officials to participate

For More Information:

– See the SABP Website

- www.SABayPartnership.org

or

– Contact James Dodson

- jdodson27@gmail.com
- 361-649-1518