Description of the Datasets

The databases available on the H-GAC Clean Rivers Program website are MS Access Databases and pipe delimited text files compiled from data downloaded from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Surface Water Quality Monitoring Information System (SWQMIS) database. Only data that have met the quality assurance requirements of an applicable Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) are included.

Structure of the Databases

Data can be downloaded by the TCEQ Basin ID or by the collecting entity reported throughout the H-GAC region.

Data for the following basins are available on this site:

a. Basin 8 – Trinity River Basin
b. Basin 9 - Trinity-San Jacinto Coastal Basin
c. Basin 10 - San Jacinto River Basin
d. Basin 11- San Jacinto-Brazos Coastal Basin
e. Basin 13 - Brazos–Colorado Coastal Basin
f. Basin 24 - Bays and Estuaries
g. Basin 25 – Gulf of Mexico

1. Segment ID: A number indicating the specific waterbody (segment) within the basin. In most cases, a segment can be considered a distinct watershed.
2. Station ID: A number indicating an established water quality monitoring station.
3. Station Description: A short verbal description of the location of the monitoring station.
4. Parameter code: A five-digit code (formerly known as a STORET code) identifying the parameter and analytical method. A list of commonly used Parameter Codes is found here.
5. Parameter Description: A brief description of the parameter.
6. Greater Than/Less Than: A field used for entering the “<” or “>” signs where appropriate.
7. Value: The numeric value of the parameter.
8. Date: The date the sample was collected.
9. Time: The time the sample was collected.
10. Sample Depth: The depth at which the sample was collected. Surface sample are collected approximately 0.3 meters (one foot) below the surface. Vertical profiles collected in rivers, reservoirs, bays and estuaries are usually collected in 1–3-meter intervals dependent on the total depth of the sample location.
11. Composite Category: Represents the category of composite sampling (only used for composite samples): “T” (time), “S” (space), “B” (both time and space), or “F” (flow weighted).
12. Composite Type: The number of grabs that comprise a composite sample. May be 00-99, or GB (for unknown number of grabs).
13. Start Date: If a composite sample, the date sampling began. Date field indicates the end date of sampling.
14. Start Time: If a composite sample, the time in which sampling began. Time field indicates the end time of sampling.
15. Start Depth: If a composite sample, the start depth at which sampling began. Depth field indicates the end depth of sampling.

16. Submitting Entity: A code indicating the organization that submitted the data to TCEQ.
17. Collecting Entity: A code indicating the agency, organization, or other entity that collected the sample.
18. Monitoring Type: a code indicating whether the data was collected during routine monitoring (RT) or performed in response to unusual conditions, as part of a research project, or other reasons.
19. Comments: Comments provided to data managers regarding the conditions of the field or lab samples associated with the record.

Reformatting the Databases

H-GAC understands that the files are large and seeks to provide the data in the most commonly used formats for viewing or reformatting. If MS Access is unavailable, a text file can be downloaded and reformatted to your preference.

In a pipe delimited text file, a user can open, select all, and copy the data. If a .CSV file is preferred, the user can then open an Excel document and paste the data into the first cell. Once the data is pasted, the user can open the Text to Column wizard. In the first step, under the Original Data Type, select “Delimited” and click “Next”. Under Delimiters, select “Other” and include a pipe symbol (|). This symbol is found on most keyboards by holding down Shift key and vertical bar key above the Enter key. If the Data Preview box shows vertically organized columns, click “Next”. If additional Column Data Formatting is needed, the last step in the wizard allows for data reformatting by column. The user can then click “Finish” to complete the Text to Column wizard and utilize the spreadsheet format for additional use of the data.