

Highland Bayou Workgroup Kick-Off Meeting Notes

December 8st, 2015 • 12:00-2:30 p.m.

Attendance: Steve Mikulencak (TX Coastal Watershed Program), Celina Lowry (TX Coastal Watershed Program), Bill Alcorn (MUD 12), Bob Bassett (MUD12), Martin Entringer (Galveston County Health District), Taylor Sanford (Galveston County Health District), Alan Kuehl (Galveston County Consolidated Drainage District), Michelle Krause (Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP)/Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)), Lindsey Lippert (GBEP/TCEQ), Lisa Marshall (GBEP/TCEQ), Linda Broach (TCEQ), Les Rumburg (City of La Marque), Chaise Cary (City of La Marque), Suzy Kou (City of La Marque), Charlene Warren (City of La Marque), Robert Michetich (City Council La Marque), Anthony Matranga (City of Hitchcock Mayor), Harry Robinson (Hitchcock Industrial Development Corporation (HIDC) and former City of Hitchcock Mayor).

Introductions

Steven Mikulencak and Celina Lowry introduced themselves and asked attendees to share their name, affiliation and experience with Highland Bayou to the group.

Presentation

Texas Coastal Watershed Program presented on the following items specific to the Highland and Marchand bayou watersheds:

- Water quality impairments in Texas and nationwide
- Point sources versus non-point sources
- Bacteria and dissolved oxygen in aquatic systems and consequences of poor water quality conditions
- Why use a watershed approach, what is a watershed protection plan (WPP), WPPs across Texas
- Highland Bayou's 303d listing
- Goals for the upcoming winter and spring of building a list of management measures that work for surrounding communities, identify possible funding sources and solutions, build partnerships and a vision for the project
- Texas A&M (Texas Coastal Watershed Program)'s role to prepare the plan and perform outreach
- Working together through meetings where we identify recommendations, estimate costs, mark possible funding sources, create a timeline and include advisory and technical support
- Structural versus non-structural practices
- Review of similar watershed plans
- Stakeholder outreach exercise

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Concerns within the Watershed

- The original flow of Highland Bayou has decreased as a result of the Diversionary Canal and sedimentation.
- The need for dredging in Bayou Vista and other parts of Highland bayou to “clean up” debris and excess sediment for improvement of dissolved oxygen distribution and overall flow
- The addition of sediment and other pollutants to the bayou carried by drainage from surrounding areas with the intention of flood control
- Exposure to pathogens in the Bayou resulting in life-long injuries for residents

Other Topics of Discussion

- Role of the TCEQ in water quality assessment versus permit compliance for regulated facilities
- GBEP projects within the Galveston Bay system relating to habitat conservation/restoration efforts

Action Items

- Setting a meeting date for January. The Carbide Park Extension office was chosen as the location for subsequent meetings.
- Stakeholder outreach to individuals/groups identified during the meeting exercise
 - introduce the project and invite them to the next meeting
- Distribute information about the Texas Watershed Steward workshop scheduled for February 17th, 2016 to the group.
- Upcoming milestones
 - February 17th, 2016: Texas Watershed Steward community-wide workshop with CEUs available
 - Tentatively April 15th, 2016: Draft Watershed Protection Plan for Public Comment
 - May 31st, 2016: Final Draft Watershed Protection Plan

