

Highland Bayou Workgroup Meeting Notes

January 19th, 2016 • 12:00-2:30 p.m.

Attendance: Steve Mikulencak (TX Coastal Watershed Program), Celina Lowry (TX Coastal Watershed Program), Bill Alcorn (Municipal Utility District (MUD) 12), Bob Bassett (MUD12), Lori Fitzsimmons-Evans (Galveston County Health District), Martin Entringer (Galveston County Health District), Lisa Marshall (Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP)/Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)), Linda Broach (TCEQ), Brian Koch (Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)), 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)), Dan Konyha (City of Bayou Vista), Tim O'Connell (resident stakeholder), Lee Grundmann (Water Control and Improvement District (WCID) #19), Phil Harrison (WCID #19)

Introductions

Steven Mikulencak and Celina Lowry introduced themselves and asked attendees to share their name and affiliation.

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
- 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
- Point sources versus nonpoint sources (NPS), impervious surfaces and runoff, review of nonpoint sources
- Stakeholder outreach exercise update.



Guest: Brian Koch, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)

- Brian introduced TSSWCB as an agency. He explained TSSWCB's role in the Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) process. Brian has been involved in several WPP efforts. He gave advice to the group regarding participation and input.
- TSSWCB supports small projects to fund individual agricultural efforts. Brian gave several project examples including: providing alternative water sources for livestock to keep them from natural water bodies and fencing projects for rotational grazing.
- The group asked if TSSWCB would provide funding for dredging or work with the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the diversionary structure on Highland Bayou. The structure is under the Army Corps of Engineers jurisdiction. The WPP efforts that TSSWCB funds are typically rural water quality projects.

Virtual Nonpoint Source (NPS) Field Trip

- The Highland bayou and Marchand bayou subwatershed maps were divided into 7 catchments
- The group reviewed each area map one by one to discuss and determine a primary and secondary category to best fit the visible land use/land cover
- Categories included agricultural, urbanization, WWTP/OSSF, and wildlife/feral hogs/nondomestic animals
- Urbanization was the primary category for most catchments followed by wildlife

Other Topics of Discussion

- Meeting administration - Survey Monkey worked well for determining the meeting date. Eventbrite will not be used in the future for meeting invitations. Survey Monkey will be used for event invitations during the next meeting.
- The original flow of Highland Bayou has decreased as a result of the Diversionary Canal and sedimentation. The Army Corps of Engineer contact we have has not responded. Mr. Michetich will check on getting another contact.
- 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. A few years ago MUD12 utilized spoil material from dredging projects to enhance nearby marshes.



Action Items

- Send potential meeting dates for February. The Carbide Park Extension office will remain the location for subsequent meetings.
- Continue stakeholder outreach to individuals/groups identified during the meeting exercise
 - Introduce the project and invite them to the next meeting
- Meet with group members one-on-one (each organization or a subset of) to gain understanding of recent and possible future projects. Discuss possible projects or efforts for funding. What is your organization doing or might be doing that could have a positive impact on Highland Bayou?
- Upcoming events/milestones
 - February 17th, 2016: Texas Watershed Steward community-wide workshop with CEUs available
 - April 2nd, 2016: Trash Bash at the Virginia Point site off Hwy 45. The Moses-Karankawa Bayous Alliance will host an educational booth
 - Tentatively April 15th, 2016: Draft Watershed Protection Plan for Public Comment
 - May 31st, 2016: Final Draft Watershed Protection Plan

