

Highland Bayou Workgroup Meeting Notes

February 24th • 12:00-2:30 p.m.

Steve Mikulencak (TX Coastal Watershed Program (TCWP)), Celina Lowry (TCWP), Charriss York (TCWP), Amanda Solitro (TCWP), Bill Alcorn (Municipal Utility District (MUD) 12), Bob Bassett (MUD12), Lori Fitzsimmons-Evans (Galveston County Health District (GCHD)), Martin Entringer (GCHD), Nancy Baher (Galveston County), Joe Giusti (Galveston County), Charlene Bohannon (Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF)), Lisa Marshall (Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP)), Michelle Krause (GBEP), Lindsey Lippert (GBEP), Linda Broach Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)), Brian Koch (Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)), Suzy Kou (City of La Marque), Chaise Cary (City of La Marque), Les Rumburg (City of La Marque), Robert Michetich (City Council La Marque), Harry Robinson (Hitchcock Industrial Development Corporation (HIDC)), Vaun Henry (City of Bayou Vista), Gwen Megale (Omega Bay Improvement Committee (OBIC)), Marcy Scates (OBIC), 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:

- Goals for the spring to build 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
- Continuation of stakeholder outreach exercise. Several new individuals and entities were identified.
- Copies of the front page Galveston County Daily News article titled "Area group exploring options to clean up Highland Bayou of bacteria, low oxygen levels" was distributed to attendees.



Charriss York, Texas Coastal Watershed Program

- Charriss, the Dickinson Bayou Watershed Partnership coordinator, discussed adjacent watershed protection projects and keeping stakeholder groups together after the WPP process.
- Handouts provided to show locations of Galveston Bay area watershed protection projects and options the Dickinson Bayou Watershed Partnership explored for group sustainability.
- Implementation projects for Dickinson bayou include various educational workshops, pet waste education and a raingarden at the Library.
- Charriss provided a brief overview of the Galveston Coalition of Watersheds. Benefits of joining the coalition include approaching funding with projects that cover different geographical areas potentially having a greater cumulative impact.

Existing Management Measures-Issues and Observations Exercise

- One-on-One meeting notes were reorganized without attribution and presented to the group in an interim draft document.
- The discussion items from One-on-One meetings were categorized into one of the following:
 - Agriculture and Wildlife, Wastewater Treatment Plant Collection System and On-site sewage facility. Streamflow /Hydrological Modification/Dredging, Urbanization, and Other – All Categories or Combination.
- The group reviewed the items in each category and added to the items, moved items to other categories or revised items.
- Urbanization was not reviewed but the exercise will continue here at the next meeting.

Other Topics of Discussion

- Meeting administration – Previous meeting minutes are pending approval from the group.
- The original flow of Highland Bayou has decreased as a result of the Diversionary Canal and sedimentation. Culverts were intended to allow for water flow into Highland Bayou but have silted in. The UH property and Jack Brooks Park contribute sediment to this section of the bayou.
- Mr. Michetich was able to reach an Army Corps of Engineer contact. He has started discussions with him regarding Highland Bayou. Steve and Celina plan to contact for project introduction.
- Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act (RESTORE) funding was brought up as an opportunity for large dollars this group could seek together.



Action Items

- Send potential meeting dates for March.
- Continue stakeholder outreach to individuals/groups identified during the meeting exercise
 - Introduce the project and invite them to the next meeting
- Continue to 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
 - CHARM Workshop tentatively scheduled for March will be moved.
 - April 2nd, 2016: Trash Bash at the Virginia Point site off Hwy 45. The Moses-Karankawa Bayous Alliance will host an educational booth. Registration for the event can be found at trashbash.org
 - April 15th, 2016 (tentative): Draft Watershed Protection Plan for Public Comment
 - April, 2016 (date to be decided): Highland Bayou Open House
 - May 31st, 2016: Final Draft Watershed Protection Plan

