

Galveston Bay Coalition of Watersheds

Post-Harvey Debrief

October 2017

General Comments

- Who is watching the Hughes Road dumpsite with debris and runoff at this and other temporary dumpsites
- Large amount of debris in ditches – will go into the bayou with the next rain fall or cause backups and more potential flooding
- Large amount of household hazardous waste that isn't getting picked up
 - o Are contractors picking up tires? – Don't know but remember once a month tire recycling in Dickinson
- Drainage – mouth of Highland Bayou, mouth of Dickinson Bayou

Misinformation & Public Education

- Residents asking about flood gates on Dickinson Bayou
- Many homeowners have a false sense of security due to large detention ponds near their homes
- Questions we as a group can potentially address through our education efforts
 - o What does storm surge mean?
 - o What is a watershed?
 - o What are the flood zones and the risk levels that come with them
 - o Impact of paved areas on flooding in other areas
- Feeling of “I survived Harvey so I won't flood”
- Now is a time when people are listening and showing more interest in designing to better accommodate larger storms

Coalition Sponsored Disaster Related Event with Focus of watersheds & making connections

- Possible messages
 - o Come talk about.... Package messages in a useful way
 - o Why did your home flood? Why didn't your home flood?
 - o What actually happened...
 - Rain vs storm surge
 - Photos, maps, & diagrams showing areas that flooded & what they looked like
 - Watershed with x miles and y inches of rain
 - What can we do to stop more flooding?
 - How can we connect flooding with our water quality message?
 - o Use this as a water quality teaching moment – everything you do gets into the water
 - o Watershed health and allowing for natural areas to happen
- Could we do a case study for a community that flooded? Could it somehow show changes to imperviousness
 - o Look at water quality
 - o Look at green spaces
 - o Look at something feasible – not undoing what the community currently looks like
- Have the option to make a commitment and then follow up to see if people made changes

- Know your floodplain
- How many homes flooded outside the floodplain
 - o Everyone having flood insurance
- Make flooding safer – more resilient communities
- Two workshops, one in Galveston County and Brazoria County
- Booth driven or round robin, open house style
 - o complaint box & official record
 - o involve as many possible partners as appropriate to provide correct and useful information
- Need to be careful about finger pointing
 - o Drainage ditches
 - o Elected officials
- Incorporating “success” stories or plans

Research Opportunities/Needs

- Has the fact that flood retention standards have changed decreased the number of homes that flooded? – Could Dr. Brody at TAMUG answer this?
- Is anyone looking at revising the design standard? Possibly changing the number of inches of rainfall that we use to design and building detention.
- Is anyone investigating proposals like the Coastal Spine (Ike Dike) and how they deal with upstream flooding? They are designed to protect from storm surge – but that was not the issue with Harvey

Long-term projects/needs

- Household Hazardous waste facility for Galveston County – needs funding for continued disposal and operation
 - o Could/should Gulf Coast Waste Disposal be part of this conversation?
- Infrastructure assessment of areas – are bridges creating bottlenecks?
- Clearing streams (done in Galveston County) vs leaving snags (done in Harris County) – which is really better? Are there studies?
- Counties having the ability to make & enforce regulations (Regional Flood Control District idea?)
- Well water sampling for contaminants other than coliform & need for education on proper sampling techniques
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