

Galveston Bay Coalition of Watersheds

Bastrop Bayou | Dickinson Bayou | Highland Bayou | Jarbo Bayou
Partnering for healthy watersheds.
<https://agrillife.org/coalitionofwatersheds/>

Tuesday, June 22, 2021 | 1-2 PM
Virtual Meeting via ZOOM with call in option

Dredging-Erosion Control-Riparian Buffers

MEETING NOTES

Attendees: Rachel Windham, Lindsey Lippert, Katie Wilson, Michael Shannon, Stevie Nash, Steven Johnston, Brian Koch, Robert Michetich, Daniel Albanese, Charriss York, and Celina Gauthier Lowry

Status Update: FOG and Wipes

The presentation started with an introduction to the Coalition and a review of the three focus areas for projects prioritized by the Coalition in previous meetings. This meeting we are working through efforts included under the *Dredging-Erosion Control-Riparian Buffers* topic.

Projects and Priorities

Review project opportunities and refine project strategies and actions.

Policy decisions regarding drainage practices – Outreach to policy makers on policy decisions regarding dredging, drainage practices and erosion control, including post-Harvey status/actions

- Educational workshop targeted to city leaders/officials
- Can we do a survey of drainage districts – what is the understanding, what is their role, what is the aspect of overlap for cross-functioning?
- Who are the correct speakers? What is the goal?
- Survey the audience to get an idea of topics they want covered beforehand; survey after the event to see if expectations were met.
- Could Harris County Flood Control District be a speaker to talk about water control basins for water quality as well as flood control?
- If flooding and green infrastructure is highlighted, more people will show up.
- Could Galveston County provide information at the event? There is a county-wide drainage plan in progress.
- 6 or 7 groups are doing drainage plans or studies in the area right now
- Maybe a county level focus or regional area based on the watersheds.

- What are the drainage districts willing to provide and share about their current practices?
- Celina has provided a brief introduction to the Coalition to several local drainage district members over the phone.
- Several cities in Galveston County are receiving CDBG-DR funding. Maybe we can hear from each of the groups on what they are doing.
- Might be better to take a multi-jurisdictional versus county-wide approach. The county does not work inside city limits or incorporated areas. Drainage districts have a role, cities have a role,...
- Another option is to have a hyper-local event where we link a community with their drainage district(s).
- What are common misconceptions? Drainage districts are cutting down the riparian cover to make water move as fast as possible.
- What part of the process do communities feel they are not connected to? Is it not knowing what is happening?

Misconceptions about bayous, dredging, and land use – Public interest and misconceptions on the natural hydrology of bayous and dredging versus drainage maintenance

- Meet people where they are.
- The [Texas Riparian and Stream Ecosystem](#) training was offered as an established educational program the Coalition can invite. A sample agenda, list of CEUs, program goals, and what the project team would need from the Coalition was presented. Free, one-day workshop with presentations and afternoon outdoor portion. Can come to our area next spring between February and May.
- Alternatives to dredging for flood control; room for more than dredging.
- Dredging the bayou will not change the water level of the Gulf of Mexico or the tide.
- How much maintenance is needed? What type of maintenance for vegetation? Woody debris?
- The Coalition could apply for Galveston Bay Estuary Program funding in Water and Sediment Quality for a workshop on soil health – increasing organic matter to increase water infiltration and tying it to green infrastructure. Not just for farmers, this applies to homes and smaller properties also. On the ground demonstrations could accompany this workshop.

Grant Opportunity to Continue Coalition Funding

Letters of support were requested to accompany a proposal titled, *Highland and Bastrop Bayous: A Collaborative Approach to Implementation through the Galveston Bay Coalition of Watersheds*. The proposal is being prepared for submission to the TCEQ under the FY22 Clean Water Act (CWA) 319(h) grant program. Highland and Bastrop bayous are highlighted as having EPA-accepted Watershed Protection Plans. The Dickinson and Jarbo bayou watersheds remain part of the Coalition and are included the proposal.

Resources shared by Coalition members:

- Galveston Bay Estuary Program is [seeking proposals](#), due COB Friday, July 21, 2021. Funding starts September 1, 2022.
- Disaster mitigation projects awarded by the Texas General Land Office
 - Funds to improve drainage and wastewater infrastructure approved for six entities in [Galveston County](#)

- Funds to improve wastewater and drainage infrastructure approved for the cities of Brazoria, Freeport, and Oyster Creek in [Brazoria County](#)

Next Steps and Future Meetings

Celina will continue to follow up on projects with individual stakeholders. Before the next meeting, information from this meeting and individual stakeholder conversations will be pulled together and shared with the Coalition. Another meeting on this topic is anticipated for some time in July. Celina will send a survey of potential meeting dates to receive availability from the Coalition.

[Virtual binder](#) and access key: Coalition