

Galveston Bay Coalition of Watersheds

Bastrop Bayou | Dickinson Bayou | Highland Bayou | Jarbo Bayou

Partnering for healthy watersheds.

<https://agrilife.org/coalitionofwatersheds/>

Thursday, March 7, 2024 | 10:00-11:30 AM

Virtual Meeting via Teams

MEETING NOTES

Attendees: Kendall Guidroz, Georgia Carmack, Brian Koch, Christian Rines, Nicole Plowman, Katherine Wilson, Natasha Zarnstorff, Robert Michetich, Lindsey Lippert, Cesar Garcia, Hector Renteria, Jean Wright, Proy Chalitruangkul, Julie Cain, Celina Gauthier Lowry

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting started with a welcome and individual introductions. Introductions started with the project team from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Texas Community Watershed Partners office, Celina and Julie. One attendee had audio only access through the phone. They were emailed a copy of the presentation slides. The meeting agenda was presented.

The first of two poll questions was administered, "What brought you here today?". *Participants were able to select more than one answer.* Poll answers were entered for those that could not enter them themselves. Results were reviewed.

- 26% I want to hear what nearby communities/organizations are doing to improve water quality in our coastal waterways
- 21% I'm interested in coordinating with other organizations to extend limited resources
- 26% I am a previous Coalition member
- 5% I'm new to the group and am here for an orientation
- 21% I'm interested in how the Coalition can help my organization move forward with existing/planned projects

What is the Coalition all about?

A brief history of the Coalition was provided including the intent for forming the group – to form partnerships to implement existing watershed-based plans in Brazoria and Galveston counties. To share resources and funding to conduct similar implementation actions across all four watersheds, better utilizing and sharing resources. After giving a brief introduction to the terms “watershed” and “watershed-based plans”, an overview of each of the four Coalition watersheds was shared: Bastrop Bayou, Dickinson Bayou, Highland Bayou, and Jarbo Bayou.

The Texas Watershed Steward workshop held in La Marque the week prior was brought up. Celina presented on some of the implementation efforts that occurred during 2021 in Highland Bayou specifically and across Coalition watersheds.

Attendees were asked if they worked in any of the Coalition watersheds or more than one. Another poll question, “Which watershed do you work in?” was administered. *Participants were able to select more than one answer.* Poll answers were entered for those that could not enter them themselves. Results were reviewed.

21%	Bastrop Bayou
26%	Dickinson Bayou
26%	Highland Bayou
10%	Jarbo Bayou
15%	Other

Goals and Action Items

The presentation then rounded back to focus on the four existing Coalition watershed areas and the common issues identified in the various watershed-based plans. Common themes included on-site sewage facilities, stormwater runoff, and illegal dumping among several others. A review of the efforts completed during the Coalition cycle in 2017 and 2018 was described including the consolidation of management measures into a top 12 list that led to the development of the Coalition’s goals and action items. Coalition goals and associated action items were reviewed. The Coalition’s previous intentions were also mentioned: focus on areas others are not already working in; supplement other people’s work; and adaptive management, continuing to evolve the group and focus.

Attendee comments:

- There has been exponential growth in some of these watersheds since plans were written. There may be new priorities.
- Many of the communities have new leadership.

Projects and Priorities

The flexibility in implementing actions to improve local surface water quality was communicated. The topic areas, audiences, and methods of delivery are not pre-determined, the group has flexibility. The Coalition will deliver three educational events in the next three years.

Outreach Strategic Action Plan –

The existing Outreach Strategic Action Plan (2021) was introduced as a opportunity for the Coalition to take action as soon as stakeholders choose to. There were several actions identified for future efforts.

The updated Action Plan will be based on current Coalition needs and capacity by re-prioritizing issues identified in local watershed-based plans to provide a framework for implementation. The Action Plans are intended to be as short as we can manage. Celina will compile the plan based on meeting activities and discussions. A draft is expected this fall.

Coalition Focus in 2021 –

A review of the efforts completed from 2020-2022 and the organizations who participated was discussed. The three focus areas prioritized in the 2021 Outreach Strategic Action Plan were: (A) Fats, oils, grease (FOG) and wipes in sanitary sewers; (B) Debris in Bayous and Illegal Dumping; and (C) Dredging-Erosion Control-Riparian Buffers.

Coalition Resources Highlight -

Two resources from the Coalition were summarized. The [Virtual binder](#) (Access Key: Coalition) and the [Fats, oils, grease \(FOG\) and wipes digital resources webpage](#).

Attendees were asked if they remembered accessing the virtual binder as a reference. There were two in attendance who had and expressed interest in keeping it.

Feedback was given on the bill insert design: Information on kitchen garbage disposals should be incorporated in a future iteration of this material. The connection of materials put down kitchen sinks is not as obvious as the messaging related to flushing items down the toilet.

One attendee previously shared a bill inserts with their organization's logo with their communications department but have not followed up.

Future Meeting Topics and Activities

Future meeting topics were introduced. Funding is secured to support reoccurring meetings and several implementation actions over the next three years.

Attendees were asked if they would attend an in-person meeting if held at the Galveston County Extension Office at Carbide Park in La Marque. One attendee stated the drive may inhibit them depending on their schedule that day. The option of alternating meeting locations in different watersheds was brought up as an option. Celina will poll the group for a date and time to meet in May.

Upcoming area events –

- 30th Annual Trash Bash 30th. Multiple locations. Saturday, Mar. 23. For [more information and to register](#).
- OSSF Homeowners Education Workshops. Liverpool. Mar. 8. One from 1:00-3:00pm and one from 5:00-7:00pm. Contact [Kendall Guidroz](#). Attendees at the workshop may be eligible for a no-cost pump out. This opportunity could extend to other communities in the future.

Partner Announcements

- Galveston Bay Council quarterly subcommittee meetings:
 - Water and Sediment Quality, June 12, contact [Christian Rines](#).
 - Natural Resource Uses, Mar. 20, contact [Lindsey Lippert](#).
 - For more information on all GBEP subcommittees, visit the [subcommittees](#) webpage.
- Requests to add water quality monitoring sites, contact [Jean Wright](#).

Next Steps

Attendees were asked what groups or specific people they would like to see represented who are not present. Both the Brazoria County and Galveston County Pollution Control teams were suggested. Galveston County Health District was present. Attendees offered assistance in contacting Brazoria County Environmental Health.

Next meeting date: May 2024, Location TBD