



KICKOFF MEETING

Tuesday, May 21, 2013
5:30 - 7:30 P.M.

White Park Community Building
219 White Memorial Park Road
Hankamer, Texas 77560

MEETING NOTES

Attendees: Raymond Anders (property owner, DB VFD), David Boyd (Sierra Club member), Glenn Brent (self), Sandra Brent, Terri Briggs (landowner), Tom Briggs (landowner), Tom Douglas, Clay Edmonds (self), Leroy Ezer, Becky Fancher (landowner), Clint Fancher (landowner), Tyler Fitzgerald (Texas AgriLife-Chambers County), Renée Hammond (Oak Island Market), Guy R. Jackson (ChaRT), Justin Jenkins (landowner), John Jenkins (self), Charles Johnson (landowner), David Kitson (self), David Manthei (USDA-NRCS), Tommie McNeely, Steven Mitchell (TPWD), Daryl Morris (CLCND), Terry Rivon, Bob Scherer (Retired), Scott Sharp (self), James Standley (VFD), Hon. Jimmy Sylvia (Chambers County), David Thruston (DB VFD), Dave Turner, George Turner (self), Jacque White (landowner, ChaRT), Kay Willcox, Pudge Willcox, Catherine Williams (ChaRT)

Contractors: Ashley Alexander (TSSWCB), Kristi Alexander (Shead), Mitch Conine (TSSWCB), Stephanie Glenn (HARC), Sam Rendon (USGS), Linda Shead (Shead), Danielle Vinette (Shead)

1. Welcome

Judge Jimmy Sylvia welcomed the attendees.

2. Introductions and Agenda Review

Linda thanked Judge Sylvia for his welcome, and the County, Jacque White, and Stephanie Glenn for the food. After self-introductions, Linda briefly went over the agenda.

3. Why and How We Got Here

Ashley Alexander, the Double Bayou Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) project manager, discussed the history and gave a brief overview of the project, the project area, and what's already known.

Double Bayou is northeast of Galveston Bay and located in Liberty and Chambers County. It is made up of two forks. The area around Double Bayou is mostly rural lands and includes land for the purpose of oil and gas wells, agricultural, and irrigation canals.

Bacteria are a constituent of concern due to risk for human health. The West Fork has been listed as impaired for bacteria since 2004. Dissolved oxygen is another factor that is tested, because when oxygen levels are too low, it causes stress to aquatic life. The West Fork is listed as impaired for dissolved oxygen, and the East Fork is listed as concerned for dissolved oxygen. Galveston Bay is impaired for dioxins and PCBs, causing connecting water bodies, such as Double Bayou, also to be impaired due to tidal influence.

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Double Bayou Watershed Partnership is a project of the following entities:



HARC



A characterization project took place from August 2009 to October 2011. The project included testing the water and then presenting the results, leading to setting up a watershed protection project.

Improving water quality in watersheds is tied into the federal Clean Water Act (CWA), with the CWA's goal of the body of water being "fishable and swimmable." The first step of the watershed protection process is to build a partnership, which everyone is invited to join. The current project goal is to develop a nine-element WPP that will ultimately restore the water quality of the streams.

Concerns were raised about a chemical waste dump near Turtle Bayou – the concern was about the chemicals flowing into Lake Anahuac and then being pumped into irrigation canals and ending up in Double Bayou.

Another concern was that the area had recently experienced an historically dry season, so the water wasn't flowing, which probably caused buildup and results that are not reflective of normal conditions. Ashley Alexander and Stephanie Glenn addressed this, stating that the characterization was also based on external data collected during other periods of time, not solely on testing in the dry period, and that even during the dry period some relevant data points were collected.

4. Why a Watershed Approach?

Kristi Alexander thanked everyone for showing up, noting that the people in the local area really care about the area. A brief overview of a watershed definition was given. The Double Bayou WPP focuses on both the land and water in the watershed, not just the waterbody itself. Maps were shown of the Double Bayou watershed and of the watersheds in Texas, based on the major river basins, all of which flow into the Gulf of Mexico. Everything on the land can eventually flow into the waterway. Photos were shown of some of the various different land activities in the Double Bayou watershed.

Point and nonpoint source pollution were defined. The Double Bayou WPP will analyze all of the different possible contributors. The more information that the group can contribute, the better the end plan will be.

5. What's a Watershed Protection Plan Process?

Linda Shead and Stephanie Glenn then gave a brief overview of the different aspects of the Watershed Protection Plan process.

This WPP is strictly voluntary and is collaborative and participatory, driven by the people. The definition of a stakeholder was presented, and it was noted that the partnership needs more stakeholders to come and give their input. The partnership is looking for ways to reach all people. Any landowner in the area who wants to attend is welcome to come. The only reason why some people weren't invited to this meeting was because the Double Bayou team did not have their contact information. The WPP is locally driven. If people are not involved, then it is not going to work. Ideas from other places can be brought to the table, but the locals have to decide what will or won't work, based on what they personally know about the area.

Discussion moved to the many WPPs going on in the neighboring regions. In Houston alone, there are 72 waterways in the plan of the Bacteria Implementation Group. The Double Bayou WPP project intends to integrate ideas from these various WPPs to consider in the Double Bayou Watershed.

Details were given on the process of the watershed protection plan development. The process will last for several years, so it is best if everyone comes and shares their views now. Each meeting will have a different focus. Two of the initial steps are building the partnership and further characterizing the watershed. Everyone is encouraged to go on the website and look at the data

collected so far. This process will look at a lot of models and databases, but it isn't just about what is calculated. It is also about what stakeholders think is missing or being overlooked. A set of goals for the community needs to be developed in the future.

The public participation plan will be on the website and will focus on how to communicate with people. There are a whole series of meetings planned. The next one is on water quality, and the one after that is on forming a structure – a steering committee of people who help decide the strategies and what and how things are done. The meetings will generally be every other month, but the work group meetings will occur between the general meetings.

6. Getting Involved

Ashley Alexander encouraged people to flip through the watershed protection plans she brought, or look at some online, to get familiar with a WPP. One of the merits of a WPP is that it is flexible and anything wanted by the group can be added into the plan.

Kristi Alexander explained why outreach is important. People need to be at the meetings, otherwise the process doesn't work. Identifying people who are not on the list and should be invited is important. Attendees can contact any of the people currently making up the Double Bayou WPP team with additional stakeholders and their information.

Kristi Alexander explained that the team is trying different types of communication to reach people in the community. A poll by show-of-hands was conducted to learn how people heard about the meeting. One person read about it in the newspaper; 3 people learned about it from the fliers; 7 people were responding to a notice by U.S. mail; 8 people read about it through email; and 12 people heard about it by word of mouth. If any stakeholder wants supplies, like fliers, to help them get the word out, they are encouraged to ask for them.

Concerns were raised about whether there was any proof that doing all of this actually has an effect. Ashley Alexander directed the stakeholders to the website of TSSWCB, then to search active and completed projects. It will show every project that the organization is or has funded. The attendee felt that more people would want to get involved if they saw examples of success and proof that their actions make a difference.

Concerns were raised about the public gaining access to private property if funds are used to improve the area. It was emphasized that the public does not gain access to the land unless it is purchased and owned by the public.

Kristi Alexander inquired about people's preferred form of contact. Only one person preferred USPS. A column of preferred contact method could be added to future sign-in sheets. Contacting the [Soil and Water Conservation] District by mail would be better, because then it can be brought to the board meeting.

7. Next Steps

General stakeholder meetings will be every other month. There is a special event coming up: Texas Watershed Stewards Training will be on June 25th from 1:00PM—8:00PM. Dinner will be provided, and this class has CEUs; attendees just need to preregister. Work group meetings will happen between general meetings in the future. A poll by show-of-hands was conducted for the preferred day of week for the meetings. Thursdays appeared to be the best day for the most folks that attended this meeting, and evenings were best, because people who work can come afterward to attend.

Discussion then focused on the next meeting location, as the current facility cannot be used for every meeting. The Double Bayou Community Center is another possible meeting place. The meetings can be moved around for people's convenience. Food for the next meeting will be

donated, but after that, help is needed to provide food, since government grant money cannot be used for food. During the July meeting, there will be more details on water quality in the Double Bayou Watershed. During the meeting after the one in July, the official steering committee group and work groups will be setup. When the public participation plan is up on the website, the whole set of meeting plans can be seen.

8. Adjournment

Linda thanked everyone and encouraged them to come back, because the success of this partnership depends on them.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30, while informal discussion continued after the end of the meeting.

Copies of all presentations and documents referenced in these meeting notes or provided at the meeting are at www.doublebayou.org under the Project Documents tab.