



Residential Workgroup Meeting

July 21, 2015

Double Bayou Community Building

MEETING SUMMARY

Stakeholders: Elga Jackson, Guy Robert Jackson, Ollie Mayes, Creola Moore, Alice Rivon

Team Members: Lisa Marshall (GBEP)

1. Introduction

Lisa opened the session with an explanation that the other workgroups have been meeting to talk about specific things that have contributed to poor water quality in Double Bayou. The purpose of this residential session is to learn, from those who haven't been involved in a workgroup, about what they've seen that might be a water quality problem around residential areas.

2. Septic System Issues

One issue that has been discussed in previous stakeholder meetings is the problem with repair and maintenance of septic systems. Participants discussed the importance of keeping the bugs alive (with enough nutrients), especially when the number of people in a household has reduced from a large family to just one or two people. Also discussed was not putting things down the drains that can harm the system, such as grease and cleaning products.

More outreach and education was identified as a need, for help in keeping a septic system working properly.

Rex Tunze was identified as a resource for finding out about providers of service for septic systems, as he's in charge of environmental health for the County.

3. Other Potential Sources of Water Quality Issues

Using too much fertilizer on gardens was mentioned as a pollution source, since the fertilizer can run off into the bayou and cause algae to grow. Using too much herbicide or insecticide could also end up running off into the bayou.

Dumping of oil or other waste into roadside ditches was discussed, but the group felt that did not happen very often these days, and that the County has someone pick up trash or garbage left in ditches.

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In terms of illegal dumping, one option discussed was to consider game cameras, which could be useful if there were a rash of illegal dumping. Another option to consider would be a neighborhood watch program, where folks could get trained in how to safely monitor the neighborhood and report concerns.

One item that had been noted in earlier individual interviews was the County permit system, whereby residents can pay \$5 for a sticker that is good for two years and allows residents to take trash, including large appliances, to the landfill. There may be an exemption to the fee for people over 65 years of age.

When asked about stray dogs and cats, the group felt that, although it used to be an issue, it was not currently a problem.

Rain gardens and rain barrels were discussed. Because of maintenance issues, there was not as much interest in the rain gardens. If there were a program to help with installation, the group expressed some interest in rain barrels, such as those provided through GBF's workshop program.

The congregation of buzzards around the community building was discussed, but the conclusion was that, although a nuisance, they were not a big issue, and that the buzzards do help with disposing of dead animals that might otherwise end up in the bayou.

Providing for more responsible disposal of fishing line, through collection stations, was discussed, as a way to prevent harm to wildlife.

4. Conclusion

The biggest issue for this group of residents was identifying funding assistance, especially for service of septic systems, but also for rain barrels (and possibly rain gardens). The Area Agency on Aging, of the Houston-Galveston Area Council, was mentioned as one potential resource.

There was also interest in more outreach and education on the proper use of septic systems.