

Double Bayou Watershed Partnership Newsletter

Double Bayou WPP: Management Measure Spotlight

The Galveston Bay Action Network



The Double Bayou WPP includes outreach and education management measures to inform stakeholders how different choices impact water quality. Some are broad-based, like the GBAN project described here, and others are tied to more specific pollution sources, such as septic system workshops.

In order to help protect Galveston Bay, into which Double Bayou flows, the Galveston Bay Foundation established the Galveston Bay Action Network, an interactive tool through which citizens can report incidents of water pollution in and around Galveston Bay, including its tributaries.

Chemical spills, illegal boat discharges (dumping of untreated human waste), waste dumping, and other activities can pollute water, cause damage to the environment, and upset the delicate ecosystems of the bay. Through GBAN, citizens can “be the eyes on the bay” and alert authorities to deliberate or accidental pollution. According to GBF’s GBAN site, GBAN “is designed to act as a bridge between citizens who care for the safety and health of the Bay and the authorities who can help enforce those qualities.” Reports filed through the interactive system are sent directly to the correct authorities.

To file a report, citizens can go to the website: <http://www.galvbay.org/GBAN>. There, they can click the button marked “Log in to file a report.” From there, they can log in as a one-time guest, or create an account. Once logged in, they can click the “Report Pollution” button and fill out the report form.

To be effective, reports should include the following information:

- Correct location
- Smells, colors and textures of substance
- Area of land or water that substance covers
- Name or identification of any vehicle, vessel, or building involved
- Type/quantity of animals involved
- Potential source, if known

The report may optionally include contact info and photos or video. Examples can be found in the section called “Writing a report.”

A map and a list are also available for viewing other pollution reports (click on the map and then one of the pins marking the location of an incident). Examples of types of incidents include: discolored water, fish kills, septic systems, trash and debris, abandoned vessels, pet waste, storm drains, chemicals, oil or sheen, and algal blooms.

Any questions or comments to the Galveston Bay Action Network web application can be directed to Sarah Gossett at sgossett@galvbay.org or 281-332-3381 extension 217.



Photo Credit: Stephanie Glenn

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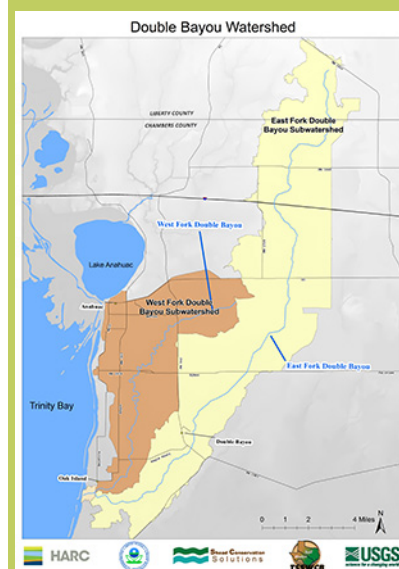


Some useful links from our website:

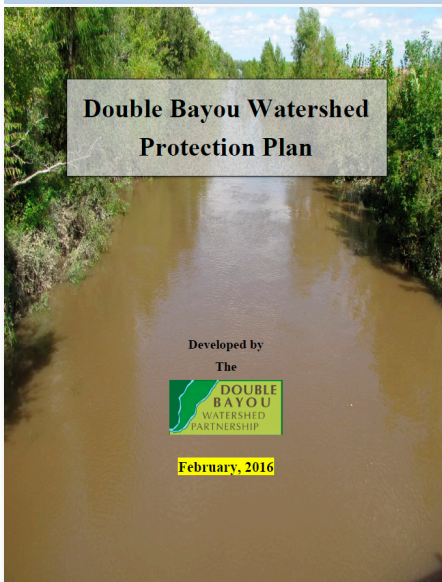
WPP Document:
<http://www.doublebayou.org/wpp-document/>

Meeting Archives:
<http://www.doublebayou.org/double-bayou-meetings/>

Tools and Resources:
<http://www.doublebayou.org/toolsresources/>



Full Draft of Watershed Protection Plan Available



It's been a long time coming, but after incredible dedicated work by stakeholders for the past 2½ years, and with background support from the project team, the full draft of the Double Bayou Watershed Protection Plan is now available for stakeholders to review and give comments!

Digital copies of the document may be found at <http://www.doublebayou.org/wpp-document>. PDF and Word versions are available.

Or, hard copies may be picked up at:
Chambers Co. Precinct Two Office
2128 Highway 61
Anahuac, TX 77514
Ph: 409-267-2409

Any and all comments are welcome.
Stakeholder comments are due by Friday, December 18, 2015.

Edits and comments to the document may be made in a variety of ways:

- Print and mark up the PDF document from the website, and scan and email the pages with changes.
- Print and mark up the PDF document from the website, and mail or drop off the hard copy changes.
- Use track-changes in the Word document, and email the mark-up (or print with changes, and mail or drop off).

- Mark up the hard copy. Then, scan the pages and email them; or mail the marked-up pages; or drop off the marked-up pages.

Comments may be submitted to any of the following:

Email to:
sglenn@harcresearch.org

U.S. mail to:
Stephanie Glenn
Houston Advanced Research Center
4800 Research Forest Drive
The Woodlands, TX 77381

Drop off:
Chambers Co. Precinct Two Office
2128 Highway 61
Anahuac, TX 77514

If you have any questions, please contact:

- Linda Shead, 713-703-1123
linda.shead@sheadconservation.com
- Stephanie Glenn, 281-364-6042,
sglenn@harcresearch.org

Once stakeholder comments have been addressed by the project team, stakeholders will be asked for approval of the document, at a General Meeting on January 19, 2016, and for approval of soliciting comments on the document from the general public. After public comments are addressed, the stakeholder-approved Double Bayou Watershed Protection Plan will be submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for consistency review, which is a step toward securing certain sources of federal and state implementation funding, although other sources are also possible.



What is the

Double Bayou WPP project?

The Double Bayou Watershed Protection Plan project is one of several projects designed to voluntarily address stream water quality in a tributary of Galveston Bay. Like most of these tributaries, Double Bayou is listed on the State Impaired Waters List (the "303(d) List") for having bacteria levels that are unsafe for human contact in some recreational uses. Many also have too little oxygen to support healthy aquatic life.

Impairments in Double Bayou are not as severe as for most other Galveston Bay tributaries. With voluntary stakeholder involvement, it may be possible to improve the stream water quality enough to have it removed from the State Impaired Waters List without drastic measures.

The Double Bayou WPP project will result in a stakeholder-driven, written plan to achieve stream water quality standards through voluntary actions: the Double Bayou Watershed Protection Plan.



Key Project Acronyms

DBWP = Double Bayou Watershed Partnership

DO = Dissolved Oxygen

GBEP - Galveston Bay Estuary Program

HARC = Houston Advanced Research Center

TCEQ = Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

TMDL = Total Maximum Daily Load

TSSWCB = Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board

USEPA = United States Environmental Protection Agency

USGS = United States Geological Survey

WPP = Watershed Protection Plan

WWTF = Wastewater Treatment Facility

A Local Perspective: Q&A with Guy Robert Jackson

Periodically, the Double Bayou WPP project team will ask local participants to share their thoughts about the project and its activities. This edition features Guy Robert Jackson's responses.

1. What watershed interest(s) do you represent?

I am a landowner and a resident in the watershed, along with representing community development and economic development interests within the watershed.

2. Why did you choose to participate in the Double Bayou WPP project?

An impaired waterway is just one sign of a greater problem. By addressing the watershed and the possible causes for impairment we then in turn create a better quality of life for ourselves and future generations.

3. How do you think this project will help your community (and especially the interests you represent)?

As a landowner it will help me to develop some best management practices on my lands. As a resident I know that I will have a cleaner waterway and in times of emergency,

the waters from the upper end of the east fork can be used for municipal purposes. Then from the community development/economic development front, it will give the area a greater quality of life along with more recreational uses thereby stimulating the local economy.

4. What would you most like to see come out of this project?

I would like to see all the users and interested parties come together and develop a long term plan that is not only sustainable but realistic.

5. Please share with us something you have learned through your participation in this project about the Double Bayou Watershed and water quality.

I have learned that people see the same problem from different angles and it is in working together for the common goal that we can address these differences in order to achieve the mutual outcome.

Wild Pig Management Video Series

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is offering a Wild Pig Management Video Series to help landowners address the ever-present problem of feral hogs. The video series currently includes six videos with over half an hour of informative content, including advice on best practices in trapping and shooting feral hogs.

The video series can be found on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL10QCALWCnPRucKHEcdnfn_oT9HklyNYG.

According to Mark Tyson, an Agrilife Extension associate with the Wildlife and Fisheries unit, "the videos will

clarify many management points not always easily understood through other media. Doing so should help land managers effectively manage this destructive nuisance species and reduce its impacts on native habitat, wildlife, livestock, water quality and agricultural production."

The video series is produced through a Renewable Resources Extension Act Grant funded by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

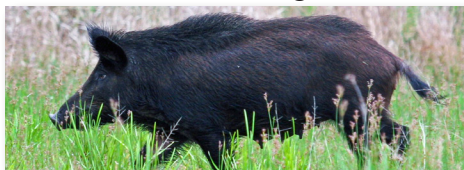
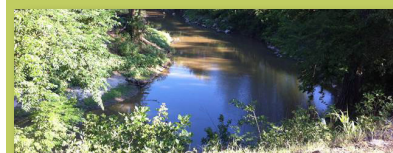


Photo by Craig O'Neal



Other Watershed Projects: Leon River

The Leon River watershed encompasses 1,375 square miles in central Texas and includes a tributary named Pecan Creek. It is bounded by Proctor Lake in the north and Belton Lake in the south. The watershed is home to agricultural industry as well as the coal, oil, and natural gas industries.

In 1996, the Leon River was placed on the impaired waters list due to high bacteria content, and Pecan Creek was added in 2006. The water was deemed unsafe for contact recreation.

In 2006, after TCEQ initiated a total maximum daily load (TMDL) study of the Leon River watershed (in 2002), local stakeholders began meeting to develop best management practices and a watershed protection plan. TSSWCB provided funding to help develop the WPP.

Stakeholders in the watershed voluntarily implemented several best management practices (BMPs) to help reduce bacteria loads.

Due to the success of the BMPs, Pecan Creek was removed from the impaired list in 2010, and the upper portion of the Leon River was removed in 2012. The EPA's Nonpoint Success Story for Leon River states, "The success can be attributed to increased stakeholder awareness due to the watershed planning process and to conservation practices being implemented along or near the waterbodies."

Leon River WPP:
<http://leonriver.tamu.edu/our-watershed/>

Galveston Bay Report Card



What is the Galveston Bay Report Card?

For the first time ever, scientists have created an easy-to-understand grading system to communicate the health of Galveston Bay. The entire report can be found online at <http://www.galvbaygrade.org/>, and will be updated annually, taking into consideration the interests, priorities and questions expressed by the public.

What challenges does Galveston Bay face?

Living near water and particularly the sea, provides many benefits to society – and Galveston Bay is no exception. Scores of commercial and recreational fishermen, international and domestic shipping vessels, pleasure boats, cruise ships and others make Galveston Bay, and especially the Houston Ship Channel, one of the busiest waterways in the world.

The Bay's urbanized, industrialized, and agricultural setting poses unique challenges for water quality, habitat protection, and resource conservation. Galveston Bay's most significant problems are tied to pollution, to declines in habitat acreage, and to the impacts of climate change, like sea level rise.

What grade did Galveston Bay receive in the Report Card?

The overall health of Galveston Bay received a grade of C – proof that, despite significant challenges in the form of pollution, habitat declines,

threats to wildlife, and trends in coastal change like sea level rise, we have a resilient system that is still able to provide us with incredible resources, both physical and aesthetic. This offers hope that we can change our negative impacts, and continue to enjoy the benefits the Bay provides for years to come.

In all, 19 indicators and six categories were graded. By learning more about each of the individually graded categories and indicators within the Report Card, you can gain a deeper understanding of the Bay's challenges and opportunities.

Can I really make a difference?

Absolutely! The future health of Galveston Bay will be determined by our daily actions. Every category and every indicator in the Report Card emphasizes suggestions for specific actions you can take to help the Bay's health improve – look for the “What You Can Do” graphics and explore the links to outside resources. There are a lot of wonderful organizations who depend on the dedication of volunteers like you to roll up their sleeves and help with habitat restoration, wildlife monitoring, water sampling, contacting legislators, educating students and more.

Who produced the Report Card?

The Galveston Bay Report Card was compiled from existing data by scientists and communication specialists at the Galveston Bay Foundation and Houston Advanced Research Center. Support for the Report Card was provided by a grant from Houston Endowment.

This article was compiled from resources provided by the Galveston Bay Foundation.

Upcoming Events

14th General Meeting
Tuesday, January 19, 2016



Our thanks to the following for providing recent support to the Double Bayou Watershed Partnership, since the previous newsletter:

For meeting space, equipment, and set-up –

- Chambers County

For refreshments –

- Chambers County Abstract Co.
- Trinity Bay SWCD #434
- Shead Conservation Solutions
- Galveston Bay Foundation
- Trinity Bay Conservation District

Please add your thanks to ours, when next you see these folks!



Our Partners

Funding provided through a Clean Water Act §319(h) Nonpoint Source Grant from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



Houston Advanced Research Center
4800 Research Forest Drive
The Woodlands, TX 77381

<http://www.doublebayou.org>