



DOUBLE BAYOU WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP RECREATION/HUNTING WORKGROUP MEETING

**Tuesday, February 25, 2014
5:30 - 7:00 P.M.**

Chambers Recovery Team
509 Washington Avenue
Anahuac, TX 77514

MEETING NOTES

Attendees: David Boyd (Sierra Club), Tom Douglas, Becky Fancher (landowner/farmer), Guy R. Jackson, Travis Lovelace (Anahuac Paddling), Brandt Mannchen (Sierra Club)

Team Members: Kristi Alexander (Shead), Stephanie Glenn (HARC), Brian Koch (TSSWCB), Linda Shead (Shead), Danielle Vinette (Shead)

1. Sign-In, Welcome, Agenda Review, and Introductions – Kristi Alexander

Kristi welcomed everyone, and reviewed the agenda: reviewing the potential sources that the group identified at the last meeting and adding any other sources, discussing how to achieve effective solutions, and discussing potential solutions to watershed issues. The meeting will be recorded for the purpose of improving the notes, after which the recording will be deleted. Additionally, comments in the meetings will continue to remain anonymous. There are some copies of water protection plans from other watersheds and past meeting notes available, or they are all on line as well.

2. Review of Potential Sources – Kristi Alexander

There is a bacteria problem in Double Bayou, and during the last meeting the group came up with some potential sources of the bacteria.

- Marine Sanitation Devices – the term “boater waste” may be more accurate
- Concentration of scavengers
- Disposal of carcasses
- Lack of Sanitation Facilities (for campers, paddlers, hunters, RVs)

RV parks were suggested as another potential source, but these are all tied into the sewer lines. Lone RVs can be a problem, but that may be related to a lack of sanitation devices. Not having facilities for people who are out and about doing other activities could be a problem as well, including campers, paddlers, and hunters.

4800 Research Forest Drive The Woodlands, Texas 77381 Tel: 281-367-1348 www.doublebayou.org

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



Other problems that could be affecting the water – but aren't necessarily bacteria issues – were also reviewed from the last meeting:

- Vehicle Maintenance Issues
- Litter
- Oil Sheen from motorboats
- Lead from shooting ranges and sinkers
- Sediment from erosion (ATVs)
- Loss of vegetation (ATVs)
- Invasive species – boats, etc.
- Erosion from Motorboats – wakes, propeller wash

Invasive species were discussed in the Ag group, but that may overlap in this group. Giant Salvinia has been spread primarily by boaters that haven't cleaned their boat before going to a different location. Water hyacinth shouldn't be a problem if it gets into the canal, but if the Giant Salvinia gets into the canal it will be a problem. Fishing in the canals may also be a cause of the spread.

Turbidity was identified as another water quality issue, which could be caused by motorboats and sediment from erosion, which could be affected by ATVs and similar vehicles driving on the edge of the bank, by wake erosion, and by prop wash.

This meeting is focused on sources and solutions related to recreation and hunting activities in the watershed, other workgroups are working on other sources, and everyone is welcome to come to any of the other meetings and add input. For the residential meeting, Linda will be contacting individuals.

3. Consideration for Solutions -- Linda

For this workgroup's focus, it may be more difficult to obtain grant funding for solutions, and thus it will be important to consider what actions will be effective and what factors to consider in their effectiveness. Through discussion, the group identified the following key factors for effectiveness and some of the resources to involve or access for implementation.

- Buy-in from local entities and businesses, including hunting and fishing guides and lodges
- Education Methods, such as:
 - "Pump It, Don't Dump It" campaign
 - Local contact for outreach and making connections
 - Science teachers
 - Citizen science in the classroom and Stream Team, tied to Double Bayou
 - Existing educational materials
 - Environmental clubs (Roots and Shoots), 4H, FFA
 - Back-the-Bay pledge
 - Test-your-knowledge game
 - Community trash clean-ups or crab-trap , with booth on water quality
- Enforcement, where applicable
- Taking the message to communities of origin for boaters or other recreationists, including marinas and bait shops

- Connections with other organizations, such as Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF), Galveston Bay Estuary Program, and Galveston Baykeepers
- Economic benefit

Galveston Bay Foundation could help with tying these projects together across the bay, especially related to boater waste education and the oyster waters TMDL projects. Keeping the messages consistent will be important.

4. Discussion of Bacteria and Other Solutions for Double Bayou Watershed -- Linda

The recommendations developed by the workgroup will be presented at the March 18th meeting, for additional input and feedback, and eventually, they will be in the plan produced for the Double Bayou watershed.

Bacteria – Boater Waste

The following recommendations were developed to address boater waste in Double Bayou:

1. Pump station at Job Beason Park
2. Work with County marine officers and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for events to focus on items that could be violations
3. Promote GBF hotline
4. Continuous ad in the paper
5. Logs of violations in paper
6. Partner with GBF (on west side of the bay promotion especially)
7. ChambersWild website and others

Many of these strategies will be useful for other potential pollution sources.

Bacteria – Concentration of Scavengers

Concentrations of scavengers could be more difficult to deal with, because wildlife such as vultures and coyotes are native. Sometimes the issue of concentration of scavengers is the result of improper disposal of carcasses. The recommendation is to treat the scavengers as a background source.

Feral hogs are a different issue, since they are not native. There could be demos, maybe at a BBQ event.

Note: For the Double Bayou watershed, there are three events coming up: a feral hog workshop coming in June, a riparian workshop in September, and an onsite septic system presentation at the March meeting, as well as an onsite septic system workshop later.

Bacteria – Disposal of Carcasses

The following recommendations were developed to address disposal of carcasses in/near Double Bayou:

- BBQ (with education)
- Education, especially regarding entrails
- Hunter education with licensing and hunting supplies
- Continuous ad in the paper (include a photo to illustrate the problem)
- Logs of violations in paper

- Operation Game Thief # (1-800-792-GAME)

There's no legal way for disposing of entrails, but agencies suggest not dumping them in waterways and instead consider putting them where they will be eaten. Other states require burning it or burying it or taking it to a waste site that accepts them. There's no place that accepts entrails/carcasses in Double Bayou, and there is no one who does carcass removal from waterways. Education when hunters get their permits could help. Waste of Game is a misdemeanor offense in Texas. You have to take most of the carcass away. However, if the animal is a nuisance, you can kill it, but cannot touch it.

People can call the game warden if they see hunting violations. If you are in the vicinity of the game warden, they could be really helpful. (Operation Game Thief number is 1-800-792-GAME.)

Lack of Sanitation Facilities

Existing public sanitation facilities in the Double Bayou watershed are those at Job Beason Park and Double Bayou Park. The following recommendations were developed to address waste from lack of sanitation facilities elsewhere in the Double Bayou watershed:

- Add restroom facilities to local maps (and/or have on websites)
- Partner with ChambersWild about potential for other restrooms

The new ChambersWild map does not show the currently available facilities, but could be added in new additions, and on the ChambersWild website.

Working for more facilities on the West Fork may be an option. However, there's no public land on the West Fork, making adding facilities more difficult. Amount of use and who will clean up new facilities is a consideration. Another location to consider would be the end of Haynes Rd. at the East Fork. Although the lack of facilities may not be a huge issue now, the increasing population and increased outdoor recreation would only make it worse.

Other Issues – Litter

The following recommendations were developed to address litter in the Double Bayou watershed:

- Clean-up days, with counts of types of trash
- Monofilament collection facilities – be sure they are at parks, and investigate adding at bridge crossings
- Mention in plan of county facilities for local residents
- Education, including:
 - Connecting with other organizations
 - Promote the GBF hotline
 - Continuous ad in the paper
 - Logs of violations in paper
 - Signs at parks (which, unfortunately make good targets)
 - Schools, including citizen science in the classroom
 - Library exhibits

Events for cleaning up the bayou can help with awareness and the immediate litter issue. The Sheriff would be the one to contact to report littering. Beach cleanups used to involve counting and cataloging, so the kids see what all the trash in their area is.

Other Issues – Oil sheen from motorboats

The following recommendations were developed to address oil sheen from motorboats in the Double Bayou watershed:

- Encourage newer motors, which do not leave oil sheen (even 2-stroke)
- A TERP-type program, via legislature

Getting credit for old motors will encourage people to get new motors. Saving on maintenance and fuel made people more interested in upgrading their boat motors as well.

Other Issues – Lead

Stephanie reported that there is not a lead problem with water quality in the waterways. Chambers County is a steel-shot county for waterfowl, and lead shot for upland game. Education would still be useful.

Other Issues - Sediment from Erosion & Loss of Vegetation

While ATV use is not seen so much in the Double Bayou watershed, the problem could increase if trespass increases. The following education recommendations were developed to avoid sediment issues in the Double Bayou watershed:

- Schools
- Hotlines
- Call Sheriff
- Enforcement
- ChambersWild website
- Ad in paper
- Test-your-knowledge game, such as on the website, with results posted, such as on Facebook
- Enforcement

Other Issues - Invasive Species:

The following recommendations were developed to address invasive species issues in the Double Bayou watershed:

- Education
 - Websites
 - GatorFest
 - Boat parade
- Enforcement
- Removal days

For a Removal day, such as a tallow knockdown event involving – cutting down and having a professional spread the herbicide, have education at GatorFest and the Fourth of July boat parade. Boats spread invasive species to informing boaters is important.

Another outlet for educational materials would include Oak Island Lodge and through Oak Island Fishing Adventures. Back the Bay does pledges, and having pledges for this bayou could be useful.

5. Wrap-Up and Next Steps

There's probably no mapping task associated with this workgroup, so there may not be an April workgroup meeting. If anyone has any more ideas before the next meeting, they can email Linda. The next meeting for the whole partnership is March 18 at the Double Bayou Community Building.

Another announcement: another Wetland Field Day at Sheldon Lake State Park on April 10th, for wetland restoration in action. There might be CEU's for that, for teachers.

6. Adjourn