



DOUBLE BAYOU WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP Stakeholder Meeting 10

July 21, 2015

5:30 – 8:00 PM

Double Bayou Community Building

MEETING SUMMARY

Stakeholders: David Boyd (Houston Sierra Club), Hannah Cruce (Texas Forest Service), Clay Dean, Karla Dean (SWCD), Tom Douglas, Norma Ezer, Leroy Ezer, Becky Fancher, Clint Fancher, Elga Jackson, Guy Robert Jackson, Charles Johnson, David Manthei (NRCS), Ollie Mayes, Creola Moore, Alice Rivon, Matt Singer (GBF), Rex Tunze, Otho Turner, Gary Weaver (SWCD), Bertha White, Kay Willcox, Pudge Willcox

Team Members: Ryan Bare (HARC), Abby Ficklin (Shead), Stephanie Glenn (HARC), Brian Koch (TSSWCB), Brandie Minchew, Linda Shead

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Linda Shead welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She then thanked the Trinity Bay Soil and Water Conservation District #434 for the dinner, as well as Chambers County for its continued support: Precinct 2 for the meeting room, Emergency Management for the screen, the Economic Development Office for the PA system, and the Parks Department for getting inmates to set up the tables and chairs. She then reviewed the evening's agenda, including both the General Meeting part and the Workgroup breakout part. Following self introductions, Linda asked for a moment of silence in memory of Judge Wilborn, a watershed landowner and wonderful citizen of Chambers County.

2. Review and Comment on Watershed Management Chapter

Stephanie reminded everyone that the chapters are draft, and comments will be accepted at any time. Chapters 1 and 2 presented this evening have been revised and are closer to final than before. The State of the Watershed chapter (Chapter 1) is the overview – about watershed management, Watershed Protection Plans, what a watershed is, what are water quality standards, and what a watershed approach is. She asked for any detailed comments. With none offered at this time, she moved on to the next chapter (noting that comments can also be submitted later).

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



HARC

Shead Conservation Solutions



3. Review and Comment on State of the Watershed Chapter

For the State of the Watershed Chapter (Chapter 2), Stephanie noted that this chapter is about the background of the watershed: ecoregion; soil, vegetation, habitat, and land cover; and demographics and populations changes. She also noted that a new section has been added – a short description of water quality. This topic will be covered in more exhaustive detail in Chapter 4. Again, this State of the Watershed chapter is generally describing what Double Bayou looks like now. Another section yet to be added to this chapter will be about the human history of the watershed. Some of this chapter has been updated to take into account the comments that have been received.

Linda asked for some feedback on items to include regarding important historical happenings in the watershed. Suggestions from stakeholders included: that the Double Bayou waterway was the highway for commerce for the ranches of south central Chambers County, and that rice production started in this area.

Back to Chapter 1, Linda asked what stakeholders thought was the most important thing to them about the WPP for Double Bayou. Responses included: improving water quality to avoid going from a voluntary to a mandatory situation, and having a better waterway for those who come after.

Linda also asked folks to suggest images or photos to help capture what the chapters are about. For Chapter 1, a suggestion was made to include something related to Oak Island, since that's where the east and west forks come together – perhaps an aerial.

On Chapter 2, Linda asked whether the description of the habitats, wildlife and landscape fit what folks see. A suggestion was made to distinguish the riparian areas from the Gulf coast prairie region. The team noted that the classifications of ecoregions are an EPA distinction, but other images could be added to show the riparian areas.

Additional clarification was given on the different classes of land cover. While there are literally dozens of classifications that exist within the Double Bayou watershed, folks had previously suggested that some of the categories get combined, to simplify the map and make it easier to understand. It turns out that some of the categories occur in very low percentages in the watershed (such as 111 acres out of 40,000 or so acres total). Lumping was thus developed to help make sense of the potential sources.

Linda asked again for any feedback on helping the document make sense, especially for new people who may get involved later on.

4. Presentation of WPP Chapters on Public Participation, Management Measures, and Outreach & Education

Stephanie noted that the next three chapters to review are Public Participation (Ch. 3), Outreach & Education (Ch. 6), and Management Measures (Ch. 7). She explained that the reason for waiting on chapters 4 and 5 is that those chapters are about water quality, and the team wanted to wait until more data were available for those chapters. She noted that those chapters will also be considering bacteria “loads,” which is the total amount of bacteria coming through the waterway, considering both the concentration (or level) of bacteria and the total flow (or amount of water). Understanding what is happening at different amounts of flow helps determine whether the sources are more likely to be point sources or nonpoint sources.

Stephanie explained that both chapters 6 and 7 are about management measures. Chapter 6 has the “touchable” management measures, divided up by workgroup. Chapter 7 pulls together all the

outreach and education measures from all of the workgroups, because there are so many, and because many of them are shared among the workgroups. In each of these chapters may be found items labeled “TBD,” for “To be Determined,” as more information and data become available.

Also to be noted is that the number of WQMPs (Water Quality Management Plans) to be recommended for implementation, or septic systems to be improved, will be based on subwatersheds, not specific names or tracts of land or numbers of cattle on a ranch.

The next step will be to apply the recommended management measures to the specific number of sources in each subwatershed, to see what bacteria load reduction would be accomplished by the management measure there. Currently, Brian is looking into what WQMPs are in place now, in which subwatershed. He noted that the only people who see that information are Brian, the farmer, the SWCD and David with NRCS. A request was made to put roads on the subwatershed map. Brian reminded everyone that the WQMPs are totally voluntary, with the idea to make them available, but not to recruit anybody specifically.

Septic systems are an issue in the watershed, specifically with aerobic systems, and the AgriLife program only deals with conventional systems, not aerobic. Another solution would be to get an expanded public sewer system.

Linda then proceeded to the public participation chapter draft (Ch. 3). She briefly described the focus of each of the sections in that chapter and asked for questions.

Stephanie continued with a description of the chapter on outreach and education management measures (Ch. 7). This chapter describes what has been done so far and what has been recommended by the workgroups for the implementation phase – including continuing previous efforts and adding new programs. She noted that more input on residential programs would be appreciated.

Stephanie concluded this part of the agenda with a description of how the chapters fit together, with input to be collected at this evening’s meeting, and how the final chapter (Ch. 8) will provide an overview of implementation.

***** Breakout Workgroup Sessions for:
Discussion of Costs, Milestones, and Technical Assistance Needs *****

5. General Outreach and Education

Linda noted that some of the recommended measures in the outreach and education chapter are not specific to a particular perspective, so the next step is to come up with number and timing of those measures, with input from the whole group. The costs will likely have to be developed in consultation with some of the folks who have provided these items in the past.

With discussion, the following table shows what the group concluded for these general measures. In the cases where fewer than three workshops are recommended for a three-year period, the different workshops do not have to take place in the same year.

Management Measure	Lead Entity	Unit Cost	Number, per Time Period (in years)		
			1-3	4-6	7-10
<i>Texas Watershed Steward Training</i>	TSSWCB/AgriLife Extension		2	1	2
<i>Riparian & Stream Ecosystem Workshop</i>	TSSWCB/AgriLife Extension	est: \$8,000 ea	2	1	2
<i>Feral Hog Management workshop</i>	AgriLife Extension		2	1	2
<i>Well Owner Network Workshop</i>	AgriLife Extension		1	1	1
<i>Nonpoint Source Education Workshop / NEMO</i>	TSSWCB/AgriLife Extension	est: \$5,000 ea	1	1	1
<i>Galveston Bay Action Network</i>	GBF / Watershed Coordinator	\$0	3	3	4
<i>Educational Displays at Local Events</i>	Watershed Coordinator	est: \$200 ea	6	6	8
<i>Watershed Roadway Signage</i>	Watershed Coordinator / ChambersWild	est: \$100 ea	60 (adjust appropriately)		
<i>School Materials (age encompassing)</i>	ChambersWild / AgriLife Extension				
<i>Continuous Newspaper Ads (awareness or targeted)</i>	Watershed Coordinator	\$0			
<i>Test Your Knowledge Game</i>	Watershed Coordinator / ChambersWild		Website – ongoing		

Some additional comments regarding these:

- ◇ For GBAN, GBF could have someone come to one of the stakeholder meetings during implementation, to explain all about the reporting system.
- ◇ Some of the annual local events to consider would be: Rice Festival (more local people attend than do at GatorFest); Double Bayou Bash; 2-4 youth-oriented events (such as Youth Project Show, Fall Festival, Speed Day at AISD); County Health Fair for all county employees.
- ◇ For watershed roadway signage, need to adjust the number to reflect the number of roadways coming into the watershed, and allow for replacements.
- ◇ For school materials, the watershed model was recommended.
- ◇ For continuous newspaper ads, it was not known whether *The Progress* often donates space. An alternate suggestion was to write articles for *The Progress*, as well as for other

newsletters, such as the one for the SWCD (fall and spring) and the one for the DB Watershed Partnership.

- ◇ The Test Your Knowledge game was intended as a website item, with a pre- and post-test.

6. Wrap-Up, Next Steps, and Announcements

Linda asked if any of the workgroups had thought that an implementation time frame other than ten years would be better, and none had.

Stephanie reported that HARC had submitted a grant application for the implementation phase of the project, but it is completely contingent on stakeholder approval of the WPP document, and on EPA acceptance as consistent with their criteria. Once the stakeholders approve the plan – currently targeted for November – then the plan would go to EPA for their review/acceptance. If the implementation grant were to be approved, then there would be very little gap before implementation. However, this has been the biggest number of total grant submissions ever to TSSWCB, making the competition very stiff.

The application includes a new watershed coordinator position, with the intent for it to be local. Linda explained further that implementation needs someone able to respond quickly (not from 50 miles away) and to work on it full time. She would provide some transition and training. Once someone learns the grant process and where the resources are (for information, funding, etc.), then it would be best for that new person to be local. Linda also reiterated that the stakeholders have the only approval of the WPP, and that, in order for funds to be available to the Soil Board to grant for implementation, EPA has to accept the WPP as consistent. Several folks asked about details for the new position – salary, and job description, and time frame. All of those things are not known yet, and are to be worked out in the first phase of implementation.

Next, Linda reviewed the dates for the next meetings – August 18, September 15, and October 13. She also asked folks to reserve November 10, since all of the water quality data may not be available to wrap things up by October 13.

Lastly, Linda reported that a new business is being planned for the watershed – a proposed slaughterhouse – and that there are local concerns about it. A stakeholder provided more information, including that the Commissioners' Court will be taking public comment on July 28 regarding a proposed tax abatement for the facility. He also offered that he could probably arrange for someone from the company (Mecca Farms, doing business as Riceland Farms) to come talk to the group. Linda noted that the Partnership team will be providing information, such as about permitting rules for such a facility and possibly meeting with the business – basically serving as an information conduit. Brian reminded everyone that the Partnership is voluntary and that it isn't the Partnership's role to take stands for or against what landowners do. Another stakeholder noted that slaughterhouses had been her field of study in college, that there are rules to be followed, and that there are concerns about odors and bacteria. Someone else noted that the company has businesses all over the U.S.

Linda thanked everyone for attending, and staying through the longer meeting.