



SPRING MEETING Summary

**Monday, June 22, 2015
1:00 am to 4:00 pm
H-GAC Conference Room B&C, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane**

Members Present

Michael Bloom, Catherine Elliott, Phillip Goodwin, Teague Harris, Bruce Heiberg, Jason Iken, Tom Ivy, Helen Lane, Mike Lindsey (on phone), Alisa Max, Craig Maske, Cathy McCoy (on phone), Raymond Pavlovich, Linda Pechacek, Linda Shead

Marilyn Christian was represented by Denise Hall (on phone)

Carol Haddock was represented by Richard Chapin

Ron Kelling was represented by David Parkhill (on phone)

Becky Olive was represented by Karen Kottke (none voting representative)

Anne Olson was represented by Linda Shead

Michael Lee was represented by Thomas Sample (none voting representative)

Earl Smith was represented by Susie Blake (on phone)

Members Absent

Joe Clark, Scott Jones, Mitchell Page, Kathy Richolson, Jim Robertson, Brian Shmaefsky

Guests Present

Elroy Balboa, Linda Broach, Amy Carl, Bill Carter, Danielle Cioce, Kylah Dias, Tom Douglas, Hugo Gomez, George Guillen, Jonathan Holley, Jody Hooks, Diane Humes, Steve Hupp, Justin Klump, Brian Koch, Carol LaBreche, Nate LaBreche, Glenn Laird, Kim Laird, Carole Lamont, Heather Maloney, Lisa Marshall, Maria Modelska, Jennifer Morrow, Nwachukwii Sam Okonkaro, Rachel Powers, Randy Roberts, Nick Russo, Robert Snoza, Ron Stein, Jennifer Wheeler, Aaron Wiczorek

H-GAC Staff Present

Justin Bower, Kathy Janhsen, Steven Johnston, Todd Running

Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions

Steven Johnston welcomed those in attendance. Members of the BIG and guest were asked to introduce themselves. The agenda was reviewed and the BIG was provided the opportunity to discuss.

Certification of Quorum

A quorum was certified during the meeting.

Approval of Proposed Alternates & Members

Greg Hall, Phyllis Frank, and David Parkhill were presented as new members representing the City of Conroe, Gulf Coast Waste Disposal Authority, and San Jacinto River Authority, respectively. Jody Hooks was presented as an alternate for the City of League City,

Steven Johnston asked if voting members supported the changes to the roster by each member providing a thumbs-up before the group. All were in favor of the changes.

Approval of October 21, 2014 Meeting Summary

BIG members reviewed and provided comment to the draft October Meeting Summary. With the changes, Richard Chapin motioned for approval of the minutes and Jason Iken seconded. All of the BIG members were in favor. There was no additional discussion.

Public Comment

There were no public comments provided.

Presentation

"Alligator Pond Water Quality Wetland," Dr. George Guillen, Environmental Institute of Houston, University of Houston – Clear Lake.

Dr. Guillen with the Environmental Institute of Houston (EIH) reviewed the history of the project. Alligator pond was a detention pond developed in the 1970s to manage run-off from approximately 19 acres of undeveloped and developed land located on the University of Houston at Clear Lake (UHCL) campus. The project was funded through a grant from the Galveston Bay Estuary Program of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality with the purpose of retrofitting the three acre detention pond to create a wetland to treat the stormwater run-off from 8.5 acres of impervious cover from the university's buildings, parking lots and managed landscapes.

Dr. Guillen reported that the university is situated on the banks of Horsepen Bayou, a tributary to Armand Bayou. Horsepen Bayou is listed as an impaired waterbody by the state for elevated levels of bacteria and depressed dissolved oxygen. The project's goals were to demonstrate the benefits of treating stormwater run-off; support future measures of the Armand Bayou Total Maximum Daily Load implementation plan, particularly current plans of the Clear Lake Water Authority to manage stormwater using the old Clear Lake golf course; evaluate to potential for treating bayou water through the use of a solar pump; establish fish and wildlife habitat; create research opportunities; serve as an educational resource; and be a aesthetically pleasing outdoor amenity.

With the assistance of KBA consultants, EIH created 0.56 acres of wetlands using and expanding portions of the detention pond and ditch leading to the pond. EIH conducted monitoring, pre and post construction, for standard water quality parameters, aquatic resources and vegetation. Following construction, EIH conducted dye tests and flow measurements. The project also produced additional research including grey water analysis using non-potable water from a nearby waste water treatment plant and wildlife use.

Monitoring results, reported Dr. Guillen, demonstrated reductions in nitrate+nitrite, orthophosphate, ammonia, and total phosphate. TKN did not demonstrate a reduction. Bacteria (*E. coli* and Enterococcus) demonstrated a drop during dry weather but lacked a similar drop during wet weather. The likely reason given for this was due to the wetlands small footprint and similar lack of sufficient residence time. Dr. Guillen stated that the use of the solar pump, while there is potential for its use elsewhere, could not be proven with this project due to the tidal nature of Horsepen Bayou. Salinities were too high to pump water through the wetland which was established using freshwater loving plants.

In addition to water quality, Dr. Guillen noted increased wetland plant diversity over time and documented wildlife use. Wildlife use was determined through the use of cameras. It was also stated that UHCL professors and other teaches have used the wetland as a teaching laboratory. Dr. Guillen concluded by stating that the project has received support from UHCL administration and that there are goals to retrofit the larger Duck Pond in the future.

Old Business

Discussion: 2015 Draft Annual Report

Staff led the BIG in a discussion of 2015 Annual Report. Staff provided a draft version of the Annual Report and supplemental figures and tables for BIG members to review. Staff noted that the WWTF DMR data has been difficult to attain this year, but the issues appear to have been resolved. Staff discussed the stakeholder review process and time-line for finalizing the document. Staff asked BIG members to submit reviews by July 15, 2015.

It was noted that bacteria levels continue to recede for monitoring stations in the BIG project area with geometric mean between four and five times the standard. Stations outside the project area remain steady with a geometric mean 2 times above the standard.

Staff reported that the report contains four potential success stories, but that they would like the BIG input. Currently the document contains stories on Walker County's OSSF program, Low Impact Development, decrease bacteria levels on White Oak Bayou, and information on the TCEQ WWTF Study.

Staff then proceeded to review section highlights for WWTFs, Sanitary Sewer Systems, OSSFs, Stormwater Systems, Construction, Illicit Discharges, Animals and Agriculture, Residential, Monitoring, Research and Geographic. Throughout the review, tables and figures were discussed.

BIG members commented that they would like to see additional language added to compare the 2014 annual report with the 2015 report, to begin tracking changes over time. It was suggested staff add the Patty Potty campaign, being carried out by the San Jacinto River Authority, to the report and that the appropriate workgroup should consider whether the I-Plan should reflect the issue of sanitary wipes. Finally, the BIG discussed whether developer reimbursement activity has been completed. The BIG concluded that while a process has been created for developers to seek reimbursement for water quality features, there has been no formal guidance developed by the TCEQ. The BIG recommended the activity continued to be monitored.

Presentation by TCEQ: FY 2015 TMDL Program Update

Mr. Ron Stein, TMDL Project Manager, provided an update on several completed and ongoing TMDL projects in and adjacent to the BIG project area. Some of the projects are for water bodies found within the BIG project area. For those projects, the TMDL Program is using the Water Quality Management Plan update process to seek management approval of the new TMDLs.

Mr. Stein stated the only update for a project within the BIG project area is Rolling Fork Creek (AU 1017F_01), which falls within the Buffalo and White Oak Bayous TMDL. The completed project is in the April 2015 Water Quality Management Plan update as an addendum to the Buffalo and White Oak Bayous TMDL and the public comment period recently closed.

Outside the BIG project area the Armand Bayou TMDL continues to work through the approval process. It is scheduled to be considered for adoption by the TCEQ commission on August 5, 2015. The project covers six TMDLs (six AUs: 1113_02, 1113A_01, 1113B_01, 1113C_01, 1113D_01 and 1113E_01).

The East and West Forks of the San Jacinto River project, which includes seven TMDLs (seven AUs: 1002_06, 1003_01, 1003_02, 1003_03, 1004_01, 1004_02, and 1004D_01) has made progress. The TMDL projects have been completed and the stakeholder implementation plan process has resulted in the recommendation to join the BIG. Due to the continuing growth in the watershed additional TMDL work has commenced to keep the TMDL current while the stakeholder process proceeds.

Mr. Stein concluded with the Jarbo Bayou project which includes one assessment unit, 2425B_01. Like the San Jacinto River project, the Jarbo TMDL study has been completed and stakeholders have recommended joining the BIG.

Action Item: Implementation Plan Updates

H-GAC staff presented draft Addendum #2 to the BIG Implementation Plan which as written included 7 AUs/TMDLs in the BIG project area which would be added to the BIG I-Plan. Staff reminded the BIG that Addendum #1 approved the process by which new TMDLs can be added to the BIG project area either for waterbodies within the current BIG project area or those outside the BIG project area where the area has been approved to join the BIG.

The TCEQ completed the TMDL on one water body, Rolling Fork Creek (AU 1017F_01), within the BIG project area in 2014. The other six water bodies on Addendum #2 come from the Armand Bayou watershed which the BIG approved joining to the BIG project area in May 2014.

The BIG was asked to approve updating the BIG I-Plan to include these seven water bodies by voting to approve Addendum #2. The BIG discussed the fact that the Commissioners with the TCEQ had not formally adopted the TMDL or approved the plan by the stakeholders to join the BIG. Based on the discussion, the BIG voted to conditionally approve Addendum #2. Should the Commissioners approve the Armand TMDL and adopt the recommendation for the watershed to be covered under the BIG I-Plan, then the condition on Addendum #2 would be removed.

Discussion: Watershed Updates

Staff provided updates to the Jarbo Bayou and East and West Fork of the San Jacinto River TMDL implementation planning processes. The review included discussion on the results from BIG Coordination and Policy workgroup meetings. Coordination and Policy workgroup members had met three times to discuss the results of the Jarbo Bayou and East and West Fork TMDL stakeholder processes. Both stakeholder groups recommended joining the BIG and were interested in possible representation on the BIG.

Results of the Coordination and Policy meetings concluded with the recommendation that the BIG consider filling three current vacancies on the BIG with potential representatives from the two watersheds and to consider adding two additional seats bring the total number of seats on the BIG to 33 from 31.

Action Item: East and West Fork of the San Jacinto River TMDL implementation plan stakeholder request to join the BIG.

The BIG considered taking action on the request by East and West Fork of the San Jacinto River stakeholders to join the BIG.

The BIG reviewed the action with members of the BIG that participated on the Coordination and Policy workgroup meetings. The BIG asked if there was consensus on the recommendation. BIG members participating on the work group felt that they needed additional time to prepare for bringing the topic for a vote before the BIG. Based on discussion during the meeting, the BIG suggested that the Coordination and Policy work group meet again to discuss the topic and provide a recommended slate of seats to address the representation request made by the watershed stakeholders. The BIG agreed by consensus that once the Coordination and Policy work group met and provided a recommendation then the BIG could meet via email to review and take action on this item.

Action Item: Jarbo Bayou TMDL implementation plan stakeholder request to join the BIG.

The BIG considered taking action on the request by Jarbo Bayou stakeholders to join the BIG.

The BIG reviewed the action with members of the BIG that participated on the Coordination and Policy workgroup meetings. The BIG asked if there was consensus on the recommendation. BIG members participating on the work group felt that they needed additional time to prepare for bringing the topic for a vote before the BIG. Based on discussion during the meeting, the BIG suggested that the Coordination and Policy work group meet again to discuss the topic and provide a recommended slate of seats to address the representation request made by the watershed stakeholders. The BIG agreed by consensus that once the Coordination and Policy work group met and provided a recommendation then the BIG could meet via email to review and take action on this item.

New Business

Discussion: Review 2016 Annual Report Process

Due to a lack of time, staff quickly reviewed high points of the 2016 Annual Report Process with the BIG, including the schedule of work group meetings, and focus for 2015 implementation tracking. Staff stated that the topic would be addressed in future Coordination and Policy meetings.

Other Business/Roundtable

As time permits, H-GAC, BIG members, and stakeholders are encouraged to discuss implementation activities, related projects, and announcements.

Next Meeting Date

October, 20, 2015

H-GAC Conference Room B (2nd Floor)

Adjourn