



Fall Meeting Summary

**Tuesday, October 15, 2013
1:30 pm to 3:30 pm
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane**

Members Present:

Michael Bloom, Marilyn Christian, Catherine Elliott, Teague Harris, Bruce Heiberg, Jason Iken, Tom Ivy, Helen Lane, Michael Lindsey, Craig Maske, Michael Page, Ray Pavlovich, Linda D. Pechacek, Ceil Price, Jim Robertson, Linda Shead

John Blount was represented by Alisa Max
Becky Olive was represented by Ralph Calvino
Ann Olson was represented by Linda Shead
Kathy Richolson was represented by Phyllis Frank
Bob Stokes was represented by Scott Jones

Members Absent

Joe Clark, Carol Haddock, Shannon Hicks, Ron Kelling, Cathy McCoy, Michael Mooney, Brian Shmaefsky, Michael Turco, Linc Wright

Guests Present

Randy Acreman (SJRA), Sarah Bernhardt (GBEP), Linda Broach (TCEQ), Danielle Cioce (HCPID), Joseph Defalio (CoH), Tom Douglas (Sierra Club), Jonathan Holley (HCFCD), Jasailla Homed (Lani), Diane Humes (ABWP), Anita Hunt (HHEC), Steve Hupp (BPA), Randy Jones, Carole Lamont (HC), Carol LeBreche (CoH), Brian Koch (TSSWCB), Ruben Martinez (MC), Maria Modelsiah (UH), Chip Morris (TCEQ), Rachel Powers (CEC), Carol Serna (AEI), Shane Simpson (SJRA), R.D. Smilt (CCFCC), Robert E. Snoza (HCFCD), Rose Sobel (UH), Christen Specht (TXDOT), Michelle Weber (GBEP)

H-GAC Staff Present

Steven Johnston, Aubin Phillips, Todd Running

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:38 PM by Steven Johnston. Members and guests were asked to observe a moment of silence on behalf Dr. Sammy Ray. Members of the BIG were then asked to introduce themselves. Following introductions, the Agenda was reviewed by Steven Johnston.

2. Certification of Quorum

A quorum was established.

3. Approval of Proposed Alternates & Members

Michael Lee was presented as the replacement to Michael Turco for the US Geologic Survey. Scott Jones was presented as the replacement to Bob Stokes for the Galveston Bay Foundation. Linda Shead, Texas Coastal Partners, made the motion to approve the nominations. Ray Pavlovich, Nottingham Country MUD, seconded the motion and the BIG gave consent.

4. Approval of May 14, 2013, Meeting Summary

BIG members reviewed the draft meeting summary. Two changes were requested. With those changes, Linda Shead made the motion to approve the minutes. Ceil Price, City of Houston seconded the motion and the BIG gave consent.

5. Public Comment

The public was asked if anyone wished to make a comment. Steve Hupp of the Bayou Preservation Association made a request that the BIG encourage additional volunteer monitoring of *E. coli*.

6. Ground Rules Review

Steven Johnston lead the BIG in a review the ground rules. It was presented to the BIG that the ground rules might need to be update to reflect the move towards implementation. The ground rules appear to have been set up to develop the BIG I-plan rather than serve during implementation of the plan. It was also suggested that the Coordination and Policy workgroup could take up any re-write during its next meeting. BIG members agreed to the suggestion. Mr. Johnston also mentioned that part of the impetus is to reflect that funding for H-GAC to continue facilitation is getting more difficult and new by-laws might assist continuation of the BIG down the road. Ceil Price suggested that there was the potential to use supplemental environmental project funds to support implementation in the future. Teague Harris, Pate Engineers, asked that all BIG members receive the Coordination and Policy workgroup meeting announcement.

7. Presentation by TCEQ: TMDL Program Update

Mr. Jason Leifester, TCEQ, provided a status update on all TMDL projects in the region. TCEQ is using a water quality management plan (WQMP) to speed the

completion of TMDL projects. New TMDL projects have added segments within the BIG watershed, including four segments to Clear Creek approved by the EPA in March 2013; six segments in the Houston Metro or Buffalo/White Oak approved by the EPA in August 2013; and four segments added to the Lake Houston watershed in the October 2013 WQMP and will be sent to the EPA in early 2014.

Two new watersheds have undergone the TMDL process which are outside the boundaries of the BIG, East and West Fork San Jacinto projects, and have already started to hold stakeholder meetings back in July. The East and West Fork of the San Jacinto River would be a potential candidate to join the BIG should stakeholders agree. Mr. Leifester noted that Dr. Larry Hauck would provide more information on this watershed. Mr. Leifester also stated that the Armand Bayou TMDL will be wrapping up soon and that the watershed stakeholders have voted to petition the BIG for inclusion in the I-Plan. Ms. Rose Sobel from University of Houston (U of H) will present additional information on that project. Finally, Mr. Leifester introduced the Jarbo Bayou TMDL project which will be starting up in the fall 2013. Jarbo Bayou is only a few miles long with no tributaries near the city of Clear Lake Shores and drains into Clear Lake.

8. Presentation by the University of Houston: Update on the Armand Bayou TMDL

Rose Sobel, working with Dr. Hanadi Rifai and Dr. Tina Peterson at U of H, provided the Armand Bayou TMDL update. Ms. Sobel reported that data compilation and analysis, and watershed characterization have been completed for 6 stations. None of the stations meet water quality standards for contact recreation. Ms. Sobel did note when asked about pigeons that while there is not enough wildlife bacterial contribution data, wildlife are factored in the model calculations for the non-point source load total.

Flow was calculated using gauge data from Vince and Sims bayous since Armand lacks a flow gauge. U of H is currently working on a tidal prism mass balance model for the tidal reach of Armand Bayou due to the influence tides have on flow. U of H will be finalizing the flow duration curves and load duration curves, drafting the technical support document (TSD) and preparing a WQMP update tool which is expected to be done in 2014.

Ceil Price asked if there needs to be more wildlife data available and whether more data could come from Audubon and the Armand Bayou Nature Center. Helen Lane, from Houston Audubon said that the BIG looked at bats and swallows and chickens. The BIG prioritized bacterial sources and wildlife, including birds came out last for recommending management action. Justin Bower, H-GAC, said that Upper Oyster Creek TMDL had considered birds and TXDOT looked at loadings from birds under bridges. TXDOT determined it was too minor to implement BMPs, as their contributions were so small.

9. Presentation by Tarleton State University: Update on the East and West Forks of the San Jacinto River TMDL

Dr. Larry Hauck, Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research (TIAER)-Tarleton State University, provided the presentation on added segments to the Lake Houston TMDL area and the East and West Forks of the San Jacinto River TMDL. For the six Lake Houston segments TIAER will be adding a reservoir model to loading calculation due the location of Lake Conroe and Lake Woodlands within the watershed. On-site septic systems, particularly above the Woodlands are a potential source to the watershed. Based on the latest census designation 2010, most of the new segments in the watershed are considered an Urbanized Area and thus subject MS4 stormwater regulations. The TMDL TSD has been completed and posted on TCEQ website. The TSD is under review and will be added to the WQMP. TCEQ will notify the BIG when the document is available for public review and comment.

The TMDL for the East and West Fork of the San Jacinto River and a tributary arm to Lake Houston address seven new segment impairments. Bacteria exceedences fell slightly above the standard for most of the stations analyzed. OSSFs appear to be a minor factor in the watershed and a majority of the watersheds fall outside a census designated urban area. The TSD has been completed and posted to the TCEQ website. The contractor report has been submitted. TCEQ is working on an internal TMDL report and once completed the TMDL will be posted for public comment. With the TMDL completed, and considering the project location is adjacent to the BIG, there is some thought to consider adding this project to the BIG.

10. BIG Discussion: Implementation for New TMDLs

Steven Johnston led the discussion on how to incorporate additional watershed into the BIG. As an example the Armand Bayou stakeholders want to join the BIG and seek acceptance prior to having the TMDL adopted by the State. Additionally, TMDLs that fill in within the BIG region will need to be added to the BIG. Mr. Johnston pointed to the language in the I-Plan which states that the BIG can add additional segments within the BIG footprint or add watersheds outside the footprint, but officially would need to wait till the TMDL is adopted by the State.

Currently there is no defined process to add a watershed or segment. Also, the request of the Armand Bayou stakeholders needs to be addressed. A process needs to be developed to add these new areas. Mr. Johnston suggested that the BIG's Coordination and Policy workgroup should consider this at their next meeting. Two options were presented to BIG members for consideration – 1) change the language in the I-Plan to allow for conditional approval of watersheds undergoing TMDLs (e.g. Armand Bayou) and develop a process to officially add the watersheds to the I-Plan OR 2) wait until the TMDL is completed and adopted by the state, but still develop the process to officially add the watersheds. The Coordination and Policy workgroup will need to discuss how to bring in other watersheds – those already in and those adjacent and define process. Any change to the language of the I-Plan or

recommendation for conditional approval will go to the BIG during the annual meeting in May 2014.

Several questions were asked including 'if the BIG I-plan's goals will change or new ones added when new watersheds and new stakeholders are incorporated?'; 'Does that mean they join the BIG committee?'; 'Add a seat or they just attend work groups?' Mr. Johnston said that whether conditional approval or not, new watersheds would take on the responsibility of implementation of the BIG I-Plan and to track the implementation effort. The I-Plan was developed to be broad and for stakeholders to implement the portions that will have the most impact in the particular area or watersheds they oversee. Any changes to the I-Plan would have to be taken to the workgroups which oversee that area of requested change and from there any recommended change would then proceed to the BIG for approval.

BIG members then discussed adding additional stakeholders to the group should new watersheds be added. Numerous current serving BIG members serve on the prospective watersheds that potentially could be their representative. Adding new watersheds would really just extend the existing service area. Also, not all 72 watersheds currently represented by the BIG have individual members on the BIG rather the point is to ensure that the majority of interests/categories are represented.

BIG members discussed whether to bring new watersheds in before the TMDL has been adopted by the TCEQ. One argument presented against conditional approval suggested that it should be done after the TMDL is complete as more of a legal concept, since it would be cleaner to do after the TMDL adoption. An argument for conditional approval suggested that the process would be good so new watershed stakeholders can get involved early and that since so much of implementation is voluntary, they can work to improve water quality now. To add to this argument another member suggested that this will allow the stakeholders to count what they are doing – which would likely be done regardless. Other arguments for conditional approval included that it allows more uniformity, especially where permits are required and that conditional approval is consistent with the I-Plan being a living document. BIG members were agreeable to send this item to the Coordination and Policy workgroup to look at both scenarios and that there was a recommendation to go with e conditional approval.

11. Annual Report & Meeting

Steven Johnston presented the Annual report process undertaken in 2012-2013. The group was asked if they were happy with the process and wanted to proceed with it again. The BIG gave the go ahead to proceed.

Justin Bower reviewed the certification and award program proposal that is being crafted to support BIG implementation through funding under a 604b contract. The Stormwater Smart proposal is an environmental incentive/recognition program

that will cover the BIG and eventual beyond. The eventual program will be similar to the WaterSmart or Energy Star label programs.

Staff will be developing the certification program over the next few weeks by defining criteria and multiple categories. In addition to the certification program there will be a recognition program – similar to Natural Resource Advisory Committee’s parks awards – to recognize achievements on an annual basis, to reinforce the brand and drive ongoing interest.

The BIG recommended that the program should not use “best” to create a race or point people out. One question asked if this was going to tie in with LID? In response, Mr. Bower stated that LID would be an element of the criteria developed. A second question was asked whether this would be directed at people or projects? Mr. Bower responded that it was going to be tied to projects, mostly on the private side with some public recognition. A third question was directed at the programs logo “Stormwater” and that if the program considered water conservation. The concern was to ensure that the program should not start out limited but that it could be scalable to water related topics like ‘quantity’. Mr. Bower said that was a consideration and that all efforts would be to steer this program towards scalability.

12. Workgroup Assignments

Steven Johnston reviewed each BIG workgroup. Each workgroup during meetings in the spring of 2013 had developed priorities to be completed over the course of the next year. The BIG was asked if these expectations were reasonable and on par with the direction the BIG wanted to take this year in preparation of May 2014 annual report with particular emphasis on what was expected of Workgroup assignments. The BIG had few comments to the proposed assignments.

The Monitoring and Watershed Outreach workgroups would be requested to consider looking at expanding more *E. coli* monitoring training to volunteer monitors. The Waste Water Treatment Facility workgroup would be asked to follow up on section 217 and consider submitting comments to the TCEQ. BIG members asked about collecting data on best management practices (BMP) and development of a database. The Stormwater, Land Development and Construction workgroups were looking at that and there will be continued discussions with Harris County Flood Control District to build on what their BMP database. Another question asked if the presentations will be on the website and Mr. Johnston responded that they will be added to the website.

13. Other Business/Roundtable

Several comments, updates and announcements were made by BIG members and the audience:

- Feral hog workshop in Rosenberg November 9, 8-2:30, \$10

- Upper Oyster Creek project – has gone through public comment, will be approved in January.
- CWI workshop next Thursday, October 24, 2013 at H-GAC 1:30 PM
- Harris County initiated a nutrient study with WWTF
- Harris County got grant for feral hog removal from Barker and Addicks reservoirs. The project will also help determine baseline water quality numbers. The hope is to at least stabilize population and the meat will be donated. Commissioner Radack has been very supportive of the project.
- It was suggested to check out the 311 APP to report sanitary sewer overflows.
- BPA had college interns assist with field surveys of 5 bayous on the top10 most wanted list and helped to solved a few problems.

14. Next Meeting Date

Late spring 2014 (Potentially May 20)

H-GAC Conference Room A (2nd Floor)

15. Adjourn