

Watershed Outreach Workgroup
Thursday, May 21, 2009
9: 00 AM to 11:00 AM

Individuals Present:

Scott Jones (GBF by phone); Richard Chapin (City of Houston); Jim Robertson (CCFCC); Linda Shead (by phone), Herman Sanders (Harris County Infrastructure); Erika McCauley (GBEP); Cynthia Brum (GBEP)

H-GAC Staff Present:

Rachel Powers; Erin Livingston

BIG Reporter

Linda Shead was identified as the BIG reporter for the June BIG meeting.

Discussion:

Rachel began the discussion by mentioning the maps H-GAC has been working on. One thing we have not yet mapped is the population within ¼ mile and ½ mile of each impaired assessment unit, but H-GAC did provide an excel spreadsheet of these populations.

Then discussion turned to general mapping of the impaired streams. The information from TCEQ needs to be checked. H-GAC staff will be reviewing and discussing the information with TCEQ.

Maps H-GAC provided for the meeting included:

- Impaired assessment units (includes watersheds and sampling locations)
- Land Cover (2008 aerial photography was the information used for this map)
- Land Use – only for the nine county transportation region, we will compare them and identify where development threat is most likely to occur

Maps that have not yet been produced include:

- One showing the number of segments downstream
- Parks
- Concrete lined vs. non-concrete lined
- School locations

One segment in the Greens Bayou watershed is not effluent dominated, but the rest in Harris County pretty much are. We shouldn't reject these from recreational use, maybe decide to at some point, but not right now.

Discussion switched to UAAs

Rachel had printed out the slides from Lori Hamilton's presentation from the May BIG meeting. TCEQ is discussing changes to the contact recreation categories. They are talking about looking at the streams and determining whether primary contact is still the appropriate classification.

City of Houston would like all segments to remain primary contact and to clean them all up so that they can be used safely. They will be making a strong recommendation to TCEQ.

Primarily it would be the concrete lined channels that might be recommended as switching to secondary contact classification. Brickhouse Gully could be switched to completely non-contact.

Q: How would the public be notified of changed classifications?

A: They wouldn't. Classifications cannot be changed if the waterways **are** being used for primary contact.

In general terms, the group did not see a compelling reason to change the classifications of different streams within Buffalo and Whiteoak, nor is there a reason right now to conduct additional recreational UAAs. The Watershed group did not identify any other areas where a recreational UAA might be appropriate now.

While there was some discussion of whether the proposed numerical criteria were appropriate, the group did not have any objections to those changes (there might be some comments from individual members).

The Criteria

Under activity level, add "Existing groups that promote recreational use." Also, break out "Potential for Use"

Under bacteria level, explain that we will focus on segments with low bacteria levels AND the highest levels of bacteria—and leave the ice cream for later.

The marketing campaign is a good one—for outside of the ranking process.

We need to look at the segments that feed into primary contact segments (those that we know have activity occurring), and prioritize those, but maybe just to a determined distance up the stream.

Next meeting:

Rachel to send an email with the next meeting date and time at a later date.