

**Bastrop Bayou Watershed Protection Plan Meeting Notes  
February 26 & 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Public Meeting**

**Tuesday, February 26, 2008**

**Angleton Public Library**

**401 East Cedar Street**

**Angleton, TX 77515**

**5:30 pm – 7:40 pm**

**Brian Koch's presentation**

Q. Sue Jackson: What do you do for unpermitted action?

Ans. . Our agency is nonregulatory.

Q. David Dow: What is the timeline?

Ans. July 06 – beginning of watershed protection plan

2yrs and 2mos of data collection

18 mos. Plan development

Q. Todd Running: What is the cost share provided?

Ans. David: Average is 75% on pasture planting, brush management; aerial spraying; ground treatments, etc.

**Om Chawla's presentation**

Q. Arthur Aycock: How was population projection calculated for 2035 slide?

There is not enough water for the population to increase.

Q. Joan Aycock: Why do you say people are going to be there where there is not enough water or place for housing?

Q. A. Aycock: It looks as though you are only addressing recreational uses.

Ans. Carl: Desalination is a possibility. People will seek out recreation and a significant impact on Bastrop Bayou will result.

Q. J. Aycock: Do projections include I-69 Transcorridor impact? Ans. No

Q. S. Jackson: Is there anything that this funding could do to reforest banks with native trees to stabilize them? Ans. Yes.

C. S. Jackson: New York Times article said that there is a global trash and litter study on the world's oceans. The first study began in Texas. We are the center of that.

Q. What bacterial count is considered good?

Ans. It depends on the location. You wouldn't expect the Houston Ship Channel to be good. Around 350 is the limit for ecoli.

Q. A. Aycock? What is Upper Reach and what is lower reach?

Ans. [Pointed out on map.]

Q. A. Aycock: From what point is Upper Reach? Above 288?

Ans. Bruce said that the map from the station locations would provide the answer.

Ans. S. Jackson said to look at the monitoring plan on the 4<sup>th</sup> page on the back.

C. Todd: Enterococcus is found in salt or brackish water; E. coli is found in fresh water.

Q. A. Aycock: Have you considered the garbage dump?

Ans. S. Jackson: Little bayou and big bayou are now connected. The Republic Waste garbage will be draining even more into the bayous.

C. J. Aycock: There is an expansion proposed. It will take a long time to do it. We fought it for years because we have cattle on that property. Deals have been made with land owners and some has been taken with eminent domain. Meetings have been closed. When easements are discussed the meetings are closed. It has been talked about for 5 years. Tallow trees have been cleared but have regrown. It is a natural drainage but now it goes really fast. The drainage off of the garbage dump will be channelized deeper and straighter. Why is the Glascoe (sp?) supporting this. The natural drainage area has been filled in and now there is no place for the drainage to go.

C. Scott Lewis: There is a terrible odor coming from this area.

J. Aycock: No one listens to us. No one pays attention. I'm told I don't understand hydrology, I am not an engineer. My family has had cattle on this land for many years. They say that they won't flood our pasture but it will spread out our entire prairie.

A. Aycock: There is impact from the game preserve.

S. Jackson: Contact the game manager to be at the next meeting in Lake Jackson.

J. Aycock: I brought this up last year at the meeting about the ditch. Everyone was against the ditch including TPWD but Republic is for it and it is going

through. The 900 acre development off of 2004 will also drain into Bastrop Bayou. How did they get permits for this?

A retention pond has been dug and wetlands have been filled in. Glascoe Drainage District can be trusted to monitor this.

S. Jackson: Didn't see any emblems on the equipment.

J. Aycock: A would-be housing development is being built in a swamp.

S. Jackson: The Corps of Engineers did nothing when it was turned over to them. I don't have time to serve on a committee but someone needs to check into it.

Was it in Richwood TCTJ. It had to become part of the city to be eligible for city services.

S. Jackson: This is a major issue. How it is dealt with now will be how it is dealt with in the future.

J. Aycock: The housing development isn't a concern to be because it is too wet to be developed. But it is has been subdivided to create many lots with many septic systems. Those will create a lot of problems. The lots will be long and narrow. That is legal according to the county specifications.

Ans. If one of the changes is to create different standards for septic systems, then let's start on that.

J. Aycock: You better start now.

Steve Friedman: How much support do you have from the local governments? How come they are not here?

Ans. Dude Paine and Mary Ruth support it. Mr. Drake supports it as well. And they will be at the Lake Jackson meeting.

S. Jackson: Will the monitoring continue?

Ans. Yes, it will continue past 2009.

David Dow: Give us some examples that other groups have done to improve their watershed?

Brian Koch: 1500 students have been trained to understand water quality issues and make changes at home. Identify a major pollution source with feral hogs and have added a technician for feral hog control. Illegal dumping is a problem

and funds have been made available to get rid of illegal dump sites. There are many things going on that have been identified and funds have been used to come in and work on some of the problems identified by the stakeholders. More people are attending meetings.

The upper part of the watershed the land use is very different from what it was a year ago. Trying to get the attention of various county officials, many are aware of the problems. County and city officials have attended NEMO training to lesson the impact on water quality. You have to know what stone to turn over to get a unified plan and get people involved.

S. Jackson: I saw 7 feral hogs after the last meeting.

S. Lewis: They are bad at the 524 bridge and the deer are bad too.

S. Jackson: Email everyone that came to the last meeting.

S. Friedman: Contact Keep Brazoria County Clean; Keep Angleton Clean; Keep Lake Jackson Clean

S. Jackson: Talk to the Brazosport FACTS and get them to do a story.

Ans. Sometimes it takes a phone call from locals.

### **Listening Session**

C. Bastrop needs a major cleaning. Up towards Stansbury (sp?), tires, washing machines, refrigerators, are stacked up and when it rains, it flows past.

Ans. We can arrange a Trash Bash for Brazoria County. HGAC can help.

C. There are Hazardous waste cleanups now but there is nothing to do for the junk cars, lawnmowers, air conditioners, medicine cabinets. The county said that it was not on a county road so they wouldn't come and clean it.

Q. What do you do for old septic systems? We put in a new sprinkler system that cost \$7000. How can you improve upon that?

Ans. We can subsidize the cost by providing a 60/40 split or 50/50 split depending on the community's wishes. It has to be decided by the community the best places to spend the implementation dollars.

Q. Why can't the county enforce the septic regulations?

C. On Havenwood, a pipe was running into our pasture and we reported it. The washing machine is draining out there. Two or three houses are draining air conditioner systems and other gray water drain lines in our pasture.

Ans. Let's map those out and train county officials to correct this.

C. County officials are stopping people from emptying raw sewage but that needs to come from the county. We can't enforce it if the county won't.

Ans. Brazoria County environmental health: 388.864.1600 cell, 979.864.1484 They have a flat bottom boat and motor. Jeff is a licensed peace officer and he can find the pipe to see where they are and take care of it.

C. Dude has helped me out a lot.

C. One of your original solutions was to follow it upstream. Segment it some more so you can see where the land uses are.

C. Environmental Institute of Houston mapped out a lot of locations like "Cow Patty Beach". They have been very helpful.

C. Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists are good to contact; Urban Ranchers program;  
Brazosport Birders

## **Meeting Adjourned**

**Thursday, February 28**  
**Lake Jackson Public Library**  
**250 Circle Way**  
**Lake Jackson, Texas 77566**  
**5:30 pm – 7:40 pm**

### **Brian Koch's presentation**

Q. You said you mentioned a plan and then you mentioned 43 plans. Which one applies to me?

Ans. The watershed plan covers all of Bastrop Bayou but the agricultural plan covers just agricultural property.

Q. What are the 43 plans?

Ans. They are confidential and in the area of the Bastrop Bayou Watershed. These are the individual components of the watershed.

Q. The plans could involve cross fencing on pasture land or leveling. The plans already incorporate plans for the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Ans. The plans will meet the requirements for water conservation practices.

Q. Do the 43 plans already meet the requirements? Will the watershed plan include these?

Ans. Yes, all of the plans – Ag side – urban side – all of them will meet the watershed plan design. All of the many agricultural plans likely are part of the reason that Bastrop Bayou isn't listed yet.

Q. If no rancher is having a problem, why should they participate? What is the benefit to changing the way they have ranched for over 100 years?

Ans. More grass to support more animals. It won't happen overnight. We run into this all the time. Having a plan documents that they are doing everything they can.

Q. If a farmer or rancher wants to get rid of tallow trees or invasive plants; won't it pay to remove them so the rancher can run more cattle on the land?

Ans. Yes.

Q. Will this put the rancher/farmer in trouble if they don't follow the plan?

Ans. We will take the cost share away from them. They won't be protected from regulatory action.

Q. There are 43 plans that are individual plans that are already working now. How do they fit into the overall plan or do they stand alone?

Ans. We will get the general location of the plan and see how they fit into the overall watershed plan. If the cooperative owner is willing to put water monitoring on their land that would be very helpful. If people are satisfied, they will tell other people to participate.

Q. What is the usual cost sharing? Is tree planting covered as one of the practices as well as fencing, wells, etc.

Ans. Tree planting is not covered. Cost share rates for this district are 75% cost share up to \$10,000.

Q. On the land use part you have identified the agriculture plan that is part of this, is there another part that could be involved? Do you think that the agriculture part is a large part of the plan or a minute part?

Ans. The district covers more than just the watershed, the district covers part of Galveston and Brazoria county. It is a popular program. You don't always have to get the cost share. You could do the conservation plan just to get the conservation.

Q. You are talking 13,000 acres over 17 square miles.

Ans. Todd provided the statistics from the 2006 risk assessment and the 2001 data. In December of this year we will have new numbers.  
17% developed

Q. Are all of these funds agricultural?

Ans. Yes

Q. But the bigger plan is not is it?

Ans. Yes, the bigger plan is for the whole watershed.

### **Om Chawla's Presentation**

Q. You are just talking about Bastrop Bayou?

Ans. Yes, just Bastrop Bayou. It can apply to other watersheds. But the areas on the map that are in red, it is already too late.

C. The last best oysters and the last best sea grasses are on east Galveston bay but we have to protect them or they will turn red. That is what is behind all of this.

Q. On the meetings that you have had, were any of them outside the county?

Ans. The Bastrop Bayou watershed is totally within the county. There are some watersheds that overlap boundaries but this one does not.

Q. You don't want to get rid of the Galveston Bay Council?

Ans. No, but there is nothing that we can do for problems coming from the other counties.

Q. On your testing and data collection, the numbers can dramatically increase and decrease according to rainfall. Do you take a whole bunch and average them?

Ans. We take a sample every quarter or every two months and see a trend. When it rains, it goes up drastically. We take a geometric mean since the numbers vary widely over the standard. It depends on E. coli or other bacteria. It also depends on the amount of time it is over the line.

Q. I heard there is a state plan that by 2010, there would be a MUD district or water district over an area of housing.

Ans. It sounds like phase II over storm water but that is only for municipalities.

Q. There are a lot of 50ft lots at river's end, and real estate agents are saying that all of the little lots will skyrocket.

Ans. I haven't heard anything about this. There are storm water regulations that apply to 25,000 and above.

Q. Where do the signs go? Would it be beneficial to put them around public boat ramps?

Ans. Yes, absolutely.

Q. Is the data from 2004 to the present?

Ans. Yes.

Q. What is GIS?

Ans. Geographical Information System. We use satellite images and aerial photography to take high resolution pictures then analyze them to see changes in the land.

Q. Do you do that or does HARC do it?

Ans. We do it.

Q. Define land cover.

Ans. Is it open prairie, a house, aquaculture, etc.

C. You can see how much is changing. GIS lets you quantify the data.

C. It sounds like a really good start. It is interesting that the watershed is totally contained in Brazoria County. This has more possibility of having a change. Cleanups are nice but they are reactive not proactive. In 25 years there will be so many more people. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. A lot of people in the county will help out.

Q. How much money is in the budget?

Ans. The total budget is \$750,000 with \$450,000 cash and the rest as a match, which can be in-kind. In-kind can come from attending meetings, volunteers at cleanups.

Q. How much has already been spent? Is your time charged to that?

Ans. Yes, our times, the brochures, the testing, have been charged to the program.

Q. You mentioned the storm water plan. How do you see that tying into the plan for the watershed? You have to coordinate with that too?

Ans. Yes, we will tie into all of these to create one comprehensive plan.

C. 3 years ago about this time, Friends of the River St. Bernard started with 3 people, and now we have 5000 visits per month on our website. Meetings are

attended by about 100 people each time. You need to get your friends and neighbors together to get in the mud and do cleanups and whatever you need to do. It won't work without your friends and neighbors.

C. I've seen 250 people come to a meeting at the Lake Jackson civic center and a trailer park wanted to create a septic pond that would empty into the bayou. Everyone came to stop that.

C. We need to get rid of the trailers. That event precipitated a great deal of action.

Q. We talk about the bays and estuaries, but it is the same about Bastrop Bayou. The wetlands and woods along the bayou are just as important for cleaning the crap out of the bayou. Organizations got to go to the Corps of Engineers and tell them to get to work. So much development is occurring that degrades the water quality.

Q. What is the plan for quantifying what the sources are?

Ans. We'll use land cover data. We'll try to get the data ready for SELECT model from TX A & M.

Q. Have you looked at the dump?

Ans. No.

Q. Is a drainage ditch planned to run the dump to Bastrop Bayou?

Ans. Don't know.

Q. We are in desperate need of funding to manage the watershed in our neighborhood. We need to know if there is any money to help manage our water quality problems. Is there money to help us with wastewater treatment plants?

Ans. We will do everything in our power to identify what the community needs. If it is part of the watershed plan, we will use money for that.

Q. Can you attend one of the meetings for the neighborhood [Demi-John]?

Ans. Yes.

Q. What is the total estimate [Demi-John's WWTP]?

Ans. 4.5 to 5.5 million

Q. How big is the community [Demi-John]?

Ans. 310 houses but it is divided by the bayou.

Q. Are you going to get by in from all of the people on Bastrop Bayou?  
Ans. Yes.

**Meeting Adjourned**