

9 – OUTREACH AND EDUCATION (ELEMENT E)

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Public education and outreach are essential to the implementation of a successful Watershed Protection Plan. In addition to the physical BMPs to be implemented by landowners and jurisdictions in the watershed, behavioral BMPs can be addressed by everyone in the watershed. Public Participation can include public education workshops, distribution of educational materials, and participation in activities to improve water quality.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

ADVERTISING

The H-GAC will advertise the project through press releases, direct mailing, emails, phone calls, the website, and through community newsletters. Efforts will be made to gather public support, diverse public participation, and community input for this project through several different outreach efforts. In order to accomplish this, the project will be advertised throughout the watershed and input will be gathered from stakeholders which will influence the outcome of the Watershed Protection Plan.

MEDIA RELATIONS

PRESS KIT

H-GAC has produced a watershed brochure titled “San Bernard Watershed”. It has been updated and will be used to educate stakeholders about the impacts of individual activities on water quality and how to reduce those impacts. The watershed brochure gives an overview of the area economy and resources, historic water quality, Best Management Practices, and water monitoring results.

NEWS RELEASES

H-GAC creates and submits news releases to numerous media outlets, including 5 local newspapers and approximately 50 additional local and regional newspapers, magazines, radio programs and TV stations. Press releases will be used throughout the Watershed Protection Plan process. Press releases will be used to advertise public involvement opportunities and during major milestones of the project. Additional public information articles will be developed and submitted to key outlets to announce completion of the watershed plan and to encourage stakeholder involvement in the implementation process.

MEDIA DATABASE

Press releases for the San Bernard Watershed Protection Plan will be distributed to:

Alvin Sun / Alvin Advertiser	Houston/Fort Bend Lifestyle & Homes
Banner Press Newspaper	Fort Bend Herald
The Bulletin of Brazoria County	Sealy News
The Bellville Times	El Campo Leader-News
Eagle Lake Headlight	Coastal Broadcasting
Colorado County Citizen	Fort Bend Spotlight

Gulf Coast Tribune
Wallis News-Review
The Weimar Mercury
Fort Bend Mirror
The Brazosport Facts
Greatwood / New Territory / Pecan Grove
Richmond/Rosenberg Herald-Coaster
Las Noticias de Fort Bend
The Pearland Journal

Fort Bend Star
Brazoria County News
Katy Times
The Brazosport Facts
Pearland Reporter
La Vida News/The Ebony Voice
KULP Radio
Radio Station KULM-FM

NEWSLETTERS

Watershed updates will be written for the “Coordinated Watershed Protection in Southeast and South Central Texas” newsletter, which is prepared and disseminated by the TSSWCB. The newsletter is distributed monthly/bimonthly by mail and email and is available on the TSSWCB and Texas Watershed Steward websites. These updates will also provide information to a broader regional audience about activities, approaches and progress in the Watershed and serve as an important component of partnerships with similar groups in the state.

EDUCATION

PROACTIVE OUTREACH/RESPONSE

Texas Stream Team

Texas Stream Team is a network of trained volunteers and supporting partners working together to collect information about the natural resources of Texas to ensure the information is available to all citizens. Volunteers are trained to collect quality-assured information that can be used to make environmentally sound decisions. The Stream Team is administered through a partnership of Texas State University, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Volunteers complete three phases of training and are certified at various levels depending on their environmental goals and concerns.



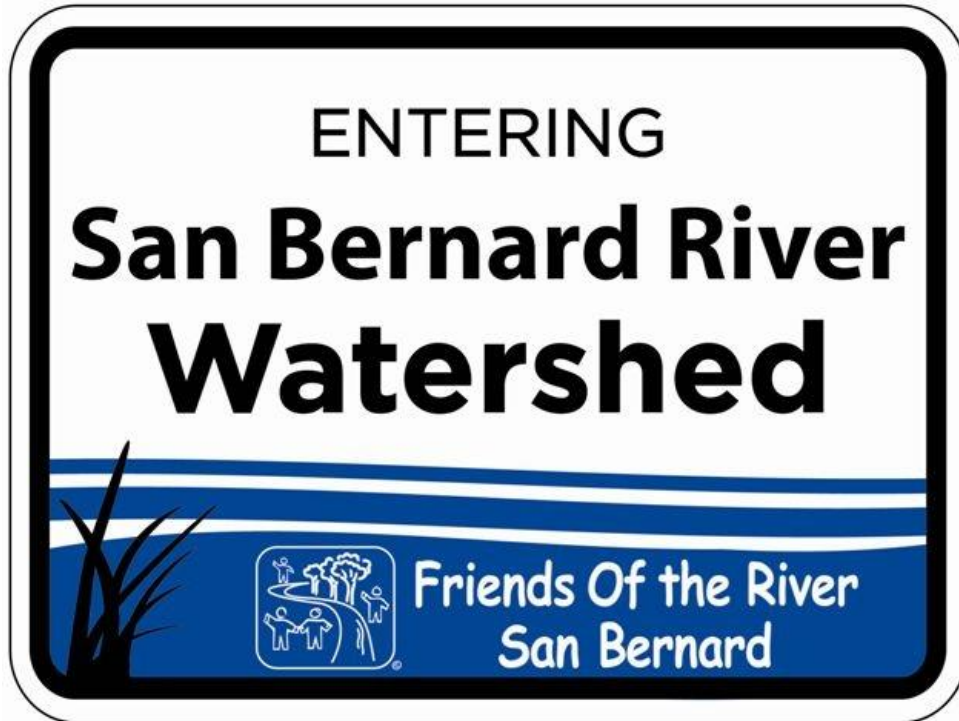
Clean Waters Initiative Program

The Clean Waters Initiative (CWI) program offers workshops that will help local governments, landowners, and citizens develop strategies to reduce pollution in area waterways. Workshops will focus on a variety of issues such as leaking septic tanks and pollution from urban development and agriculture, or broader issues of watershed protection, planning, and stormwater permitting. H-GAC makes individual presentations and can tailor workshops to the needs of specific areas.



Watershed Signage

Road signs can be developed as a way to notify residents and visitors that they are entering the watershed and encourage them to take action and protect water quality in the area. These can be posted on major roads and highways and when crossing a tributary of the San Bernard.



Texas Watershed Stewards

Texas Watershed Stewards (TSW) is a science-based watershed education program designed to help citizens identify and take action to address local water quality impairments. The focus of the group is public participation in local watershed management. The program is open to all watershed residents, including homeowners, business owners, agricultural producers, decision makers, community leaders, and all other citizens. The program has been implemented through the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB). The Stakeholder Group will receive the training through presentations and discussions at the meetings. The goal is to engage as many citizens as possible in the implementation process.



Classroom Presentations

The Friends of the River San Bernard has a River Ranger program that presents to local students about the importance of a healthy San Bernard River watershed. The group generally does one program each quarter of the year.

Trash Clean Up

The Friends of the River San Bernard holds an annual river clean up event each April. They host four collection sites in the tidal portion of the river, where residents can deposit items collected from the river by boat. This clean up event could be extended to the non-tidal portion of the river, particularly in areas where there is a lot of illegal dumping.



WEB SITE

The San Bernard Watershed Website will be updated and maintained by H-GAC. The website contains information about the watershed, press releases, upcoming meeting announcements, and information presented at previous meetings. There are also links to different types of best management practices (BMPs) along the urban to rural transect and links to sample ordinances on how to reduce nonpoint source pollution. Draft copies of deliverables can also be viewed by downloading them from the website. The URL is www.h-gac.com/go/sanbernard.