Meeting Summary
Buffalo & White Oak Bayous Bacteria TMDL Stakeholder Group

October 15, 2003

STAKEHOLDERS PRESENT: Latrice Babin; Neil Bishop; Claire Caudill; Catherine Elliott; Theo Glanton; Scott Jones; Gwang Kyo Po; Helen Lane; Trent Martin; Linda Shead; Mary Ellen Whitworth;

STAKEHOLDERS ABSENT: Del Cannon; Rod Hainey; Terry Hershey; Colleen O'Brien; Mike O'Brien; Kim Phillips; Todd Running; Kerry Whelan.

SUPPORT TEAM PRESENT: Linda Broach; Carl Masterson; Mary Jane Naquin; Tina Petersen; Hanadi Rifai; Ron Stein; Yu-Chun Su; Monica Suarez.

OTHERS PRESENT: Bruce Heiberg (Citizen), Kim Laird (TCEQ); Lynne Johnson (BPA); Paul Nelson (Houston Public Works); Amber Thomas (Harris County Storm Water Quality); Tom Ivy (Citizen); Aaron Tuley (Buffalo Bayou Partnership); Michael Bloom (PBS&J); Linda Pechacek (TC&B);

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Mary Jane Naquin opened the meeting at approximately 6:40 PM and self-introductions were made.

REVIEW AGENDA AND NOTES FROM BRAINSTORMING SESSION

Members accepted the agenda as proposed. There were no changes to the meeting notes.

PROJECT BRIEFINGS

Harris County: Trent Martin informed the group that final approval of the project has not yet occurred and there is nothing to report at this time.

H-GAC Clean Rivers: H-GAC Clean Rivers: Michael Bloom with PBS&J presented the results of the recently completed Small Watershed Study that was directed at finding sources of bacteria and ammonia in Buffalo, White Oak and Greens Bayou Watersheds. Essentially, the project approach was to conduct watershed reconnaissance, map sources and select sampling sites, prepare the Quality Assurance Project Plan, conduct sampling in both dry and wet weather, and analyze and report the data that was collected. Mr. Bloom took the group through the steps involved in this approach with a power point presentation. Through the source identification and sampling, the project resulted in a list of sources with the highest dry weather levels of bacteria contamination that were recommended for mitigation measures. The project also included development of a GIS runoff tool that allows the user to calculated a weighted curve number for a selected watershed area based on soil types and land use. A copy of the final report and CD was provided to the project team.

FOLLOW-UP STATUS TO BRAINSTORMING ITEMS

Additional Task: Based on the survey of what additional information we need for the project that was conducted during the last meeting, an additional task was added to the current work plan. The added task is to Assess *E. coli* levels downstream of WWTP outfalls. The goal of this task is to understand the relationship between treated wastewater effluent and *E. coli* levels downstream of a wastewater plan outfall. Up to 10 locatable wastewater outfalls will be sampled and

analyzed for *E. Coli*, Fecal Coliform, and Total Suspended Solids. In addition, in stream water and sediment grab samples will be collected from a point located upstream of the outfall discharge and from a point downstream of the mixing zone and also analyzed for *E. coli*, Fecal Coliform, and Total Suspended Solids.

STAKEHOLDER SURVEY FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION

Carl Masterson reported the results of the stakeholder survey that was conducted prior to the meeting. Its purpose was to get better acquainted with each other, to get input on their interests and views of the TMDL project and to learn about existing and future projects that could be related to the TMDL process. The survey of stakeholders showed that there were many interests represented in the group, including citizens, agricultural groups, developers, regulators, environmental groups, local governments state agencies and public health groups. The survey also covered various activities of the stakeholders, which pointed out a range of involvement. Members were actively engaged in water quality assessment, habitat restoration, monitoring, technical assistance, advocacy, trash clean up, pollution prevention, education and training, land conservation and management, and enforcement. Stakeholders also did research, testing and studies of water quality in the area.

Stakeholders also provided an overview of their goals for the TMDL. Improved water quality in Houston's bayous, which are perceived to be an asset to the city, was a universal goal. Members also want a balanced and healthy ecology and recreation in bayous wherever possible. Good science and sound water management was deemed the way to reach the ideal of an "enchanted forest on our bayous."

Future aspirations of the stakeholders begin with more collaboration and partnerships among various interests. Stakeholders want to apply new technologies and share "best practices" in their water quality plans and continuing land acquisition was listed. On-going use of the Buffalo Bayou Master Plan and other successes, such as Texas Watch, Bayou Buddies, the Watershed Management Conference were also endorsed by the members for future planning.

As part of the discussion on survey results, Mary Jane Naquin had the stakeholders score their organization's perceived impact on water quality improvement on a scale from 1-10 (least to most). The following table lists the organization, it's score and any comments made by the representative:

Buffalo Bayou Partnership	10	Skimmer boat with a GPS unit locates outfalls to the bayou – it gives BBP "eyes on the bayou". Also working with U. St. Thomas on their Urban Ecology Program.
Bayou Preservation Association	9	A lot of history (since 1966). Conducted cleanups, monitoring, and conducted a bayou classification project that is located on the BPA Web Site.
U.T. School of Public Health	8	Public health related studies.
Business & Developers as represented by W. Houston Association	7	Support anything that improves the quality of life and brings people to Houston.
Harris County Pollution Control	8	Mostly active in unincorporated Harris County. Works with different people, but focus is on regulation and providing information. Does not have money to fund projects.
Houston Wastewater	8	Getting other departments together.
Trust for Public Land	6	Bringing awareness of the issues and benefits of conserving open space and buffers to reduce storm water impacts.
Galveston Bay Estuary Program	7.5	Public education, project funding
Joint Task Force/Harris County	7	Buyouts, detention and developing new ways to protect homes

Flood Control		
Houston Audubon	3	Land acquisition with coastal emphasis. Education on habitat.
Harris County Storm Water Quality	8	An MS4 operator

Other Stakeholder comments and questions on water quality issues arose from the discussions and they are summarized here:

- We must try to remove the vehicle by which pollutants reach the bayous and when they do get to the bayous, figure ways to clean it up.
- Need to establish buffers.
- We should remember that someone has to pay for the BMPs.
- Anything may be considered by the State including modifying permits, but we certainly need public cooperation and education. Can we provide incentives? Looking at other funding sources to make things happen. Possibly do a policy study through the LBJ School of Public Affairs or similar organization. This would be a thorough study to look at a broad perspective including incentives that can be brought into play.
- A group inventory is needed to find out all that is being done and all that is planned by the stakeholders and other organizations not at the table. Need to find overlaps and intersections and who and what can support implementation and in what ways.
- How do we use in-place organizations to enhance education?
- Should get a couple of folks together to help build a questionnaire on projects including what are you doing, what will you be doing and when are you going to do it.
- We keep building the same way and must look to the future and how development happens and make changes.
- Water quality has more focus now, especially in Harris County Flood Control projects.
- We must be prepared for the attention the TMDL project will get once we reach the implementation stage.
- We have to get peoples' attention, such as throwing out "straw man" implementation actions and see what response we get, maybe "here are ten things we might make you do". This is something the TCEQ is not prepared to do until TMDL allocations are in place.
- What will it take to get the public sector to assume a leadership role in mandating BMPs, best low impact development and the like. Look to Chicago as an example. Chicago's mayor wants it to be the greenest city in the nation.
- We should make an area a showcase and it will spread elsewhere.

MEMBERSHIP ISSUES

A number of events occurred since last meeting that leaves the group with 19 active members and 5 vacancies. According to the current makeup, these vacancies are in the categories of local government (wastewater treatment), local government, two representatives of environmental interest groups, and agriculture.

Part of this meeting was a discussion on who else needs to be on this stakeholder group, noting that the official membership of a TCEQ advisory committee is limited to 24 people. Members identified the need for representation of Houston storm water utility, developers, homeowners, recreational boaters, small wastewater treatment facilities, Houston Parks Department, Houston Independent School District, University of St. Thomas, the Corps of Engineers, Texas Cooperative Extension, more citizens, and Utility Association(s) – more than sufficient to fill the vacancies and take the group over the twenty-four member limit.

This issue was not resolved at this meeting. The Outreach Team will evaluate and report to the group via e-mail.

NEXT MEETING

No specific date was set. Ron Stein noted that it would be approximately six months until the next stakeholder-oriented meeting would occur with a technical meeting in about three months.

Noting issues with building security and convenience for members, Carl Masterson asked the group about changing the meeting time to earlier in the evening or the daytime. There was consensus to change the time – possibly to a 4 PM start. The Outreach Team will propose several time choices and poll the group via e-mail.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:55 PM.