

Meeting Summary Notes
H-GAC's Clean Rivers Program
Basin Steering Committee Meeting
Conducted Via ZOOM on Thursday, May 31, 2023

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Basin Steering Committee (BSC) met for a second meeting in 2023 on Wednesday, May 31st, via the ZOOM virtual meeting platform. Todd Running, Water Resources Program Manager, conducted the meeting. Kendall Guidroz and Rachel Windham facilitated the meeting with support from staff covering various topics. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM.

Attendance List: (See attached list for additional details)

Tom Douglas, Celina Gauthier Lowry, George Guillen, Kristin Lambrecht, Lisa Marshall, Nakailla Poole, Christian Rines, Jamie Shakar, Michael Shannon, Linda Shead, Brian Shmaefsky, Joni Synatschk, Scott Tuma, David Villarreal, and Jenna Wadman.

H-GAC Staff Present:

Todd Running, Jean Wright, Jessica Casillas, Kendall Guidroz, Steven Johnston, Rachel Windham, Elling Mann, Anna Ervin, Justin Bower, and Jonathan Morris.

Welcome

Host, Todd Running, and Facilitators, Kendall Guidroz and Rachel Windham, opened the meeting at 1:30 PM with a welcome and then gave instructions on how the meeting would be conducted, and how individuals could ask questions and participate in ZOOM discussions. Running gave a brief outline of the agenda for the meeting and conducted a roll call among those who were visible in the meeting's participant window. The ZOOM meeting was recorded with transcripts provided for follow-up.

Public Comment

Running asked if there were any public comments, for which, no one spoke up.

Presentations

Running gave a very brief presentation regarding the *Final* FY2024-2025 Scope of Work and the *Final* FY2024-2025 Budget. Drafts of both were presented at the January 2023 meeting in great detail.

Running gave the presentation about the final 2023 Basin Highlights Report (BHR). Senior Planner, Brian Sims, was highlighted at the front of the BHR report since he was a major contributor to the writing and layout of the report. Brian passed away the first weekend of April after submitting the first full draft of the BHR report to TCEQ. The 2023 BHR is a Watershed Characterization Report about three segments/subsegments: Greens Bayou Above Tidal (1016), Greens Bayou Tidal (1006) and Halls Bayou (1006D). The report describes the key sources that

are likely to impact water quality and provide a collection of ‘on the ground’, local knowledge for other TCEQ program areas to use when prioritizing monitoring efforts. Sections of the report include reviewing data, mapping land use, mapping wastewater treatment facilities and permitted On-site Sanitary Sewer Facilities (OSSF), tracking watershed events, reviewing information from site visits, and communicating with monitoring personnel, stakeholders and local residents. The final report can be found on H-GAC’s web site at <https://www.h-gac.com/community-and-environmental-planning-publications/water-resources>.

Jean Wright, Senior Planner and Monitoring Coordinator for the Region, gave a short presentation on Water Quality Monitoring throughout the region. Wright reported that all Coordinated Monitoring Meetings (CMM) were conducted the last week of March 2023, with individual meetings for each local partner. While nearly all sites, frequencies, and parameters remained the same, a few new sites and former monitoring locations were pulled back into the CMS for FY24. Also, with TCEQ’s input, H-GAC moved some of the 24-hour Dissolved Oxygen (DO) monitoring efforts to different locations in the region. Between EIH and H-GAC, there are now ten 24-DO sites. The FY24 Coordinated Monitoring Schedule (CMS) will begin September 1, 2023. The CMS can be found at <https://cms.lcra.org/>.

Wright then moved into a brief update on the Targeted Bacteria Monitoring special project being conducted in FY2023. A total of 14 Segment/AUs were investigated to look for dry weather flows contaminated with *E. coli* or *Enterococcus* bacteria. Three different groups were conducting the project investigations with EIH completing 9 AUs, TRIES working on two AUs, and H-GAC conducted only one AU investigation. Field work for the project is anticipated to be completed by mid-June with all associated reports and an executive summary expected to be submitted to TCEQ before the end of August 2023.

CRP Data Manager, Jessica Casillas, gave a presentation about ‘Assessing Vulnerable Population in the H-GAC region. Using 2020 US Census Bureau data, H-GAC developed a new “Regional Equity Tool” based upon GIS (Geographical Information Systems) at the block group level and vulnerable populations based upon nine sensitive population groups. Those population groups include poverty, non-Hispanic (non-white), Hispanic, limited English proficiency, disabled families, elderly, car-less households, and single female householder w/ one or more children in the household. CRP and other Water Resources Group projects hope to implement the ‘Vulnerable Population Index’ analysis into special projects, watershed-based plans, as well as grant and funding opportunities.

Steven Johnston, Principal Planner, gave an update on the status of all TMDL projects in the H-GAC Region. There are twelve I-Plans currently underway, and Johnston is in discussions with TCEQ about another project on Tarkington and Luce Bayous.

Rachel Windham, Sr. Planner specializing in Watershed Protection Plans (WPPs), gave updates on three projects currently underway. First, the Clear Creek WPP, initiated in 2021, is being drafted as of this meeting. Second, East Fork San Jacinto Watershed stakeholders are working to determine reductions needed and what kind of implementations strategies to use to achieve the reduction. Lastly, The West Fork San Jacinto Implementation Project has just kicked off in 2022. H-GAC is working with stakeholders to support outreach and education efforts.

Senior Planner, Kendall Guidroz, presented the results of the River, Lakes, Bays ‘N Bayous Trash Bash held on March 25, 2023. Two thousand, four hundred fifty-six volunteers removed 40.51 tons of trash and 219 tires from 108 miles of waterways throughout the Galveston Bay watershed. Next year’s event will be the 30th anniversary of the largest waterway clean-up in the state of Texas.

Lastly, Guidroz also presented a brief summary of her efforts to conduct outreach for the ‘Coastal Communities Projects.’ After identifying a vulnerable community in along the coast, she is conducting outreach to get out the message on picking up pet waste to help minimize bacteria loading to area waterways, stop illegal dumping, the message to NEVER put fats, oils or grease down sewer drains in houses regardless of whether the household is on sanitary sewer collection systems or on-site sanitary sewer facilities (OSSFs).

Other Business and Announcements

Running wrapped up by inviting meeting attendees to share meeting announcements.

Linda Shead and Tom Douglas shared a 1-page paper about trying to get people to re-consider how we evaluate human health risk from surface water contamination. Tom suggests suing human DNA would be more accurate than using *E. coli*. The paper was shared with H-GAC staff after the meeting as a topic for discussion at a future meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 PM.