

Meeting Summary Notes  
**H-GAC's Clean Rivers Program**  
**Basin Steering Committee Meeting**  
Held: Tuesday, April 26, 2022 Via: ZOOM

The 2022 meeting of the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Basin Steering Committee (BSC) was Tuesday, April 26, 2022, via the ZOOM virtual meeting platform. Todd Running, Water Resources Program Manager, conducted the meeting. Andrea Tantillo facilitated the meeting with support from staff covering various topics. The meeting was called to order at 2 PM.

**Attendance List:** (See attached list for additional details)

Camila Biaggi, Glenda Callaway, Greg Camp, Danielle Kristin Lambrecht, Grant Moss, Kara Nuckels, Jenny Oakley, Robert Pechukas, Jason Pinchback, Paige Powell, Venus Price, Bret Raley, Christian Rines, Michael Shannon, Linda Shead, Brian Shmaefsky, Shane Simpson, Joni Synatschk, Darryl Tate, Jenna Wadman, Pudge Willcox, Jo Wilson, and Kyle Wright.

**H-GAC Staff Present:**

Todd Running, Jean Wright, Brian Simis, Jessica Casillas, Kendall Guidroz, Steven Johnston, Rachel Windham, Justin Bower, Andrea Tantillo, Wendy Almanzan and Jonathan Morris.

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**Welcome**

Host, Todd Running, and Facilitator, Andrea Tantillo, opened the meeting at 2 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. Running asked if there were any public comments, for which, no one spoke up.

**Presentations**

Running presented the final draft of the 2022 Basin Highlights Report (BHR) to the group. This BHR uses online GIS StoryMap software that allows the report to include interactive maps. He ran through the layout and how to navigate through the report. Running stated the final report is due to TCEQ on or before May 15, 2022.

Jean Wright, Senior Planner and Monitoring Coordinator, gave a short presentation on Water Quality Monitoring in the region. She reported that Coordinated Monitoring Meetings were conducted the last week of March 2022, with an individual meeting with each local partner. Staff and local partners are still investigating whether a few sites will be moved due to accessibility and whether H-GAC will be able to move some of the 24-hour Dissolved Oxygen monitoring efforts to different locations in the region. A separate, zoomed in map of each local partner's monitoring sites was provided to better understand how the region is covered and overlap is

minimized. The Coordinated Monitoring Schedule for FY2023 will begin September 1, 2022. Wright shared CRP's involvement in paying for NELAP accreditation of local partner labs, as well as funding for analysis of the TKN and chlorophyll *a* of samples collected by partners. Kendall Guidroz, Senior Planner at H-GAC and Texas Stream Team Coordinator, finished the presentation with an update on the Texas Stream Team Program Trainings, which are funded by CRP. Trainings are expected to resume in June 2022.

Senior Planner Brian Sims is the H-GAC staff member who managed the Monitoring Efficiency Special Study conducted during FY20-21. The preliminary findings of that project were presented at the BSC meeting on June 2, 2021. Sims's presentation at the April 26, 2022, BSC meeting outlined the implementation activities related to the findings. The preliminary results showed that H-GAC, along with all local partners, run an efficient monitoring program. However, the main issue was found to be data management and data review. H-GAC worked with the local partners to create a standard naming convention for each. A standardized naming convention helped H-GAC handle partner data more efficiently. This would make it easier to track what data files were submitted to H-GAC and which files were processed for submission to TCEQ. In response to the request for additional training in water quality monitoring, data management, processing, and data interpretation, H-GAC implemented a series of short-courses (20 minutes or less) which only focus on one-topic at a time. H-GAC has conducted four short-courses and will host them in months when there are no other CRP-associated meetings. All short courses have been and will continue to be conducted via TEAMS meeting software to eliminate travel time and expense

Jessica Casillas, an H-GAC Senior Planner and the CRP Data Manager, presented the new monitoring application she has developed for water quality monitoring. The application is GIS-based and can be run on either a smart phone or on a tablet in the field. As data and photographs are collected in the field, the information can be submitted directly to data files back at the office. This application includes promptings that help field personnel collect the data and perform data entry with fewer data entry errors. The application is also intended to reduce the time associated with data entry, formatting, and review. So far, H-GAC's field crews have been testing the application with great success. SJRA has also volunteered to test the application with their monitoring activities. Casillas is working closely with SJRA staff to address their unique situations. Casillas will present the application at the next Regional Monitoring Workgroup to encourage more users. Casillas will work with each local partner to fine tune the application to fit each program's needs.

Steven Johnston, Senior Planner at H-GAC, gave an update on activities associated with the Bacteria Implementation Group (BIG), and the revisions to the Basin 11 and Basin 13 Implementations Plans for the TMDL Program. Johnston highlighted how the watershed projects use CRP data in their planning and modeling activities.

Justin Bower, a Principal Planner at H-GAC, gave a brief explanation of H-GAC's Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) projects and how they differ from the TMDL projects in the region. Bower gave a summary of completed WPPs in the region, such as the West Fork San Jacinto River WPP, the Cypress Creek WPP, and the Spring Creek WPP. Bower highlighted his newest

project, the Clear Creek WPP. Rachel Windham, H-GAC Planner, gave an update on her newest project under development, the East Fork San Jacinto River WPP.

Guidroz, Coordinator for the River, Lakes, Bays ‘N Bayous Trash Bash, gave a summary of results for the 28<sup>th</sup> annual Trash Bash event held on Saturday, March 26, 2022. Due to COVID, the event was canceled in spring 2020 and individualized in 2021 with no large gatherings of volunteers. This year, the event was held conducted at 14 sites and drew over 2,500 participants. H-GAC’s CRP sponsored educational activities at each of the clean-up location to help people make the connection between their behavior/activities and water quality. Guidroz invited everyone to join the next Trash Bash event on Saturday, March 25, 2023.

### **Other Business and Announcements**

Running wrapped up by inviting meeting attendees to share meeting announcements. Meeting announcements included dates and times for several upcoming TMDL and WPP partnership meetings and the date for the next Clean Waters Initiative (CWI) workshop which would highlight H-GAC’s various web tools. Camila Biaggi, a Harris County Water Quality Specialist, announced the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Harris County OSSF Webinar was scheduled for two half days in May. Linda Shead of Shead Conservation Solutions announced Mark Kramer, the long-time employee and manager of the Armand Bayou Nature Center, passed away recently. Mud Lake, aka Lake Pasadena, at the downstream end of Armand Bayou, was renamed to honor Mark’s years of dedication to preserving the Nature Center and protecting Armand Bayou. It was re-named “Lake Mark Kramer”.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 PM.