

Houston-Galveston Area Council's Clean Rivers Program Steering Committee Meeting

Thursday, March 22, 2012
10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Meeting Location:
Spring Creek Greenway Nature Center
1300 Riley Fuzzel Road
Spring, TX 77386

Summary Notes

1. Welcome & Introductions

Todd Running welcomed everyone and began introductions. Todd explained that conducting the Basin Steering Committee meeting with a water quality field demonstration segment had been a long-time goal of his. He acknowledged Spring Creek Greenway Nature Center Manager Teri MacArthur's for making accommodations for us at the nature center and special thanks was extended to Montgomery County Commissioner Ed Chance for providing lunch for meeting attendees. Todd reviewed the agenda, explaining that we would have several presentations first, then dismiss everyone to reconvene down at the creek for the field demonstrations. Afterwards, everyone should come back to the nature center for lunch, discussion and networking.

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments made at the meeting.

3. Update: Draft 2012 Basin Highlights Report

Todd gave a brief update about the Draft 2012 Basin Highlights Report discussing the drought and its effects on partner monitoring, drinking water lines, fishing and oyster harvesting, and the regions treescape. He discussed the data analysis that was performed to determine whether there was a trend in regional water quality. Todd asked for comments from stakeholders and committee members so the report could be finished. The deliverable date is set for May 15, 2012.

4. Coordinated Monitoring Meeting – April 10, 2012

Jean Wright reviewed the current coordinated monitoring schedule (CMS) and shared the number of monitoring sites per partner as well as parameters and frequencies for each. Jean showed how anyone can access the CMS by going to either H-GAC's web site or the state CMS at (<http://cms.lcra.org>). She asked for input from stakeholders and committee members regarding potential monitoring locations and invited everyone to attend the upcoming Coordinated Monitoring meeting set for April 10, 2012.

5. Budget Update

Todd explained about the state budget cuts to the Clean Rivers Program and how H-GAC was asked to take all the cuts this contract period to simplify the budget process. In total, there was approximately 28% cut from the CRP budget but most was made up using 106 Clean Water Act funds for the next 2 years. This is extremely important to know since CRP is no longer a dedicated fund. A break down of the budget was handed out for stakeholders to review and ask questions.

6. Watershed Action Planning Process (WAP)

Patricia Wise, TCEQ, gave a presentation introducing and explaining the Watershed Action planning process developed by TCEQ. There are representatives from every program within TCEQ as well as representatives from the Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board working on the WAP. A handout was passed out to the group explaining how stakeholders and other interested parties could access the information being developed by the WAP. Todd Running explained how H-GAC had added 2 segments to the WAP lists as waterbodies of special interest. Having them listed will make those segments eligible for funding in the future.

7. Updates: H-GAC's Water Resources Group Special Projects

- a. On-site Sewer Facilities Mapping & Database Project
- b. Bastrop Bayou Watershed Protection Plan (WPP)
- c. Westfield Estates WPP
- d. Cedar Bayou WPP
- e. San Bernard River WPP

Will Merrell, Jeff Murray, and Aubin Phillips gave brief updates about the 5 projects listed above.

8. Field Demonstrations

The meeting broke apart so participants could drive down to the parking lot near Spring Creek to watch the water quality field demonstrations. The demonstrations included showing how USGS and H-GAC monitor flow using hydroboards and Doppler technology; an on-land simulation of flow monitoring using a Flow Tracker meter and wading rod; how to collect water samples from a bridge using a bucket; using a secchi tube to measure transparency of the water; Texas Stream Team volunteer methods for measuring water temperature, pH, conductivity, and dissolved oxygen as opposed to the field meters used by professional investigators. The group was pleased to see that the Texas Stream methods generated the same results as the multi-probe instruments.

9. Lunch

After all questions were answered, everyone went back up to the Nature Center meeting room for lunch. The Nature Center sent all meeting participants away with a bag of handouts about the center and the Texas environment.

