



EAST FORK SAN JACINTO RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

Public Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 12th, 2022
1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

In Attendance:

Organizers:

Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC):

- Andrea Tantillo, Meeting Coordinator
- Rachel Windham, H-GAC Project Manager

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ):

- Heather Robinson, TCEQ Project Manager

In-Person Attendees:

Andrew Isbell (Walker County)

Brian Sims (H-GAC)

Danny Davis (Sam Houston National Forest, United States Forest Service (USFS))

Nia Hicks (Sam Houston National Forest, USFS)

Tom Douglas (Bayou Preservation Association)

Virtual Attendees:

Ashley Morgan-Olvera (Texas Research Institute for Environmental Studies (TRIES))

Ericka Jackson (Harris County Pollution Control)

Jamie Shakar (City of Houston Public Works)

Jason Roesner (USFS)

Jessy Stone (TRIES)

Kevin Muraira (Bayou Land Conservancy)

Rachelle Smith (TRIES)

Roberto Vega (Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD))

Roger Brookes (City of Cleveland)

Ron Diderich (Texas Master Naturalists)

Meeting Notes:

Welcome and Introductions

- Rachel Windham (H-GAC) commenced the hybrid meeting at 1:30 pm by welcoming the attendees. Ms. Windham introduced herself and the participants in the room. Andrea Tantillo (H-GAC) then called roll for virtual attendees.

Project Overview and Preliminary Findings

- Ms. Windham provided an overview of the East Fork San Jacinto River watershed.
 - The East Fork of the San Jacinto River watershed includes parts of Walker, San Jacinto, Liberty, Harris, and Montgomery County. Much of the watershed area overlaps with the Sam Houston National Forest. More natural land cover is observed north of the San Jacinto-Liberty County line, and more developed areas are located south of that line.
 - Assessments of surface water in the East Fork of the San Jacinto River watershed indicate impairments for contact recreation use due to bacteria levels in exceedance of the state water quality standard.
 - Sources of fecal indicator bacteria include point sources such as improperly treated wastewater discharge, and nonpoint sources including overflow from on-site sewage facilities and illicit sewage, waste from pets and livestock, and waste from wildlife and invasive species.
 - Preliminary analyses of data collected quarterly between 2011 and 2021 show bacteria levels exceeding state water quality standards in East Fork of the San Jacinto River, Winters Bayou, and Boswell Creek. Geometric mean data for bacteria in the surface water of Nebletts Creek do not exceed the standard. Other parameters including dissolved oxygen, ammonia nitrogen, total phosphorous, and nitrate were analyzed but do not demonstrate geometric means exceeding state water quality standards. More information can be found in the Acquired Data Analysis Report at the following link:
https://eastforkpartnership.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/0/7/130710643/30143_3.2_acquired_data_analysis_report_final.pdf
 - Load duration curve analyses relating streamflow to water quality data indicate:
 - Bacteria loads exceed the state water quality standard in high flow and moist conditions across the watershed which could indicate nonpoint source pressures are the major influence of high levels of bacteria. However, point source pollution can also occur during or

be exacerbated by high flow events as noted by Andrew Isbell (Walker County).

- Bacteria loading is below the standard for mid-range, dry, and low flow conditions in Boswell Creek and Winters Bayou.
- Bacteria loading is variable in mid-range and dry conditions at different points on the East Fork of the San Jacinto River.

Partnership Mission, Structure, and Outlook

- The East Fork of the San Jacinto River Watershed Partnership is being formed to develop a watershed protection plan informed by data analyses and stakeholder knowledge.
- Framework for the East Fork of the San Jacinto River Watershed Partnership was described and included more detail on meeting roles including general stakeholders, focused work groups and steering committee members.
- A projected timeline was reviewed showing the milestones that the partnership hopes to achieve by late 2024. The last steps include the development and implementation of a watershed protection plan (WPP) document.
- An example of a WPP drafted by a partnership facilitated by H-GAC was shared at the following link:
https://springcreekpartnership.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/0/7/130710643/scwpp_draft1_0621min.pdf
- Heather Robinson (TCEQ) also shared the following link with more examples of WPPs: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/nonpoint-source/mgmt-plan/watershed-pp.html>
- A call was made for notice of any other projects or organizations that may already be established in the watershed that the partnership can work alongside. Danny Davis (Sam Houston National Forest, USFS) recommended looking into the San Jacinto Regional Watershed Master Drainage Plan for data that could be pertinent to the project.

Next Steps and Discussion

- The outlook between the current meeting and the next scheduled meeting (February 2023) was discussed. At the next meeting, the partnership will decide on a steering committee and review more technical information produced by H-GAC.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:00 pm.

For more information, visit www.eastforkpartnership.com,
or contact Rachel Windham at:
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