



EAST FORK SAN JACINTO RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

Virtual Public Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 15th, 2023
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

In Attendance:

Organizers:

Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC):

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

Attendees:

Andrew Isbell (Walker County)

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

Brian Koch (Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB))

Cassidy Ince (Texas A&M Forest Service)

Danielle Cioce (Harris County Engineering)

James Messer

Jamie Shakar (City of Houston Public Works)

Jason Pinchback (Texas General Land Office (GLO))

Jean Mann

Jerry Caraviotis (Harris County Pollution Control Services)

John McKinney (Montgomery County)

Kelly Norrid (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD))

Kevin Muraira (Bayou Land Conservancy)

Kirstin Vernin (Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC))

Lucy Flores (GLO)

Nugent Cotton (Harris County Pollution Control Services)

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

Ron Diderich (Texas Master Naturalists)

Tom Douglas (Bayou Preservation Association)

Wade Guy (HCFCD)

Meeting Notes:

Welcome and Introductions

- Rachel Windham (H-GAC) commenced the hybrid meeting at 2:00 pm by welcoming the attendees. Ms. Windham introduced herself and called roll for virtual attendees and provided a brief project introduction.

Steering Committee Nominations

- Ms. Windham explained the structure of the partnership and the role of the Steering Committee as the leadership arm of the partnership. After describing the time commitment and responsibilities of the Steering Committee, Ms. Windham introduced volunteers who had reached out before the meeting and called for further nominations. The following members were added to the committee:

Name	Organization	Representing
Ashley Morgan Olvera	Sam Houston State University	Academia
Brian Koch	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board	Agriculture
Kevin Muraira	Bayou Land Conservancy	Community Organizations
Kelly Norrid	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Environmental Organizations
Cassidy Ince	TAMU Forest Service	Forestry
Jamie Shakar	City of Houston	Local Government
Andrew Isbell	Walker County	Local Government

- In addition to these members, Ms. Windham will continue to seek representatives for the United States Forest Service and Business/Industry.

Project Background

- 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.

Bacteria Source Models

- Ms. Windham explained the Spatially Explicit Load Enrichment Calculation Tool (SELECT) assessments used to estimate the potential daily load from all fecal waste sources considered in the analyses. These assessments are based on known data and assumptions from literature values and are modified to estimate how load contributions will change over time in five-year increments out to 2050. While these estimates do not formally account for fate and transport, potential instream loads are weighted based on the distance of individual sources from the waterways using a buffer approach.
- Ms. Windham reviewed preliminary SELECT results based on each of the following sources:
 - Wastewater Treatment Facilities
 - On-Site Sewage Facilities
 - Dog Waste
 - Livestock Waste
 - Deer Waste
 - Feral Hogs
- Ms. Windham made note of sources that could contribute to instream loads that were not accounted for in the SELECT analysis due to insufficient or incompatible data. These include wildlife other than deer, birds, and sanitary sewer overflows. Ms. Windham pointed out that while the impacts of these sources were not estimated, they can still be included as priorities in the Watershed Protection Plan.
- Finally, Ms. Windham explained summary charts showing the total daily load estimate as of 2022 and the projected daily load for 2050. Each of these charts demonstrated the estimated percent contribution of each considered source to the overall load. According to the results, livestock waste contributes most of the 2022 load and is followed by a large contribution from feral hogs. This is likely due to the agricultural and forested land cover types that make up the watershed. Looking out to 2050, the overall load is expected to increase by 1.4x. Livestock waste still contributing the highest amount to the overall load, but contributions

from dog waste are projected to grow past feral hogs to become the second largest contributor. H-GAC estimates this reflects the prediction that more development will move into the watershed and therefore more pet-owning residents.

- These results will be discussed further with workgroups consisting of volunteers from the partnership and revised to better reflect observed conditions in the watershed.

Next Steps and Discussion

- The outlook between the current meeting and the next prospective workgroup meeting (tentatively March 2023) and stakeholder meeting (tentatively April 2023) was discussed. Ms. Windham initiated a poll for attendees to use to indicate their interest in joining a workgroup to help refine the model results. At the next stakeholder meeting, model revisions suggested by the workgroups will be shared with the partnership and H-GAC will provide an introduction to potential implementation strategies corresponding to sources of concern.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:30 pm.

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