



OSSF Workgroup Meeting Minutes

October 12, 2011 9:30 AM

Workgroup Members Present: Bryan Eastham (TCEQ), Linda Broach (TCEQ), Ryan Gerlich (Texas AgriLife Extension, by phone), Marty Entringer (GCHD), Steven Johnston (GBEP), Charriss York (TAMU Texas Coastal Watershed Program), Will Merrell (H-GAC), and Charlene Bohanon (GBF)

Discussion

Public Meeting: Charlene informed the workgroup that a public meeting has been scheduled for November 15th from 3-5pm at Armand Bayou Nature Center. She explained that based on suggestions from those experienced in holding public meetings, it will be designed to be informal and very interactive. Marty Entringer agreed to speak on behalf of the OSSF workgroup for a few minutes at the meeting. Workgroup members received postcard sized handouts to pass out to advertise the meeting. Charlene will email out a one page PDF advertisement that is good for attaching to emails, as well as an e-invitation that can be forwarded to contacts.

Implementation Plan: Charlene informed the workgroup that the preliminary draft of the entire I-plan was submitted to TCEQ on September 30th. She will email the entire PDF document to them, as well as a Word file with just their section so they can give additional comments as necessary.

Charlene provided the workgroup with a handout of a load reduction calculation example from another I-plan. Upon receiving information from H-GAC, the calculation should be fairly straightforward for OSSFs. Will Merrell explained the map that he created, which shows permitted OSSFs in the surrounding region, as well as notes which ones are within a one and two stream mile area around the project segments. There are 497 within 1 mile and 1476 within 2 miles. Will is going to estimate the square mileage within the 1 and 2 mile buffer zones. He is currently working on mapping the unpermitted OSSFs.

The workgroup discussed holding workshops for homeowners and real estate agents. It was suggested that all workshops provide CEUs in order to ensure better attendance. Ryan said Texas AgriLife Extension has a 2 hour course that would be good to offer and he will check if they still have some funding left to cover those costs. Will suggested contacting him about the curriculum they use at H-GAC and said they are working to obtain CEUs, but it is difficult to do. They may end up working with Lone Star College since they are already a certified body. Will also informed the group that H-GAC will hold an OSSF seminar in January or February and their resource website will be online soon. Charriss suggested teaming up with the Dickinson Bayou Watershed group when holding trainings since the project areas are so close together. The Houston Area Real Estate Investors (HARI) and Texas Area Real Estate Investors (TARI) are two groups that were suggested to target for attending workshops.

Charlene brought up an article she found about a county in Washington state that is implementing OSSF operation and maintenance fees under a new ordinance. She suggested this as one means to assuring long-term improvements to bacteria levels. Linda explained that there will be a lot of push back from this because right now we

don't have the ability to show stakeholders data to prove that OSSFs are a big problem. She emphasized the importance of carrying out a study to enable us to show statistics/data to get people on board.

Funding: The workgroup discussed funding needs for repairing/replacing failing OSSFs. Some estimates given were \$5-8,000 to replace a conventional system or \$6-12,000 for ____?. A peat filter system is around \$1,100. If repairs are needed, a permit is required. The long term problem is that when a new system is put in, the maintenance is covered by the company for the first two years and is then the responsibility of the homeowner. This creates problems and an alternate solution is needed to make sure maintenance is continually done. Another problem is the animosity received from homeowners connected to sewer lines who don't think it is fair that OSSF owners receive funding to repair/replace and they have to pay fees to be on the sewer. Linda recommended that stakeholders be made aware of the true cost of what they get vs. what they pay for. Charlene asked Ryan how they determine who gets funding and he said they have a survey he can share. They work with TCEQ to make those calls.

The other measure that will require funding is to hire additional authorized agents to carry out proactive OSSF inspections. Currently, inspections are done on a reactive basis when complaints come in due to funding limitations. Marty says the average annual salary of a sanitarian is \$36,000 plus 20% benefits. He said that more dye tabs will also need to be purchased.

Next meeting: November 9th, 9:30am