



Boater Waste Workgroup Meeting Minutes

May 2, 2012 2:00 PM

Workgroup Members Present: Scott Tuma (City of League City), Paul Fannin (Public), Ericka McCauley (GBEP), Keisha Heck (Redfish Island Marine), Dewayne Hollin (Texas Sea Grant), Angela McDowell (GCHD), Jean Wright (H-GAC), and Charlene Bohanon (GBF)

Discussion

Introductions/Updates: The workgroup members introduced each other and Charlene gave an overview of the I-Plan process to benefit those who are new to the workgroup. She updated the group on where we stand in the process and the role of the Boater Waste workgroup. The final draft of the plan will be emailed to new workgroup members.

Outreach Activities: Charlene gave the group an update on the BWEC outreach activities that have taken place including the first launch of a Clean Water Partnership with Marina Del Sol and potential launch with Watergate YC. Help will be needed from the workgroup members with ties to Watergate members to help with advertising the launch event once the date is set. She gave an overview of what the CWP program consists of and showed them the program logo and photos from the launch party. She reported on the feedback that was received from presenting to the Galveston County Board of Health. They are definitely interested in partnering (hence our new representative on the BW workgroup from GCHD), but there were mixed feelings on some of the measures we have proposed (i.e. zero tolerance enforcement events). The overall impression was that they agree that this is a concern and want to partner with us, but that more facts are needed to determine the level of the problem and that more pump-out facilities are needed around the Bay. Charlene explained that GBF has had several education booths, but are limiting the number unless more volunteers can be found to man them. More time will be spent giving presentations and carrying out hands-on activities. There were also a handful of print ads that have been published, some in-kind donations and some paid. Paid ads are being limited, but GBF continues to distribute the ads for magazines to use in hopes of getting donated space. Finally, two volunteer monitoring classes have been held—one in February at Watergate YC and one in April at Marina Del Sol. Monitors were trained that will be able to sample at Marina Del Sol, Watergate, Lakewood Yacht Club, South Shore Harbour, and Houston Yacht Club. The bacteria monitoring equipment and supplies have been ordered and many of the monitors are excited to get trained on this method.

319 Grant: Based on conversations with TCEQ, GBF has decided not to apply for 319 funding this time around for boater waste projects because they are wanting separate applications for boater waste and OSSFs versus an all-inclusive application. Since there are currently funds available through CMP to carry out many of the I-plan management measures for boater waste, the OSSF workgroup will apply for funding through the 319 program this year.

Impact study/surveys: Charlene explained that thanks to the discussions that took place while writing the I-Plan draft and trying to make the load reduction calculation, many of the variables that are needed in order to assess the potential impact that boater waste contributes to bacteria problems in the Bay have been identified. A water quality intern will be hired to start on June 4th, with a majority of their time spent on obtaining this data from the marinas and mobile pump-out companies.

Pump-outs/enforcement: The workgroup still feels that a pump-out station at 3 Amigos would be a huge win for the boater waste issue since it is the place that a majority of boats get their fuel and is a high traffic area between Clear Lake and Galveston Bay. The key now is to just make some progress on communicating with the owners of this need. Charlene promised to make this a priority before the next meeting. Another site that is of concern is Watergate YC. Apparently their attempt at applying for a CVA grant took place 3 years ago and hasn't been pursued since. GBF still frequently receives calls and emails asking why they don't have a pump-out facility. Once the data from the impact study/survey has been carried out, this will help give GBF more information to bring to the owners as to why this is a problem. The workgroup also suggested checking if the Galveston Yacht Basin will be installing a pump-out station. The other area that has been stagnant for a while is in regards to increased enforcement. The major hold up with this is being able to identify who the marine safety officers in the area are so we can start talking with them about the workgroup's idea to hold zero tolerance enforcement weekends and walking the docks to issue warnings for Y-valves that are not secured. Charlene has asked the workgroup to help her identify these officers, specifically for Clear Lake Shores, League City and Galveston County. Angela suggested having some of their investigators out on the docks more frequently to do inspections as well and will look into this possibility.

Clean Water Sticker: The workgroup and public still have a lot of questions and uncertainties about TCEQ's Clean Water Sticker program. Several workgroup members didn't know anything about it, which leads to the suspicion that there are many others in the area that don't either. The other question that remains is what is the purpose of the program, is the program's purpose being met. Charlene will add Cassandra Derrick to the BW workgroup email list and make it a point to get these questions addressed before the next workgroup meeting.

Next meeting: June 6th, 2:00pm