



Science and Monitoring Workgroup

September 16, 2011 9:30 AM

Workgroup Members Present: Linda Broach (TCEQ), Steven Johnston (GBEP), Anne Lutringer (Public), Chip Morris (TCEQ by phone), and Charlene Bohanon (GBF)

Discussion

Schedule Updates: Charlene began the meeting with introductions and by reviewing the new I-Plan schedule. A preliminary draft will be submitted to TCEQ by September 30, 2011 and the final draft is due on February 15, 2012. In the mean time one to two public meetings will be held and public comments will be received and incorporated into the final draft. Workgroup and GBF staff comments are currently being incorporated and will be submitted with the preliminary draft in September.

Funding: Section 319 non-point source pollution funding through TCEQ was discussed. We will be working with Kerry Niemann and Bill Carter at TCEQ. Linda suggested that Charlene work directly with the TCEQ and TSSWCB folks on the grant process and relay information to the workgroups along the way.

The workgroup mentioned that John Jacobs has 319 funds for OSSFs in the Galveston County Health District. He is a good person to ask about the application process, costs, etc.

Public and City Council Meetings: Charlene solicited suggestions for dates, locations, target audiences and advertising avenues. It was decided that a meeting around the 2nd or 3rd week in November would be ideal. Future meetings with city council members are also on the radar. The workgroup suggested talking to Rachel Powers about engaging OSSF and WTTF stakeholders. Focus on the authorized agents.

Charlene asked the workgroup about maps and figures that are still needed and the possibility of getting them for the next public meeting. Additional TMDL project segments will need to be added to the maps. Linda and Chip will help Charlene connect with the right person at TCEQ to get this done. The chart that was created with info from TDSHS also needs to be updated with new segment info. Steven suggested asking Mike Tenant for these stats.

Data Discussion: Linda Broach analyzed the bacteria data looking for both seasonal and spatial trends. The first analysis combined the bacteria data with locations of rookeries. She found that there was a high concentration of bacteria near the rookeries. Linda suggested talking with the standards department at TCEQ to recommend a modification in the language of the standard to account for the high concentrations of bacteria near rookeries. A buffer zone around the rookery, much like the shoreline buffer zone, where the oyster waters use does not apply is one suggestion to consider/make it a PHZ.

Linda did find a seasonal pattern. When fecal coliform is measured year round, it does not exist during the summer months. Most likely the heat and/or UV kills the bacteria during the summer. However, near Clear Lake there are

higher concentrations of fecal coliform during the summer which could be linked to increased boater use. The Clear Lake area has a large number of boaters who could be dumping boater sewage in Clear Lake and the bay. Linda said we need to think about the best way to show this on a map.

Storm water Discussion: The decision was made early in the I-Plan development to focus only on management measures for OSSFs, WWTFs, and Boater Waste. Storm water runoff was not considered to be a large contributing factor to the bacteria in the bay. However after re-analyzing the data, high concentrations of bacteria at the mouth of the tributaries indicate that runoff is an issue for the oyster waters. A section in the I-Plan will be written to address the issue of runoff. The occurrence of the runoff will be acknowledged but instead of being addressed by a management measure in this I-Plan, the Science and Monitoring workgroup will monitor the progress of upstream TMDL/WPP groups with their management measures that address storm water runoff. If no progress is being made, stronger measures will be initiated.

OSSFs: The workgroup suggested asking Justin Bower or Will Merrell at H-GAC for a map of the OSSF sites in our project area.

Charlene asked the workgroup for their opinion on doing water quality monitoring in marinas. Linda mentioned that the only study she knows of was done in the 90's by George Guillen and she can get Charlene the report. The workgroup was very positive about the idea to start volunteer water quality monitoring in marinas and Linda explained that the Enterolert method is much simpler than plate counts and could easily be done with volunteers upon getting the proper equipment.

Next meeting: October 24th, 9:30am