



GALVESTON BAY FOUNDATION

Implementation Plan Annual Stakeholders Meeting

Implementation Plan for Eleven Maximum Daily Loads for Bacteria in Waters of the Upper Gulf Coast

Thursday, February 23rd, 2017 2:30 PM – 3:45 PM

Freeman-Branch Public Library in Clear Lake

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Ray Mayo (City of La Porte), Susie Blake (City of League City), Linda Broach (TCEQ), Lori FitzSimmons-Evans (GCHD), Martin Entringer (GCHD), Jean Wright (H-GAC), Lisa Marshall (GBEP), Steven Johnston (H-GAC), Kaitlin Grable (GBF), Sarah Gossett (GBF), Bryan Eastham (TCEQ), Leonard Levine (GCWDA), Helen Paige (Marina Bay Harbor), Nate Johnson (GBF)

I. Welcome, introductions – 2:30 – 2:35 PM

- a. GBF displayed updated maps of the TDSHS oyster consumption bacteria data from 2010 – 2016, just 2015 – 2016, and GBF’s citizen science bacteria data for 2016 to provide a reference for how bacteria concentrations have changed over the last couple of years. While the TDSHS data show that bacteria concentrations have largely increased in 2015 – 2016 compared to the 2010 – 2016 data, the sample sizes for the 2015 – 2016 data are relatively small and rainfall during these years was relatively high. Additionally, GBF’s monitoring data from 2016 showed that all sites were below the enterococci limit for primary contact recreation.

II. Update on Management Measures – 2:35 – 3:30 PM

a. Waste Water Treatment Facility Workgroup

- i. **Measure 1.1: Guidance and Training** - Distribute and maintain guidance document
 1. Workgroup expressed uncertainty as to what this specific document (Troubleshooting Bacteria Effluent from Wastewater Treatment Plants RG-515) refers to. GBF will follow up with TCEQ to determine if this document is part of a Texas A&M Engineering and Extension (TEEX) guidance document for WWTFs. This guidance document was intended to be separate from the guidance and training provided to WWTF operators regarding sampling requirements prior to permit renewal, and was mostly focused on providing preventative assistance. However, currently this training document is most likely not applicable to many WWTF operators and so the workgroup agreed that there is no need to develop this document if it has not already been developed. GBF will follow up with WWTF workgroup regarding the status of the document once more information is collected.

- ii. **Measure 1.3: Increase Compliance and Enforcement** - Develop and gain U.S. EPA approval for focused investigations at major/mandatory minor facilities
 - 1. The ultimate success of this measure is out of the hands of the workgroup, and rests at the federal level as the EPA would need to approve TCEQ's plan to provide focused inspections and receive "credit" for these inspections. TCEQ is currently negotiating this with the EPA, and hopes to receive approval for this plan. However, the workgroup agreed that the wording of this measure may need to be revised, so as to ensure that the success of the measure does not rely on a facet of this process that is out of the hands of the workgroup. Preferred wording would be something like "Develop a plan to gain U.S. EPA approval for focused investigations at major/mandatory minor facilities, and negotiate with the EPA to seek approval for focused investigations." GBF will coordinate with the WWTF workgroup to determine appropriate wording for the measure.
- iii. **Measure 1.4a: Decrease Sanitary Sewer Overflows** - Develop an outreach campaign to promote SSOIs and post materials on GBF website
 - 1. The workgroup mentioned that while these outreach materials to promote the SSOI exist, they are not frequently used in mass marketing campaigns primarily because the audience for SSOIs is relatively small. The initiative is an education and training tool for facilities that may face issues with SSOs, and much of the outreach is focused on ensuring that individuals who may benefit from the SSOI know about it. These materials can be added to the GBF I-Plan webpage if the workgroup believes that would help spread the message to groups that would benefit from the SSOI. GBF and the WWTF workgroup agreed that additional revisions need to be made to GBF's I-Plan website to increase its visibility and update the information provided. Additional links to other relevant GBF programs (such as Cease the Grease and GBAN) as well as announcements of outside training opportunities and resources will be added to the site.

b. On-Site Sewage Facility Workgroup

- i. **Measure 2.1: Create Regional Plan to Identify, Prioritize, and Address Failing OSSFs** - Prioritize areas to focus inspections
 - 1. The OSSF workgroup mentioned that this is the first step to address failing septic systems throughout Galveston County, though limited resources continue to be the primary issue facing these measures. Bolivar Peninsula may be an area to focus inspections, as Galveston Island does not have as many septic systems as the Peninsula does. Regardless, the workgroup is on schedule to complete this task.
- ii. **Measure 2.1: Create Regional Plan to Identify, Prioritize, and Address Failing OSSFs** - Identify research partners, low income candidates, and potential funding

1. Again, a lack of resources continue to be an obstacle for addressing failing systems in low-income areas. In order to gain more political support and funding for addressing failing systems, research would need to be done that directly shows the environmental impacts caused by malfunctioning systems (research that has not yet been done). TCEQ's 319 NPS grants may be a potential source of research funding, as are SEPs for both research and repair. However, the number of systems that can be repaired with SEP funds can be quite small relative to the number of malfunctioning systems currently known. GBF will follow up with Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Services (TAES) to discuss potential funding and research opportunities for OSSFs.

c. Boater Waste Workgroup

- i. **Measure 3.1: Increase Access to Pump-Out Facilities, Enforce Existing Regulations, Enhance Outreach and Marketing, Designate Galveston Bay as Federal NDZ, Conduct Water Quality Monitoring in Marinas** - Survey and collect data on boater waste impact on bacteria
 1. GBF provided updates on the Dockwalker program (carried out each summer by volunteer interns) and the GBAN pollution reporting tool (scheduled for beta testing in March, full launch as downloadable app in April). GBF also raised a concern that a major question by boaters, specifically what proportion of total harmful bacteria in the Bay is caused by boaters, may be difficult to answer. TCEQ recommended that focused marina studies, such as those carried out by GBF summer interns and water monitors in the past, may provide a small case study of boater contributions to bacteria that could be useful going forward. GBF will continue to host a summer intern, assuming resources are available, to perform this type of study.
- ii. **Measure 3.1: Increase Access to Pump-Out Facilities, Enforce Existing Regulations, Enhance Outreach and Marketing, Designate Galveston Bay as Federal NDZ, Conduct Water Quality Monitoring in Marinas** - Begin federal NDZ application process
 1. GBF expressed concerns that the wording of this measure implies that, within Year 1, GBF will have a completed NDZ application. Though there are currently 23 pumpout facilities throughout the Bay that GBF is aware of, none exist in the Anahuac-East Bay region. Additionally, GBF and the BW workgroup are still unaware of how the majority of commercial vessels discharge their sewage, and although the EPA's "adequate number of pumpouts" formula does not specifically address commercial vessels, GBF and the workgroup do not feel that they have sufficient knowledge on this industry to request an NDZ designation in the next year. Other members of the I-Plan stakeholder group interpreted the wording of the measure to mean that GBF could acquire data or draft an application, with the end goal potentially being a formal request,

without being held to complete an application by the end of Year 1.
Therefore, the management measure's wording will remain as is.

III. Final wrap up.....3:30 – 3:45 PM

- a. GBF summarized the following action items based on input from the workgroups:
 - i. GBF will track down information from TCEQ on the guidance document in WWTF MM 1.1 to determine the status of this document
 - ii. GBF will work with the WWTF workgroup to revise the wording in MM 1.3
 - iii. GBF will update the I-Plan website with additional links and resources relevant to the I-Plan audience
 - iv. GBF will inquire into the possibility of using TCEQ 319 NPS grant funding for OSSF research and will coordinate with TAES on research and maintenance being completed in the region
 - v. GBF will try and host a summer intern to complete bacteria research in local marinas
 - vi. GBF will continue to collect data from commercial groups on vessel sewage practices in Galveston Bay and share this information with the workgroup as applicable
- b. The workgroups will meet according to their own respective schedules (BW quarterly – May 2017, OSSF and WWTF as needed) going forward
- c. The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 PM