

## Meeting notes

### Neches Tidal and Hillebrandt Bayou TMDL and I-Plan Meeting

Date: April 9, 2020

Time: 2:00 pm – 2:35 pm

Location: Online via Zoom

## Meeting Summary

### Welcome and Introductions

Michael Schramm began the meeting with brief housekeeping/instructions for remote sign in and how questions will be handled during the online session. Roundtable style introductions were skipped due to the nature of the meeting. Sign-ins were requested via a Google form with the url posted in the chat box for attendees to click and fill out. The original in person meeting was going to include three presentations. However, due to the online presentation style, the technical presentation on Hillebrandt Bayou was dropped to keep the meeting concise. The slides will be provided online and presented at a follow-up meeting.

### Water Quality Planning and Implementation in Texas

*An overview about TMDLs, the primary contact recreation use impairment, and general information on water quality in Hillebrandt Bayou and Neches River.*

Dania Grundmann spoke about why and how TMDLs are utilized in the state water quality planning process. Specifically, she provided information about the primary contact recreation use impairment in the Neches River Tidal and Hillebrandt Bayou. The elevated levels of fecal indicator bacteria have remained above the water quality standards set by the state, necessitating the development of the TMDL. The current timeline for both projects indicates the TMDL for Hillebrandt Bayou will be completed by Winter 2021 and the TMDL for Neches River Tidal will be complete by Summer/Fall 2022. The Regional TMDL-I-Plan will be tied with the Neches River Tidal review process. Dania also mentioned that Gerrad Hofmans with the TMDL program was available as a resources concerning community engagement with the TMDL process.

### Approach to Address Water Quality & Stakeholder Involvement

*An overview about how local stakeholders can be involved in decision-making and development of the TMDL I-Plans. The presentation is intended to solicit responses from attendees about desired roles and structures regarding water quality planning.*

Michael Schramm reiterated the role of the TMDL I-Plan for achieving pollutant loads designated in the TMDL. This was followed up with a discussion about the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the process. Importantly, local stakeholders can become involved in the process through a coordination committee or workgroups. The structures and roles included open stakeholder groups, a coordination committee, and specialized workgroups as identified by stakeholders. Michael solicited feedback from attendees about the desired decision-making structure, if they were willing to serve on a coordination committee or workgroup, and information about meeting locations and formats. The feedback was solicited by Google Forms

([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScon6ZGaHLeEizqEO7lQb\\_6rg9IPGPqpuiSczMgn5TMBRFGsA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScon6ZGaHLeEizqEO7lQb_6rg9IPGPqpuiSczMgn5TMBRFGsA/viewform?usp=sf_link)). A brief follow-up about the next steps was also presented. In the short term TWRI and TCEQ will work with stakeholders on developing the desired decision-making groups and continue to facilitate the process. The next in-person meetings will include the technical discussions related to Hillebrandt Bayou and possibly Neches River Tidal.

### Questions from attendees

Is there a formal process or agreement with the TMDL process and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)? The Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) depend on NRCS for implementation of programs that ultimately affect the TMDLs.

Michael Schramm responded that there is no formal process or arrangement. Through facilitating the I-Plan process we try to engage NRCS at the local and regional level. We also try to work with the SWCDs and Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board to relay the information and importance of practices in achieving TMDLs. TWRI is also available to discuss challenges with the SWCDs and facilitate communication and solutions.

### Adjournment

### Attendees

The following signed in or names appeared in the Zoom call.

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Dale Parish	Lower Sabine-Neches SWCD#446
Anna Gitter	TWRI
Lucas Gregory	TWRI
Carla Ethridge	ANRA
Jeremiah Poling	ANRA
Allison McElroy	ANRA
Jason Watson	Lower Neches Valley Authority
Louanne Jones	TCEQ
Brian French	LJA Engineering
Taylor Shelton	City of Port Neches
Jeannie Bowlen	LNVA
John Concienne	LJA Engineering, Inc.
Gerrad Hofmans	TCEQ
Jodie Goff	Texas Farm Bureau
Terrie Looney	Big Thicket Association
Bruce Walker	Big Thicket Association
Yolanda Sorrell	City of Beaumont

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Aira Parra	City of Beaumont
Tyler Fitzgerald	AgriLife Extension Service
Doug Robinson	TCEQ – Region 10
Nikki Fitzgerald	AgriLife Extension Service
David Oates	AgriLife Extension Service
Duane Gordy	NA
	6 users via phone