

Meeting notes

Hillebrandt Bayou and Neches Tidal I-Plan Agriculture Workgroup Meeting

Date: January 29, 2021

Time: 9:00am – 10:00am

Location: Online via WebEx

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introductions

Michael Schramm (TWRI) began the meeting with introductions of attendees and workgroup members followed by a brief meeting agenda.

TMDL I-Plan Status

Schramm provided a brief review of the goals of the I-Plan and TMDL process. Schramm updated the TMDL status, indicating the Hillebrandt Bayou TMDL will be reviewed by the commission on Feb.10th and will be followed by a public comment period and public meeting. The Neches Tidal TMDL draft is in internal peer review at TCEQ.

Education and Outreach Management Measures

Schramm stated that we have an experienced group of individuals participating in this workgroup. Provided a general recap of what a management measure must include. Stated the management measures can be indirect measures, outreach or direct activities. Showed an example of activities/programs that can be implemented. Each management measure will have to include a description, technical and financial assistance, education component, implementation schedule, interim measurable milestones, indicators of progress, monitoring component and the responsible entity. An example of implementing conservation plans and water quality management plans was discussed.

Brian Koch (TSSWCB) described the Texas A&M Forest Service is given funding for forestry BMPs every year. Education and outreach a big part of those BMPs. Language/resources for those BMPs would be good to include in the I-Plan.

Dale Parish (Lower Sabine-Neches SWCD) said the SWC has difficulty with identifying specific landowners in these watersheds for I-Plan measures. Parish asked how they can reach out to those individual landowners. Schramm described a project in Lavaca County being used to target landowners that could be included in the I-Plan. Tim Cawthon (TCEQ) mentioned the TCEQ nonpoint source GIS data layers. Koch said that it might be possible to fund projects under TSSWCB to help the SWCD identify priority landowners and target implementation. The region typically does not spend all the money available through TSSWCB Water Quality Management Plan funds so this would be an opportunity to better utilize funds. Schramm said he can assist the district with an initial spreadsheet of landowner data if the info is available through the CAD.

Tyler Fitzgerald (AgriLife Extension) said the county is interested in the feral hog grant that is similar to the one implemented in Matagorda County. They are already doing educational programs with feral hogs for landowners/stakeholders.

Carla Ethridge (ANRA) said ANRA has considered feral hog work and would be willing to incorporate it into their programming/work. Ethridge has participated in renting traps/assisting landowners with feral hog traps in a previous job position and is extremely interested extending that effort to ANRA.

Parish asked what AgriLife Extension is currently doing for feral hog management. Schramm and Koch mentioned that under current federal grant funding activities are mostly limited to education and outreach. Direct removal activities aren't permitted. Schramm said he will try to coordinate additional discussion within the group and some external entities to identify resources or experiences in implementing feral hog programs.

Fitzgerald asked about who is the big contributor to bacteria in the watersheds. Schramm responded that Hillebrandt is likely from urban nonpoint sources. Neches Tidal is a more complicated watershed. LDCs only indicate under the flow conditions that exceedances occur, not where the exceedances come from. Think bacteria concentrations may have a relationship with inconsistent flow conditions. Hard to say if it is from ag or urban sources, etc.

Schramm stated we have a good number of measures that can be evaluated/included in the I-Plan. Schramm will collate this information and gather feedback via email and one-on-one discussions.

It was decided that further communication will occur on-on-one and via email (rather than doing another meeting). The suggested measures will be developed for the I-Plan and shared with the coordination committee.

Meeting Ended: 9:51am

Attendees

Attendee	Organization
Michael Schramm	TWRI
Anna Gitter	TWRI
Tim Cawthon	TCEQ
Carla Ethridge	ANRA
Brian Koch	TSSWCB
Tyler Fitzgerald	AgriLife Extension
Dale Parish	Lower Sabine Neches SWCD
Kyle Wright	NRCS