

# **Neches River Tidal and Hillebrandt Bayou – Total Maximum Daily Load Planning for Indicator Bacteria**

Thursday, August 22, 2019, 3:00pm and 6:00pm  
Cattail Marsh Wetlands Education Center  
4233 Babe Zaharias Drive, Beaumont, TX 77705

## **Meeting Summary**

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI) staff, and meeting participants introduced themselves.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Water Quality Planning and Implementation in Texas**

*Overview of surface water quality planning in Texas and the role of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs). General information related to the quality of Hillebrandt Bayou and Neches River will also be provided.*

Dania Grundmann, TCEQ, spoke about the water quality planning process in Texas and how TMDLs function within that process. Additionally, general information was given regarding the upper assessment unit of Hillebrandt Bayou (0704\_02) in the Neches-Trinity Coastal Basin and the four assessment units of Neches River Tidal (0601\_01, 0601\_02, 601\_03, and 601\_04) in the Neches River Basin. These areas have contact recreation use impairments due to elevated levels of indicator bacteria. Therefore, the TMDL process has been initiated to develop bacteria TMDLs for the impaired assessment units.

A question prompted more clarification on primary versus secondary contact recreation designations for Hillebrandt Bayou. It was explained that primary contact recreation was confirmed for the entire Hillebrandt Bayou segment. It was noted that the upper portion of the bayou in Beaumont is steep and not conducive to recreation. Additional questions were asked regarding the chances for a recreational use attainability analysis (RUAA) for Hillebrandt Bayou. It was explained that the beneficial use of a segment is not split and there was adequate stream depth and access to warrant the primary contact recreation.

#### **Hillebrandt Bayou and Neches Tidal Project Update**

*Overview of preliminary technical information gathered in support of the development of TMDL allocations.*

Michael Schramm, TWRI, presented introductory technical information that included overviews of populations and land use. The allocation process and use of the load duration curve (LDC) method was explained. The differences between LDCs in a freshwater stream (Hillebrandt) and saltwater stream (Neches River Tidal) were also detailed. Additionally, Schramm spoke on a preliminary analysis on potential sources of bacteria in the watersheds.

A question was asked regarding if a study would be conducted to determine if either human or animal waste were dominant source factors. An explanation was given

that the source (animal or human) would not be specified but could be categorized as point source and non-point source pollution.

A question was asked if the salinity and bacteria in Sabine Lake was accounted for in modified LDC. Schramm said the current assumption was 35 ppt salinity and that indicator bacteria decreases with salinity. Due to lower salinities in Sabine Lake that supply tidal flow to the Neches River Tidal, this assumption will be corrected.

### **TMDL Implementation in Texas – Dania Grundmann, TCEQ**

*Overview of TMDL Implementation Plans (I-Plans), a stakeholder-driven tool used to outline the activities to improve water quality in TMDL watersheds.*

Dania Grundmann, TCEQ, gave an outline of the TMDL I-Plan and its development process. Additionally, a question was asked if it would be feasible for two separate I-Plans to be created for the two waterbodies versus only one regional I-Plan that would cover both Neches River and Hillebrandt Bayou. It was explained that either of those options were possible and dependent on the decisions of the stakeholders.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Stakeholder Group Development – Michael Schramm, TWRI**

Michael Schramm, TWRI, explained options going forward in the stakeholder process for group development. Information included explaining the formation of technical workgroups and an oversight coordination committee. Other I-Plans in the state were described to offer examples of formal committees with ground rules and informal committees.

### **NEXT STEPS**

#### **Technical Support Documents, Winter 2019**

Stakeholders were told that technical support documents for the TMDL project would be complete in Winter 2019.

#### **Next TMDL/I-Plan Coordination Meeting, Early 2020**

Stakeholders expressed that daytime meetings would work best going forward. It was also suggested to host another meeting in the Neches River Tidal watershed, perhaps Vidor or another community in Orange County.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Jeremiah Poling	Angelina Neches River Authority (ANRA)
Kelley Holcomb	Angelina Neches River Authority (ANRA)
Bruce Walker	Big Thicket Association
Terrie Looney	Big Thicket Association
Tyler Seggerman	Channel 12 News
Averi Chan	City of Beaumont
Benjamin Weatherall	City of Beaumont
Molly Villarreal	City of Beaumont
Taylor Shelton	City of Port Neches
Scott Dunn	Entergy
Deborah Saxton	Entergy
Tory Theriot	Entergy
Starla Garlick	Jefferson County Agrilife Extension
Candy Melancon	Jefferson County Drainage District No. 6
James "Red" Castille	Jefferson County Drainage District No. 6
Ronnie Hollier	Jefferson County Drainage District No. 7
Brian French	LJA Engineering
John Concienne	LJA Engineering
Rick Masters	LJA Engineering
Dennis Becker	Lower Neches Valley Authority (LNVA)
Jeannie Bowlen	Lower Neches Valley Authority (LNVA)
Risa Barger	Lower Neches Valley Authority (LNVA)
Terry Corbett	Lower Neches Valley Authority (LNVA)
Dale M Parish	Lower Sabine - Neches Soil and Water Conservation District #446
Kendra Derrick	Lucite International
David Oates	Texas A&M Agrilife
Nikki Fitzgerald	Texas A&M Agrilife - Jefferson County
Tyler Fitzgerald	Texas A&M Agrilife - Jefferson County
Dania Grundmann	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - TMDL
Earlene Lambeth	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - TMDL
Nicole Reed	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - TMDL
Michael Rezsutek	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)
Brian Koch	Texas Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)
Michael Schramm	Texas Water Resource Institute (TWRI)
David Sherrod	WestRock
Wendy Turner	WestRock Texas