

Meeting Minutes for Steering Committee/ Technical Advisory Meeting

April 19, 2017 2:00pm – 3:45pm

2:10 Call to Order and Introductions (Dr. Rick Scott)

- Introductions were made throughout the room

2:15 Wetland Management Plan (WMP) Updates (Greg Phillips)

- We have received comments from the EPA concerning the WMP- All were positive reviews with some needing clarification
- EPA can use this document as a template for others in the future.
- Mitigation Programs within White Oak Bayou
 - There have been dead ends on the mitigation end of things.
 - The majority of the remaining budget will go towards landowner education and involvement in the program, as well as visits to their land to determine the priority of the wetlands and to help with restoration.
- Next Steps
 - We need to update the comments received by the EPA and submit it to them again
 - White Oak Bayou General Permit- We are continuing the process. Once the EPA has final WMP it will be sent to the UCACE
 - Apply for additional funding- Completed April 2017
 - Continue wetland restoration throughout the bayou
 - Construct a wetland demonstration project to encourage and display to landowners and the general public.
 - Evaluate floodplains to help with flood control
 - Beaver eradication- will help to prevent open water wetlands and encourage vegetation growth.

Comments from section:

- Kent Vestal:
 - When did receive the comments? –January
 - When did we decide to apply for new funding? –December
 - Is the UCACE permitting process changing? –Not now
 - How long has the White Oak Bayou process been going on? -8 years
- Jim Narrey stated that due to the election of the new president, funding for the new grant may be frozen until things are figured out.
- Chris Voyer (USACE) stated that no comments or regulatory status has happened within the corps as of this time and they are not expecting any within the year.
- Greg Phillips commented that it is perceived that the “new water’s rule” will disappear, but that the USACE will continue to regulate the same.
- Justin Stroman (AGFC) suggested that if more funding is needed that we go through FEMA and work more with flood reduction project.
- Jim Narrey stated that he wanted 3 things to come out this program
 - We want to develop working maps- see developers
 - Wetland management plan itself- glad that it is finally completed
 - Mitigation Banking – no mitigation bank yet due to the lack of a bank and money
- Kent Vestal asked when the Regional General Permit is expected and what we need to do? –Chris Voyer (USACE) commented that the WMP needs to be submitted before the General Permit can be issued.
- Rick Scott asked if there were other things we need to know and if a list is needed that includes the final step? – Yes a list will be made
- Dr. Rick Scott stated his interest in becoming the banker for the mitigation program.

- Bill Richardson stated that a large piece of property to be the initial bank and then possible get volunteer landowners to continue the process. Private bankers are only in it for the money, so having someone within will be best for the program.

2:45 UCA Presentation (Stephanie Stoughton)

- Stephanie presented her graduate work on the tributaries and streams within the watershed.
- Part of the process was to compare Phosphorus and Nitrogen loading rates within the watershed using Urban and Rural land use and catchments. The level loggers were used to develop stream data at 13 locations.
- Results so far of the study are that Phosphorus levels at all locations are higher than the reference data from the EPA and Nitrogen levels are below reference data within the streams and tributaries. No wetland reference data exists, so stream data is used to compare. Most wetlands are low in Nitrogen and high in Phosphorus and one possible explanation for these results of high nutrients are the runoff from the ball fields and possibly from septic systems and agriculture use of the land.

3:25 UCA Presentation Continued (Josh Nilz)

- Josh presented his research which involves using macroinvertebrates to determine the condition of the wetlands.
- Using the same sites as Stephanie, a survey is conducted on insects in the area to determine the pollutant tolerance and that then determines the condition of the water.
- Results so far is that insect diversity is increasing with urbanization.

3:40 Closing Remarks

- We will meet to discuss the next steps and then those will be relayed to the committee.
- New Grant - expect information and updates no sooner than July
- Next meeting will be announced via email
- TAC will have approximately 1 meeting remaining
- SCM will continue as long as needed and then turn into a volunteer group

3:45 Meeting Adjourned