



Science and Monitoring Workgroup

April 5, 2011 2:00 PM

Workgroup Members Present: Linda Broach (TCEQ), Winston Denton (TPWD), Anne Lutringer (Public), Chip Morris (TCEQ by phone), Scott Jones (GBF), and Lisa Miller-Marshall (GBF)

Discussion

New Schedule: Lisa began the meeting by explaining a new schedule that TCEQ has suggested in order to have more time to bring the Implementation Plan to the stakeholders. The initial plan was to have a public meeting in May and submit the draft I-Plan in August to TCEQ. With the new schedule, the goal would be to submit a preliminary draft of the I-Plan to TCEQ in May, possibly have a public meeting in June to kick off the publicity campaign, spend several months publicizing and garnering support for the I-Plan, and have a final public meeting by October with public comments. The draft I-Plan would then be submitted to TCEQ in February for approval. The full schedule is attached.

Soliciting Support: Following are the forms of publicity the Committee believes are important to use to promote the I-Plan and collect input:

- Online survey
- Public Meetings
- Media Communications – press releases, media alerts, press kits, etc.
- Electronic distribution – e-mail, website Facebook, Twitter, etc

In general, GBF and the workgroups will solicit support from cities, counties, commissioners, environmental organizations, civic groups (Lions, Rotary, etc.), professional organizations, MUDs, agencies, chambers of commerce, etc. Specific to the TMDL, the suggestion was made to contact seafood distributors, the oyster industry, oyster consumers, and commercial fishermen.

Draft Implementation Plan: To prepare the draft I-Plan to be reviewed, the committee wants tables and figures included with the draft.

Data Discussion: Linda Broach analyzed the bacteria data looking for both seasonal and spatial trends. The first analysis combined the bacteria data with locations of rookeries. She found that there was a high concentration of bacteria near the rookeries. Linda suggested talking with the standards department at TCEQ to recommend a modification in the language of the standard to account for the high concentrations of bacteria near rookeries. A buffer zone around the rookery, much like the shoreline buffer zone, where the oyster waters use does not apply is one suggestion to consider.

The data analysis also showed no relationship between bacteria and agricultural areas. There is no agricultural influence.

Linda did find a seasonal pattern. When fecal coliform is measured year round, it does not exist during the summer months. Most likely the heat and/or UV kills the bacteria during the summer. However, near Clear Lake there are higher concentrations of fecal coliform during the summer which could be linked to increased boater use. The Clear Lake area has a large number of boaters who could be dumping boater sewage in Clear Lake and the bay.

Stormwater Discussion: The decision was made early in the I-Plan development to focus only on management measures for OSSFs, WWTFs, and Boater Waste. Stormwater runoff was not considered to be a large contributing factor to the bacteria in the bay. However after re-analyzing the data, high concentrations of bacteria at the mouth of the tributaries indicate that runoff is an issue for the oyster waters. A section in the I-Plan will be written to address the issue of runoff. The occurrence of the runoff will be acknowledged but instead of being addressed by a management measure in this I-Plan, the Science and Monitoring workgroup will monitor the progress of upstream TMDL/WPP groups with their management measures that address stormwater runoff. If no progress is being made, stronger measures will be initiated.

Action Items:

1. Linda will analyze the data for annual trends.
2. Lisa will add information discussed above to the I-Plan

Next meeting: TBD

New Schedule for Implementation Plan

April: Internal review of I-Plan by the workgroups

May: Review of preliminary draft by TCEQ

June - August: Promote the I-Plan and solicit input from stakeholders; possible public meeting

August and September: Revise I-Plan based on comments and solicit letters of recommendation

October: Public Meeting and solicit comments

October – January: Address comments and make revisions to the I-Plan

February: Submit draft I-Plan to TCEQ