



Houston-Galveston Area Council

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUBLIC MEETINGS SET TO BEGIN WATER QUALITY DISCUSSIONS *Residents invited to meetings to launch San Bernard River Watershed Protection Plan Process*

Preserving water quality is essential to maintaining a good quality of life. High bacteria levels, excessive nutrients and low dissolved oxygen levels have been found throughout the San Bernard River Watershed. As a result, portions of the San Bernard River are unsuitable for recreational activities such as swimming and wading, and fish and other aquatic life are being negatively affected.

Over the next two years, the Houston-Galveston Area Council will work with community organizations, citizens, government agencies and local industry to develop a plan to restore and protect the water quality within the watershed.

“Watershed protection plans are designed to offer a framework to protect water quality,” said Todd Running, H-GAC Clean Rivers Program Manager. “The plans include analysis of pollution sources, water quality goals and specific solutions to solve the problem. Over the past decade, watershed management plans that have proven the most successful are the ones that have involved active participation from stakeholders.”

Three public meetings are scheduled to offer an overview of the watershed protection planning process:

- Tuesday, November 10, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the County Library, 1920 North Fulton, Wharton
- Tuesday, November 17, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Civic Center, 518 East Brazos Street, West Columbia
- Wednesday, November 18, 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Gordon Memorial Library, 917 N. Circle Drive, Sealy

A watershed is an area of land that drains to a common waterway such as a stream, river, or ocean. The San Bernard Watershed drains to the San Bernard River into the Intercoastal Waterway and ultimately into the Gulf of Mexico. The San Bernard River begins in Austin County and serves as a border between Austin and Colorado counties, continues as the border between Wharton and Fort Bend counties, and flows to the Gulf of Mexico through Brazoria County.

“It is expected that 3.5 million more people will move into the Houston-Galveston Region over the next 30 years, and future development can have a substantial impact on water quality,” said Bill Carter, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Nonpoint Source Manager. “That’s why it’s important to get involved today. We invite you to attend one of the three public meetings scheduled in the watershed to learn more about how you can help protect your water quality and quality of life.”

This project, facilitated by H-GAC, is funded by a grant from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Additional information is available online at <http://www.h-gac.com/go/sanbernard>

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The Houston-Galveston Area Council (www.h-gac.com) is a voluntary association of local governments in the 13-county Gulf Coast Planning Region—an area of 12,500 square miles and more than 5.7 million people. H-GAC works to promote efficient and accountable use of local, state, and federal tax dollars and serves as a problem-solving and information forum for local government needs.

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