

Chapter 7: Education and Outreach

An essential element to the implementation of this WPP is an effective education and outreach campaign. Long-term commitments from citizens and landowners will be necessary for achieving comprehensive improvements in the Bois d’Arc Lake watershed. The education and outreach component of implementation must focus on keeping the public, landowners and agency personnel informed of project activities, provide information about appropriate management practices and assist in identifying and forming partnerships to lead the effort.

Watershed Coordinator

The role of the watershed coordinator is to lead efforts to establish and maintain the working partnerships with stakeholders. The watershed coordinator also serves as a point of contact for all things related to WPP development, implementation and the WPP itself. Currently, NTMWD has taken the lead on this role. However, a full-time position is recommended to support WPP implementation.

The future role of the watershed coordinator is perhaps most important. The Watershed Coordinator will be tasked with maintaining stakeholder support for years to come, identifying and securing funds to implement the WPP, tracking success of implementation and working to implement adaptive management strategies. Simply put, the watershed coordinator is the catalyst to keeping WPP implementation on track.

Future Stakeholder Engagement

Watershed stakeholders (Table 36) will be continually engaged throughout the entire process and following the transition of efforts from development to implementation of the WPP. The watershed coordinator will play a critical role in this transition by continuing to organize and host periodic public meetings and needed educational events in addition to seeking out and meeting with focused groups of stakeholders to find and secure implementation funds. The coordinator will also provide content to maintain and update the project website, track WPP implementation progress and participate in local events to promote watershed awareness and stewardship. News articles, newsletters and the project website will be primary tools used to communicate with watershed stakeholders on a regular basis and will be developed to update readers periodically on implementation progress, provide information on new implementation opportunities, inform them on available technical or financial assistance, and other items of interest related to the WPP effort.

Table 36. Watershed stakeholders that will need to be engaged throughout the implementation of the WPP

Bois d’Arc Lake WPP Stakeholders
Private entities: Residents, landowners, businesses
Local governments: City of Bonham, Honey Grove, Fannin County
State agencies: TCEQ, TSSWCB, AgriLife Extension
Federal agencies: USDA NRCS
Regional entities: NTMWD, SWCD boards, TAMU-Commerce

Education Programs

Educational programming will be a critical part of the WPP implementation process. Multiple programs geared toward providing information on various sources of potential pollutants and feasible management strategies will be delivered in and near the Bois d’Arc Lake watershed and advertised to watershed stakeholders. An approximate schedule for planned programming is provided in Chapter 6. This schedule will be used as a starting point, and efforts will be made to abide by this schedule as much as possible. As implementation and data collection continues, the adaptive management process will be used to modify this schedule and respective educational needs as appropriate.

Feral Hog Management Workshop

The watershed coordinator will coordinate with AgriLife Extension personnel to deliver periodic workshops focusing on feral hog management. This workshop will educate landowners on the negative impacts of feral hogs, effective control methods and resources to help them control these pests. Workshop frequency will be approximately every 3–5 years, unless there are significant changes in available means and methods to control feral hogs.

Lone Star Healthy Streams Workshop

The watershed coordinator will coordinate with AgriLife Extension personnel to deliver the Lone Star Healthy Streams curriculum. This program is geared toward expanding stakeholders’ knowledge on how beef cattle producers can improve grazing lands to reduce NPS pollution. This statewide program promotes the adoption of BMPs that have been proven to effectively reduce bacterial contamination of streams. This program provides educational support for the development of conservation plans by illustrating the benefits of many practices available for inclusion in a conservation plan to program participants. This program will likely be delivered in the watershed once every 5 years or as needed.

OSSF Operation and Maintenance Workshop

Once OSSFs in the watershed and their owners have been identified, an OSSF rules, regulations, operation and maintenance training will be delivered in the watershed. This training will consist of education and outreach practices to promote the proper management of existing OSSFs and to garner support for efforts to further identify and address failing OSSFs through inspections and remedial actions. AgriLife Extension provides the needed expertise to deliver this training. Based on needs identified early during WPP planning, trainings will be scheduled for every third year. Additionally, an online training module that provides an overview of septic systems, how they operate and what maintenance is required to sustain proper functionality and extend system life will be made available to anyone interested through the partnership website. This training module was developed by the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority in cooperation with AgriLife Extension and is currently available online at:

<https://www.gbra.org/presentations/septic/index.html>.

OSSF Installer and Maintenance Provider Training

Continuing education courses for licensed OSSF Installers and Maintenance Providers are available through AgriLife Extension. The courses are designed for professional wastewater site evaluators, designers, installers, regulators, operations, maintenance, and monitoring service providers. Topics may include: (1) basic information on design, operation and maintenance, (2) laws and regulations, (3) overview of new and existing technologies, (4) relationships between soil types and application systems, (5) real world examples and discussion, (6) new and emerging topics.

Healthy Lawns Healthy Waters Workshop

The Healthy Lawns and Healthy Waters program is an educational training program that aims to improve and protect surface water quality by enhancing Texas residents' awareness and knowledge of best management practices for residential landscapes. Funding for the Healthy Lawns and Healthy Waters Program is provided in part through Clean Water Act 319 grants from the TCEQ through EPA. This program is designed to train homeowners and landowners to design and install residential rainwater capture devices, educate them about the key importance of soil testing, and how to determine nutrient application amounts. The goal of this program is to train Texans regarding reduced runoff, water quality, and best management practices for protecting their home landscape, watershed, and surface waters. More information can be found at: <https://hlhw.tamu.edu/>.

Texas Well Owners Network Training

Private water wells provide a source of water to many Texas residents. The Texas Well Owners Network (TWON) Program provides needed education and outreach that focuses on private drinking water wells and the impacts on human health and the environment that can be mitigated by using proper management practices. Well screenings are conducted through this program. The program provides useful information to well owners that will assist them in better managing their water supplies. The Watershed Coordinator is currently coordinating with AgriLife Extension personnel to deliver this program in the Bois d’Arc Lake watershed. Information on this program can be found at: <https://twon.tamu.edu/>.

Riparian and Stream Ecosystem Education Program

Healthy watersheds and good water quality go hand in hand with properly managed riparian and stream ecosystems. Delivery of the Riparian and Stream Ecosystem Education Program will increase stakeholder awareness, understanding and knowledge about the nature and function of riparian zones. Additionally, the program will educate stakeholders on the benefits of riparian zones and the BMPs that can be implemented to protect them while minimizing nonpoint source pollution. Through this program, riparian landowners will be connected with local technical and financial resources to improve management and promote healthy watersheds and riparian areas on their land. The watershed coordinator will work with AgriLife Extension personnel to deliver this program in the Bois d’Arc Lake watershed.

Stream Trailer Facilitator Training

To promote and amplify water and landscape conservation practices in North Texas, the NTMWD received funding for a stream hydrology trailer from the TSSWCD. The trailer is utilized for training programs that allow partners and stakeholders the opportunity to create their own watershed and understand the influence of water quantity, sediment and vegetation on waterbodies. This program provides a hands-on educational experience that magnifies the education and outreach impact for water conservation in North Texas. Information for this program can be found at: <https://www.ntmwd.com/watershed-planning/>.

Wildlife Management Workshops

Wildlife have numerous significant impacts on the Bois d’Arc Lake watershed and as a result, periodic wildlife management workshops are warranted to provide information on management strategies and available resources to those interested. The watershed coordinator will work with AgriLife Extension wildlife specialists and TPWD as appropriate to plan and secure funding to deliver workshops in and near the Bois d’Arc Lake watershed. Wildlife management workshops will be advertised through newsletters, news releases, the project website and other avenues as appropriate.

Public Meetings

Periodic public stakeholder meetings will be used to achieve several major goals of WPP implementation. Public meetings will provide a platform for the watershed coordinator and project personnel, as appropriate, to provide WPP implementation information including implementation progress, near-term implementation goals and projects, information on how to sign-up or participate in active implementation programs, appropriate contact information for specific implementation programs and other information as appropriate. These meetings will also keep stakeholders engaged in the WPP process and provide a platform to discuss adaptive management to keep the WPP relevant to watershed and water quality needs. This will be accomplished by reviewing water quality data, implementation goals and milestones during at least one public meeting annually and actively discussing how watershed needs can be better served. Feedback will be incorporated into WPP addendums as appropriate. It is anticipated that public meetings will be held on a semiannual basis but will largely be scheduled based on need.

Newsletters and News Releases

Watershed newsletters will be developed and sent directly to actively engaged stakeholders. Newsletters will be sent annually and staged to be published between project meetings. News releases will also be developed and distributed as needed through the mass media outlets in the area and will be used to highlight significant happenings related to WPP implementation and to continue to raise public awareness and support for watershed protection. These means will be used to inform stakeholders of implementation programs, eligibility requirements, when and where to sign-up, and what the specific program will entail. Lastly, public meetings and other WPP-related activities will be advertised through these outlets.