



Boater Waste Education Campaign

Final Report

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Project Description	4
Project Results	5-6
Conclusions and Lessons Learned	7

Executive Summary

The Boater Waste Education Campaign addresses the issue of illegal boater waste discharge through targeted outreach and education to boaters. The purpose of the campaign is to decrease the incidence of illegal discharge of boater sewage waste to the Galveston Bay Estuary, particularly Clear Lake that has the third highest concentration of privately owned marinas in the U.S. The Clear Lake community has shown sincere interest in tackling this environmental issue and has played an instrumental role in the development of the campaign. The work group has successfully developed campaign messages, created marketing materials, and distributed materials in the Clear Lake community through a variety of methods (flyers, signage, billboards, etc.). Marina owners and managers who are involved in the project have been willing to help with all aspects of the campaign and the boaters reached during the events and exhibits have been receptive to the campaign messages.

GBF is pleased with the progress that has been made with the campaign in 2008 and plans to continue in 2009. During the next year GBF will focus on the distribution of the campaign message through printed and outdoor advertisement and through direct mailings to boaters. Second, GBF hopes to involve marinas not currently participating in the campaign. Furthermore, GBF hopes to increase enforcement of the “No Discharge” law in Clear Lake by continuing communication with Texas Parks and Wildlife and local governments.

Project Description

The Boater Waste Education Campaign addresses the issue of illegal boater waste discharge through targeted outreach and education to boaters. The Galveston Bay Foundation has developed a boater waste education campaign targeted at the Clear Lake boating/marina community that is also applicable to Galveston Bay users as a whole. The purpose of the campaign is to decrease the incidence of illegal discharge of boater sewage waste to the Galveston Bay Estuary, particularly Clear Lake that has the third highest concentration of privately owned marinas in the U.S.

The project has involved the developing of social marketing messages suitable for, but not limited to, personal communications via presentations and exhibits, print, billboard, and internet use. The Galveston Bay Foundation has focused on communicating the message directly to boaters and marinas. This has been achieved by arranging special events, presentations, and/or exhibits where boaters will be exposed to the campaign message. Furthermore, the use of printed ads and outdoor advertisement has helped spread the campaign message to the entire Clear Lake community. The campaign emphasizes 1) environmental harm caused by raw sewage and 2) how boaters can properly dispose of their waste. The Galveston Bay Foundation has directed the development and distribution of the message with the advice of a workgroup comprised of stakeholders from GBEP, TCEQ, Clean Texas Marina Program, Clear Lake Marina Association, and other interested groups.

To complement the education and outreach component of the project, the Galveston Bay Foundation has been working with regulatory entities to increase enforcement of the relevant statutes.

Project Results

1) Promotional Materials

The working group developed a campaign logo and tagline (**Attachment A**). The following were created as campaign materials:

Boater Sewage Pollutes Galveston Bay Sign – **Attachment B**

Keep Boater Sewage Out of Galveston Bay Billboard – **Attachment C**

A Message for Clear Lake Boaters Flyer– **Attachment D**

Enjoy A Healthy Bay Ad – **Attachment E**

A Pump-out Guide for Clear Lake Boaters Brochure – **Attachment G**

Pump It – Don't Dump It Koozie

Pump It – Don't Dump It Bumper Sticker

Campaign Website - http://galvbay.org/education_boaterwaste.html

2) Distribution Outlets

All of the materials listed above were made available to work group members who worked to distribute them throughout the Clear Lake area. Furthermore, GBF representatives hosted education exhibits throughout the Clear Lake area to ensure one-on-one interaction with boaters. Education exhibits included copies of printed materials mentioned above (brochures, bumper stickers, koozies, and sign and banner display), a mock-up pump-out station, an opportunity to sign-up to receive more information about sewage discharge and boater training, and other relevant literature provided by Texas Sea Grant and the Texas Clean Marina Association.

Please see **Attachment H** for a list of these events. A total of 4,500 tri-fold brochures (**Attachment G**), 100 bumper stickers, and 500 koozies were printed for distribution at these events.

This grant made it possible to print and purchase distribution outlets for these materials. Please see **Attachment I** for a spreadsheet of paid media outlets. In addition to the outlets included on **Attachment I**, a one-page article was included in TellTails Magazine to announce the kick-off of the campaign (**Attachment F**).

Clear Lake marina managers were encouraged to include information about the program in their monthly billings to their tenants. A double-sided flyer (**Attachment D**) with information about the issue of sewage discharge was printed and provided to marina managers for this purpose. **Attachment J** highlights the flyers and signs that were distributed directly to marinas.

3) **Project Partners**

An active working group was formed to develop and execute the campaign. **Attachment K** includes a list of the participating individuals. The work group met on the third Wednesday of every month from January 2008-June 2008.

Work group committee members contributed to the project in different ways. The Texas Clean Marina Association was instrumental in providing sample brochures and signage. The Kemah Portal and Jenobi, Inc. provided graphic design artwork for the marketing materials. The Clear Texas Marina Association played an important role in facilitating communication between the work group and Clear Lake marinas.

Work group members met with local government representatives from the City of Houston and City of Seabrook to discuss the enforcement aspect of the issue. The representatives expressed significant support and interest in the project. Work group members also met with Sergeant Johnny Longoria to discuss involvement of Texas Parks and Wildlife and increase in enforcement of dumping statutes. These communications are still in progress and GBF is confident they will lead to an increase in enforcement.

4) **Partner Contributions**

Please see **Attachment L** for a summary of partner contributions. GBF was recently awarded a grant from the GLO Coastal Management Program to continue the project in 2009.

5) **Additional Results**

The Galveston Bay Foundation's summer legal intern conducted a thorough review of the laws and regulations surrounding the issue of illegal dumping. The tables included in **Attachment M** summarize the laws and regulations of the federal government and other states and how those states have approached the issue of boater waste. This information will be useful in advocating for the strengthening of Texas' current regulations and will aid the work group in determining how to proceed with the legislative and/or enforcement aspect of the project.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

The Boater Waste Education Campaign addresses the issue of illegal boater waste discharge through targeted outreach and education to boaters in the Clear Lake area. The campaign was very well received in the Clear Lake community. GBF was pleased with the progress that was made with the campaign in 2008 and plans to continue in 2009.

As shown by the number and diversity of work group members (**Attachment K**), GBF had no problem recruiting stakeholders to form part of the work group committee. The Clear Lake community showed sincere interest in tackling this environmental issue. Marina owners and managers who became involved in the project were willing to help with all aspects: putting signs up, sending flyers to their tenants, and participating in the work group. Work group committee members contributed to the project in different ways: the Texas Clean Marina Association was instrumental in providing sample brochures and signage. The Kemah Portal and Jenobi, Inc. provided graphic design artwork for the marketing materials. The Clear Texas Marina Association played an important role in facilitating communication between the work group and Clear Lake marinas. Boaters reached during the events and exhibits were also very supportive of the project: they were willing to learn about the issue, requested additional information and commented on the importance of the campaign. Overall, GBF believes the campaign is highly valued in the Clear Lake boating community.

The work group faced several challenges during execution of the project. One of the main obstacles faced during the development of the campaign was the lack of involvement of some of the marinas in Clear Lake. To address this issue, GBF will be requesting one-on-one meetings with marina managers from marina's that did not participate in the project during 2008. At these meetings, work group members will educate marina managers about the issue and the current regulations and consequences, and will provide feasible alternatives (i.e. educate them on the funding available to pay for the installation and maintenance of pump-out station and the services provide by Maritime Sanitation). Another challenge faced was the lack of traffic at some of the education booths. At Marina Bay Harbor and West Marine, boaters were anxious to take their boats out or buy merchandise and did not take the time to stop by the booth. GBF decided to tackle this issue by providing an incentive for boaters to approach the education booth. At Marina Bay Harbor, GBF gave out free bags of ice to entice the boaters to approach the exhibit. This did not work well because most boaters had bought their ice prior to arriving at the marina. However, this method could be successful if the "free ice" was advertised days or even weeks before. Overall, GBF concludes that the mailing of flyers directly to tenants, signage at marinas, and billboards were a more effective way of communicating the campaign message. It is likely that GBF will focus

more on these methods of distribution in 2009.

During the next year GBF and the work group hopes to focus on the following:

- 1) The distribution of the campaign message through printed and outdoor advertisement and through direct mailings to boaters.
- 2) The involvement of marinas not currently involved with the campaign and placement of new pump-out stations.
- 3) Increase enforcement of the “No Discharge” law in Clear Lake by continuing communication with Texas Parks and Wildlife and local governments.