

GALVESTON BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM

FINAL - Galveston Bay Council (GBC) Meeting Minutes – July 18, 2018

Attendees:

Galveston Bay Council Chair: Helen Paige (Marinas)

Galveston Bay Council Vice-Chair: Glenn Clingenpeel (Trinity River Authority)

Estuary Program Staff Lead: Sarah Bernhardt, Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP)

The July 18, 2018 quarterly GBC meeting was held at Harris-Galveston Subsidence District, 1660 West Bay Area Blvd., Houston, Texas, from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM.

Members Present: Scott Alford, Christine Bergren, Glenn Clingenpeel, Patrick Cuty, Albert Gonzales, Brian Koch, Mike Lee, Helen Paige, Nancy Parra, Ana Partin, Pamela Plotkin, Hanadi Rifai, Kate Saul, Caimee Schoenbaechler, Ronnie Schultz, Linda Shead, Lori Traweek

Members Not Present/Delegates: Caryn Brooks, Andrea Catanzaro*, Phillip Goodwin*, Rebecca Hensley, Kelly Holligan*, Jace Houston*, John Huffman, Doug Jacobson, Audrey Kuklenz, Kristin Lambrecht*, Garry McMahan*, Will Nipper*, Russ Poppe*, Taylor Rieck, MaryBeth Stengler, Sharron Stewart, Rusty Swafford, Jeff Taebel*, Chuck Wemple, Kirk Wiles, Tracy Woody, Bob Stokes*

(*=Member designated a proxy)

Proxies Present (council member absent/designated proxy):

Andrea Catanzaro/Jeff Pinsky, Phillip Goodwin/Richard Chapin, Kelly Holligan/Kerry Niemann, Jace Houston/Kim Wright, Kristin Lambrecht/Manual Martinez, Garry McMahan/Jacqueline Munoz, Will Nipper/Mariz Valdez, Russ Poppe/Glenn Laird, Bob Stokes/Scott Jones, Jeff Taebel/Todd Running

Current Vacancies: None

Other Attendees: Mollie Powell, Peter Riger, Rusty Senac, Matt Singer, Marsha Towns

Additional GBEP Staff present: Cynthia Clevenger, Cassidy Kempf, Lindsey Lippert, Lisa Marshall, Mary Stiles, Kristen McGovern

Call to Order: Introduction of Members and Delegates

Helen Paige called the meeting to order and requested introductions.

Action Item: Approval of April 18, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Helen Paige opened the meeting with approval of the minutes. Motion was requested for approval. Brian Koch moved to approve the minutes, and Lori Traweek seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with one correction.

Report of the Chair:

Helen Paige announced that Sarah Bernhardt would announce action items that need to be addressed.

Sarah Bernhardt announced the Budget and Priorities (B&P) Subcommittee met in June. There are two action items for the Council to consider today. The first action item is to change the Bylaws.

As part of the revision of the Galveston Bay Plan, 2nd Edition it was proposed to change the membership and title for the Minority Community representative seat to Underrepresented Communities. This follows the most recent US Census data that showed that the Houston-Galveston region is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse cities in the nation, with no major group composing a majority. With this change, the Underrepresented Community seat will preserve the intention of the position to ensure representation by racial or ethnic groups that are not otherwise represented on the Council.

The other position modification is to change the Galveston County Chambers of Commerce seat to Nature Tourism. This proposed change was brought to the Budget & Priorities Subcommittee by current Galveston County Chambers of Commerce representative Chuck Wemple, H-GAC, who had been representing the Greater Houston Economic Alliance.

Ms. Bernhardt announced that the Council is seeking a nomination to fill the Underrepresented Communities position. The Nominations committee has been pursuing several different avenues. Any suggestions, leads, or volunteers should contact the Estuary Program.

Helen Paige announced that the U.S. Coast Guard has designated Patrick C. Cuty. Mr. Cuty is the Port Security/Maritime Infrastructure Recovery Specialist and he represents the CTCAC Executive Administrator, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, United States Coast Guard, Sector Houston-Galveston.

Action Item: Presentation and approval of revised Bylaws (to reflect changes to the interests represented by two seats on the Council: Underrepresented Communities (formally Minority Communities) and Nature Tourism (formerly Galveston County Chambers of Commerce). Nancy Parra motioned to approve, and Linda Shead seconded. The motion was approved by the council.

Action Item: Approval of the nomination of Jeff DallaRosa, CenterPoint Energy to represent Utilities. Linda Shead announced her nomination for Jeff DallaRosa in which she read his biography. Brian Koch moved to approve the nomination, and Lori Traweck second the motion. The motion was approved by the Council.

Action Item: Approval of nomination of Chambers County Commissioner Rusty Senac to represent Nature Tourism. Lori Traweck announced her nomination for Rusty Senac in which she read his biography. A motion was requested to approve the nomination. Nancy Parra motioned for approval and Lori Traweck seconded. The motion was approved by the Council.

Action Item: An action item was added to the agenda to approve the nomination of Mr. Cuty to the Council to represent the Coast Guard. Glenn Clingenpeel approved the motion, Lori Traweek second the motion and all council members approved.

Report of the Program:

Ms. Bernhardt announced that the GBEP team completed interviews yesterday for the Budget and Quality Programs position to replace Bryan Eastham who retired on May 31, 2018. Anticipated start date will be in August.

Ms. Bernhardt announced the launch of GBEP's newly redesigned website in late August. She also introduced Kristen McGovern as the new summer Mickey Leland environmental intern. Kristen is working on a geodatabase of past GBEP projects.

Action Item: Presentation and Approval of Minor Revision to Fiscal Year 2019 Galveston Bay Estuary Program Budget:

Ms. Bernhardt announced there was a minor change to the FY 2019 Work Plan. GBEP was able to secure leftover FY 2018 administrative funding, and allocate it to an existing project, Seafood Evaluation in a Portion of Galveston Bay. The difference, along with some overestimated administrative funding from FY 2019, was reallocated to complete the Highland Bayou Watershed Protection Plan. Sarah presented a word document that showed changes in table format to the Council members.

Helen Paige requested motion to approve the minor budget change to the FY 2019 GBEP Budget. Linda Shead motioned for approval, followed by Brian Koch who seconded. The motion was approved by the Council.

Subcommittee Reporting:

Natural Resources Uses (NRU) featured project: Conservation Assistance Program Fiscal Year 2011-2017, Matt Singer, Director of Land Conservation, Galveston Bay Foundation:

Matt Singer, Director of Land Conservation for the Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF) gave a presentation for the NRU's Conservation Assistance Program. The Conservation Assistance Program (CAP) provides regional support for land conservation efforts within the Galveston Bay watershed. The CAP partnership between GBEP and GBF provides financial resources to coordinate, develop and implement land acquisition projects, provide transactional support to local conservation organizations, and organize a workgroup of natural resource partners dedicated to perpetual land conservation efforts within the Galveston Bay watershed. Program objectives include identifying and developing priority land acquisition projects, implementing conservation strategies, negotiating fee simple and conservation easement acquisitions, and closing land conservation projects.

Tasks identified to accomplish the CAP objectives include: (1) grant administration; (2) coordination of a land conservation workgroup; (3) conservation project tracking; (4) preparation of grant proposals to secure acquisition funding; (5) implementation of

conservation projects and identified strategies; and (6) public outreach related to regional land conservation efforts.

CAP efforts from 2011 to 2017 resulted in success of the program goals and objectives. Successful conservation projects were completed in Chambers, Galveston, and Brazoria Counties and high priority habitats were protected within target geographic areas. GBF led efforts on four successful conservation projects and provided support to partner organizations to compete five projects. The Galveston Bay watershed gained more than 5,000 acres of perpetually conserved lands as a direct result of CAP investment.

Hanadi Rifai announced that Mr. Jim Neece passed while on a post-retirement trip with his wife. He had been a project manager for several Houston and Galveston Bay projects and had been a good colleague and supporter of the programs and projects in her region. He will be missed. The council observed a moment of silence in Mr. Neece's honor.

Break

Ms. Bernhardt announced that she will be leaving the Estuary program in August to take on the role of President and CEO of the Bayou Preservation Association. She is proud of all the accomplishments GBEP has made over the last five years. She will still be seeing everyone, as she will remain in the Houston area working on watershed issues.

Presentation & Discussion: Houston Zoo Initiatives Making a Difference in our Watershed, Peter Riger, Vice-President of Conservation and Education, Houston Zoo

The Houston Zoo Wildlife Conservation Program supports efforts in nearly two dozen countries around the world. The program represents a critical piece of the Zoo's organizational mission to connect communities with animals to inspire action to save wildlife. The goal for the conservation program is to save animals and their habitats, and they do this by educating people to care and to realize the value of nature as a key element in their quality of life.

The Zoo is also dedicated to local Texas wildlife and has been active in long-term conservation projects in the Galveston Bay watershed and Texas Gulf Coast. Several teams from the Zoo regularly lead beach and bay cleanups and are participating in a program to eliminate sea turtle entanglement from monofilament fishing line.

In partnership with NASA's Johnson Space Center and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Zoo also manages a captive breeding program for the Attwater's prairie chicken. When the birds hatch and grow large enough, they are slowly introduced and released into the wild at the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge.

Celebrating the biodiversity of Texas, the Zoo is launching a new Texas Wetlands exhibit at the front of the zoo. The habitat will feature alligators, bald eagles, whooping cranes, turtles and waterfowl. The exhibit opens in the Spring of 2019.

To reduce single use plastic items, the Zoo has done away with single use plastic bags, plastic straws, and plastic water bottles. The Zoo participates in outreach and education about single use plastics through their education programs as well as exhibits and shows with the sea lion team.

Presentation & Discussion: GulfCorps, Marsha Towns, Partnership Director-Gulf Coast Student Conservation Association (SCA)

Marsha Towns' presentation outlined and described 'What is Gulf Corps?' It is a \$7 million RESTORE Act Grant administrated by NOAA with funding from Restore Bucket Two. The restoration project has a 3-Year term from August 2017 to July 2020. Ms. Towns described the program structure, the history of the partnership of the grant's joint applicants, and the recent Conservation Corps activity in the Gulf of Mexico prior to the award for Gulf Corps to the Nature Conservancy. Sub-awardees are The Corps Network and the Student Conservation Association. The presentation also included a list of which organizations participated in the Conservation Corps in Year 1 of the 3 Year grant project. Ms. Towns shared the expectations for Year 2 which include an overview of the orientation, Corps capabilities, and training. Gulf-wide orientation is provided by the SCA. Ms. Towns showed the project activities and described how projects are selected.

Council Members Roundtable: News and Announcements

Ronnie Schultz: Job opening at the Galveston County Health District: Water Pollution Manager.

Pamela Plotkin: "STRAWS" documentary will be showing at Rice University at 6:30 7/18/2018. It will also be shown in Corpus Christi and South Padre in the fall. Screening provided by Sea Grant and the Citizens Environmental Coalition.

Todd Running: The 2018 Basins Highlight Report that focuses on the Houston Ship Channel and Chocolate Bayou is complete and available on the Houston-Galveston Area Council website.

Brian Koch: The 319 Request for Proposals (RFP) will open in August. A Cedar Bayou Watershed Partnership stakeholder meeting is scheduled for August 9th in Baytown.

Glenn Laird: Reminded everyone to go the Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) website to review the bond proposal. Comments are due by August 25th.

Caimee Schoenbaechler: The Flood Assessment will be released in August. Flood protection grant applications closed on July 11th and will be taken to the Board on September 28th. TWDB has a job vacancy for a flood modeler. Dr. Quigg's Environmental Flows project is almost complete, and the final report will be submitted in August. This might be a good presentation for the Council.

Scott Jones: On August 15th, Galveston Bay Foundation will announce the 2018 Galveston Bay Report Card results at the Buffalo Bayou Partnership office located at 1019 Commerce St. from 9:30 - 10:30am.

Kerry Niemann: Regarding RESTORE: The draft State Expenditure Plan (bucket 3) is posted for public comment. Due to Hurricane Harvey, Governor Abbott and Commissioner Baker determined that the plan will focus on hurricane recovery efforts, ecological and economic, as well as resiliency-related programs for the area. A programmatic, rather than project-specific, plan has been developed. Selection of specific projects will be done upon the RESTORE Council's approval of the programmatic plan and in conjunction with the Governor's Commission to Rebuild Texas (CRT). The 45-day comment period will end at 5:00 pm on Monday, August 27th.

Regarding the Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Management Program:

The GLO and TCEQ continue to work with NOAA and EPA on approval of six (6) remaining conditions. The deadline to submit an approvable program is June 2019.

- The remaining conditions are:
 - watershed protection, site development, existing development, new development, and roads, highways, and bridges, which have been combined
 - 2nd informal submittal - summer 2018
- On-site Disposal Systems
 - OSDS Contributions to Nitrogen Limited Waters
 - formal submittal - summer 2018
 - Inspection of OSDS at a frequency adequate to ascertain if they are failing
 - informal submittal - summer 2018

Regarding the TMDL Program: The Lower San Antonio River Implementation Plan is scheduled to go to agenda for approval on August 8.

Regarding the NPS Program: The annual Request for Grant Applications is open and will close on July 31st. Two to \$3 million dollars in federal funds is available to pass through to selected project to develop CWA Section 319 contracts. A 40% match is required.

Regarding the 2016 Integrated Report: Public Comments were accepted between May 4 and June 5 and is anticipated to be going to Commissioner's Agenda for approval on October 17. Following that, it will be submitted to EPA for approval.

Regarding Water Quality Standards: They were adopted by the Commission on February 7, 2018 and became effective as a state rule on March 1st. They are now with EPA pending approval.

Regarding the Clean Rivers Program: The calendar of Steering Committee Meeting dates may be accessed from the statewide Coordinated Monitoring Schedule. Meetings occur throughout the year and help to establish monitoring priorities.

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 12:08pm

Upcoming Galveston Bay Council Meeting Dates: October 17, 2018; January 16, 2019; April 17, 2019. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the quarter from 9:30am - 12:30pm. If there are known conflicts, Council members are encouraged to propose alternate dates to the Council.