

## **GALVESTON BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM**

### **FINAL- Galveston Bay Council (GBC) Meeting Minutes – July 17, 2019**

#### **Attendees:**

**Galveston Bay Council Chair:** Helen Paige (Marinas)

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

**Estuary Program Staff Lead:** Lisa Marshall, Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP)

The July 17, 2019 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, Winfred Colbert, Jeff DallaRosa, Albert Gonzales, Lori Hamilton, Rebecca Hensley, Cruz Hinojosa, Jace Houston, Doug Jacobson, Brian Koch, Mike Lee, Will Nipper, Helen Paige, Ana Partin, Pamela Plotkin, Caimee Schoenbaechler, Ronnie Schultz, Linda Shead, Sharron Stewart, Bob Stokes, Lori Traweek, Kirk Wiles, Tracy Woody

**Members Not Present/Delegates:** Caryn Brooks, Andrea Catanzaro, John Huffman\*, Audrey Kuklenz, Kristin Lambrecht, Garry McMahan\*, Nancy Parra, Russ Poppe\*, Melissa Porter\*, Taylor Rieck, Hanadi Rifai, Rusty Senac, Mary Beth Stengler, Rusty Swafford, Jeff Taebel\*, Matthew Tilimon

(\*=Member designated a proxy)

**Proxies Present (Council member absent/designated proxy):** John Huffman/Scott Williams, Garry McMahan/Mollie Powell, Russ Poppe/Glenn Laird, Melissa Porter/Julie McEntire + Dianna Ramirez, Jeff Taebel/Todd Running, Glenn Clingenpeel/Web Mangham

**Current Vacancies:** None

**Other Attendees:** Philip Bedient, Tom Douglas, George Guillen, Elizabeth Fazio Hale, Debra Harper, Kerry Niemann, Amanda Rinehart, Kim Wright.

**Additional GBEP Staff present:** Cynthia Clevenger, Lindsey Lippert, Kristen McGovern, Christian Rines, Mary Stiles.

#### **Call to Order: Introduction of Members and Delegates**

Helen Paige called the meeting to order and requested introductions and confirmed a quorum with Lisa Marshall.

#### **Action Item: Approval of April 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Paige opened the meeting with approval of the minutes. A motion was requested for approval. Lori Traweek moved to approve the minutes, and Winfred Colbert seconded the motion and clarified that the minutes were approved without corrections.

## **Report of the Program (Lisa Marshall)**

- Ms. Marshall announced the program is updating Galveston Bay Council contact information database and requested members confirm their contact information with Mary Stiles during the break.
- A new timeline is set for the State for the Bay Symposium: abstracts are due August 19<sup>th</sup>; presenters will be notified in early October; agenda will be sent out mid to late October.
- Proposals for the FY 2021 project development process are due to the subcommittee coordinators by July 22.
- Priorities for each of the subcommittees and the dates for their next meetings will be presented later in the meeting.

## **Report of the Chair (Helen Paige):**

Ms. Paige announced nominations for a new chair and vice chair. Request for nominations were opened to the members. Ms. Paige nominated Glenn Clingenpeel as chair, followed by reading his biography. Ms. Shead seconded the nomination. Ms. Shead nominated Albert Gonzales as vice chair followed by reading his biography. Bob Stokes seconded the nomination. Ms. Paige requested a motion to approve the new chair and vice chair positions. GBC members approved the nominations. Doug Jacobson abstained from voting.

Ms. Paige announced Patrick Cuty, our U.S. Coast Guard representative, was recently transferred. The new representative is Matthew Tilimon. Mr. Tilimon was unable to attend the meeting. Ms. Paige read his biography to the council members.

**Announcement:** Resolutions to Support *The Galveston Bay Plan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, The Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Galveston Bay Ecosystem*

Ms. Paige announced the Budget and Priorities (B&P) subcommittee developed a resolution in support of the new Galveston Bay Plan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (The Plan). A copy of the resolution is included in the handout packet and can be provided to GBC council electronically.

Ms. Paige stated the resolution can be used as a template for organizations or revised as needed. The B&P subcommittee would like to present resolutions at the State of the Bay Symposium in January 2020. The GBC members were asked to consider taking the resolution back to their organizations to receive approval or provide to other municipalities or organizations that they are affiliated with to adopt a resolution to support the implementation efforts of The Plan.

## **Presentation: Philip B. Bedient, Ph.D., PE, Rice University SSPEED Center - "Galveston Bay Park Plan: A Vision for Houston and Galveston Bay"**

Mr. Bedient reported that the Galveston Bay Park Plan is a corollary to the Coastal Spine and would provide 10,000 acres of park land with public access while helping to protect the Houston-Galveston industrial complex and the west side of Galveston Bay to 25 ft, raise the Texas City levee to 25 ft, install a levee on the backside of Galveston

Island, elevate evacuation routes on FM 3005 and Highway 87, provide sand nourishment for beaches, and potentially extend the Galveston levee to Pelican Island. The Park is expected to be constructed in 2025-2027 and would cost \$3-6 billion. Circulation and salinity studies have already been completed, and historical and current oyster reefs have been analyzed. The Port of Houston has plans to deepen and widen the Houston Ship Channel, and the material could potentially be used to build The Park. The Park would include event and dining options, campgrounds, a marina, event space, and fishing opportunities.

Mr. Bedient reported current plans include one main gate and several mechanical gates. The number of mechanical gates could be increased to improve circulation if necessary. The gates would remain open and would only be closed in the event of an expected surge.

Council members expressed the need for:

- Studies of how nutrient cycling would be impacted;
- Studies of the impacts to species other than oysters due to changes in nutrient cycling, salinity; and
- Getting NOAA involved, as there may be impacts to marine mammals.

**Presentation: Amanda Rhinehart, Artist Boat - “We Back the Bay Project Presentation”**

Ms. Rhinehart reported following the Memorial Day Flood in 2015 and the Tax Day Flood in 2016, Artist Boat began to develop a project to give students more background on why flooding happens in the Houston-Galveston area and what students can do to help improve the situation. Increasing development as well as increasing trends in precipitation mean that the Houston area will continue to experience these flooding events.

The “We Back the Bay!” project engaged 600 middle and high school students at five schools. At each school, Artist Boat provided professional development workshops for the teachers, eco-art workshops and kayak adventures for the students, and a \$4500 grant to design an outdoor habitat, such as a rain garden, wetland pond, or water retention system. One stipulation of the grant was that 10% of the budget had to be used to develop a student-designed social outreach campaign (preferably using Back the Bay campaign materials). Pre- and post- survey results indicated that related knowledge, attitudes, and stewardship behaviors were improved among students that participated in the project.

The project aims to build awareness of the causes and impacts of nonpoint sources (NPS) on Galveston Bay, develop critical thinking skills necessary to mitigate NPS from the bay, create actions to increase water conservation, and reduce storm water run-off from school campuses. “We Back the Bay!” also builds on the GBEP’s outreach Back the Bay campaign.

**Subcommittee Updates:**

- Public Participation and Education (PPE): Cynthia Clevenger presented the FY 2021 priorities of the PPE Subcommittee:
  - Supporting underrepresented communities;
  - K-12 formal education programs; and
  - Needs/data assessment for formal environmental education, non-formal outreach and education, identifying underrepresented communities.
- Water and Sediment Quality (WSQ): Christian Rines presented the FY 2021 priorities of the WSQ Subcommittee:
  - Supporting management measures and watershed-based plans;
  - Health and green infrastructure; and
  - Waterway trash, marine debris, and/or macroplastics and microplastics.
- Monitoring and Research (M&R): Kristen McGovern presented the FY2021 priorities of the M&R Subcommittee:
  - Larval transport within the estuary;
  - Macroplastics and/or microplastics in water, sediment, and organisms; and
  - Emerging contaminants in water, sediment, and organisms.

**Presentation: Natural Resource Uses (NRU) Subcommittee Focus and Priorities**

Lindsey Lippert gave a presentation on the Plan Actions and FY 2021 Priorities of the NRU Subcommittee. Ms. Lippert gave a brief overview of the 1995 Galveston Bay Plan and 2015 Strategic Action Plan goals and programmatic results of previous implementation efforts by activity and habitat type. Ms. Lippert outlined the NRU subcommittee process of developing the framework and goals of the 2018 Galveston Bay Plan Revision, and how those goals correlate to the original plans. Ms. Lippert finally outlined the FY 2021 priorities for the NRU Subcommittee:

- Land acquisition;
- Benefit to Federal and State Listed Species or Species of Greatest Conservation Need; and/or
- Brings funding or work leverage to the subcommittee.

**Council Members Roundtable: News and Announcements**

**Todd Running** - H-GAC is currently managing two supplemental projects to help low-income homeowners repair or replace failing on-site sewage facilities (OSSFs). There will be two OSSF workshops for homeowners at Brazosport College - Thursday, September 26<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00 PM, and Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-11:00 AM.

**TMDL** - H-GAC is working with stakeholder groups to develop Implementation Plans (I-Plan) for TMDLs in Chocolate Bayou and Oyster Creek to reduce bacteria levels. They are also conducting watershed characterizations of Halls and Mustang Bayous for future TMDL I-Plans.

**Bacteria Implementation Group (BIG)** - The BIG is currently in its 5<sup>th</sup> year of implementation and is working to update I-Plans. A Coordination and Policy committee

meeting will be held July 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1:00 PM and San Jacinto River, East and West Fork meeting will be held July 24<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM. The BIG fall meeting is scheduled for October 29<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM.

**Watershed Protection Plans** – The Cypress Creek Watershed Partnership will hold its first stakeholder meetings on Tuesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1:30–3:30 PM in Cypress, and from 5:30–7:30 PM in Spring to start discussions for the development of a Cypress Creek WPP.

**Coastal Communities Work Group Subcommittee** - Will meet July 31<sup>st</sup> from 1:30–3:00 PM at the Alvin Library.

**Clean Waters Initiative and Coastal Communities Work Group** - Will meet on August 8<sup>th</sup> from 10:00–12:00 PM at the North Harris County Regional Water Authority.

**Brian Koch** - TSSWCB will be sending out a request for proposals mid-August.

**Caimee Schoenbaechler** - The 2019 Texas Legislature and Governor Abbott greatly expanded the Texas Water Development Board's (TWDB) role in flood planning and financing. The TWDB will now be administering a new state flood planning program. This program establishes a state and regional flood planning process, with flood planning regions based on river basins. The first regional flood plans will be due in 2023, and the first state flood plan will be due in September 1, 2024.

The legislature also made a one-time transfer of \$793 million from the Rainy-Day Fund to create a new flood funding program to be administered by the TWDB. The program is designed to make the implementation of drainage and flood projects more affordable for Texas communities and to meet immediate needs for funding. The funding will become available in FY 2020.

The legislature provided the TWDB funding to collect more flood-related data, advance its river and coastal modeling capabilities, and distribute critical flood information through an online dashboard. TWDB is working to get programs up and running as soon as possible and to hire staff of 66 new FTEs for the new roles. TWDB will request stakeholders' input on a variety of issues at workshops around the state (Orange, Tomball, Lake Jackson) later in the summer.

Ms. Schoenbachler asked if anyone was interested in the updates they can sign up on the TWDB home page to receive emails. The sign-up location is under the agency Hot Topics section and the box "Flood Information" must be checked, under FAQ's.

**Linda Shead** - The Bayou Preservation Association will have its 2019 Annual Symposium "The Dirt on Watersheds: The Quest for Healthy Soil" on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 AM–3:00 PM.

**Lori Traweek** - Announced the Gulf Coast Authority's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and introduced the new Assistant General Manager, Ms. Fazio Hale.

**Kerry Niemann** – Announced the following updates on behalf of the TCEQ’s Water Quality Planning Division.

**Regarding the TMDL Program:**

The Oso Creek TMDL, Lavaca River TMDL and Implementation Plan, and Navasota River TMDL and Implementation Plan are scheduled to go to Agenda for adoption and approval on July 31<sup>st</sup>, August 14<sup>th</sup>, and August 28<sup>th</sup> respectively.

**Regarding the NPS Program:** The Request for Grant Applications solicitation closes July 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Regarding the 2018 Integrated Report:** The Commission adopted the draft 2018 Texas 303(d) List on June 26, 2019.

**Regarding Water Quality Standards:** The public comment period for the 2021 water quality standards closed on April 8.

**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.

**RESTORE**

Re: Bucket 1 (which is the Direct Component to the States to strengthen resiliency, economy, and tourism): TCEQ RESTORE staff continue to prepare federal applications for submission to the Treasury to receive grant awards for Bucket 1 funds. TCEQ will submit seven federal applications consisting of 22 of the 26 projects in the accepted Multiyear Implementation Plan (MIP). Each project will be included in one of the seven applications associated with the eligible activity that it was listed for under in the MIP. Projects moving forward to the application phase were selected in consultation with the Office of the Governor. Approximately \$97 million is currently available to Texas through Bucket 1.

Re: Bucket 2 (which is the Council Selected Restoration Component to support coordination w/experts and elected officials): The Council members and staff are currently in the process of reviewing comments and expect to finalize the Planning Framework document no later than early August 2019. The draft Planning Framework document is available at [www.restorethegulf.org](http://www.restorethegulf.org). The final Planning Framework will guide the Council in developing program and project proposals for consideration for funding under the next round of the Bucket 2 grant. That round of funding is estimated to be \$360 million for the five Gulf Coast states. To select what proposals to submit on behalf of Texas, Executive Director Toby Baker will host two public meetings. The purpose of the public meetings will be to receive comments on potential project proposals that he will post on the Council’s website in August. The meetings will be held on September 9 and 10, 2019. Details on the projects can be found at [restorethegulf.org](http://restorethegulf.org).

Re: Bucket 3 (which is the Spill Impact Component): On March 4<sup>th</sup> the Initial State Expenditure Plan was approved. The plan will focus on Hurricane Harvey recovery

efforts and the distribution of approximately \$31 million. Other plans will be developed in later years as additional Bucket 3 funds become available. Texas is expected to receive a total of \$121 million through Bucket 3 by the end of 2031.

Detailed information on the public meetings and other Texas RESTORE Act activities can be found on the [restorethetexascoast.org](http://restorethetexascoast.org) website.

**Julie McEntire** - The GLO's CMP Cycle 25 pre-proposals are currently under review; request for full proposals will be sent in October. The GLO is also hosting a series of living shoreline workshops in late July to early August.

**Doug Jacobson** - The Plastic Pollution Prevention Partnership (P3P) is hosting the Plastic Pollution Symposium in Galveston on October 29 at Moody Gardens. Visit [www.donttrashagoodthing.org](http://www.donttrashagoodthing.org) for more information.

**Cruz Hinojosa** - The Environmental Defense Fund, Texas Southern University, and the Environmental Advocates of Galena Park received a community outreach grant for education, outreach on air quality and environmental issues.

**Public Comments:** None

**Adjourn:** Meeting was adjourned at 12:02 PM

**Upcoming Galveston Bay Council Meeting Dates:** October 16, 2019; January 15, 2020; April 15, 2020, July 15, 2020. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the quarter from 9:30 AM-12:30 PM.