

# WATER AND SEDIMENT QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL

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**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 04, 2020**  
**1:30PM – 3:30PM**

Subcommittee Chair: Brian Koch, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)

Subcommittee Vice Chair: Justin Bower, Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC)

GBEP Representative: Christian N. Rines

## **Call to Order, Introductions**

Attendees: Justin Bower (H-GAC), Michael Lee (USGS), Zulimar Lucena (USGS), Denise Ehrlich (GCA), Stephanie Glenn (HARC), Lisa Marshall (GBEP), Kristen McGovern (GBEP), Lindsey Lippert (GBEP), Patricia Thompson (GBEP), Christie Taylor (TX A&M AgriLife), Elizabeth Kompanik (TCEQ), Colleen Ulibarri (TX A&M AgriLife), Mary Stiles (GBEP), Christian Rines (GBEP), Charlotte Cisneros (GBF), Nick Ellis (GBF), Mac Martin (TFS by phone).

*Approval of December 5, 2019 minutes – approved with no changes.*

**Presentation:** “Stormwater Wetlands: Where We Stand and What’s Next” – Christie Taylor, Extension Program Specialist, Texas Community Watershed Partners, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

**Presentation:** “What plant succession can inform about wetland restoration at Sheldon Lake State Park” – Colleen Ulibarri, Ecological Restoration Program Coordinator, Texas Community Watershed Partners, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

*\*Presentations, notes, and Q&A available upon request.*

## **Project Updates:**

Dickinson Bayou/ Highland Bayou WPP (TX A&M AgriLife)

- Dickinson Bayou – No update.

- Highland Bayou – Currently reviewing the Draft WPP. Galveston County MUD 12 has received a grant from the ACOE to conduct a feasibility study to work on hydrologic restoration to improve flow. The City of La Marque will be the non-federal sponsor for the project.

#### GIFT (TX AgriLife)

- The contract has expired. AgriLife has submitted the Final Comparative Study and Final Report. All data for the Sheldon Lake State Park freshwater restoration monitoring project was finalized, Phase II of the Exploration Green stormwater wetland was completed, and Phase III was under construction prior to contract expiration.

#### Cypress Creek/Spring Creek Watershed Protection Plans (H-GAC)

- Cypress Creek –The project has reached the halfway point and is starting to discuss solutions. Mr. Bower is currently looking for any available data, especially in the Katy Prairie area, to present to its partners.
- Spring Creek – This project is just getting started and Ms. Windham will be the lead. Public involvement is anticipated to start in early April 2020.

#### BIG I-Plan/Basins 11 and 13 (H-GAC)

- No update. Contact Steven Johnston with any inquiries.

#### Double Bayou Watershed Protection Plan (GTRI)

- The QAPP has been approved; the first sampling session was completed; The team developed an OSSF workshop together with TX A&M AgriLife for stakeholders that will take place March 31, 2020 in Anahuac; the next stakeholder meeting will be held May 12, 2020 in Anahuac; the Double Bayou project is looking to partner with the Coastal Communities project in the near future.

#### Bacteria Source Tracking (TWRI)

- All isolates have been identified and entered into the BST library. Dr. Gentry will be presenting on the project at the next Council meeting and possibly the next WSQ Subcommittee meeting. The contract is currently being amended to allow for completion of the final report due to a hold up with the lab.

#### Targeted Bacteria Monitoring (BPA thru H-GAC)

- The Final QAPP has been approved and the project is now ramping up. The contract is currently being amended to add FY 21 funds versus developing a new contract.

#### Occurrence of Microplastics in Tributaries to Galveston Bay (USGS)

- The Final QAPP is currently being signed and sampling is set to begin in the next few weeks.

### **Subcommittee Needs/Gaps Discussion:**

- Mr. Bower welcomed a discussion on the direction of the subcommittee in the coming year (i.e.- types of presentations, collaborations, subcommittee needs and gaps).
- Mr. Bower posed the question as to if microplastics will continue to be a priority for the TCEQ or are we good with the projects we are currently funding. Nick Ellis interjected that GBF recently received funding to start their own microplastics study as part of their marine debris program. They will be partnering with UHCL to process and analyze samples and adopting Mississippi State University's protocols. Ms. Rines added that collectively across the Galveston Bay, our partners are collecting the necessary baseline data to support future projects. This continues to be a priority for the EPA. Mr. Lee mentioned that the need for microplastics will probably only grow and he'd hate to see the issue abandoned for the next emerging topic. A concentrated effort for multiple years would allow us to represent the watershed on this topic of research. He also added that a study focusing on the impacts of microplastics would be beneficial. What do microplastics mean for human health and the environment?
- Ms. Glenn mentioned that PFOAs are going to be of big concern in the near future. Another subcommittee member added that routine monitoring of PFOAs may soon be required by the EPA. Mr. Ellis announced that he will share their report of samples collected during the ITC incident once accepted. M&R will be funding a PFOA project in FY21.
- Mr. Bower mentioned that impacts to WSQ after flood events should be on our radar given the post-Harvey money that is available.
- Mr. Lee suggested creating a storyboard or portal project for Microplastics data for the bay. Should this be added as a parameter to the next State of the Bay Report?
- Mr. Bower asked if there have been soil health outreach type projects in the watershed. Urban soil health outreach continues to be a gap.

### **Announcements/Path Forward Items:**

- Ms. Rines suggested possibly having subcommittee members highlight their current work in short 10-minute presentations, similar to the "member spotlight" presenters at the M&R Subcommittee meetings. Presenters may be members of any of the subcommittees.

- Ms. Cisneros announced that she will be replacing Sarah Gossett Robinson as the new Advocacy Programs Manager at the Galveston Bay Foundation.
- Mr. Bower announced that The Woodlands is looking to ramp up watershed protection outreach and education in the area. If you have any helpful information, please reach out to them.
- Ms. Kompanik announced TCEQ will be hiring Mickey Leland interns again this summer if anyone knows of someone who may be interested.

**GBEP, Council, and subcommittee updates:**

- M&R Subcommittee Meeting - June 10, 2020, 9:30am -11:30am at the GBEP Office
- PPE Subcommittee Meeting - March 12, 2020, 10:00am -12:00pm at the GBEP Office
- NRU Subcommittee Meeting - TBD
- GBC Meeting - April 15, 2020, 9:30am - 12:00pm at the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District
- Future WSQ Meetings:
  - Wednesday, June 10, 2020 1:30PM - 3:30PM
  - Wednesday, September 9, 2020 1:30PM - 3:30PM
  - Wednesday, December 9, 2020 1:30PM - 3:30PM

**Adjourn**