

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL

**Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 12, 2019
10:00PM – 12:00PM
Held at Armand Bayou Nature Center, Pasadena, TX**

Subcommittee Chair: Kathy Janhsen, Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC)

Subcommittee Vice Chair: T’Noya Thompson, North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE)

GBEP Representative: Cynthia Clevenger

Attendees: T’Noya, NAAEE; Ted Driscoll, GBF; Anni Ranck, Bayou Preservation Association; Cindy Wilems, GBF; Rose Esteves, City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD); Amanda Rinehart, Artist Boat; Sasha Francis, GBF; Megan Imme GBF; Mary Alice Trumble, The Eddie V. Gray Wetlands Education and Recreation Center; Kendall Guidroz, H-GAC; Erin Kinney, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC); Brenda Weiser, University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL); Theresa Morris, Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN); Alicia Mein-Johnson, Citizen’s Environmental Coalition; Kristen Vale, American Bird Conservatory; Joanie Steinhaus, TIRN, Amanda Brown, Children’s Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELF); Lisa Gianukos, CELF; Lindsey Lippert, GBEP; Patricia Thompson, GBEP; Kristen McGovern, GBEP; Lisa Marshall, GBEP; Christian Rines, GBEP; Mary Stiles, GBEP; Cynthia Clevenger, GBEP

GBEP, Council, Subcommittee updates

The 11th State of the Bay Symposium will take place January 22-23, 2020 at the Moody Gardens Hotel and Convention Center in Galveston, TX. Registration is still open. The next Council meeting will be on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at the Café in the Park at the Moody Gardens Hotel starting at 5 p.m.

Erin Kinney with HARC presented an update to the Regional Monitoring Database (RDM). This is a programmatic deliverable and part of the Galveston Bay Plan, 2nd Edition. The RDM is a centralized data portal that supports work of stakeholders in management of the Galveston Bay ecosystem. The RDM will be integrated with the plan, State of the Bay report, Status and Trends, and the Coastal Atlas.

The RMD will be released in a phased approach over three years. Phase I will supply bulk datasets covering the entire period of data, where users will be able to download subsets. The bulk data will provide what is necessary for the interactive geospatial mapping and interactive analysis and graphing applications that will be subsequently rolled out in the later phases. Datasets will be cross integrated from multiple databases. Once deployed the database will be updated to include data through 2019 and possibly 2020. Bulk data will be available through a ShareFile FTP site.

Information on the RMD can be referenced on pg. 145 of the Galveston Bay Plan, 2nd Edition. The indicators list that is the driver for the datasets is located on pgs. 153-155. Any additional thoughts or comments on the database are welcomed. Contact Ryan Bare at HARC if you have questions: Rbare@harcresearch.org

Presentation

Brenda Weiser with UHCL and Cindy Wilems with GBF on their GBEP/TCEQ funded project, “Know Your Watershed.”

This objective for this project was to host an Administrators’ Day and a Summer Institute for Teachers.

In the summer of 2019, the Administrators’ Day focus was to inform local administrators on what EE is, the benefits of incorporating it into classroom curriculum, and how to support local educators in EE efforts. There were 13 participants from 5 school area school districts. The participants heard from speakers and were given the opportunity to experience some field work. A fall follow-up survey was given in December 2019 to attendees in the to evaluate the relevance of the seminar. Results show the seminar was informative and provided a deeper understanding of EE and how to support EE efforts on area campuses. A spring 2020 follow-up survey will also be provided for attendees.

The eight-day Summer Institute for Teachers took place in July of 2019. Twenty participants from three area school districts participated. The objective was to provide educators with the description and history of EE, information on water quality, importance of wetlands, best practices, importance of marshes, and curriculum and classroom resources. Attendees also had field trips and field work experiences. A post-institute follow-up survey was provided for attendees. Results indicated that the institute provided a lot of relevant and useful information and attendees felt they were leaving with resources/activities they could incorporate into their classrooms. Several attendees indicated in the evaluation that their district currently included/encouraged EE in their classrooms. A fall follow-up survey was conducted in November 2019. The attendees indicated that after the institute training, they were more familiar with environmental issues and research related to watersheds compared to before the institute. A spring 2020 follow-up survey will be also be conducted.

Questions and ideas to be explored:

- Would a large-scale educator survey provide a needs assessment for Galveston Bay watershed-related EE programs and assistance in getting those programs into schools?
- Would the survey help assess how schools, school districts, and educators can partner with the organizations and groups who delivering EE programs?
- Would more professional development workshops and programs like Know Your Watershed be beneficial for the region's educators and education administrators?

For more information about this project, please contact Brenda Weiser and Cindy Wilems.

Discussion

PPE members discussed the need to reach underserved/underrepresented communities in the Galveston Bay watershed. They looked at how to define underserved/underrepresented, which most agreed that that casts a wide-net for this region: socio/economic, age, faith communities, rural communities, physical/mental disabilities, LGBTQ, language barriers etc.

Members agreed that there needs to be a needs assessment. The current project with HARC that is conducting a public awareness and perception evaluation will help with guide this discussion. Members also discussed the need to engage in environmental justice issues for the region.

It was agreed that a workshop is needed to delve deeper into reaching underserved/underrepresented communities, bringing in experts in the fields of social science, environmental justice, community organizing, community outreach etc.

Announcements/Path Forward Items

Next Meeting: TBD

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