

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL

**Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 18, 2020
10:00PM – 12:00PM
Via Microsoft Teams**

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, Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF); Sarah Bernhardt, Bayou Preservation Association; Cindy Wilems, GBF; Rose, City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD); Kelli Ondracek, HPARD; Cassidy Kempf, HPARD; Sasha Francis, GBF; Kendall Guidroz, H-GAC; Ryan Bare, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC); Martha Parker, Houston Zoo; Della Barbato, Native Texas Prairie Association of Texas; Brenda Weiser, University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL); Theresa Morris, Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN); Cruz Hinojosa, Galveston Bay Council; Alicia Mein-Johnson, Citizen’s Environmental Coalition; Kristen Vale, American Bird Conservatory; Amaryllis Martin; EcoRise; Charlotte Cisneros, GBF; Melissa Ciesielski, Texas A&M University at Galveston; Kristen Vale, American Bird Conservancy; Joanie Steinhaus, TIRN; Amanda Brown, Children’s Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELF); Lindsey Lippert, GBEP; Patricia Thompson, GBEP; Kristen McGovern, GBEP; Lisa Marshall, GBEP; Christian Rines, GBEP; Mary Stiles, GBEP; Cynthia Clevenger, GBEP

Presentations

[GEN:THRIVE](#) Project - Gina LaMotte, EcoRise and Alicia Mein-Johnson, Citizens Environmental Coalition

Citizens’ Environmental Coalition's (CEC) mission is to foster education, dialogue, and collaboration on environmental issues in the Houston/Gulf Coast region. The focus of CEC’s environmental education program is to promote environmental literacy by connecting content experts with educators and, by extension, their students.

EcoRise is a nonprofit whose mission is to inspire a new generation of leaders to design a sustainable future for all. EcoRise is a nationally recognized leader in K-12

sustainability education, providing school districts with curriculum, teacher training and microgrants focused on sustainability, design and social innovation.

The GEN:Thrive project's goal to create a data-driven, systems-approach to deploy programs focused on environmental literacy, green building, outdoor learning, e-STEM, climate justice, and other related topics to the places that need it most.

By mapping the intersection of social, environmental, and educational factors, this project will help illuminate areas of greatest need, uncover opportunities for strategic collaborations and embolden districts and partners to join forces in a way that makes sense. The result is a clear vision and strategy for implementing environmental education (EE) into each unique community.

The tool's resourced include:

- A map of environmental literacy programs that correlates data indicators for equity and climate vulnerability.
- Connections to K-12 program providers to identify opportunities to partner and accelerate collective impact.
- Data visualization that creates value propositions, expands audiences, and drives new resources for EE.

<https://ecorise.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=c14e2f2ab0e34e9992022ad9f67a337c>

Current survey findings: <https://ecorise.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/EE-Survey-Findings.pdf>

The GEN:Thrive project is also in collaboration with the Here in Houston project, a “one-stop shop for formal and informal educators, parents, Texas Master Naturalists, Scout leaders, boating & wildlife enthusiasts and child care providers that want to teach about our Greater Gulf Coast.” Alicia and the CEC is leading this effort for the Greater Houston-Galveston region. PPE was encouraged to check out this resource and help provide information for the website.

The Environmental Educators Exchange is also another resource for Galveston Bay Watershed EE collaboration opportunities.

<https://www.hereinhouston.org/>

EcoRise and CEC are seeking input from Galveston Bay watershed EE stakeholders. Please reach out to Gina or Alicia for details on the survey.

<http://www.ecorise.org/genthrive-survey/>

Community Engagement and Environmental Education with impacts of COVID-19 presented by T’Noya Thompson, Environmental Education Specialist, North American Association for Environmental Education.

Community engagement means: "Teaming with communities enables environmental educators to work in situations or on issues that may be outside the typical conception of the field and to include people who may not be reached by traditional environmental education efforts." NAAEE.

T'Noya walked attendees through five characteristics of successful community engagement for EE that are: community centered, based on sound EE principles, collaborative and inclusive, oriented toward capacity building and civic action, long-term investment in change. The key to attaining success is knowing your audience, knowing the barriers and benefits of the program or messaging you are trying to deliver or implement, and evaluating both quantitative and qualitative impacts of your program.

Links for further information and guidance:

Guidelines for Excellence Series Set

<https://naaee.org/eeopro/publication/guidelines-excellence-series-set>

NAAEE resources for COVID-19

<https://naaee.org/our-work/programs/covid-19-resources-tips-and-support>

Impact by Design <http://www.impactbydesigninc.org/expertise>

Native Texas Prairie Association of Texas <https://texasprairie.org/the-deer-park-prairie-education-program/>

Galveston Bay Foundation <https://www.galvbay.org/virtualcamp>

Project Updates

Project managers gave updates for the following projects:

- Blackhawk Park (Houston Parks and Recreation Dept.)
 - The project is on track to wrap up in August. Ten acres of degraded habitat was restored to its historic condition. This improvement has increased habitat function, improved the ecosystem services provided by the site, and created habitat for the many grassland-dependent species that are native to the Houston area. The surrounding community was actively involved in the restoration process and are now more likely to understand and appreciate the natural area of their community park.
- Galveston Bay Public Awareness and CBSM Campaigns (HARC)
 - The public assessment evaluation was delayed slightly due to COVID-19. The goal is to deliver the evaluation in the field by the end of August/early September.
- TERN (Audubon Texas)
 - For this project, in partnership with TPWD, Audubon Texas' TERN network grew to provide over 5,000 hours of volunteer service for

coastal bird conservation efforts in 2019. Audubon Texas was able to reach coastal communities in the Galveston Bay area and develop a campaign aimed at reducing plastic pollution. Audubon Texas staff was also able to provide a reference document that will serve as a resource for individuals interested in becoming state and federal wildlife rehabilitators and responders. This project will be completed in August 2020.

- Galveston Seawall Recycling (Galveston Park Board of Trustees)
 - 58-gallon cans and one, six-compartment station were deployed along the Galveston Island Sewall at the end of February. Unfortunately, COVID-19 caused the Park Board to implement safety protocols for their staff. They were able to collect materials but could not sort and analyze the material to gauge recycling efforts for the project. Even though this project is ending in August, the Park Board intends to collect and analyze the material in the bins and send GBEP the information once it is safe for their staff to resume normal operations.
- Know Your Watershed (UHCL)
 - The symposium/seminar and the summer institute for teachers was a success. The administrators expressed lots of interest in the programs that were presented during the “exhibit fair.” As a result, Crenshaw EE Magnet School in Galveston ISD requested some additional training for their teachers. A Project Learning Tree workshop was conducted in August 2019 at the school. Additionally, Galveston Bay Foundation conducted various field trips, classroom programs, and teacher workshops during the 2019-2020 school year with many symposium/seminar and institute participants as a direct result of this project. This included teachers/students from Seabrook Intermediate School (Clear Creek ISD), Crenshaw Elementary (Channelview ISD), Ed White Elementary (Clear Creek ISD), Pasadena ISD, Clear Creek ISD, and Oppe Elementary (Galveston ISD). This project will be completed in August 2020, and COVID-19 impacted several of the deliverables for this grant. First, the teachers were not in their class after Spring Break and were teaching on-line. This made it difficult for the teachers to use the materials, activities or have a field trip with their students. Most teachers were excited and planned on using the materials and activities as indicated by the surveys but were not able to do so. Next, all the planned presentations at state, regional and national conferences were cancelled. This included presenting at the International Project Learning Tree Coordinator’s Conference and the North American Association for Environmental Education Annual Conference. However, a presentation was shared at the GBEP PPE meeting in

December 2019. This did not include the survey from May 2020 but it was well received by the members of the committee.

Final project reports will be available on the [GBEP website](#).

PPE FY2022 Priority Planning

Members reviewed the 2020 PPE Plan Priority Assessment survey and discussed the subcommittee's priorities for fiscal year 2022 which are:

- Mapping/database identifying underrepresented communities and a needs assessment for volunteer and stewardship programs and opportunities for those underrepresented communities.
- Programs building capacity to target and partner with underrepresented communities that encourage diversity, equity, and addresses language barriers.
- Create and facilitate a workshop that convenes thought leaders, stakeholders, and partners to address how to partner with underrepresented communities to deliver environmental education and outreach efforts. As an outcome of the workshop, develop a plan of action on how to deliver programs in the Galveston Bay watershed for underserved communities.
- Programs that address careers in the environmental field targeting high school-aged youth, young adults in college, and young professionals. Programs may encourage careers in, but not limited to, natural resource management, formal and informal education and outreach, and environmental communication.

Discussion

Galveston Bay Intertidal Oyster Reef Mapping and Analysis project - Amanda Hackney.

This project, funded by GBEP, will incorporate shapefiles, field photographs, and videos into an interactive StoryMap via ArcGIS.com. This StoryMap will be embedded on a suitable outreach focused website (like Back the Bay) and available to the public. The StoryMap will communicate the importance of oysters to the health of the bay, the loss of historical oyster populations and engage the public with real stories from field scientists.

Amanda asked PPE for input for educational story map. For additional input, contact Amanda for more information.

Announcements/Path Forward Items

The Bayou Preservation Association's symposium will take place in October. See their website <https://www.bayoupreservation.org/News-Events/Events/2020-Annual-Symposium>

The next State of the Bay Report will be released in early fall. Contact Cynthia, Ryan Bare or Erin Kinney for more information.

Next Meeting: September 10, 2020

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