



# WATER AND SEDIMENT QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL



## Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 9, 2021 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)

Galveston Bay Estuary Program Representative (GBEP): Christian Rines

*Due to COVID-19, the June 9, 2021 meeting was held through the Microsoft Teams conferencing service.*

### Call to Order, Introductions

Attendees: Brian Koch (TSSWCB), Justin Bower (H-GAC), Christian Rines (GBEP), Christie Taylor (TX A&M AgriLife), Elizabeth Kompanik (TCEQ), Laura Ryckman (TCEQ), Mac Martin (TFS), Gordon Pederson (GCA), Faith Hambleton (TCEQ), Kristen McGovern (GBEP), Lisa Marshall (GBEP), Lindsey Lippert (GBEP), Patricia Thompson (GBEP), Celina Gauthier Lowry (TX A&M AgriLife), Linda Shead (Shead Conservation Solutions), Rachel Windham (H-GAC), Kendall Guidroz (H-GAC), Charlotte Cisneros (GBF), Stacey Carr (TCEQ), Ryan Bare (HARC), Stephanie Glenn (HARC), Kimber De Salvo Anderson (TIRN), David Hala (TAMUG), Wendy Forester (GBEP), Stevie Nash (GBEP Intern), Roberto Vega (HCFCD), Rachel Craig (UH), Michael LaMontagne (UHCL), Cassidy Kempf (HPARD), Amy Kuriakose (RU), Ray Ram (PVAMU), Denise Ehrlich (GCA), Kim Korth (BPA).

*Approval of March 9, 2020 minutes – Ms. Rines opened the meeting with approval of the minutes. A motion was requested for approval. Mr. Pederson moved to approve the minutes, and Mr. Bower seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with noted changes.*

### New Business

**Presentation:** “Draft Galveston Bay Estuary Resilience Assessment” – Stephanie Glenn, Houston Advanced Research Center

**Presentation:** “Coordinating Implementation of a Watershed Protection Plan for Double Bayou” – Stephanie Glenn, Houston Advanced Research Center

**New Member Introduction:** Michael LaMontagne, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Microbiology, University of Houston-Clear Lake

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

### **Planning and Priorities for FY 22 Funding:**

- FY22 project proposal submission will tentatively begin June 21, 2021 and close on July 21, 2021. A copy of the proposal form will be provided to subcommittee members once these dates have been finalized. More information will be sent out by subcommittee coordinators in the official call for proposals email.
- Actions and Outputs of the Galveston Bay Plan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Ms. Rines provided a spreadsheet that listed the three Actions Plans of Priority One of the Galveston Bay Plan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Ensure Safe Human and Aquatic Life Use. Subcommittee members will be asked to indicate which actions and outputs of the Plan their project implements when submitting proposals.
- Past and current WSQ projects and narrowing of priorities for FY22 project development. A listing of WSQ projects completed or ongoing since 2012 was provided to subcommittee members. The spreadsheet also identified actions of the Plan implemented by each of these projects. These priorities previously identified by the subcommittee in the last quarterly meeting were revisited in order to narrow down the list to three priorities. These three priorities will then be used to help the subcommittee decide which projects to fund in the fall. Those needs and gaps not identified as a priority for this project planning cycle will remain on the list and will be revisited by the subcommittee the following year. The following three priorities were identified:
  - Green infrastructure and soil health projects/ monitoring to improve water quality
  - Supporting management measures and watershed-based plans
  - Waterway trash, marine debris, and/or macroplastics and microplastics
- Ms. Marshall asked members to possibly consider ranking those projects that support diversity, equity, inclusion, underserved communities, and environmental justice, higher than those projects that do not, as this is a current priority of the EPA. Mr. Bower agreed that this seems to be the general direction a lot of agencies are headed and would be worthwhile incorporating into Subcommittee project planning. Ms. Clevenger added that these issues have been chosen as priorities by the PPE Subcommittee for the past two years. Ms. Lippert suggested possibly adding a field to the proposal to indicate if your project addresses any of these issues.

### **Old Business**

#### ***Project Updates from WSQ Project Mangers:***

- Implementation of Watershed Protection Plan for Double Bayou (HARC) – The project is complete. A project overview was provided during the HARC presentation. The team will continue implementation efforts and maintenance of the [Double Bayou Partnership Website](#).
- Targeted Bacteria Monitoring (BPA thru H-GAC) – Ms. Guidroz announced that they are currently working on sampling efforts with the second round of SCA

interns to complete additional Assessment Units (AU). The team has completed one AU so far, Plum Creek, which was completed in December with the first round of interns. There are five more to complete that the team is hoping to complete and get reports submitted to the City of Houston (COH). The COH has not yet formally responded to the previously submitted Plum Creek Targeted Monitoring Report but is looking into any possible leads on incidents around those sampling dates.

- Occurrence of Microplastics in Tributaries to Galveston Bay (USGS) – Ms. Rines announced that sample collection is nearing completion. Six sampling events have been completed between May 2020 and June 2021. Sample analysis is awaiting Agreement and QAPP Amendments to reflect a change in the contracted lab.
- Baseline Assessment of Microplastics in Galveston Bay (USGS) – Ms. Rines announced that USGS has started sampling and has completed two sites following rain events. Phase II samples will be sent to the lab once Phase I have been processed.
- Outreach Implementation for Galveston Bay Water Quality Projects (H-GAC) – Ms. Guidroz announced that the team is currently updating some of its outreach materials to make those more user friendly and are in the process of trying to reach those communities that were not reached in the first phase of the project. These conversations will determine which resources the project will be focusing on.
- Dickinson Bayou/Highland Bayou Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) (TCWP) – Ms. Rines announced that the Highland Bayou Coastal Basin WPP has been accepted by the EPA on May 12, 2021. No Dickinson Bayou update. Ms. Gauthier Lowry added that the Galveston Bay Coalition of Watersheds for Galveston has been working on implementation efforts in both Dickinson and Highland Bayous and is currently focusing on Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) efforts and a few other topics this year.
- Cypress Creek and Spring Creek WPPs (H-GAC) – Mr. Bower announced that Cypress Creek is moving rapidly into implementation. The WPP and has completed the stakeholder period of review and has been approved by TCEQ. The next step will be submittal to the EPA. The team has been working with TFS and Katy Prairie Conservancy on a variety of forestry and conservation-based projects that are on the ground. They are also continuing to work with the EPA and ACOE on some modeling that is looking at water quality and flood management. The team will be seeking additional funding to be able to coordinate the project and other Lake Houston Watershed projects. Ms. Windham announced that they are through most of the modeling process and talking about reduction targets and implementation strategies. The WPP has been drafted and is now entering the review phase with stakeholders. Mr. Bower added that the contract for the Clear Creek Watershed has been initiated. He looks forward to future discussions and coordination surrounding this project.
- BIG I-Plan/Basins 11/Cotton Bayou (H-GAC)/ – BIG I-Plan: No update. Basin 11: No update. Cotton Bayou: Ms. Windham announced that the team is currently working to develop a technical support document and are hoping to be meeting with stakeholders in the Mont Belvieu area very soon.

**Watershed Partnership Updates/Roundtable:**

- Mr. LaMontagne provided the link to the [EPA's Healthy and Resilient Gulf of Mexico 2021 Request for Applications](#) and encouraged anyone interested in collaborating to contact him directly.
- Mr. Bower announced that H-GAC is working with the Houston Endowment on a large-scale conservation project, which includes our coastal counties and much of the area around Galveston Bay. They are focusing primarily on local governments and looking for ways to enhance conservation projects and identify funding resources/aid in application submittals.

**Galveston Bay Estuary Program, council, and subcommittee updates:**

- Ms. Marshall announced again that the Highland Bayou WPP has been accepted by the EPA and will now move into the implementation phase with the Coalition of Watersheds.

**Upcoming GBEP meetings:**

PPE Subcommittee Meeting - June 10, 2021, 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M., Online

NRU Subcommittee Meeting - June 11, 2021, 9:30 A.M. - 11:30 A.M., Online

B&P Subcommittee Meeting - July 7, 2021, 9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M., Online

GBC Meeting - July 21, 2021, 9:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M., Online

Next Quarterly WSQ Meeting - September 8, 2021 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.

Winter WSQ Meeting - December 8, 2021, 1:30pm - 3:30pm

**Adjourn**