# Budget and Priorities (B&P) Subcommittee of the Galveston Bay Council (GBC)

### Date: Tuesday, October 5, 2021, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

## Location: Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP), Virtual Teams

## Minutes

### Attendees

**Members attended:** Justin Bower, Albert Gonzales, George Guillen, Brian Koch, Kerry Niemann, Cherie O’Brien, Linda Shead, Lori Traweek, Cindy Wilems.

**GBEP Staff attended:** Cynthia Clevenger, Wendy Forester, Lindsey Lippert, Kristen McGovern, Lisa Marshall, Christian Rines, Vanessa Zemke.

### Welcome and Introductions.

Lisa Marshall welcomed the members to the meeting. Ms. Marshall introduced Vanessa Zemke, the new Technical and Quality Program Coordinator.

July 7, 2021 minutes correction made to change the spelling of Russ Poppe from the previous B&P meeting minutes. A motion to approve the minutes from July 7, 2021 was made by Linda Shead and a second was made by Brian Koch. The minutes were approved with correction.

**Fiscal Year 2023 Subcommittee Priorities**

The subcommittees will share their priorities with the GBC at the next GBC meeting. The following projects are being recommended for funding by the various subcommittees:

Natural Resource Uses (NRU) Subcommittee

* Conservation Assistance Program (CAP) (Galveston Bay Foundation [(GBF); year 5 of existing project)] – $100,000 in funding
  + Ms. Shead has conflict of interest with CAP since she facilitates the meetings
* Baytown Nature Center Oyster Reef Restoration and Shoreline Protection Project (GBF through the City of Baytown) – $100,000 in funding
* Blackhawk Part Restoration Project [Houston Parks and Restoration Department (HPARD)] – $83,000 in funding
* Impact of Cold-Stunning Events as Physical Stressors on Sea Turtle Behavior and Movement in Galveston Bay [Texas A&M University, Galveston (TAMUG)] – $96,000 in funding

Monitoring and Research (M&R) Subcommittee

* Long-term Monitoring of Living Shorelines for Restoring Shoreline Habitat and Efficiency (Lee College with partners University of Houston Clear Lake [(UHCL) and GBF] - $127,791in funding
* Effects of Erosion Control Structures on Shoreline Marsh Species Populations (partial funding in fiscal year 23, approved by GBC last year) \_ $31,140 in funding
* Fate of Emerging PFASs pollutants in Fish and Shellfish in Galveston Bay (partial funding in fiscal year 23, approved by GBC last year) - $37,093 in funding
* Alternate: Monitoring Ecosystem Indicators for Science-Based Restoration and Enhancement of Pelagic Habitats of Galveston Bay (TAMUG) - $130,663

Public Participation and Education (PPE) Subcommittee

* Water Quality Outreach Implementation for Vulnerable Rural Populations [Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC)] – $40,000 in funding
* Trash Bash (HGAC) - $10,000 in funding
* Galveston Bay Report Card for Vietnamese Outreach (Houston Advanced Research Center) - $65,000 in funding
* Alternate 1: Engaging Diverse Communities in Conservation (BPA through the Harris County Department of Education) – $58,540 in funding
  + Linda Shead has a conflict of interest because of BPA
* Alternate 2: Exploring the Education Connections at Exploration Green (Texas A&M AgriLife through the Texas Community Watershed Partners) - $65,000 in funding

Water and Sediment Quality (WSQ)Subcommittee

* Watershed Protection Plan for Clear Creek (H-GAC) - $30,000 in funding
* Supporting the Use of Green Infrastructure in the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed (H-GAC; existing project that was funded last year) - $15,000 in funding
* Targeted Bacteria Monitoring (Bayou Preservation Association (BPA) through H-GAC; existing project, Phase 3) - $40,000 in funding
  + Linda Shead has conflict of interest because of BPA
* HPARD Water Management Plan - $50,000 in funding
* Alternate: Promoting Healthy Soils and Green Infrastructure for Improved Water Quality through Galveston Bay Watershed (Texas A&M AgriLife through the Texas Community Watershed Partners) - ~$92,000 in funding
  + Mr. Koch has a conflict of interest

Lori Traweek abstained from projects involving GBF, strictly volunteer. Ms. Shead abstained from projects involving BPA, strictly volunteer.

Ms. Marshall welcomed Cindy Wilems to the meeting since it was her first B&P meeting as the new PPE subcommittee chair.

**Budget Presentation**

*Budget A:*

* $700,000 in funding from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), ~$923,000 in state funding
* Fiscal year 23 Subcommittee Recommendations for funding (does not include any alternatives, only includes base projects)
* Compared against fiscal year 22 budget
* Have considerable amount of funding leftover, roughly $150,000, to make some recommendations in fiscal year 23
* Changes made included:
  + Addition of PPE Alternative 1 (#17) and M&R Alternative (#22)
  + Moving around of projects from state to federal funding
* With the changes made, GBEP was able to balance the budget with exception of $35,000 in state funding
  + This $35,000 in state funding was a special ask to fund an additional project (not guaranteed to get it a second time)
  + Should this be available again, this would go to project 10 (Baytown Nature Center) or project 11 (Blackhawk Park)

*Budget B:*

* $750,000 from EPA, ~$900,000 state funding
* Changes needing to be made to accommodate this budget include:
  + Project 11 (Blackhawk Park) would switch from state funding to federal funding
  + Project 13 (Cold-Stunning Events) would be funded in full amount for fiscal year 23 instead of asking for additional funding in fiscal year 24
  + Project 22 (Pelagic Habitats) would request additional funding for fiscal year 24 to then fund this project in fiscal year 23
    - Change from $62,000 in fiscal year 23 and $69,000 in fiscal year 24 in Budget A to $95,5000 in fiscal year 23 and $35,000 in fiscal year 24 in Budget B
* Projects 10 and 11 would receive additional funding to fund specific operations of these projects that otherwise would not have been funded

Ms. Traweek made a motion to approve both budgets, and Ms. Shead seconded this motion.

**Galveston Bay Council Meeting Discussion:**

Ms. Marshall announced the GBC meeting will be a hybrid meeting that will follow the Open Meetings Act. Attendees must follow a set criterion of conditions, including:

* people planning to attend will have to register;
* every voting member must have their camera on while discussing and voting on issues; and
* microphone should be muted, unless speaking

Ms. Marshall suggested recording abstentions within the Teams chat during the meeting to refer to later.

Ms. Shead agreed with using the chat to make it easier for recording abstentions.

Lindsey Lippert stated the chat has a transcript option.

Mr. Koch said he has used the chat function for other meetings before, so it should be acceptable to use the chat for recording abstentions because of the transcript feature.

GBEP will be holding practice sessions in preparation for the GBC meeting.

GBC will be electing the GBC Chair and Vice-Chair and Ms. Marshall asked for nominations to re-nominate Glenn Clingenpeel and Albert Gonzales. Mr. Koch and Ms. Shead offered to nominate Mr. Clingenpeel and Mr. Gonzales, respectively.

Presentations for GBC meeting include:

* GBEP FY2023 Projects and Budget
* *New Tools to Respond to Environmental Justice in the Narragansett Bay Region* – Mike Gerel, Executive Director, Narrangansett Bay Estuary Program
* *Targeted Bacteria Monitoring Project* – Todd Running and Kendall Guidroz, H-GAC

**GBC Meeting Format for January Meeting Discussion**

* Field Trip
  + One site for each subcommittee
  + Meet in a place where all members could park and meet and then take a bus from there to the various sites
  + Need donations for bus

Mr. Gonzales commented even if buses are not available, people could drive in their own cars and visit these sites because it is very important to see the work being done.

Ms. Wilems commented more people will need to be available for the sites, such as staff, and January may be easier to have everyone present than April.

George Guillen suggested finding sites close to each other in location for ease of transport.

Ms. Shead said a bus is advantageous because you can share information on a bus rather than everyone in their own cars. She also highlighted the need for a bus donation and to consider working with the Harris County precincts for a bus. She also emphasized conducting the field trips in January because April has nicer weather and might have more events going on that the GBC meeting would compete with. In addition, she mentioned it would be nice to have field trips during the years that the symposium is not going on in the month of January.

GBEP will work on plans for the January field trips going forward.

**GBC Meeting Format for April Meeting Discussion**

* Panel
* Topics brainstorm for panel:
  + Plastic Pollution
  + Conservation plans and frameworks
  + DEI/EJ, if moving towards becoming more involved with watershed mapping

Ms. Shead suggested pushing panel to July GBC meeting, if doing field trips in January, to have more time for planning. Ms. Marshall agreed.

**Scheduling the Next B&P Subcommittee Meetings**

The next B&P Subcommittee Meeting dates for 2022 are January 11, April 12, July 12, and October 11. B&P Subcommittee meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of the month during the same month as the GBC meetings.

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for January 11, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

**Announcements:**

Linda Shead - Register for BPA Symposium

George Guillen – UHCL is hosting the annual meeting of the Texas Academy of Science on February 25-27, 2022. Texas Academy of Science is a state-wide organization, heavily attended by universities, with sections on rain and freshwater, and environmental sciences. He stated it is a great opportunity to see what is going on across the state and he is encouraging papers to be presented on Galveston Bay, in particular. This will be an in-person event with some virtual content.

### Upcoming meetings:

Galveston Bay Council: 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 3, 2021, Microsoft Teams/In-Person Hybrid Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:26 a.m.