PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL

# Meeting Minutes

# Wednesday, June 15, 2022

# 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Hybrid Meeting (Virtual Meeting Via Microsoft Teams and In-person at 17041 El Camino Real, Suite 210, Houston, TX 77058)**

Subcommittee Chair: Cindy Wilems, Education Director, Galveston Bay Foundation

Subcommittee Vice Chair: Vacant

GBEP Representative: Lisa Marshall

Attendees: Cindy Wilems, Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF); DeAndra Ramsey, Nature Discovery Center (NDC); Erin Kinney, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC); T’noya Thompson, (HARC); Kendall Guidroz, Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC); Kelsey Biles, Houston Audubon (HA); Charlotte Cisneros, (GBF); Liz Virgl, American Bird Conservancy (ABC); Joanie Steinhaus, Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN); Morgan Huette, (TIRN); Ashley Ross, Texas A&M University – Galveston (TAMUG); Virginia Greb, (TAMUG) and University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB); Kathy Sweezy, (HA); Lindsay Loftin, Artist Boat (AB); Rose Esteves, Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD); Ryan Francisco, Bayou Preservation Association (BPA); Lindsey Lippert, Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP); Lisa Marshall, (GBEP); Matthew Abernathy, (GBEP); Christian Rines, (GBEP); Vanessa Zemke, (GBEP)

Lisa Marshall called for review and approval of the March meeting minutes. Cindy Wilems (GBF) motioned for approval and Erin Kinney (HARC) seconded the motion.

***Presentations***

Erin Kinney and T’Noya Thompson of the Houston Advanced Research Center gave a presentation on what was learned from the Galveston Bay Public Perception Assessment project. This project began in the fall of 2019 and was a product of discussions among the PPE subcommittee of the need for a concentrated effort to survey the residents of the lower Galveston Bay Watershed. This assessment investigated the knowledge residents have about Galveston Bay, local campaigns, general perceptions of the bay, and demographics of the area. This presentation provided a summary of the results and what was learned from these results and how that information is applicable in a post 2020 world.

A copy of the presentation is available on the GBEP website

***Current Project Updates***

Ms. Marshall provided attendees with current projects to provide updates on those projects. (Figure 1: Current Project Spreadsheet is below)

* Trash Bash, 19-90216 (H-GAC) – 28th Trash Bash was held on March 26, 2022 at the first in-person clean-up since 2019. Just under 2,600 volunteers which was a bit less than pre-COVID numbers who collected 75 tons of litter and debris from 14 sites.
* Public Perception Assessment and Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) Campaigns to Enhance Conservation and Educational Outreach Programs, 20-10175 (HARC) – The final report for the project has been approved by TCEQ.
* Microplastics in the Galveston Bay Watershed: The Big Impacts of Tiny Pollution, 21-10096 (UHCL/TIRN) – Morgan Huette is the new Program Coordinator at TIRN and is working on taking over the project from Joanie. The teacher kits are ready for the fall 2022 technique. Sediment sampling has started, and techniques were modified to adjust for an increase of clay. Public outreach is in progress and has reached over 1,500 people regarding reducing their use of single-use plastics. Over 300 lbs. of trash, 78 balloons, and 6,800 cigarette butts have been collected along with over 3,400 nurdle patrols and sand processing for microplastics.
* Audubon TERN Citizen Science in Schools: Students as Field Researchers 21-10097 (HCDE) – HCDE and Audubon held in-person and virtual teacher trainings during the 2021-2022 school year, along with one in-person student training and field trip. Due to a lack of participation, there is a proposal for transitioning the TERN program to incorporate it with the HCDE afterschool program.
* Mobilizing the Environmental Education Community through Prairie Education, 22-30208 (UHCL) – They are preparing for their upcoming girls summer camp program, Girls on the Prairie, which will be a five-day camp geared to STEM activities on the prairies of Deer Park, UH – Clear Lake’s Environmental Institute of Houston, and Armand Bayou. They are also gearing up for fall teacher workshops and student field trips.

***Fiscal Year 2024 Project Priority Discussion***

The PPE Subcommittee conducted a roundtable discussion to establish the project priorities for FY2024. Ms. Marshall shared previous priorities from FY2022 and FY2023 for reference and the subcommittee members then discussed gaps and needs to finalize the FY2024 priorities.

1. Addressing a Lack of funding or difficulty for securing funding for existing programs. Look for established programs looking to expand an outreach component or revamp an existing portion of the program. Funding for programs to go into the classrooms to provide educational workshops.
2. Career information on natural resource, environmental education, and outreach for community college programs. How to connect (Roadmap) to STEM careers and resources to support them.
3. Collecting a list of stewardship and volunteer resources in the region (young adult, adult audiences, afterschool programs)
4. Addresses diversity, equity, and inclusion in the proposal.

Ms. Marshall also announced that GBEP will be seeking proposals to update the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan in FY2024.

***Subcommittee Roundtable and Announcements***

* Ms. Wilems announced that NAAEE and TAEE will be offering a training for educators that correlates outdoor education standards with Texas education standards.
* Ms. Thompson announced NAAEE has an e-STEM funding opportunity for environmental education organizations and non-profits that with students aged 11-18. Specifically, they are looking for proposals that engage students in areas that are underrepresented in STEM subjects. A tutorial webinar is also available to guide interested applicants through the RFP process.
* Ms. Kinney announced that the Galveston Bay Report Card will be released during National Estuaries Week, September 19 – 23, 2022. It is yet to be determined whether this will be a virtual or in-person launch. HARC is also celebrating it’s 40th anniversary this year.
* Mr. Abernathy announced that GBEP is partnering ABC’s SPLASh program to host a litter clean-up at the Texas City Dike on Tuesday, July 5 from 8 – 11 a.m. The registration link will be sent out to the subcommittee.
* Ms. Loftin announced that the Environmental Fund of Texas is providing grants to environmental education nonprofits based in Texas specifically focused on grassroots and volunteer driven non-profits and are currently accepting applications.
* Ms, Marshall made the following announcements.
  + The 2023 Texas Environmental Excellence Award applications are due September 23.
  + The 2023 Clean Water Act Section 319 grant RFGA application is due July 15.
  + The NRU subcommittee meeting is Wednesday, June 22.
  + The Galveston Bay Council meeting is July 20 at 9:30 a.m.
  + GBEP is taking the lead for planning the 2023 Plastic Pollution Symposium in the Houston-Galveston region. The first planning meeting is July 6 and anyone interested in participating on the planning committee should let Ms. Marshall know.
  + Also, if there is anyone else that should be added to the PPE subcommittee should forward their contact information to Ms. Marshall.
* Ms. Francisco (BPA) announced the Terry Hershey Bayou Stewardship nominations are open. This recognizes individuals who provide outstanding support of our area’s bayous. The nominations are open through July 15 and the application is online.

***Meeting Adjourned***

***FIGURE 1***

