

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND EDUCATION
SUBCOMMITTEE
GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL**

**Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 30, 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); Marsha Towns, Student Conservation Association (SCA); Brenda Weiser, Harris County Soil and Water Conservation District (HCSWCD); Erin Kinney, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC); Kendall Guidroz, Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC); Liz Virgl, American Bird Conservancy (ABC); Morgan Huette, Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN); Sarah Frantz, Artist Boat (AB); Rose Esteves, Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD); Richard Gibbons, (ABC); Della Barbato, Native Prairie Association of Texas (NPAT); Elizabeth Schneider, Galveston Park Board of Trustees (GPBT); Jenny Oakley, University of Houston - Clear Lake (UHCL); Wendy Reistle, (UHCL); Lisa Rickards, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Lacie Ulrich, City of Houston Public Works (COHPW); Mary Anne Piacentini, Coastal Prairie Conservancy (CPC); Charlotte Cisneros, Citizens' Environmental Coalition (CEC); Karastin Katusin, Bayou Land Conservancy (BLC); Nicole Plowman, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD); Karla Klay, (AB); Bethany Foshee (CPC); Lindsey Lippert, Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP); Lisa Marshall, (GBEP); Matthew Abernathy, (GBEP); Christian Rines, (GBEP);

Presentations

Charlotte Cisneros, CEC – Connecting Houston's Environmental Community

Ms. Cisneros is the Executive Director of CEC and provided the subcommittee with information on the organization and how it helps to connect the environmental community throughout the Houston region. This included a history on the organization along with information on the reimagining of the organization moving forward. Ms. Cisneros provided details on the short- and long-term vision for the organization along with additional resources that are available to the community and how people and organizations can become more involved with CEC.

Elizabeth Schneider, GPBT – Environmental Initiatives with the Park Board of Trustees of the City of Galveston

Ms. Schneider is the Environmental Coordinator for the GPBT and introduced the organization and the environmental initiatives the organization is working on for 2023 and beyond. The organization was established to support tourism, but the organization is working to improve tourism while also improving the natural and environmental areas throughout the island. These initiatives include litter reduction and beautification, education, and public awareness of issues

relating to impacts on the island. She also provided details on current and upcoming programs and certifications that the GPBT is working on.

*Presentations are available on the GBEP website <https://gbep.texas.gov/subcommittees/>.

Discussion – Back the Bay Website Redesign

Ms. Marshall and Mr. Abernathy provided an update on the Back the Bay website redesign, specifically targeting information on how to get more organizations to support and promote Back the Bay.

- The initial discussion was related to the goals of the new site: engaging with multiple stakeholders (teachers, municipalities, industry, etc.), types of information provided, supporting other organizations.
- How can the site and offerings be streamlined for ease of use?
- Determine your desired audience and survey members of the target audience to find their needs.
- Incorporating Back the Bay outreach into GBEP contracts.
- Is there a way or method for one group to receive organization resources that can be shared with other sites/resources?
- Allow some of the resources to overlap with other sites as our community and audiences overlap
- Utilizing Back the Bay website to connect larger entities together and resources for the bigger community.
- Consider challenges (time/cost) to continually update websites with current events and activities- links of organizations and allow each organization to update their own site is more efficient.
- Alternatively, advertising other organizations may water down the Back the Bay campaign messaging.

GBEP will discuss and meet with Wilkins and then provide an update at the next meeting.

Current Project Updates

- Kendall Guidroz (H-GAC); Trash Bash, 19-90216: The 29th Trash Bash will be held on March 25, 2023. There are tentatively 14 sites, with a new site on Greens Bayou partnering with Greens Bayou Coalition, but with Cypress Creek possibly being closed due to a lack of a coordinator. There is a new interactive guide on how to use all the exhibits.
- Jenny Oakley (UHCL), Morgan Huette (TIRN); Microplastics in the Galveston Bay Watershed: The Big Impacts of Tiny Pollution, 21-10096 – UHCL is collecting water, sediment, and shoreline samples from Galveston Bay to test for microplastics. 150 samples have been collected and processing is almost complete. TIRN is collecting samples around Galveston Island (six sites), two sites have currently been collected and plan to work on collecting another round of samples at four sites in the spring. Through a variety of education opportunities, education and outreach efforts reached 1,704 from September 23, 2022, to November 30, 2022, comprised of 277 students from beach clean ups where 141 pounds of trash, 3,930 cigarette butts, 104 microplastics, 369 nurdles were collected.
- Matthew Abernathy (GBEP); Audubon Texas Estuarine Resource Network (TERN) Citizen Science in Schools: Students as Field Researchers 21-10097 (HCDE) – Audubon Texas employed a new intern to facilitate the TERN program in the HCDE CASE program. Educator meets for one hour a day, five days a week. So far it has been well received and is moving forward as planned.
- Wendy Reistle (UHCL-EIH), Della Barbato (NPAT); Mobilizing the Environmental Education Community through Prairie Education, 22-30208 (UHCL) – NPAT provided information on

the current projects that have been done to date at the Deer Park Prairie along with some photos from programs over the summer. Teacher workshop was very successful; 15 teachers with the reach of 5,677 students engaged. The student field trips included Sam Rayburn HS which had 90 students participated over three days doing surveys. The girls' summer camp in June 2022, at Deer Park Prairie and Armand Bayou Nature Center included expert guests and career scientists visit.

- Lindsey Lippert (GBEP); Engaging Diverse Communities in Conservation, 23-40077 (HCDE); BPA is working with HCDE to get the subgrants in place and a meeting will be held once that is done.
- Kendall Guidroz (H-GAC); Water Quality Outreach Implementation for Vulnerable Rural Populations, 23-40239 (H-GAC); Currently, H-GAC is conducting an analysis of the 24 non-MS4 communities in the coastal counties based on their regional equity tool. The goal of this analysis is to create a draft list of vulnerable communities that correlates with permitted and non-permitted OSSFs. The goal is to have this list done by the end of December 2022 and then in February 2023, conduct a meeting with stakeholders from the identified communities to identify the most effective ways to conduct water quality outreach in these communities.

Ms. Lippert asked if information from this project would be shared to inform the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) project that is related to this. Ms. Guidroz stated that this is serving as a pilot project and they hope to have it completed prior to the BIL OSSF project starting, so that this project can be used as reference for the next project.

- Erin Kinney (HARC); GBRC Vietnamese Outreach, 23-40249 (HARC); Ms. Kinney stated that they are working on establishing contacts in the Vietnamese community along the west side of Galveston Bay. They will utilize some existing connections made from previous crab trap removal program for the east side of Galveston Bay. This search will hopefully yield a good primary contact with the Vietnamese community to help facilitate these discussions moving forward. They are also seeking university groups, churches, and chambers to identify a nexus organization to collaborate on this project.

Subcommittee Roundtable and Announcements

- Ms. Barbato provided information on the Prairie Stampede being held at the Houston Arboretum and Nature Center on December 7.
- Ms. Marshall provided the dates and times for the other subcommittee meetings in December and the GBC meeting in January.
- Ms. Marshall reiterated that the Texas Plastic Pollution Symposium will be held on Wednesday, April 5, 2023, and that there will be some additional activities on April 4.
- Ms. Reistle announced that there will be a Becoming an Outdoor Girls event on December 10 at the UHCL campus. They are looking for volunteers and currently have 55 girls signed up.

Next Meeting

TBD

Meeting Adjourned

FIGURE 1

PPE Current Projects														
FY	#	Contractor	Title	Initiation	Expiration	Source	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	Total Encumbrance	Amendment in progress	QAPP	QAPP Expiration, if applicable
19	90216	H-GAC	Trash Bash	8/17/2018	8/31/2022	Federal	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 10,000.00	\$ 35,000.00		No	N/A
20	10175	HARC	Public Perception Assessment and Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) Campaigns to Enhance Conservation and Educational Outreach Programs	8/23/2019	5/31/2022	Federal		\$ 86,000.00			\$ 86,000.00		No	N/A
21	10096	UHCL/TIRN	Microplastics in the Galveston Bay Watershed: The Big Impacts of Tiny Pollution	1/22/2021	5/31/2024	Federal			\$ 64,458.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 114,458.00	Amendment No. 1 in progress to increase funds and extend expiration date	Yes	TIRN: 8/11/2024; UHCL: 1/28/2025
21	10097	HCDE	Audubon TERN Citizen Science in Schools: Students as Field Researchers	11/13/2020	5/31/2023	Federal			\$ 49,323.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 89,323.00	Amendment No. 1 in progress to increase funds and extend expiration date	No	N/A
22	30208	UHCL	Mobilizing the Environmental Education Community through Prairie Education	11/12/2021	5/31/2024	Federal				\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	Amendment No. 1 in progress to increase funds	Yes	Not approved yet; under review