



WATER AND SEDIMENT QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL



Meeting Minutes Wednesday, March 8, 2023 1:30PM – 3:30PM

Subcommittee Chair: Brian Koch, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)

Subcommittee Vice Chair: Ryan Bare, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC)

GBEP Representative: Christian N. Rines

Call to Order

Attendees: Brian Koch (TSSWCB), Christian Rines (GBEP), Natalie Bue (HPARD), Grant Moss (BPA), Celina Gauthier Lowry (TX A&M AgriLife), Christie Taylor (TX A&M AgriLife), Rachel Windham (H-GAC), Steven Johnston (H-GAC), Bryan Eastham (Public), Stephanie Glenn (HARC), Brian Sims (H-GAC), Kendall Guidroz (H-GAC), Natasha Zarnstorff (GBF), Morton Sager (BPA), Stephanie DeVilleneuve (TWRI), Ryan Bare (HARC), Proy Chalitruangkul (TCEQ), Elizabeth Kompanik (TCEQ), Stacey Carr (TCEQ), Rose Esteves (HPARD), Zulimar Lucena (USGS), Moriah Johnson (Moriah Lynn Consulting), Lisa Marshall (GBEP), Lindsey Lippert (GBEP), Matthew Abernathy (GBEP), Kari Howard (GBEP), Ellen Creecy (GBEP), Casey Taylor (GBEP), Guadalupe (UHCL student), and Michael LaMontagne (UHCL).

Approval of the December 14, 2022 minutes – Ms. Rines opened the meeting with approval of the minutes. The minutes were approved with no changes.

New Business

Presentation: Microbial Source Tracking – Michael LaMontagne, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Microbiology, University of Houston Clear Lake

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

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Planning and Priorities:

- Ms. Rines began the conversation by discussing the handling of the previous year's BIL project selection process. In an effort to make the process less biased, the Budget and Priorities (B&P) subcommittee met last month to discuss an improved and more fair process to select projects. It was decided that subcommittee members would be taken out of the project selection process, and it would instead be left to B&P. Subcommittees are being asked to provide a list of what ideas or types of projects they'd like to see represented in this year's BIL funding cycle. These lists will then be combined to create a single list of priorities for this year's BIL proposal. Ms. Rines shared those priorities already developed by the PPE and M&R subcommittees, both of which meetings were held prior to WSQ. Ms. Rines also mentioned that B&P is wanting to see bigger, more collaborative projects this year, that span several, if not all subcommittees. The subcommittee was also reminded that this generated list would not be final, and that B&P could choose to eliminate any or all of the subcommittee suggestions.
- Actions and Outputs of the Galveston Bay Plan, 2nd Edition and WSQ Supported Project Ideas - Ms. Rines provided a spreadsheet that listed the three Actions Plans of Priority One of the Galveston Bay Plan, 2nd Edition, Ensure Safe Human and Aquatic Life Use and all WSQ projects that have been completed since 2012 or are ongoing. The spreadsheet also identified actions of the Plan implemented by each of these projects. Priorities identified by the subcommittee in previous years were revisited in order to narrow down the list to three topics of interest. These three project types will inform the single priority list that will be developed by B&P. The following types of projects were identified as important to the WSQ subcommittee:
 - Projects that support commercial and recreation finfish and shellfish monitoring for public health risks
 - Projects in support of management measures (e.g., green infrastructure, watershed health, water reuse and conservation) and watershed-based plans
 - Projects that evaluate efficacy of Galveston Bay Plan, second edition implementation efforts
- Ms. Rines reiterated that all subcommittee ideas would be provided to the B&P subcommittee, where a final list of priorities would be developed in the April meeting. The finalized list will be sent out ahead of the request for proposals in June. Projects will be presented to B&P, with a recommendation for one to five projects submitted to the Council for final approval. The minimum amount requested will be \$200,000 with a project length of ≤ 3 years. These criteria will be finalized by B&P in April.

Subcommittee Business:

Roundtable/ Partner Announcements and Updates:

Ms. Rines announced that the EPA will be sitting in our June subcommittee meetings as part of GBEP's Program Evaluation. In addition, the State of the Bay Symposium will be held January 31 - February 1, 2024, with an optional field trip either Tuesday, January 30 or Friday, February 2. Phase Two of the Regional Monitoring Database was also just released, so be sure to check it out.

Mr. Johnston announced that H-GAC is looking to fill water resource and planner positions. In addition, the Clean Rivers Program will be reevaluating where monitoring stations are located, as is done every year.

Ms. Windham announced that H-GAC will be hosting the 2023 Water Innovation Strategies of Excellence (WISE) awards on March 31, 2023. They've expanded this year's list of eligible applicants to include educational institutions, more monitoring and research, or even if individuals working on their own without the support of a program. Applications are currently open on the H-GAC website and will close March 31. Please contact Ms. Windham for more information.

Ms. Bue announced that HPARD is currently looking to hire a conservation technician, equipment worker, and additional other positions. Check HPARD'S website for more information.

Mr. Koch announced that Baffin Bay is looking to hire a watershed coordinator. Different levels of experience are available for hire. Also, get out and get your garden going, as it's warming up quickly.

Ms. Lippert announced that the NRU subcommittee meeting will be March 22 at 10 am. HPARD will be presenting on the Sylvan Park project.

**Time did not allow for project updates*

Old Business

Upcoming GBEP meetings:

NRU Subcommittee Meeting – Wednesday, March 22, 2023 (10:00 a.m.- 12:00p.m.)

B&P Meeting – Wednesday, April 12, 2023 (1:00-3:00pm)

GBC Meeting – Wednesday, April 19, 2023 (9:30am -12:30pm)

WSQ Subcommittee Meetings

- Wednesday, June 14, 2023 (1:30-3:30pm)
- Wednesday, September 13, 2023 (1:30-3:30pm)

- Wednesday, December 13, 2023 (1:30-3:30pm)

Adjourn