

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

**Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 7, 2023
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 (GBF)

Subcommittee Vice Chair: Kendall Guidroz, Senior Planner, Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC)

GBEP Representative: Kari Howard

Attendees: Erin Kinney, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC); Kendall Guidroz, (H-GAC); Anna Ervin, (H-GAC); Brenda Weiser, Harris County Soil and Water Conservation District (HCSWCD); Bethany Foshèe, Coastal Prairie Conservancy (CPC); John Rafferty, KPRC-TV; Ryan Francisco, Bayou Preservation Association (BPA); Tiffany Ritter, Houston Arboretum Nature Center (HANC); Sarah Frantz, Artist Boat (AB); Rose Esteves, Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD); Cassidy Kempf, (HPARD); George Guillen, University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL); Nicole Plowman, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD); Lisa Reznicek (TPWD); Karla Klay, (AB); Amy Neblett, (AB); Kristine Rivers, Birding for Fun (BFF); Karastin Katusin, Bayou Land Conservancy (BLC); Keilly Flores, (BLC); Sabraya Knight, National Wildlife Federation (NWF); Grace Martinez, League of Women Voters (LWV); Diane Olmos-Guzman, Promoters of Education, Awareness, Community Engagement (PEACE); Lindsey Lippert, Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP); Lisa Marshall, (GBEP); Matthew Abernathy, (GBEP); Christian Rines, (GBEP); Ellen Creecy, (GBEP); Casey Taylor, (GBEP); Huy Vu, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Fiscal Year 2025 Funding Priorities Discussion

Kari Howard led the subcommittee discussion priorities by presenting plan priorities listed within the Galveston Bay Plan (GBP), projects selected in prior years which align with GBP priorities, and the priorities that were selected for fiscal 2024 funding.

- The group discussed the importance of K-12 environmental education program, and that place-based or experiential learning has the greatest impact on individuals. Several members expressed concerns around environmental behavior changes to which reaching young people has the potential to create an early foundational understanding of where they live and the impact their habits have on our natural resources.
- Transitioning from school age education, the group discussed the growing needs that young professionals and college students have in environmental fields. Internships need to be meaningful and paid to attract a more diverse group of people. Several individuals within the meeting who are currently interns echoed that the environmental field can be challenging to get into without experience, yet financial support is necessary. The group decided that while internships are typically identified with young college students on a specific career path, for the sake of the priorities the category of people was left general on purpose.

- The group brought up the continued need for funding that supports existing and established programs that include education, outreach, and engagement within our communities. These programs are not limited to the continuation of, an expansion of, or an evolution through evaluation or development tools.
- When the group reflected on the Action Plan defined in GBP, PEA-1- Key Issue Engagement was brought up as an essential topic to cover. Several terms were discussed to describe some of the environmental issues around coastal resiliency. The need for adult education around science literacy focused within our area was agreed on.
- There was much discussion around how to best address diversity, equity, and environmental justice within the project. The subcommittee members provided several suggestions as to whether their addressing equity should be an optional box to select regarding the project priorities or whether all of the proposals must address an aspect of equity as a requirement. The group ultimately agreed to form a statement within the proposal that priority will be given to projects that are addressing environmental justice and equity in the community.
- Priorities the group produced:
 - Place based and immersive programming (k-12)
 - Conservation and environmental workforce training
 - Continuation or expansion of established education, outreach, or engagement programs
 - Adult engagement in science literacy focused on the Galveston Bay estuary and watershed

Procedures and timeline for Fiscal 2025 Projects

Ms. Howard and GBEP staff revealed the timeline of 320 funding proposals.

- June 26 - Request for proposals
- July 28 - Proposals due
- August 14 - Proposals sent to subcommittees
- September 6 - Proposals presented at PPE subcommittee meeting

Back the Bay Website Redesign Update

Ms. Howard provided an update on the Back the Bay (BTB) website redesign as a resource page and made an announcement that GBEP will be sending out a survey to collect information in order to advertise and promote stakeholder resources on the Bay Ambassador pages.

Current Project Updates

- Kendall Guidroz (H-GAC); Trash Bash, 19-90216: The 29th Trash Bash was held on March 25, 2023 where over people attended 14 sites and removed over tons of trash, and 214 dumped tires. Kendall is beginning planning the 30th Trash Bash, but there is no date selected yet.
- George Guillen (UHCL), Christian Rines in place of Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN); Microplastics in the Galveston Bay Watershed: The Big Impacts of Tiny Pollution, 21-10096 - TIRN has continued sample collection through round three and have collected and processed samples at two sites since the last PPE meeting with only one more site to complete. They are also collecting and enumerating additional water sampling with the National Flower Garden Banks Marine Sanctuary (NFMS). The teacher workshops and teacher kits were completed during the spring semester where three of the five kits were distributed to Oppe Elementary. More teacher workshops are planned for the upcoming fall. Engagement continues through beach cleanup events and community workshops. During the last few months, the programs has reached over 1,500 people, 257 pounds of trash, 3,387 cigarette butts, 101 microplastic pieces, and 465 nurdles UHCL has been collecting a variety of replicant samples from open water, shallow water, and sediment samples in Galveston Bay. All of the samples that have been collected have been process

and enumeration is on-going. Emily Cox won 3rd place at the Texas Plastic Pollution Symposium for student speaker, and she will be presenting at the Water and Sediment Quality subcommittee meeting next week.

- Matthew Abernathy (GBEP); Audubon Texas Estuarine Resource Network (TERN) Citizen Science in Schools: Students as Field Researchers 21-10097 (HCDE) - Audubon Texas project wrapped up on May 31st and was successfully transitioned into an afterschool program with the Center for Afterschool, Summer, and Enrichment (CASE) programs. The project reached 9 different schools over 17 weeks where 119 students were engaged in 5 days of birding and left birding kits with materials and curriculum for future students and teachers to use. The final report is being reviewed at GBEP internally.
- Matthew Abernathy (GBEP); Mobilizing the Environmental Education Community through Prairie Education, 22-30208 (UHCL) - One of the two school field trips took place at Deer Park Prairie on April 27 with 30 students and six chaperones. Feedback from the teacher was that they "LOVED IT". The other is scheduled for May 25. We are currently planning and soliciting participants for the Girls Summer Camp, taking place June 5-9. Our fall teacher workshop is also being planned. Ecorise is continuing to work on their list of schools in need of environmental education.
- Karastin Katusin (BLC); Engaging Diverse Communities in Conservation, 23-40077 (HCDE); All the agreements have been signed and completed. The cooperative partnership has begun quarterly meetings to discuss collective and individual progress among each organization. Partners are currently recruiting for this program and Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) training is scheduled for the fall.
- Kendall Guidroz (HGAC); Water Quality Outreach Implementation for Vulnerable Rural Populations, 23-40239 (H-GAC); Ms. Guidroz stated that the team hosted its first stakeholder meeting with Brazoria County staff representatives and went over their first analysis. Based on their vulnerability analysis, the block groups were higher than other areas within the county. Brazoria County and H-GAC will work to identify communities that are at higher risk of failing systems. H-GAC will also be reaching out to local organizations in that area that may also be connected to those communities.
- Erin Kinney (HARC); GBRC Vietnamese Outreach, 23-40249 (HARC); Ms. Kinney announced the QAPP is complete and currently in internal review with TCEQ Quality Assurance managers. She reported they were successful with finding and hiring an intern to translate Vietnamese at the community events so HARC and GBF will continue partnering with Texas A&M Agrilife to engage the crabbing community in the Galveston Bay area. They will also be working with college students with regards to how they think about environmental issues and working to build relationships with the Vietnamese community.
- Erin Kinney (HARC); GBEP Equity Strategy, 23-43948 (HARC); Moriah Johnson has completed the Equity Strategy. She hosted a series of partner interviews with GBEP and community partners to identify terms, strategies, barriers, and tools for current programs that are already engaging diverse communities. The document has been reviewed by TCEQ and is now currently being reviewed with the Environmental Protection Agency.

Subcommittee Roundtable and Announcements

- Ms. Weiser announced that the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) conference will be held online this year. The conference (will be from Oct 9th-20th, 2023.
- Mr. Abernathy announced that the Texas Association for Environmental Education (TAAEE) conference will be held September 29th - October 1st, 2023 Camp Olympia in Trinity, Texas. Links will be sent out with the minutes.
- Ms. Lippert announced the Natural Resource Uses meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 22, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.
- Ms. Rines announced that the Monitoring & Research subcommittee will be held on Wednesday, June 14, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. and the Water and Sediment Quality subcommittee will also be held on Wednesday, June 14, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. at GBEP office and virtual.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Adjourned

