



# WATER AND SEDIMENT QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL



## Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 14, 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), Ryan Bare (HARC), Christian Rines (GBEP), Natalie Bue (HPARD), Grant Moss (BPA), Huy Vuy (EPA), Christie Taylor (TX A&M AgriLife), Rachel Windham (H-GAC), Steven Johnston (H-GAC), Todd Running (H-GAC), Stephanie Glenn (HARC), Kendall Guidroz (H-GAC), Natasha Zarnstorff (GBF), Stephanie DeVilleneuve (TWRI), Elizabeth Kompanik (TCEQ), Jill Csekitz (TCEQ), Morgan Huette (TIRN), Jo Wilson (GCA), Lisa Marshall (GBEP), Lindsey Lippert (GBEP), Matthew Abernathy (GBEP), Kari Howard (GBEP), Ellen Creecy (GBEP), Casey Taylor (GBEP), Michael LaMontagne (UHCL), and George Guillen (UHCL).

***Approval of the March 08, 2023 minutes – Ms. Rines opened the meeting with approval of the minutes. Mr. Johnston motioned to approve the minutes with minor changes and Mr. Koch seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with minor changes.***

### New Business

**Presentation:** 2023 Basin Highlights Report – Todd Running, Manager Community & Environmental Planning, Houston-Galveston Area Council

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

### **FY 2025 Section 320 and State Funding Planning and Priorities:**

- FY25 project proposal submission will begin June 26, 2023 and close on July 28, 2023. A link to the proposal form and additional information will be sent out by subcommittee coordinators in the official call for proposals on June 26. A separate proposal link will be sent out for the BIL funding cycle. BIL proposals form will be due August 18. Submitted Section 320 and state funding proposals will then be sent back out to subcommittee members on August 15, 2023, for review prior to the September meeting.
- Actions and Outputs of the Galveston Bay Plan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition - Ms. Rines provided a spreadsheet that listed the three Actions Plans of Priority One of the Galveston Bay Plan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Ensure Safe Human and Aquatic Life Use. Subcommittee members will be asked to indicate which actions and outputs of the Plan their project implements when submitting proposals.
- Past and current WSQ projects and narrowing of priorities for FY25 project development - A listing of WSQ projects completed or ongoing since 2012 was provided to subcommittee members. The spreadsheet also identified actions of the Plan implemented by each of these projects. These priorities previously identified by the subcommittee in past meetings were revisited in order to narrow down the list to three priorities. These three priorities will then be used to help the subcommittee decide which projects to fund in the fall. Those needs and gaps not identified as a priority for this project planning cycle will remain on the list and will be revisited by the subcommittee the following year. The following three priorities were identified:
  - Supporting measurement measures and watershed-based plans
  - Monitoring and Research that evaluates green infrastructure (GI) effectiveness in water quality & soil health
  - Targeted/Direct monitoring

### **Subcommittee Business:**

#### **Project Updates from WSQ Project Mangers:**

- Baseline Assessment of Microplastics in Galveston Bay (USGS) – Sample collection complete. Still awaiting results of laboratory analysis due to sample processing delays. Contract is set to expire August 31.
- Targeted Bacteria Monitoring (BPA thru H-GAC) – Ms. Guidroz and Mr. Moss announced BPA has helped trained Texas Conservation Corp interns and they have completed monitoring on Pine Gully and are two-thirds of the way through Little White Bayou, both of which the team were not able to sample in previous rounds. All data has been sent to the City of Houston Public Works Department, so that they may conduct timely investigations. Two points of interest were located on Pine Gully, one of which was determined to be a leak. The team will follow up to see if the

City was able to fix the leak and if it made any noticeable difference in bacteria levels. The project will soon start wrapping up any final monitoring and then move on to the outreach portion of the project. Any additional monitoring will depend on weather.

- Supporting the Use of Green Infrastructure (GI) in the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed (H-GAC) - Mr. Johnston announced that the team met with the project committee, a group composed of local water quality professionals, on March 21 to discuss the efficacy of collected data. The team will soon begin working on data analysis and will be meet back with committee in August to review work completed over the summer. Once complete, the team will move into the outreach portion of the project.
- Townwood Park Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) (HPARD) - Ms. Bue announced that construction of the bioswale is complete. If you are in the area of Townwood, which is located on the southwest side of town, please stop by. The team has started to design the interpretive signage for the park and will work on installation in the final phase of the project.
- Houston Parks and Recreation Department Water Management Plan (HPARD) - The team is currently completing the internal procurement process for securing a subcontractor for the project.
- Clear Creek Watershed Protection Plan (H-GAC) - The WPP is currently being drafted. Once complete it'll be shared with stakeholders for comment.
- West Lake Houston Basin/East Fork Watershed Protection Plan/Cotton Bayou TMDL (H-GAC) - Ms. Windham announced that the West Lake Houston Basin implementation project is still trying to push the QAPP through to completion, so not much other than that has been completed. Later in summer the team hopes to have more public interaction and get feedback on how they want to actually implement the plans in this basin; Development of a WPP for the East Fork is currently underway. The team is currently still going through the modeling results with the stakeholders just to make sure they are acceptable to base the implementation prioritization off of. The next public meeting for this project will be on July 12; The team has developed a technical support document for the Cotton Bayou TMDL project and is now in the implementation plan development phase. The next stakeholder meeting is scheduled for July 27 at the Mont Belvieu Public Library.
- BIG I-Plan/Chocolate Bay - Mr. Johnston announced that the BIG group recently met and discussed bacteria indicators and what's appropriate in terms of public health. The team is looking to create a workgroup for this and potentially discuss at the upcoming Watershed Coordinator's Roundtable. The next roundtable will be held in-person and virtually at H-GAC on October 10. Mr. Johnston will provide more information on registration; Mr. Johnston announced that the team is currently developing the I-Plan for Chocolate Bayou, Halls Bayou, and Mustang

Bayou and will meet with stakeholders on June 28 to go over some of the reduction values; Mr. Johnston announced that the Oyster Creek stakeholders will meet on June 29 to discuss their I-Plan.

- Dickinson Bayou/Highland Bayou Watershed Protection Plans (TCWP) -No update.

### **Roundtable/ Partner Announcements and Updates:**

Mr. Koch announced that USDA NRCS team is looking to hire a Coastal Biologist that will focus on living shoreline implementation and oyster mariculture in Robstown near the Corpus Christi area. Check the NRCS website for more information.

Mr. Koch announced the TCEQ is requesting proposals for the FY24 CWA Section 319 cycle. Please visit the TCEQ's Nonpoint Source Grant Program page for more information.

Ms. Csekitz announced that the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) 2023 All Hands Meeting will be held in Austin, June 26-29.

Mr. Johnston announced that H-GAC is looking to hire someone with lab experience dealing mostly with their Clean Rivers Program work. They are also looking to fill a Senior Planner Position related to natural resources type work. Please contact Mr. Johnston (Steven.Johnston@h-gac.com) at H-GAC for more information.

Mr. Johnston announced a stormwater workshop will be held on August 16th with TCEQ's Stormwater Program to discuss the permitting process as it relates to Watershed Based Plans. Please contact Mr. Johnston (Steven.Johnston@h-gac.com) at H-GAC for more information.

Mr. Johnston announced the Chocolate Bay and Oyster Creek Watersheds will hold public meetings on June 28 and June 29.

Ms. Bue announced that HPARD is looking to hire an additional conservation technician. This will be an entry-level for a recent graduate or someone looking to get into conservation type work. Please check the City of Houston website for more information.

Ms. Windham announced that H-GAC will be hosting the 2024 Water Innovation Strategies of Excellence (WISE) awards at H-GAC on July 14. Please contact Ms. Windham (Rachel.Windham@h-gac.com) at H-GAC for more information.

## **Old Business**

### **Upcoming GBEP meetings:**

NRU Subcommittee Meeting – Wednesday, June 21, 2023 (10:00 a.m.-12:00p.m.)

B&P Meeting – Wednesday, July 5, 2023 (1:00-3:00pm)

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

WSQ Subcommittee Meetings

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

## **Adjourn**