
NATURAL RESOURCE USES (NRU) SUBCOMMITTEE

**GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL
SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY**

20 September 2023

SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR Philip Smith, GBF	SUBCOMMITTEE VICE CHAIR Scott Alford, USDA-NRCS
NRU COORDINATOR Lindsey Lippert, GBEP	

GBEP Staff Present

Matthew Abernathy, Ellen Creecy, Kari Howard, Lindsey Lippert, Lisa Marshall, Christian Rines (virtual)

Members/Participants Present

Philip Smith (GBF), Anna Armitage (TAMUG), Chris Butler (TAMU), Ricardo Cagigal (Houston Parks Board), Sally Clark (GBF), Amanda Hackney (Black Cat GIS), Savannah Horton (TPWD), Bryar Johnson (USFWS), Karla Klay (Artist Boat), Charlotte Nash (TNC), Amy Neblett (Artist Boat), Kelli Ondracek (HPARD), Evelyn Merz (UH Coastal Center), Dianna Ramirez (GLO), Derek Sanford (ABNC), Suzanne Simpson (GBF), Mary Schwartz (FOBWR), Matt Singer (GBF), Cindy Wilems (GBF), Scott Williams (USFWS), Jarrett Woodrow (USFWS)

Members/Participants via TEAMS

Jan Culbertson (USFWS), Pete Deichmann (Houston Audubon), Jennifer Irving (HARC), Anwar Jacintomoreno (EPA), Erin Kinney (HARC), Jayce Proctor (EPA), David Retchless (TAMUG), Linda Shead (various), David Villareal (TDA), Huy Vu (EPA)

An Overview of the Federally Listed Eastern Black Rail and Why the Galveston Bay Region is Especially Important

Jarrett Woodrow (USFWS) gave a presentation on the Eastern Black Rail, which included descriptions of adults and chicks, behaviors including nesting and vocalization, distribution and habitat, predators and competitors, listing status, and threats. A recording of the presentation is available upon request.

Planning and Priorities for FY 2025 Funding

Project proposals were sent out in advance of the meeting for review. Members were asked to keep the subcommittee priorities in mind while reviewing. The priorities selected by the NRU Subcommittee for the FY25 funding cycle were:

- Habitat Acquisition
- Enhancement of Existing or Ongoing Restoration/Conservation Efforts
 - Special emphasis on projects addressing geotubes failing across West Bay through design and/or construction
- Benefit to Native Fish and Wildlife, including Federal and State Listed Species, Species of Greatest Conservation Need, or Nongame Wildlife
 - Special emphasis on projects addressing seagrasses, intertidal reef/shell hash, and benthics
- Brings Funding, Work Leverage, or Multiple Goal Benefits to the Subcommittee
- Project Urgency: Project must be completed in next 24 months or opportunity is lost

The NRU Subcommittee were presented with 11 proposals that implement performance measures and outputs of the Living Resource Action Plans of the *Galveston Bay Plan, 2nd Edition (GBP)*. Once all eligible proposals had been presented to the group, the subcommittee discussed which projects should take priority. One proposal (the Coastal Heritage Preserve) was split into two separate entries due to the urgency in funding the ninth addition. Additionally, two projects (#3 and #6) were combined and reduced due to similarity in work. A consensus-based decision was made to recommend the following projects for FY25 funding to the Budget and Priorities (B&P) Subcommittee.

Proposal Name	Grantee	Total Request	Recommendation
1. Developing Regional Capacity for Long-term Management and Restoration of Conserved Lands	ABC	\$300,705	\$0
2. <i>Salt Lake Native Marsh Shoreline Protection Project</i>	<i>FOBWR</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>	<i>Alternative</i>
3. Cordgrass Planting for Coastal Resiliency	FOBWR	\$200,000	Combine w/#6 at \$175,000
4. Conservation Assistance Program	GBF	\$230,000	\$115,000
5. Bay Harbor Island Stabilization (Adaptative Management & Enhancement)	GBF	\$132,700	\$132,700
6. Galveston Bay Foundation Wetland Planting Assistance	GBF	\$93,840	Combine w/#3 at \$175,000
7. <i>Greens Bayou Riparian Restoration Project</i>	<i>HPARD</i>	<i>\$150,000</i>	<i>Alternative</i>
8. Monitoring and Managing the Threatened Eastern Black Rails in the Galveston Bay Area	TAMU	\$174,235	\$174,235
9a. The 9th and 10th Additions to the Coastal Heritage Preserve at Anchor Bay at West Beach	Artist Boat thru TPWD	\$600,000	Fund 9 th Addition from FY24 Rider (\$600,000)
9b. The 10th Additions to the Coastal Heritage Preserve at Galveston Preserve at West Beach.	Artist Boat thru TPWD	\$200,000	\$0
10. Best Practices for Future Restoration of Ground Nester Habitat in Galveston Bay: Partner Interviews and Past Project Database of Completed Nesting Sites (M&R)	TAMUG	\$87,315	Letter of Support
11. Monitoring to Assess Long-term Restoration Success in Galveston Bay Wetlands (M&R)	TAMUG	\$151,161	Letter of Support
Total Proposed Project Amount		\$2,419,956	\$596,235

Final B&P/Council Approval

Projects selected by the B&P Subcommittee were presented to the Galveston Bay Council at the October 18, 2023 meeting for approval. Modifications made to the subcommittee recommendation are indicated in red.

Proposal Name	Grantee	FY 25 Funding	Other Funding
The 9th Additions to the Coastal Heritage Preserve at Anchor Bay (#9 partial) (\$115K previously approved in FY 24)	TPWD	\$0	\$461,481 (From FY24 Rider)
Conservation Assistance Program (#4)	GBF	\$115,000	
Wetland Planting Assistance and Cordgrass Planting for Coastal Resiliency (#3 and #6)	GBF	\$175,000	
Bay Harbor Island Stabilization (#5)	GBF	\$132,700	
Monitoring and Managing the Threatened Eastern Black Rails in the Galveston Bay Area (#8)	TAMUG	\$105,888	\$68,347 (From FY 26)
<i>Alternative 1: Greens Bayou Riparian Restoration Project (#7)</i>	<i>HPARD</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>
<i>Alternative 2: Salt Lake Native Marsh Shoreline Protection Project (#2)</i>	<i>FOBWR</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>
Total		\$528,588	\$529,828

Updates from the Estuary Program

Staff Updates - Deferred

NRU Project Updates - Deferred

*Spreadsheet available on request.

Other

Selection of A Presenter for Next Meeting - Deferred

Roundtable

Karla Klay announced that Artist Boat turned 20 years old, and they are having a dinner series November 10, 17, and 18, 2023 honoring special individuals, former Artist Boat employees, and former board members.

Amanda Hackney announced she is working with partners to develop a scholarship to honor Cynthia Clevenger and may be reaching out in the future for donations.

Adjourn

Future Meetings

Quarterly NRU Meeting - December 6, 2023

Invasive Species Workgroup Meeting - TBD

Oyster Restoration Workgroup Meeting - December 7, 2023