

GALVESTON BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM (GBEP)

Galveston Bay Council (GBC) Meeting Minutes – July 17, 2024

Attendees:

Galveston Bay Council Chair: Bob Stokes (Galveston Bay Foundation)

Galveston Bay Council Vice-Chair: Vance Darr (Industry – Kuraray America, Inc.)

Estuary Program Staff Lead: Lisa Marshall (GBEP)

Members Present: Scott Alford, Susan Bandy, Shane Bonnot, Glenn Clingenpeel, Winfred Colbert, Vance Darr, Juan Flores, Jonathan Holley, Brian Koch, Kristin Lambrecht, Michael Lee, Julie Masters, Garry McMahan (v), Kelly Mills* (v), Helen Paige (v), Laura Picariello, Dianna Ramirez, Hanadi Rafai (v), Todd Running, Caimee Schoenbaechler, Rusty Senac, Linda Shead, Shane Simpson, Charrish Stevens, Bob Stokes, Sue Theiss, Matt Tilimon (v), Huy Vu, Kirk Wiles (v), Katie Wilson

Members Not Present/Delegates: Andrea Catanzaro*, Jeff Dallarosa, Elizabeth Fazio Hale*, Albert Gonzales, Audrey Kuklenz, Ana Partin, Sharron Stewart, Maria Valdez, Scott Williams, Tracy Woody

(*=Member designated a proxy)

Proxies Present (GBC member absent/designated proxy): Andrea Catanzaro/Rob Morrow, Kelly Mills/Gene Muller, Elizabeth Fazio Hale/Jo Wilson

Current Vacancies: None

Other Attendees: Tom Douglas, Nicole Hall (v), Amin Kiaghadi, Yina Liu, Gene Muller (v), Doug Peterson, Michael Shields, Sabryna Sulak (v), David Villarreal (v),

Additional GBEP Staff Present: Matthew Abernathy, Jenelle Estrada, Meagan Hayes, Zoe Gapayao, Lindsey Lippert, Christian Rines, Alejandra Trevino

Call to Order and Confirm Quorum

Bob Stokes brought the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

Introductions

Mr. Stokes began by having the GBC members introduce themselves. Introductions began with in-person attendees, followed by members attending virtually. Additionally, new members Laura Picariello and Susan Bandy provided brief biographies as part of their introductions.

Action Item: Approval of April 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes

A quorum was met for this meeting and Mr. Stokes began by calling for the approval of the April 17, 2024 minutes. Rusty Senac motioned for the approval and Glenn Clingenpeel seconded the motion.

Action Item: Approval of April 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Stokes then called for the approval of the April 19, 2023 minutes. Brian Koch motioned for the approval and Todd Runnings seconded the motion.

Action Item: Approval of October 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Stokes called for the approval of the October 18, 2023 meeting minutes. Julie Masters motioned for the approval and Mr. Clingenpeel seconded the motion.

All three sets of minutes were unanimously approved with no oppositions or abstentions.

Report of the Program

Lisa Marshall began the report of the program by welcoming the new GBC members. Ms. Marshall also stated that half of the GBC members will be presented at the TCEQ Commissioners' Agenda in February or March 2025 and an email will be sent out to get updated information for those members going to agenda.

Ms. Marshall also reiterated that attendance to the GBC meetings is important for members, and it is requested that members attend three of the four meetings each year.

Ms. Marshall then introduced the new GBEP staff members. Jenelle Estrada (Monitoring and Research Coordinator) and Zoe Gapayao (Public Participation and Education Coordinator) both introduced themselves and provided brief backgrounds on themselves. Morgen Zander (Technical and Quality Program Coordinator) also started on July 15, 2024 but was not feeling well and was unable to attend the meeting.

Report of the Chair

Mr. Stokes began the report of the chair by informing the GBC that due to Hurricane Beryl, the Budget and Priorities subcommittee was unable to meet last week. Instead, they will be meeting after the GBC meeting and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding priorities would be established at that time.

Next, Mr. Stokes addressed Hurricane Beryl, and how every storm is different. The path of the storm is what really caused issues, even though it was "just a category one storm." He mentioned that the path of the storm would not have been diminished by a coastal barrier, but that improving infrastructure in the region, especially green infrastructure is extremely important to building resilience for the region.

Ms. Marshall then introduced Meagan Hayes, the Micky Leland intern working with GBEP this summer. Ms. Hayes then introduced herself and provided a brief background on her education and the work she is doing for GBEP.

Presentation: *Nature-Based Solutions for Flood Control in Harris County, Texas* - Jonathan Holley, Harris County Flood Control District

Jonathan Holley began his presentation by introducing himself and providing an overview of the Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD). Mr. Holley then proceeded to provide background on the types of flood damage reduction tools that are currently being used by HCFCD and how they differ from previous methods. The topics discussed included stormwater detention basins, stormwater quality enhancements, natural-stable channel design, and habitat creation and protection. Throughout the presentation, Mr. Holley provided examples and photographs of the different examples of flood damage reduction tools.

Linda Shead asked how channel design engineering has evolved to include tree plantings. Mr. Holley stated that research has been done and that HCFCD works to find the balance between managing the flow of the water and the environmental services provided by

having vegetation planted within the channel. This includes calculating the tree density for the area and can also include planting trees higher in the channel so they do not inhibit flow.

Hanadi Rafai, Ph.D., asked how the nature-based systems performed during Hurricane Beryl. Mr. Holley stated that they are still assessing sites, but from what he has seen, most have fared well. Dr. Rafai then asked if there were any plans for work related to deepening and widening channels. Mr. Holley replied that HCFCD considers this as an alternative, but that they try to maintain the natural base of the conveyance and bench up from there wherever possible.

Rusty Senac asked if there was coordination with entities upstream of the work being done in Harris County because the impacts and influences travel downstream to this region. Mr. Holley stated that they are working with both the Texas Water Development Board and the San Jacinto River Authority on larger scale issues and solutions for the region. Additional partnerships have come in the past five to six years, since the passing of the 2018 Flood Control Bond.

Vance Darr commented on the amount of trash on the shorelines after rain events and asked for more information on the use and maintenance of devices for capturing floating debris in the water. Mr. Holley responded that there are several features used to help with this. Forebay areas with vegetated streams within the detention basins help to trap the floatable debris, which is collected by HCFCD in these areas. HCFCD has moved away from screens to catch debris at outfalls as they have found that they tend to get clogged up with organic debris. One notable partnership is the Clean and Green program with the Buffalo Bayou Partnership that is funded by HCFCD that helps to address floating debris in Buffalo and upper Brays bayous. Mr. Darr also commented that there seem to be lots of basketballs in the storm debris.

Mr. Stokes followed up by asking if HCFCD has a regulatory obligation to address floatable debris or is it voluntary? There is not a criteria for collection, but it is part of their Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permit to address floatable debris.

Doug Peterson from Exploration Green introduced himself and asked if there was any information about the project where a local Homeowner's Association turned down the widening of Horsepen Bayou and if that is a regular issue, with local organizations declining work. Mr. Holley responded that it is variable and dependent on the group. HCFCD does solicit and want feedback from organizations where projects are occurring. Mr. Peterson also commented that the neighborhood was aware of the impacts that Exploration Green has had helping to alleviate flooding in the area.

A copy of the presentation is available on the [GBEP website](#), and a recording is available upon request.

Break

Ms. Marshall asked that GBC members stop by and see Matthew Abernathy to make sure that their contact information is correct and current.

After the break, Mr. Stokes and Ms. Marshall recognized Glenn Clingenpeel for his service as the previous chair of the GBC. Mr. Clingenpeel was presented with a plaque and thanked for his work as the chair. There is also a plaque for Albert Gonzales, who was not present, as thanks for serving as the vice chair of the GBC.

Presentation: *Spatial and Temporal Distributions of Emerging Contaminants in Galveston Bay, Texas* – Yina Liu, Ph.D. and Michael Shields, Ph.D., Texas A&M University

Dr. Liu began her presentation with a brief introduction of herself and her work. Additionally, she provided background on her lab, which studies the organic chemistry of water and specifically works to quantify contaminants in the water and sediment and what happens to them in the environment. This project's focus was to determine what is considered a base level of emerging contaminants versus an elevated level based on extreme events such as Hurricane Harvey or the Intercontinental Terminals Company fire. The project evaluated 30 different per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and 14 pharmaceutical and personal care products (PPCP) over five years to create the first time series of data of this type in Texas. Dr. Liu's presentation provided an in-depth look into the findings of the research and additional information about the next steps.

Amin Kiaghadi asked if there were any samples taken from other areas such as in the bayous, the Gulf of Mexico, or other rural or urban waterways for comparison. Dr. Liu replied that they had one sample point from a bayou but that it was not enough to provide insight. She also commented on collaborating with other organizations that have access to samples from other locations in the region.

A copy of the presentation is available on the [GBEP website](#), and a recording is available upon request.

Presentation of Subcommittee Priorities for Fiscal 2026 Section 320 and State Funding

The priorities established by the subcommittees for the Section 320 and State Funding for fiscal 2026 were provided by GBEP staff. Mr. Stokes asked if the coordinators would clarify if these were similar or different from previous year's priorities.

- Jenelle Estrada, Monitoring and Research (M&R) Coordinator provided the fiscal 2026 M&R priorities to the GBC:
 - Meaningful and effective monitoring of existing, past, and new projects (NRU: especially species of concern, WSQ, PPE).
 - Baseline assessments for large-scale, man-made changes to Galveston Bay.
 - Assessment, Exposure, and Response to stressors, including but not limited to:
 - Species of greatest conservation need;
 - Contact recreation standards;
 - Environmental parameters;
 - Emerging contaminants; and
 - Legacy contaminants.
- Lindsey Lippert, Natural Resource Uses (NRU) Coordinator, provided the fiscal 2026 NRU priorities to the GBC:
 - Habitat acquisition.
 - Enhancement of existing or ongoing restoration/conservation efforts.
 - special emphasis on adaptive management for previously completed projects.
 - 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 benthic mapping.
 - any species monitoring projects should be a collaboration/partnership between subcommittees.
 - Brings funding, work leverage, or multiple goal benefits to the subcommittee.
 - Takes into consideration the results of the Estuary Resilience Action Plan.
 - Project urgency: Project must be completed in next 24 months or opportunity is lost.
- Matthew Abernathy, Education and Outreach Coordinator, provided the fiscal 2026 Public Participation and Education priorities to the GBC:
 - Continuation or expansion of established education, outreach, or engagement programs.
 - Partnering with new local entities or smaller non-governmental organizations to reach new communities.
 - Connecting new audiences to existing/completed projects or the natural habitat.
 - Opportunities for GBEP and partners to host workshops/networking opportunities for stakeholders on key topics.
- Christian Rines, Water and Sediment Quality (WSQ) Coordinator, provided the fiscal 2026 WSQ priorities to the GBC:
 - Supporting management measures and watershed-based plans.
 - Monitoring and Research that evaluates green infrastructure effectiveness.
 - Evaluation and development of indicators and metrics of water (surface and ground) and sediment quality.

Ms. Marshall noted that the Section 320 and State funding request has already been sent out and proposals are due by close of business on August 5, 2024. Information on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will be sent out on Monday, July 22, 2024.

GBC Members Roundtable: News and Announcements

Todd Running (H-GAC): There was a homeowner on-site sewage facility (OSSF) training on Saturday, July 20, 2024 at Holiday Lakes City Hall.

On July 25, 2024 there is a Texas Watershed Stewards workshop from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the HCFCD north service center in support of the Greens Bayou Watershed Protection Plan (WPP).

On July 29, 2024 H-GAC is hosting their Water Innovation Strategies of Excellence (WISE) awards from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

On August 1, 2024 H-GAC will host the Natural Resource Advisory Council (NRAC) meeting from 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

On August 15, 2024, the Chocolate Bayou Implementation plan (I-plan) development stakeholder group will meet at 2:00 p.m. at the Alvin library.

On August 22, 2024, there will be a Clean Waters Initiative workshop on OSSFs and the proposed rule changes to OSSFs.

Brian Koch (TSSWCB): On August 13, 2024 at the White's Park meeting center in Wallisville, there will be a Lone Star Healthy Streams workshop as part of the Double Bayou WPP.

In mid-August, the TSSWCB will be announcing the Request for Proposals for Clean Water Act Section 319 grant.

Glenn Clingenpeel (TRA): Mr. Clingenpeel provided an update on the issues with the Lake Livingston dam. He reiterated that the dam was not at risk of imminent failure, but that heavy rainfall caused inundation of the land on the downstream site of the dam. The land downstream of the dam began to erode and undercut part of the bank. This was addressed as water levels lowered. Once water levels decreased, the damage was assessed and fixed. There is planning beginning for a long-term solution that would prevent this in the future.

Jo Wilson (GCA): The Texas Legislature will be meeting next year and if anything needs to be addressed, this would be a good time to discuss that.

Caimee Schoenbaechler (TWDB): The TWDB published the first ever draft state flood plan and the final state plan will go to the board on August 15, 2024 and will be submitted to the legislature by September 1, 2024.

The Texas Integrated Flooding Framework published their second annual report, and it is available on the TWDB website.

TWDB is hosting the Estuary Science Exchange webinar on August 16, 2024 with Jay Kleberg, Executive Director of the Gulf of Mexico Trust. He will be discussing his film Chasing the Tide.

Caimee is now the Assistant Director of the surface water division and Amin Kiaghadi has replaced Ms. Schoenbaechler as the Coastal Manager.

Linda Shead asked if there was additional meaning by Ms. Schoenbaechler referring to the state flood plan as interesting. Ms. Schoenbaechler stated that it is the first state flood plan and that it included ranked projects, that she found that interesting. Ms. Schoenbaechler also stated that she is working with Ms. Marshall to have a presentation to the GBC about the state flood plan. Mr. Clingenpeel asked about the ranked projects and Ms. Schoenbaechler elaborated that there was a ranking method established for flood mitigation projects listed in the plan. Mr. Stokes confirmed that the plan is to have that presentation at the October 16, 2024 GBC meeting.

Dianna Ramirez (GLO): The GLO Adopt-a-Beach event will be on September 28, 2024.

Gene Muller (TCEQ): Gene Muller provided updates on behalf of TCEQ.

From the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program:

The Cotton Bayou tidal and Chocolate Bayou TMDLs were adopted by TCEQ on May 22, 2024 and are with the EPA for approval.

The Cotton Bayou I-plan, the Halls and Willow Bayou TMDL, and the Mustang Bayou TMDL are all with TCEQ for review.

Fiscal 2025 projects of interest include the H-GAC work to update the delineation of the watershed within the Bacteria Implementation Group and H-GAC will be developing a TMDL for Cotton Bayou above tidal.

From the Nonpoint Source (NPS) program:

The request for grant applications is open for projects for fiscal 2026 and more information is on the NPS website. NPS projects of interest include H-GAC developing a WPP for Brays and Sims bayous.

The TCEQ adopted the new 303(d) list on June 26, 2024.

Bob Stokes (GBF): Mr. Stokes announced that GBF is partnering with the Greens Bayou Coalition for a trash cleanup on July 27, 2024. They are also working on funds for a trash trap for a nearby location and GBF will be at the Adopt-a-Beach event.

Matthew Abernathy (GBEP): Mr. Abernathy announced that along with the GBF trash cleanup, several organizations have come together to offer four different trash cleanups throughout the watershed in support of Plastic Free July, and that he can be contacted for more information.

Public Comment: None

Other Business: N/A

Adjourn: Mr. Senac motioned to adjourn the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Upcoming Galveston Bay Council Meeting Dates: October 16, 2024, January 15, 2025, and April 16, 2025. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the quarter from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. If there are known conflicts, GBC members are welcome to propose alternate dates to the GBC.