



# WATER AND SEDIMENT QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL



## Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 12, 2024 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), Zulimar Lucena (USGS), Luke Travis (USGS), Kelli Ondracek (HPARD), Huy Vu (EPA), Christie Taylor (TX A&M AgriLife), Fouad H. Jaber (TX A&M AgriLife), Brandi Keller (TX A&M AgriLife), Rachel Windham (H-GAC), Cornell Evans (H-GAC), Kendall Guidroz (H-GAC), Katie Wilson (GCHD), Grant Moss (BPA), Jason Okoroafo (BPA), Naima Khan (TAMUC), Linda Shead (Texas Coastal Partners), Tom Douglas (Texas Coastal Partners), David Villareal (TDA), Stephanie Glenn (HARC), Natasha Zarnstorff (GBF), Michael Roberts (The Coastal Trust), Lisa Marshall (GBEP), Lindsey Lippert (GBEP), Meagan Hayes (GBEP), Matthew Abernathy (GBEP), Jenelle Estrada (GBEP), Michael LaMontagne (UHCL), Jenny Oakley (UHCL), and Maggie Sager (TIRN).

*Approval of the March 13, 2024 minutes – Ms. Rines opened the meeting with approval of the minutes. Mr. Koch motioned to approve the minutes and Ms. Taylor seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with no changes.*

### New Business

**Presentation:** No presentation to allow time for subcommittee priority development

**FY 2026 Section 320 and State Funding Planning and Priorities:**

- FY26 project proposal submission will begin June 26, 2024 and close on August 5, 2024. 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. Submitted Section 320 and state funding proposals will then be sent back out to subcommittee members on August 19, 2024, 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 FY26 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
  - Evaluation and development of indicators and metrics of water (surface and ground) and sediment quality

**FY 2025 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Planning and Priorities:**

- Ms. Rines began the conversation by discussing the BIL priority development process. Subcommittees are 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 other subcommittees, all of whose meetings were held prior to WSQ. Ms. Rines mentioned that B&P is still wanting to see bigger, more collaborative projects, 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 in support of management measures (e.g., green infrastructure, watershed health, water reuse and conservation) and watershed-based plans
  - Projects that assess indicators and evaluate efficacy of Galveston Bay Plan implementation efforts (past, present, and future)
  - Projects that incorporate the implementation of the ERAP and/or Equity Strategy.
- 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 July meeting. 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 \$150,000 with a project length of  $\leq 3$  years. These criteria will be finalized by B&P in July.
  - A separate link will be sent out for the BIL funding cycle. BIL proposal submission will begin July 15, 2024 and will close on August 26, 2024.

#### **Subcommittee Business:**

- Mr. Abernathy went over implementation of the TCEQ's new Title IV requirement, for all GBEP projects going forward.
- Ms. Rines went over the proposal submission timeline for both Section 320 and State funding and BIL in a short presentation.
- Ms. Lippert provided a quick overview of the proposal form and direct award submission process.

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

- Baseline Assessment of Microplastics in Galveston Bay (USGS) – Ms. Lucena announced that sample collection is complete, and the team is still awaiting results of laboratory analysis due to sample processing delays.
- Targeted Bacteria Monitoring (BPA thru H-GAC) – Ms. Guidroz announced the team is in the process of wrapping up the project. All draft reports have been submitted and are awaiting any final comments.
- Townwood Park Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) (HPARD) – Ms. Rines announced that the project is complete, and the final report has been received.

- Houston Parks and Recreation Department Water Management Plan (HPARD) – Ms. Ondracek announced that the team has developed a draft plan and stakeholder meetings will begin in two weeks.
- Clear Creek Watershed Protection Plan (H-GAC) – Ms. Windham announced that the WPP is currently under review by the EPA. The team is currently working on outreach for the project and drafting a report for the TCEQ’s annual report.
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Demonstration Site Development for Greenspace Education in the Galveston Bay Watershed (TX A&M AgriLife) – The AgriLife team met to identify sites to construct the project. Paul Winski, Extension Program Specialist, is now working with Houston Community College administrative staff to secure approval for the selected site. Once approved Dr. Jaber will start drawing up the plans for the site. The team will probably target a date in October for construction. Some prep work will be done ahead of time, but the site will be constructed as part of the green infrastructure workshop.
- Strategic Implementation of Green Infrastructure Best Management Practices in the Double Bayou Watershed (HARC) – Mr. Bare announced that the QAPP was approved this past week, and the team can now start working on more of the project scope. Early on the team will work on a BST assessment using data from TWRI that was collected as part of another project funded by the TSSWCB. A spatial and temporal analysis of the data will also be completed. This data will help to inform those locations that green infrastructure would have the most impact on reducing nonpoint source pollution, specifically with fecal indicator bacteria. For this, the team will utilize the SWAT Model in which the BST data and other data sets will be integrated. The team will also begin stakeholder engagement the remainder of this year and into early next year, and also begin development of the green infrastructure implementation plan.
- Digging Deeper: Addressing Soil Health to Improve Water Quality in the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed (TX A&M AgriLife) – The contract was recently executed, and the team will meet with GBEP soon to kick off the project.
- Repair and Replacement of Failing On-Site Sewage Facilities (OSSFs) for Homeowners in Disadvantaged Communities with Vulnerable Populations (H-GAC) – The contract was recently executed, and a contract kick-off meeting has been scheduled for next Tuesday.
- West Lake Houston Basin/ East Fork Watershed Protection Plan/Cotton Bayou TMDL/Greens Bayou Watershed Protection Plan/Chocolate Bay (H-GAC) –West Lake Houston Basin: Ms. Windham announced the group met with stakeholders the end of April where they developed priorities for the group and discussed how they’d like to see implementation dollars spent. H-GAC was able to secure a grant for WPPs with the Texas Forest Service that focuses on urban forestry. East Fork Watershed Protection Plan: Ms.

Windham announced the WPP is currently under review by the TCEQ and TSSWCB. The team recently made minor changes to the livestock numbers with the recently released 2022 agricultural census data that reflected an overall decline in livestock numbers across the state. Greens Bayou Watershed Protection Plan: Ms. Windham announced that the QAPP is nearing approval, and the team will hopefully begin water quality analysis by the end of the month. These monitoring results will then be shared with stakeholders sometime late fall or early winter.

- BIG I-Plan - The spring meeting was held June 11 and the group is currently working on an I-Plan update. Targeting monitoring is also underway in support of the BIG effort.
- Galveston Bay Coalition of Watersheds (TX A&M AgriLife) - No update.

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

Ms. Windham announced the following TMDL public meeting dates - Upper Oyster Creek: August 7, Oyster Creek: August 8, Cotton Bayou: June 17, and Chocolate Bay: July 23.

Ms. Rines reminded everyone that GBEP's State of the Bay Symposium has been rescheduled for February 2026. In addition, GBEP's new PPE and Technical and Quality Programs Coordinators will be beginning sometime this summer.

Ms. Hayes introduced herself as the GBEP intern and provided a little background information on herself and what she'll be working on for the summer.

Ms. Marshall announced that GBEP will be sending out an email requesting partners to sign up for our gov delivery.

Mr. Koch announced an upcoming Lone Star Healthy Streams workshop in Chambers County that he will be presenting at. The workshop will focus on soil health, feral hog management, and grazing best management practices to reduce bacteria.

Mr. Douglas announced that a Texas GLO "Lunch & Learn" webinar will be held as part of the "Bacteria and the Beach" series on July 18. The webinar will feature a TAMUG PhD candidate that is looking at the interconnectedness of economic activity and tourism with the quality of beaches.

Ms. Windham announced that the WISE Awards will be held at H-GAC on July 29.

## **Old Business**

### **Upcoming GBEP meetings:**

B&P Meeting - Wednesday, July 10, 2024 (1:00-3:00pm)

GBC Meeting - Wednesday, July 17, 2024 (9:30am -12:30pm)

### **WSQ Subcommittee Meetings**

- Wednesday, September 11, 2024 (1:30-3:30pm)
- Wednesday, December 11, 2024 (1:30-3:30pm)

## **Adjourn**