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GALVESTON BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM: FISCAL 2026 SECTION 320 PROJECT PROPOSALS AND BUDGET

BUDGET AND PRIORITIES SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

OCTOBER 2, 2024

FISCAL 2026

SUBCOMMITTEE PRIORITIES

WSQ

- 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

NRU

- Habitat acquisition.
- Enhancement of existing or ongoing restoration/conservation efforts.
- Benefit to native fish and wildlife, including federal and state listed species, Species of Greatest Conservation Need, or nongame wildlife.
- 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.

PPE

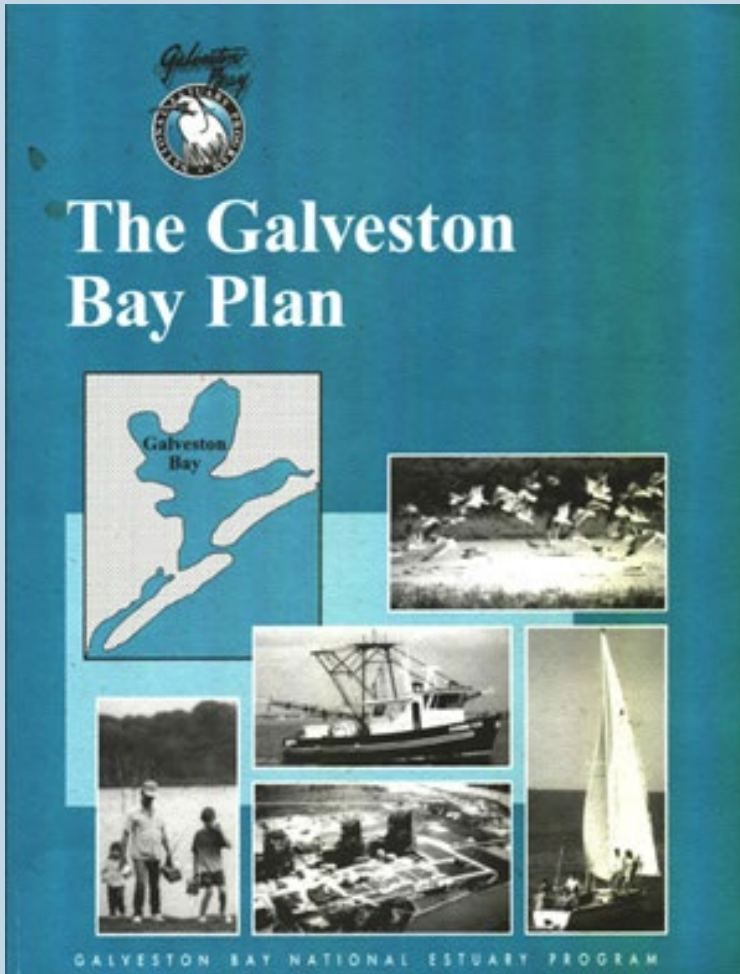
- Continuation or expansion of established education, outreach, or engagement programs.
- Partnering with new local entities or smaller non-governmental organizations to reach new communities.
- Connecting new audiences to existing/completed projects or the natural habitat
- Opportunities for GBEP and partners to host workshops/networking opportunities for stakeholders on key topics

M&R

- 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.



FISCAL 2026 PROGRAMMATIC PROJECTS



The Galveston Bay Plan, 2nd Edition

*The Comprehensive Conservation and Management
Plan for the Galveston Bay Ecosystem*



1. GBEP Annual Website Hosting & Maintenance

Lead: The Wilkins Group

Proposed Amount: \$5,300.00

2. State of the Bay Symposium

Lead: TBD

Proposed Amount: \$25,000.00

3. State of the Bay 5th Edition

Lead: Houston Advanced Research Center

Proposed Amount: \$377,639.00

4. Regional Monitoring Database

Lead: Houston Advanced Research Center

Proposed Amount: \$281,123.00 (three-year)/\$356,050.00 (five-year)



FISCAL 2026 WATER & SEDIMENT QUALITY (WSQ) PROJECTS



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5. Assessment of Coastal Groundwater Quality and Dynamics in San Jacinto River Waste Pit Superfund Site

Lead: Texas A&M University at Galveston

Proposed Amount: \$99,976.00

6. Evaluation of Green Infrastructure to Reduce Microplastic Pollution in Galveston Bay

Lead: Houston-Galveston Area Council

Proposed Amount: \$221,928.00 (Fiscal 2026 \$121,472.85; Fiscal 2027 \$100,455.15)

7. Alternative #1: Assessing Demonstration Rain Garden and Stormwater Wetland Health through Soil and Vegetation Monitoring

Lead: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Proposed Amount: \$235,176.00

8. Alternative #2: Targeted Bacteria Monitoring – Watershed Focus

Lead: Houston-Galveston Area Council

Proposed Amount: \$60,000.00



FISCAL 2026 NATURAL RESOURCES USES (NRU) PROJECTS



9. Monitoring and Managing the Threatened Eastern Black Rails in the Galveston Bay Area
(FISCAL 2026 FUNDING APPROVED BY GBC IN FISCAL 2025)

Lead: Texas A&M University

Proposed Amount: \$174,235.00 (Fiscal 2025 \$158,388.00; Fiscal 2026 \$15,847.00)

10. FY 2025-2026 Conservation Assistance Program

Lead: Galveston Bay Foundation

Proposed Amount: \$115,000.00

11. North Deer Island – Habitat Restoration & Enhancement (Phase 1)

Lead: National Audubon Society

Proposed Amount: \$107,904.00 (State)

12. The 10th/11th Additions to the Coastal Heritage Preserve

Lead: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in partnership with Artist Boat, Inc.

Proposed Amount: \$100,000.00 (State)

13. Salt Lake Native Marsh Shoreline Protection Project

Lead: Friends Group of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges

Proposed Amount: \$30,000.00 (State)



14. Alternative #1: Developing Molecular Tools for Demographics and Distribution of Galveston Bay Estuary System Sea Turtles (ALSO SELECTED IN M&R)

Lead: Texas A&M University at Galveston

Proposed Amount: \$99,826.00

15. Alternative #2: Informing Ongoing Management of Environmental Water Transactions to Preserve or Enhance Tidal Bayou Function in East Bay

Lead: Texas Water Trade

Proposed Amount: \$163,016.00

16. Alternative #3: From Scat to Conservation: Community-Based Research of Galveston Bay's Ghost Wolves

Lead: Michigan Technological University

Proposed Amount: \$12,600.00



FISCAL 2026 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & EDUCATION (PPE) PROJECTS



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17. Texas Envirothon

Lead: University of Houston Clear Lake – Environmental Institute of Houston

Proposed Amount: \$90,972.00

18. City of Houston Nature Trails Master Plan

Lead: City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department

Proposed Amount: \$90,000.00

19. Regional Coordination of River, Lakes, Bays ‘N Bayous Trash Bash®

Lead: Houston-Galveston Area Council

Proposed Amount: \$10,000.00

20. Reclaim the Drain Day

Lead: Bayou Preservation Association

Proposed Amount: \$27,000.00



FISCAL 2026 MONITORING & RESEARCH (M&R) PROJECTS



Sampling for Rangia clams in Trinity Bay



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**21. Monitoring to Assess Long-Term Restoration Success in Galveston Bay Wetlands
(FISCAL 2026 FUNDING APPROVED BY GBC IN FISCAL 2025)**

Lead: Texas A&M University at Galveston

Proposed Amount: \$151,161.00 (Fiscal 2025 \$103,908.00; Fiscal 2026 \$47,253.00)

**22. Distribution Of Key Emergent Pollutants in the Aquatic Biota (Oysters and Fish),
Sediments and Surface Waters of Galveston Bay**

Lead: Texas A&M University at Galveston

Proposed Amount: \$132,594.00

**23. Developing Molecular Tools for Demographics and Distribution of Galveston Bay
Estuary System Sea Turtles**

Lead: Texas A&M University at Galveston

Proposed Amount: \$99,826.00

**24. Ecosystem Effects of the Pelican Island Bridge Collision and Vacuum Gas Oil Spill in
Galveston Bay**

Lead: Texas A&M University at Galveston

Proposed Amount: \$103,479.00



FISCAL 2026 GBEP FUNDING

Funding estimates based on fiscal 2025 levels (without Rider funding)

- EPA Section 320 funding: \$850,000 (\$1,700,000 with supplied match)
- State Funding: \$224,484
- Salary, fringe, and indirect levels subject to change

FY 2026 Planned Funding Allocations	
§320 CWA Funding	
Federal: \$1,700,000 -- Comes “pre-matched” by TCEQ (1:1)	
\$850,000 - TCEQ \$850,000 – EPA	
State: \$224,484	

Budget Funding Type	Federal (CWA §320)	State	Total
Total Funding	\$ 1,700,000	\$ 224,484	\$ 1,924,484
Administration*	\$ (786,586)	\$ (27,660)	\$ (814,246)
Remaining	\$ 913,414	\$ 196,824	\$ 1,110,238

*Administration includes salary, fringe, indirect, and general operational costs.



FISCAL 2026 SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDED BUDGET



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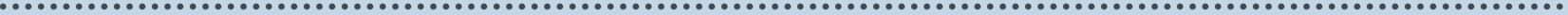
FY 2026 Subcommittee Recommendation Project Budget

Category	Grantee	Original Funding Request	FY 2026 SC Recommendation		FY 2027
			State Funding	Federal Funding	
Baseline Costs					
Salaries, Fringe, and Indirect	N/A	\$778,519.70	\$0.00	\$778,519.70	\$0.00
General Operational Costs	N/A	\$35,706.00	\$27,660.00	\$8,046.00	\$0.00
Programmatic Costs					
1. GBEP Annual Website Hosting & Maintenance	Wilkins Group	\$5,868.00	\$0.00	\$5,300.00	\$0.00
2. State of the Bay Symposium	TBD	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$25,000.00	\$0.00
3. State of the Bay 5th Edition	HARC	\$377,639.00	\$0.00	\$377,639.00	\$0.00
4. Regional Monitoring Database	HARC	\$281,123/\$356,050	\$0.00	\$356,050.00	\$0.00
WSQ					
5. Assessment of Coastal Groundwater Quality and Dynamics in San Jacinto River Waste Pit Superfund Site	TAMUG	\$99,976.00	\$0.00	\$99,976.00	\$0.00
6. Evaluation of Green Infrastructure to Reduce Microplastic Pollution in Galveston Bay	H-GAC	\$221,928.00	\$0.00	\$121,472.85	\$100,455.15
7. <i>Alternative #1: Assessing Demonstration Rain Garden and Stormwater Wetland Health through Soil and Vegetation Monitoring</i>	Texas A&M AgriLife	\$235,176.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
8. <i>Alternative #2: Targeted Bacteria Monitoring – Watershed Focus</i>	H-GAC	\$60,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
NRU					
9. Monitoring and Managing the Threatened Eastern Black Rails in the Galveston Bay Area					
10. FY 2025-2026 Conservation Assistance Program	TAMUG	\$174,235.00	\$0.00	\$15,847.00	\$0.00
11. North Deer Island – Habitat Restoration & Enhancement (Phase 1)	GBF	\$230,000.00	\$0.00	\$115,000.00	\$0.00
12. The 10th/11th Additions to the Coastal Heritage Preserve	NAS	\$107,905.00	\$107,905.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
13. Salt Lake Native Marsh Shoreline Protection Project	TPWD	\$400,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
14. <i>Alternative #1: Developing Molecular Tools for Demographics and Distribution of Galveston Bay Estuary System Sea Turtles (see M&R #23)</i>	FOBWR	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
15. <i>Alternative #2: Informing Ongoing Management of Environmental Water Transactions to Preserve or Enhance Tidal Bayou Function in East Bay</i>	TAMUG	\$99,826.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
16. <i>Alternative #3: From Scat to Conservation: Community-based Research of Galveston Bay's Ghost Wolves</i>	TWT	\$163,016.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
PPE					
17. Texas Envirothon	MTU	\$12,600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
18. City of Houston Nature Trails Master Plan	UHCL	\$94,524.00	\$0.00	\$94,524.00	\$0.00
19. Regional Coordination of River, Lakes, Bays 'N Bayous Trash Bash®	HPARD	\$90,000.00	\$0.00	\$90,000.00	\$0.00
20. Reclaim the Drain Day	H-GAC	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00
M&R					
21. Monitoring to Assess Long-term Restoration Success in Galveston Bay Wetlands					
22. Distribution of Key Emergent Pollutants in the Aquatic Biota (Oysters and Fish), Sediments and Surface Waters of Galveston Bay	BPA	\$27,000.00	\$0.00	\$27,000.00	\$0.00
23. Developing Molecular Tools for Demographics and Distribution of Galveston Bay Estuary System Sea Turtles	TAMUG	\$99,826.00	\$0.00	\$99,826.00	\$0.00
24. Ecosystem Effects of the Pelican Island Bridge Collision and Vacuum Gas Oil Spill in Galveston Bay	TAMUG	\$103,479.00	\$0.00	\$103,479.00	\$0.00
FY 2025 Funding Requests		\$3,765,978.70	\$265,565.00	\$2,507,526.55	\$100,455.15
FY 2025 Anticipated Funding Allocation (Federal and State)		\$1,924,484.00	\$224,484.00	\$1,700,000.00	
Difference		(\$848,607.55)	(\$41,081.00)	(\$807,526.55)	

FISCAL 2026 STAFF BALANCED BUDGET



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FY 2026 Subcommittee Recommendation Project Budget

Changes from subcommittee-recommended budget in RED

Category	Grantee	Original Funding Request	FY 2026 SC Recommendation		FY 2027	NOTES:
			State Funding	Federal Funding		
Baseline Costs						
Salaries, Fringe, and Indirect	N/A	\$778,519.70	\$0.00	\$778,519.70	\$0.00	OPERATING BUDGET AND STAFF SUPPORT _ NO CHANGES *State funding for salary is from a different department (index) outside of GBEP and is not calculated as part of the GBEP budget.
General Operational Costs	N/A	\$35,706.00	\$27,660.00	\$8,046.00	\$0.00	
Programmatic Costs						
1. GBEP Annual Website Hosting & Maintenance	Wilkins Group	\$5,868.00	\$0.00	\$5,300.00	\$0.00	
2. State of the Bay Symposium	TBD	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	Moved from FY25 to FY26 due to postponement
3. State of the Bay 5th Edition	HARC	\$377,639.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
4. Regional Monitoring Database	HARC	\$281,123/\$356,050	\$0.00	\$195,187.45	\$85,935.55	Three year option preferred.
WSQ						
5. Assessment of Coastal Groundwater Quality and Dynamics in San Jacinto River Waste Pit Superfund Site	TAMUG	\$99,976.00	\$0.00	\$99,976.00	\$0.00	
6. Evaluation of Green Infrastructure to Reduce Microplastic Pollution in Galveston Bay	H-GAC	\$221,928.00	\$0.00	\$121,472.85	\$100,455.15	Recommended to receive first year of funding; Council approval required for remaining \$100,455.15 to be funded in FY27.
7. <i>Alternative #1: Assessing Demonstration Rain Garden and Stormwater Wetland Health through Soil and Vegetation Monitoring</i>	<i>Texas A&M AgriLife</i>	\$235,176.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
8. <i>Alternative #2: Targeted Bacteria Monitoring – Watershed Focus</i>	<i>H-GAC</i>	\$60,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
NRU						
9. Monitoring and Managing the Threatened Eastern Black Rails in the Galveston Bay Area	TAMUG	\$174,235.00	\$0.00	\$15,847.00	\$0.00	Pre-approved in FY 2025
10. FY 2025-2026 Conservation Assistance Program	GBF	\$230,000.00	\$0.00	\$100,000.00	\$0.00	Reduced due to additional funding (\$15,000) from FY 2025 Budget
11. North Deer Island – Habitat Restoration & Enhancement (Phase 1)	NAS	\$107,905.00	\$100,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	Reduced due to limited state funding
12. The 10th/11th Additions to the Coastal Heritage Preserve	TPWD	\$400,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
13. <i>Salt Lake Native Marsh Shoreline Protection Project</i>	<i>FOBWR</i>	<i>\$30,000.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>Removed due to limited state funding</i>
14. <i>Alternative #1: Developing Molecular Tools for Demographics and Distribution of Galveston Bay Estuary System Sea Turtles (see M&R #23)</i>	<i>TAMUG</i>	<i>\$99,826.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>Funded through M&R</i>
15. <i>Alternative #2: Informing Ongoing Management of Environmental Water Transactions to Preserve or Enhance Tidal Bayou Function in East Bay</i>	<i>TWT</i>	<i>\$163,016.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	
16. <i>Alternative #3: From Scat to Conservation: Community-based Research of Galveston Bay’s Ghost Wolves</i>	<i>MTU</i>	<i>\$12,600.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$12,600.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>Added to budget due to low cost and high partnership/collaboration elements of the project.</i>
PPE						
17. Texas Envirothon	UHCL	\$90,972.00	\$0.00	\$90,972.00	\$0.00	
18. City of Houston Nature Trails Master Plan	HPARD	\$90,000.00	\$0.00	\$90,000.00	\$0.00	
19. Regional Coordination of River, Lakes, Bays ‘N Bayous Trash Bash®	H-GAC	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	
20. <i>Reclaim the Drain Day</i>	<i>BPA</i>	<i>\$27,000.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>Removed due to limited funding</i>
M&R						
21. Monitoring to Assess Long-term Restoration Success in Galveston Bay Wetlands	TAMUG (Armitage)	\$151,161.00	\$0.00	\$47,253.00	\$0.00	Pre-approved in FY 2025
22. <i>Distribution of Key Emergent Pollutants in the Aquatic Biota (Oysters and Fish), Sediments and Surface Waters of Galveston Bay</i>	<i>TAMUG (Quigg)</i>	<i>\$132,594.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>Top ranked but issues with unsecured partners based on comments received from said partners.</i>
23. Developing Molecular Tools for Demographics and Distribution of Galveston Bay Estuary System Sea Turtles	TAMUG (Marshall)	\$99,826.00	\$0.00	\$99,826.00	\$0.00	
24. <i>Ecosystem Effects of the Pelican Island Bridge Collision and Vacuum Gas Oil Spill in Galveston Bay</i>	<i>TAMUG (Hala)</i>	<i>\$103,479.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>Very localized impact for the cost of project; lapsed funding from previous project. Potentially conflict with TCEQ NRDA operations.</i>
FY 2025 Funding Requests		\$3,762,426.70	\$227,660.00	\$1,700,000.00	\$186,390.70	
FY 2025 Anticipated Funding Allocation (Federal and State)		\$1,924,484.00	\$224,484.00	\$1,700,000.00		
Difference		(\$3,176.00)	(\$3,176.00)	(\$0.00)		

FISCAL 2026 (FEDERAL FISCAL 2025) BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW (BIL)



FEDERAL FISCAL 2025 BIL BASICS

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provides \$132 million for NEP grants, including funding for the 28 longstanding NEPs.

Funding Available: \$909,800 (no match required)

Guidelines

- Extended Spending Time Frame (three years)
- Minimum Proposal Amount (\$150,000)
- Focus on Environmental Justice and Coastal Resilience including green infrastructure
- Nationwide target: 40% of benefits & investments from BIL funding flow to disadvantaged communities.



FEDERAL FISCAL 2025 BIL PRIORITIES

Overarching Requirements

- Projects should be fulfilled through collaboration when possible.
- Projects must address implementation of the Galveston Bay Estuary Resilience Action Plan and GBEP Equity Strategy.

Action Priorities

Proposals must address one or more of the following actions:

- Habitat protection & enhancement, including adaptive management
- Projects in support of management measures (e.g., green infrastructure, watershed and human health, water reuse and conservation) and watershed-based plans.
- Projects that support research and monitoring related to the plan priorities of Ensure Safe Human & Aquatic Life Use and Protect and Sustain Living Resources.

Support Priorities

Proposals at least one supporting action developed by the subcommittees, but preference will be given to projects that are able to incorporate multiple supporting actions.

- Engaging K-12 students and/or adults in hands-on, place-based environmental education.
- Diversifying strategic partners with environmental and non-environmental community organizations working within targeted communities.
- Monitoring and research that produces environmental data applicable to future implementation and management decisions and made available to the public.

Special Considerations:

- EPA Areas of Special Interest:
 - Reduction in nutrient pollution
 - Water reuse and conservation
 - Marine litter reduction
 - Green infrastructure and resiliency
- Justice 40 Initiative



FEDERAL FISCAL 2025 BIL PROPOSALS

1. Cultivating a Generation of Watershed Ambassadors through Civic Science in grades 6-12
-Children’s Environmental Literacy Foundation (\$154,217.00)
2. Developing a Community Water Risk Dashboard to Integrate Environmental and Social Indicators for the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed
-Houston Advanced Research Center (\$647,837.00)
3. Houston Parks Board Comprehensive Conservation Plan
-Houston Parks Board (\$150,000.00)
4. Deer Park Prairie Learning Center – Phases II & III
-Native Prairies Association of Texas (\$200,000.00)
5. High-Tech Monitoring and Assessing Galveston Bay Ecosystems in Support of Resilience Implementation and Management Decisions
-Texas A&M University at Galveston (\$572,020.00)
6. Critical Source Areas Identification for Nonpoint Pollutant in Village Creek-Lake Arlington Watershed
-University of Texas at Arlington (\$488,711.00)
7. Renovating Jones Park: Building Galveston’s First Climate-Ready Stormwater Park
-Vision Galveston (\$899,535.50)
8. State of the Bay 5th Edition
-Houston Advanced Research Center (\$377,639.00)

