

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND EDUCATION (PPE)
SUBCOMMITTEE
GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL**

**Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 5, 2024
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Virtual Meeting Via Microsoft Teams

Subcommittee Chair: Cindy Wilems, Education Director, Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF)

Subcommittee Vice Chair: Kendall Guidroz, Senior Planner, Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC)

GBEP Representative: Lisa Marshall

[EDIT] Attendees: Cindy Wilems, Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF); Kendall Guidroz, Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC); Christie Taylor, Texas AgriLife Extension (TALE); Maggie Sager, Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN); Cassidy Kempf, Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD); Chloe Dannenfeler, American Bird Conservancy (ABC); Morton Sager, Bayou Preservation Association (BPA); Amy Neblett, Artist Boat (AB); Wendy Reistle, University of Houston Clear Lake/Environmental Institute of Houston (UHCL/EIH); Della Barbato, Native Plants Association of Texas (NPAT); Sandra Metoyer, University of Houston Clear Lake – Environmental Institute of Houston (UHCL-EIH); Kelli Ondracek, City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD); Karastin Katusin, Bayou Land Conservancy (BLC); Erin Kinney, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC); Huy Vu, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Katherine Wilson, Galveston County Health District (GCHD); Brenda Weiser, Stakeholder; Marsha Towns, Student Conservation Association (SCA); Christine Smith, Stakeholder; Ana Capsimalis, Education for Tomorrow Alliance Intern; David Sharp, Exploration Green Conservancy; Lindsey Lippert, Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP); Lisa Marshall, (GBEP); Janelle Estrada, (GBEP); Matthew Abernathy, (GBEP); Christian Rines, (GBEP); Meagan Hayes, (GBEP)

FY 26 Section 320 and State Funding Priorities

Subcommittee reviewed the CCMP Action Plans and Corresponding Actions and Plan Priorities as they will guide the subcommittees decisions on which projects to fund. Subcommittee reviewed priorities from previous fiscal years and the action plan priorities that corresponded with the projects from the past four fiscal years. Local Government Outreach (SPO-4) and K-12 Education Efforts (PEA-3) were highlighted as the actions with the least corresponding projects.

Discussion included UHCL-EIH's Envirothon high school competition, BPA's Resiliency at Home workshop series, resilience hubs through EPA's Community Change Grants, and connecting the public to HPARD's parks with ongoing habitat restoration. There was clarification that SPO-4's objective is to ensure that local governments are knowledgeable about key estuary issues by providing them resource materials for their use and reference.

Barriers to involvement were mentioned, which included efforts being far from organizations' target areas and the lack of staff capacity for small organizations to keep up with reporting. GBEP staff clarifies that we are limited on the use of our funding to our watershed boundary based on what's in our CCMP. One way to go around that requirement is collaborating with

other organizations. A map of current and past PPE projects was requested to see what areas have been serviced. Subcommittee stressed an interest in workshops led by subcommittee members or other subject matter experts from the public. GBEP offers to coordinate future workshops.

Subcommittee agreed on the following 320 Priority Recommendations: Continuation or expansion of established education, outreach or engagement programs; Partnering with new local entities or smaller NGOs 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.

BIL Priorities

The subcommittee reviewed FY24's BIL priorities. GBEP reminds the subcommittee that we are looking to expand our reach to diverse communities both with environmental and non-environmental groups.

Subcommittee agrees on the following FY 25 PPE BIL Priority Recommendations: Collaborating with underrepresented and/or under-resourced communities via having physical presence or connection to the targeted communities; Engages 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; Incorporate the implementation of the ERAP and/or Equity Strategy

Proposal Timeline and Procedures

Request for FY 2026 Section 320 and State Proposals will be released June 26 with a due date of August 5. Subcommittee members will receive proposals for their initial review on August 19. Proposals will be presented at our September 4 subcommittee meeting for final recommendations. Presentations will consist of 3 slides in 5 minutes followed by questions and discussion. We will select the projects to be sent to B&P and the Council.

Request for FFY 2025 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Proposals will be released July 15 with a due date of August 26. Proposals will be sent to B&P Subcommittee for review on September 9 and will be presented to the B&P Subcommittee for final recommendation on October 2.

Updates and Reminders in Proposal Form

Proposal form has added language to include legalities to fund nonprofits directly without needing to go through passthroughs. Private universities and for-profit organizations still require passthroughs as GBEP still cannot contract with them directly. If partners are subgrantees completing work reimbursable under GBEP funding, a letter of commitment from the partner must be submitted under the application acknowledging their involvement with the project. GBEP is requiring a more prescriptive budget than in the past, including an Indirect Cost Agreement if the funds will be allotted towards salaries and wages. All of our agreements are reimbursable agreements and we do not prepay.

Title VI Requirements

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 must be implemented for FY 26's funding. These requirements focus on providing public outreach to limited English-proficiency communities. Project managers will provide organizations selected for funding with a Public Involvement Plan during the SOW development phase. For projects with a public engagement component, EJScreen will be utilized to create a community report. If a percentage of language spoken in that area is 5% or more, contractors will be required to provide outreach documents or presentation materials in that language, so consider factoring translations into your budget.

Current Project Updates

- Kendall Guidroz (H-GAC), Trash Bash 19-90216: The 30th Annual Trash Bash was held on March 23, 2024. Over 53 tons of trash was picked up by over 2100 volunteers across sites. Cleaned about 79 miles of shoreline.
- Christian Rines in lieu of TIRN and UCHL, Microplastics in the Galveston Bay Watershed: The Big Impacts of Tiny Pollution, 21-10096: Project is complete and will hopefully report results to the subcommittee in the fall. The final report should be up on the GBEP website later this summer.
- Della Barbato (NPAT); Mobilizing the Environmental Education Community through Prairie Education, 22-30208 - Summer camp will take place next week. Fall teacher workshops will take place November 9. Spring 2024 student field trips learn about parts of the ecosystem and the prairie root system, fostering respect for environment, biodiversity and conservation. Deer Park ISD Spring Break Camp brought under-served students to the prairie on March 12. Young adults of Hope Farms' program Growing Urban Farmers visited the prairie. Lycee International French school. Service activities - building native bee boxes to take back to their homes. Boy Scout Troop from Pearland - netting for insects and collecting milkweed seed (service project).
- Matthew Abernathy and Karastin Katusin in lieu of Morton Sager (BPA); Engaging Diverse Communities in Conservation, 23-40077 (HCDE); Project will be closing out in the next few months, so programming is wrapping up by the end of the summer.
- Kendall Guidroz (H-GAC); Water Quality Outreach Implementation for Vulnerable Rural Populations, 23-40239 (H-GAC); Liverpool city government helped promote H-GAC's Homeowner Onsite Sewage Facilities workshop that was held in March. Nineteen Liverpool residents attended, and H-GAC was able to provide free pump-outs of their septic systems through their Wells Fargo grant. Residents have expressed interest for future workshops.
- Lindsey Lippert in lieu of Erin Kinney (HARC); GBRC Vietnamese Outreach, 23-40249 (HARC); Release of the 10th Galveston Bay Report Card is scheduled to release this fall and HARC hopes to make it a bigger celebration. It might be the last GBRC they do due to funding challenges, but HARC and GBF are working to secure new funding sources. HARC is incorporating comments on the CCMP update. They will have an update on the potential of offering additional workshops for subcommittee members to integrate the Equity Strategy and the ERAP by the next subcommittee meeting.
- Matthew (GBEP); Drought Conservation Campaign 24-50213 (COH-PW); Houston Public Works is still waiting on City Council Spending Authority. Hoping for more movement on this later this summer.
- Cindy Wilems (GBF) Bays to Schools 24-50165 (GBF); Intern went out to schools to provide hands-on activities to schools across the Galveston Bay Watershed. Over 3300 students were reached since January, bringing the bay to those who don't routinely have access to it. Teachers are excited to sign up for next year. Intern is still doing workshops throughout the summer. GBF will be promoting opportunities for new intern for a September 1st start date.
- Chloe Dannenfelser (ABC) SPLASH in Houston Bayous 24-50291 (ABC); Bayou clean ups have focused on Sims Bayou and Milby Park. They picked up 1200 pounds of trash in 2 weeks. They're working on the One Less Plastic Initiative and are getting ready for their big clean up, Seaside Safari.

Subcommittee Roundtable and Announcements

- State of the Bay Symposium is postponed for January or February of 2026. Updates to come.
- PPE Coordinator should be starting in the next two weeks or so. Announcement to come.
- Intern: Meagan Hayes may be reaching out to subcommittee members for partnering and collaboration.
- GovDelivery - [[Texas Commission on Environmental Quality \(govdelivery.com\)](https://www.govdelivery.com)] - please sign up. We will be using this for general communications
- GBF has two new full-time job positions open - environmental education position and elementary environmental coordinator.
- Artist Boat is celebrating World Ocean Day on Saturday at East Beach from 11am-4pm.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 4, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Adjourned