

# MONITORING AND RESEARCH SUBCOMMITTEE GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, June 12, 2024  
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Subcommittee Chair: George Guillen, University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL)

Subcommittee Vice Chair: Mike Lee, United States Geological Society (USGS)

Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP) Representative: Jenelle Estrada

## Call to Order, Introductions (In-person and Via Microsoft Teams)

Attendees: Jessica Casillas (HGAC), Jim Dobberstein (Lee College), Mandi Gordon (UHCL), Jessica Greiskopt (TPWD), David Hala (TAMUG), Huy Vu (EPA), Brandi Keller (TAMU), Naima Khan (TAMUC), Mike Lee (USGS), Haille Leija (GBF), Hui Liu (TAMUG), Yina Liu (TAMU), Christopher Marshall (TAMUG), Sherah McDaniel (EIH-UHCL), Jenny Oakley (EIH-UHCL), Hanadi Rifai (UH), Melanie Rogers (UHCL), Maggie Sawyer (TIRN), Linda Shead (SC), Michael Shields (TAMU), Matt Tilimon (USCG), Luke Travis (USGS), Kirsten Vernin (HARC), Katherine Wilson (GCHD), Natasha Zarnstorff (GBF), Matthew Abernathy (GBEP), Meagan Hayes (GBEP), Lindsey Lippert (GBEP), Lisa Marshall (GBEP), Christian Rines (GBEP), Alejandra Trevino (GBEP).

**Approval of March 13, 2024 meeting minutes** – A motion to approve the minutes was made by Jim Dobberstein, and seconded by Linda Shead.

## New business:

### Galveston Bay Dolphin Research Program Presentation

Sherah McDaniel, Environmental Institute of Houston University of Houston Clear Lake

The Galveston Bay Dolphin Research Program has projects that investigate dolphins in the Galveston Bay area. This is an important area to study as it has several stressors such as freshwater inflows, contaminants from the industrial urban surroundings, and a lot of human interactions. The program has been collecting photo identification data for 10 years and has identified resident and transient dolphin populations. More recently, researchers have been collecting tissue samples to capture the levels of PCBs in dolphins and record their epigenetics. The program is starting a NOAA Restore Multiple Stressors collaborative project for dolphins in the Bay to look at the co-effects of the emerging contaminants: PCBs and dioxins.

### Fiscal 26 State and 320 Funding Priorities Discussion

Subcommittee members discussed the CWA 320 funds and agreed on three priorities that are important to 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 25 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Funding Priority Recommendation Discussion**

Subcommittee members discussed the BIL funds and agreed on three priority recommendations that are important to M&R to present to the B&P subcommittee:

- Monitoring and research that produces data applicable and transferable to multiple programs.
- Projects that produce meaningful data that can be used for future implementation and management decisions.
- Long-term monitoring of basic environmental parameters made available to public.
- Projects should address the Estuary Resilience Action Plan (ERAP)/Equity Strategy.

**Project Updates from M&R Project Managers** \*Updates were switched to online updates based on time constraints

- Regional Monitoring Database - HARC (Ryan Bare)
- The Distribution, Fate, and Transport of Emerging Contaminants in Galveston Bay - TAMU (Yina Liu).
- Long Term Monitoring of Living Shorelines - Lee College (Jim Dobberstein):
- Monitoring Ecosystem Indicators for Science-Based Restoration and Enhancement - TAMUG (Hui Liu)
- The Distribution and Fate of Highly Toxic Tire Rubber-Derived Chemicals in Galveston Bay - TAMU (Michael Shields).

### **GBEP, Council, and Subcommittee Updates**

- WSQ subcommittee meeting: Wednesday, June 12, 2024, 1:30 p.m.- 3:30 p.m.
- NRU subcommittee meeting: Wednesday, September 18, 2024, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- B&P meeting: Wednesday, July 3, 2024, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- GBC meeting: Wednesday, July 17, 2024, 9:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.

### **Announcements/Path Forward Items:**

- Wednesday, September 13, 2024, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
- Wednesday December 13, 2024, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
- Wednesday March 12, 2024, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

**Adjourn**