

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

**Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 4, 2024
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

Hybrid Meeting (Virtual Meeting Via Microsoft Teams and In-Person at 17041 El Camino Real, Suite 210, Houston, TX 77058)

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

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

Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP) Representative: Zoe Gapayao

Attendees: Cindy Wilems, Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF); Kendall Guidroz, Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC); Erin Kinney, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC); David Sharp, Exploration Green Conservancy; Archie Galang, Earth Solutions Houston; Sandra Metoyer, University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL); Paige Breon, Texas A&M Galveston (TAMUG); Christina Taylor, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension; Katherine Wilson, Galveston County Health District (GCHD); Elizabeth Schneider, Galveston Park Board; Kristi Rangel, Witness Series; Jennifer Irving (HARC); Tara Stafford Ocansey, Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELF); Vanessa Hulse (HARC); Kristin Brzeski, Michigan Technological University (MTU); Natasha Zarnstorff, Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF); Kate Unger, National Wildlife Federation (NWF); Melissa Wong, Houston Zoo; Anna Weiss, Vision Galveston; Alenka Cardenas, Bayou City Waterkeeper (BCWK); Treasa Antony, Nature Heritage Society (NHS); Jenny Oakley (H-GAC); Amy Neblett, Artist Boat; Christine Wehrli, Houston Audubon (HA); Morton Sager, Bayou Preservation Association (BPA); Wendy Reistle (UHCL); Huy Vu, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Moriah Brewer, Moriah Lynn Consulting; Lisa Marshall (GBEP); Matthew Abernathy (GBEP); Morgen Zander (GBEP); Christian Rines (GBEP); Lindsey Lippert (GBEP); Jenelle Estrada (GBEP)

Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) Update: Estuary Resilience Action Plan (ERAP) and Equity Strategy

Erin Kinney gave an update of the appendices that will be added to the end of the Galveston Bay Plan. The beginning of these appendices will include an introduction and executive summary describing the process of discussions with the Galveston Bay Council and the GBEP subcommittees about threats to Galveston Bay in the next 10 years. Changes in the CCMP based on incorporated feedback will be listed along with the page numbers of where they can be found throughout the CCMP. Highlights of the ERAP and Equity Strategy will be created to provide brief summaries for both documents. Dr. Kinney walked the subcommittee through an example on how stakeholders can incorporate the ERAP with the CCMP to highlight how their project proposals can benefit Galveston Bay. Moriah Brewer, GBEP's equity consultant, explained the actions of the Equity Strategy and how they impact and align with the PPE Subcommittee's work. Ms. Brewer walked the subcommittee through the Equity Strategy Guidance Document, which breaks down each action outlined in the strategy with clear definitions, along with guidance and examples of implementation for each action. Ms. Brewer

pointed out resources available in the guidance document to support stakeholders in meeting Equity Strategy goals.

Feedback was requested for the presentations on incorporating the ERAP and Equity Strategy by December 18. HARC and Ms. Brewer will draft appendices for GBEP's approval then make them available for subcommittees to review until September 1, 2025. Afterwards, HARC will finalize the appendices and complete the project by February 28, 2026.

Witness Series

Kristi Rangel presented on the annual Witness Series, which centers around artists of color whose works focus on nature. Ms. Rangel explained that the concept of the Witness Series is to uplift communities with under-utilized and under-resourced green spaces. The series is community driven and provides participatory art experiences, where partners and attendees collaborate in a community experience as equals instead of a transactional and hierarchical experience. Ms. Rangel highlighted the history of E.R. and Ann Taylor Park in the Sunnyside neighborhood as the catalyst for the Witness Series to uplift hidden green spaces and cultural histories around Houston, particularly in under-resourced communities. Ms. Rangel shared the format and successes of the Witness Series over its first three years from starting without any funding to being able to commission 35 BIPOC artists. The attendance of over 2000 people has led to collaborations between community members, conservation organizations, artists, libraries, and museums.

PPE Subcommittee Bylaws Discussion

Zoe Gapayao asked the subcommittee to evaluate potential changes to the PPE Bylaws based on changes to operating procedures since the past update. The original bylaws were distributed via email prior to the meeting and hard copies were provided for those attending the meeting in-person. Changes addressed were related to formatting and clarification on voting/ranking actions within the PPE subcommittee. The subcommittee agreed on what constitutes a "member organization" and attendance requirements for voting/ranking eligibility. An appendix that outlines member organizations and attendance records for the PPE Subcommittee will be added to the bylaws. The updated PPE Bylaws were distributed following the meeting to allow for additional comments and suggestions.

Microplastics in the Galveston Bay Watershed

Jenny Oakley presented on UHCL's project in partnership with the Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN) on microplastics in the Galveston Bay Watershed. Dr. Oakley outlined the study objectives, which included classroom education, student citizen science sampling, water and sediment sampling, and public outreach. Dr. Oakley went further in-depth about water and sediment sampling of 12 sites in 2022 to evaluate microplastic densities for surface water and sediment samples in Galveston Bay. Microplastics were observed in every sample collected. It is estimated that there are over 20.4 trillion pieces of microplastics in the top 0.3 meters of water in Galveston Bay at any one time.

2025 Meeting Dates

- March 5, 2025, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
- June 4, 2025, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
- September 3, 2025, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
- December 3, 2025, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Updates and Announcements

- Amy Neblett announced that Artist Boat received a National Academy of Science grant to provide place-based middle school programming and teacher professional development stipends. Artist Boat is looking for 50 teachers to be involved in this program. Flyer and application were sent to the subcommittee following the meeting.

- Dr. Kinney announced that Galveston Bay Report Card grades are completed. A press release and community clean up event will be planned for 2025.
- Matthew Abernathy announced that the Texas Plastic Pollution Symposium will be held on April 3, 2025, at Houston Zoo. Registration and call for abstracts will open on Monday, January 6, 2025. The save the date was sent to the subcommittee following the meeting.
- Mr. Abernathy also shared Houston Public Library's converted vehicle that serves as a mobile classroom. This is an available resource that the library is eager to provide.
- Kendall Guidroz announced that 2025 Trash Bash will take place March 29, 2025. The website is live with save the dates coming soon. Registration will be available soon.
- Wendy Reistle announced that UHCL will be holding their Texas Envirothon teacher workshop on February 15, 2025, at Long Acres Ranch. Flyer was sent to the subcommittee following the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned