

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

**Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 5, 2025
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); David Sharp, Exploration Green Conservancy; Christina Taylor, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension; Anna Weiss, Vision Galveston; Maggie Sager, Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN); Yvette Stewart, Audubon Texas; Katherine Wilson, Galveston County Health District (GCHD); Natasha Zarnstorff, Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF); Kate Unger, National Wildlife Federation (NWF); Melissa Wong, Houston Zoo; Alenka Cardenas, Bayou City Waterkeeper (BCWK); Treasa Antony, Nature Heritage Society (NHS); Amy Neblett, Artist Boat; Christine Wehrli, Houston Audubon (HA); Morton Sager, Bayou Preservation Association (BPA); Wendy Reistle (UHCL); Huy Vu, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Emily Evans, Custom Coastal Outreach; Karastin Katusin, Bayou Land Conservancy (BLC); Cecilia Pham, Houston Public Library (HPL); Vanessa Hulse, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC); Alicia Fontenot, Texas Children in Nature Network (TCiNN); Brandi Keller, Texas Sea Grant; Valeria Hernandez, Houston Zoo; Theresa Morris, Texas A&M University at Galveston (TAMUG); Erin Kinney (HARC); Nicole Plowman, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD); Kara Branch, Black Girls Do Engineer; Carol Burton, Urban Harvest; Lisa Marshall (GBEP); Matthew Abernathy (GBEP); Christian Rines (GBEP); Lindsey Lippert (GBEP); Jenelle Estrada (GBEP)

PPE Subcommittee Bylaws

Zoe Gapayao shared the updated version of the PPE Subcommittee bylaws that included changes addressed in the December 2024 subcommittee meeting. Ms. Gapayao reminded the subcommittee that these changes were regarding the ability to rank projects seeking funding in September. The first addition is that subcommittee members must attend two of the four subcommittee meetings prior to the September meeting. Both in-person and virtual count towards attendance and a proxy can be sent if the member is unable to attend. The second addition is that member organizations have one ranking vote, so all individuals from one member organization must come to a consensus about their collective ranking. David Sharp pointed out that there were mistakes found in the Member and Member Organization List and Attendance. Ms. Gapayao assured the subcommittee that she would make necessary corrections to the list.

Engaging Diverse Communities in Conservation 2024 Updates

Morton Sager of BPA gave the subcommittee an update on a PPE project that is now on its second phase. BPA will partner with Greens Bayou Coalition, White Oak Bayou Association, and Citizens' Environmental Coalition to help enhance outreach and community conservation by building capacity in small, volunteer-led or board-run organizations. BPA is collaborating with partners to create the parameters of their internship program and job description. In its second phase, this project is called Engaging Under-resourced Communities in Conservation.

Latino Outdoors Houston Chapter

Valeria Hernandez, a dedicated volunteer with Latino Outdoors (LO), shared about the national organization and their local efforts. LO inspires, connects, and engages Latino communities to the outdoors in safe and inclusive ways. Ms. Hernandez shared the core values of LO and the importance of sharing and celebrating stories, knowledge, and culture through their events. Ms. Hernandez encouraged subcommittee members to reach out via email (houston@latinooutdoors.org) or social media (Instagram: @latinooutdoors_houston) for those interested in being involved with or collaborating with Latino Outdoors.

PPE Subcommittee Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Priorities

Ms. Gapayao informed the subcommittee that this will be the last year of BIL funding for which we have around \$900,000.00 leftover for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 26. After reviewing Galveston Bay Plan priorities and action plans, the subcommittee looked over previous years' BIL priorities. The subcommittee agreed on the three FFY 26 PPE Priority Recommendations: 1) Engaging K-12 students and/or adults in hands-on, place-based environmental education 2) Includes region-wide initiatives/collaborations that implement the Engage Communities priority plan and 3) Fostering collaborations and/or building capacity with new communities and organizations.

Announcements

- As part of a GBEP project in collaboration with KPRC and UHCL, Trash Bash representatives, Kendall Guidroz and Liz Fazio Hale, were on KPRC's Houston Life on March 10 at 1:00 p.m.
- SPLASH's Nest Fest clean up was on March 11.
- The Witness Series has started and an upcoming event will be held at City of Houston's E.R. and Ann Taylor Park on March 22nd.
- GBF is hosting a 5-day intensive professional development opportunity for teachers to travel to various ecosystems in the lower Galveston Bay. Applications are open until April 1.
- Texas Plastic Pollution Symposium will be held on April 3, at the Houston Zoo.
- H-GAC is taking applications for their 2025 Water Innovation Strategies of Excellence (WISE) Awards until April 4.
- Artist Boat Land Consecration Celebration will be held on April 5 at the Coastal Heritage Preserve.

Meeting Adjourned