



WATER AND SEDIMENT QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL



Meeting Minutes Wednesday, March 12, 2025 1:30PM – 3:30PM

Subcommittee Chair: Brian Koch, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)

Subcommittee Vice Chair: Ryan Bare, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC)

GBEP Representative: Christian N. Rines

Call to Order

Attendees: Brian Koch (TSSWCB), Ryan Bare (HARC), Christian Rines (GBEP), Anna Weiss (Vision Galveston), David Villarreal (TDA), Fouad H. Jaber (TX A&M AgriLife), Michael LaMontagne (UHCL), Jenny Oakley (H-GAC), Cornell Evans (H-GAC), Zulimar Lucena (USGS), Linda Shead (Texas Coastal Partners), Tom Douglas (BPA), Huy Vu (EPA), Lisa Marshall (GBEP), Zoe Gapayao (GBEP), Vanessa Hulse (HARC), Katie Wilson (GCHD), Jenelle Estrada (GBEP), Lindsey Lippert (GBEP), Matthew Abernathy (GBEP), and Kendall Guidroz (H-GAC).

Approval of the December 11, 2024 minutes – Ms. Rines opened the meeting with approval of the minutes. Mr. Koch motioned to approve the minutes and Ms. Shead seconded. The minutes were approved with no changes.

Approval of WSQ Subcommittee Bylaws: Ms. Rines presented the draft WSQ Subcommittee Bylaws to include all subcommittee member recommendations and edits for approval. The amended bylaws were approved for use.

Member Spotlight Presentation: Microbial Source Tracking — Michael LaMontagne, University of Houston - Clear Lake

**Presentation, notes, and Q&A available upon request.*

FY 2026 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Planning and Priorities:

- Ms. Rines began the conversation by discussing the BIL priority development process. Subcommittees are asked to provide a list of what ideas or types of projects they'd like to see represented in this year's BIL funding cycle. These lists will then be combined to create a single list of priorities for this year's BIL proposal. Ms. Rines shared those priorities already developed by the other subcommittees, all of whose meetings were held prior to WSQ. Ms. Rines mentioned that B&P is still wanting to see bigger, more collaborative projects, that span several, if not all subcommittees. The subcommittee was also reminded that this generated list would not be final, and that B&P could choose to eliminate any or all of the subcommittee suggestions.
- Actions and Outputs of the Galveston Bay Plan, 2nd Edition and WSQ Supported Project Ideas - Ms. Rines provided a spreadsheet that listed the three Actions Plans of Priority One of the Galveston Bay Plan, 2nd Edition, Ensure Safe Human and Aquatic Life Use and all WSQ projects that have been completed since 2012 or are ongoing. The spreadsheet also identified actions of the Plan implemented by each of these projects. Priorities identified by the subcommittee in previous years were revisited in order to narrow down the list to three topics of interest. These three project types will inform the single priority list that will be developed by B&P. The following types of projects were identified as important to the WSQ subcommittee:
 - Projects in support of management measures (e.g., nature-based solutions, watershed health, water conservation) and watershed-based plans.
 - Projects that assess or evaluate water quality indicators (e.g., sediments, nutrients, emerging contaminants, microbial source tracking).
 - Projects that evaluate and/or address sources of water quality degradation (e.g., feral hogs, groundwater/surface water interaction, OSSFs, unknown sources)
- Ms. Rines reiterated that all subcommittee ideas would be provided to the B&P subcommittee, where a final list of priorities would be developed in the July meeting. Projects will be presented to B&P, with a recommendation for one to five projects submitted to the Council for final approval. The minimum amount requested will be \$150,000 with a project length of ≤ 3 years. These criteria will be finalized by B&P in July.
- A separate link will be sent out for the BIL funding cycle. BIL proposal submission will begin June 23, 2025.

****Time did not permit updates from WSQ project managers***

Roundtable/ Partner Announcements and Updates:

Ms. Rines announced Texas A&M AgriLife recently hosted a free soil health workshop on March 4 through the GBEP funded “Digging Deeper – Addressing soil health to improve water quality in the lower Galveston Bay Watershed” project. Agrilife will be hosting a follow up field day titled, “Dig Deeper into Soil Health – Urban and Suburban Landscapes” on Tuesday, April 29. The event will meet at Sylvan Rodriguez Park and visit other sites in the watershed. Local practitioners at parks departments, ISDs, counties, drainage districts, hospital campuses, MUDs and municipalities will benefit from attending, with homeowners, urban gardeners and farmers, and small landowners welcome. A save the date will be sent out in the WSQ Subcommittee meeting follow-up email.

Ms. Rines also announced that the Greens Bayou Partnership will hold their next hybrid meeting, June 13 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the North District Office or virtually via Zoom. A registration link will be sent out in the WSQ Subcommittee meeting follow-up email.

Ms. Guidroz announced that the annual Trash Bash event is coming up on March 29. There is still time register online at trashbash.org. Ms. Oakley also encouraged everyone to check out Ms. Guidroz on the KPRC Houston Life segment where Kendall discussed Trash Bash.

Mr. Evans announce that the WISE awards, which were developed by H-GAC’s natural resources advisory committee is looking for nominations. If you’d like to recognize someone in the water industry, you have until April 4 to apply. A flyer will be shared in the WSQ Subcommittee meeting follow-up email.

Ms. Rines announced that GBEP will host its State of the Bay Symposium February 24-25, 2026, at the Moody Gardens Convention Center in Galveston. More information to come.

Ms. Oakley announced that a World Water Day event will be held at Jesse H. Jones Park on March 22. More information will be shared in the WSQ Subcommittee meeting follow-up email.

Ms. Shead announced that Green Mountain Energy Earth Day at Discovery Green® will be held Saturday, April 22, at Discovery Green in Houston. More information will be shared in the WSQ Subcommittee meeting follow-up email.

Ms. Oakley announced that the Bacteria Implementation Group (BIG) will have their next meeting on June 3. Registration will be shared with the subcommittee once available.

Mr. Abernathy announced that registration is still open for the 7th Annual Texas Plastic Pollution Symposium. The event will be held Thursday, April 3, at the Houston Zoo. More information will be shared in the WSQ Subcommittee meeting follow-up email.

Mr. Koch announced the 2025 Texas Bays and Estuaries Meeting will be held April 23-24, at the UTMSI Campus in Port Aransas. More information will be shared in the WSQ Subcommittee meeting follow-up email.

Ms. Weiss announced that Vision Galveston will host a “Bioswale in a Bag” Workshop on Wednesday, April 9. The free workshop will cover the concepts behind green infrastructure, how to use the Bioswale in a Bag to teach about nature-based solutions, and distribution of Bioswale in a Bag models to attendees (1per organization). More information will be shared in the WSQ Subcommittee meeting follow-up email.

Upcoming GBEP meetings:

B&P Subcommittee Meeting – Wednesday, April 2, 2025 (1:00pm-3:00pm)

GBC Meeting – Wednesday, April 16, 2025 (9:30am -12:30pm)

WSQ Subcommittee Meetings

- Wednesday, June 11, 2025 (1:30pm-3:30pm)
- Wednesday, September 10, 2025 (1:30pm-3:30pm)
- Wednesday, December 10, 2025 (1:30pm-3:30pm)

Adjourn