

MONITORING AND RESEARCH SUBCOMMITTEE GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 11, 2025
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Subcommittee Chair: George Guillen, Environmental Institute of Houston-University of Houston Clear Lake (EIH-UHCL)

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

GBEP Representative: Jenelle Estrada

Call to Order, Introductions (Via Microsoft Teams)

Attendees: Gregory Buck (TAMUCC), Guilherme Conte (TAMUG), Jan Culbertson (Citizen), Kevin De Santiago (TWT), Tom Douglass (Citizen), Mandi Gordon (UHCL), Amanda Hackney (Black Cat GIS), Chelsea Hill (UHCL), Vanessa Hulse (HARC), Jen Irving (HARC), Erin Kinney (HARC), Mike Lee (USGS), Hui Liu (TAMUG), Yina Liu (TAMU), Chris Marshall (TAMUG), Vanessa Mintzer (GBF), Theresa Morris (TAMUG), Jenny Oakley (HGAC), Ioana Pavel (TAMUCC), Alyssa Quackenbush (GBF), Wendy Rangel (TAMUCC), Hanadi Rifai (UH), Bill Rodney (TPWD), Melanie Rogers (UHCL), Laura Ryckman (TCEQ), Chloe Stifler (ABNC), Luke Travis (USGS), Huy Vu (USEPA), Katie Wilson (GCHD), Matthew Abernathy (GBEP), Hope Cole (GBEP), Zoe Gapayao (GBEP), Lindsey Lippert (GBEP), Lisa Marshall (GBEP), Christian Rines (GBEP).

Approval of December 11, 2024 meeting minutes – Motion to approve by Amanda Hackney and a second by Jan Culbertson.

Presentations:

Multi-Drug-Resistant Bacteria Carrier of Heavy Metals in Texas Guld Waters– Wendy Rangel

Wendy Rangel presented on research currently underway with colleagues at Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi. Their project looks at *Vibrio vulnificus* and *Vibrio alginolyticus* (Vibrio) which are infections of public concern that often come from open wound contact with seawater or consumption of raw seafood. The researchers aim to determine the bioaccumulation of heavy metal contaminants in Vibrio to determine if they correlate with increased antimicrobial resistance. Previous studies have shown high heavy metal tolerance in Vibrio isolates.

M&R Updated Bylaws

Jenelle Estrada gave an overview on the main changes to the M&R Bylaws. In terms of the Subcommittee, an “organization” is defined as an overarching entity, and does not distinguish between divisions, sections or laboratories. A list of current member organizations was displayed, and a final list will be sent out before the proposal presentation meeting. Each member organization gets one vote and must attend (personally or by proxy) a minimum of two subcommittee meetings in the year prior.

There was discussion on whether only those who attended meetings are allowed to be included in the voting discussion at member organizations. It was determined that it will be left up to the member organizations to determine who is involved in voting discussions as long as there is one final submitted vote.

320 Priorities Discussion

Subcommittee members discussed the FY27 320 funds priorities and agreed on four priorities that represent the goals of the subcommittee for this funding round.

- 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;
 - Contract recreation standards;
 - Environmental parameters;
 - Emerging contaminants; and
 - Legacy contaminants
- Investigate ecosystem services and economic valuation of bay resources.

Project Updates:

- Regional Monitoring Database – HARC (Ryan Bare)
 - Ongoing maintenance based on updates to datasets in the past year and the final report draft is underway.
- Long Term Monitoring of Living Shorelines – Lee College (Jim Dobberstine)
 - Data analysis and final report drafting is underway.
- Monitoring Ecosystem Indicators for Science-Based Restoration and Enhancement – TAMUG (Hui Liu)
 - Sampling cruises are ongoing, and a manuscript is being drafted.
- The Distribution and Fate of Highly Toxic Tire Rubber-Derived Chemicals in Galveston Bay – TAMU (Michael Shields)
 - Data analysis is ongoing for water and sediment concentrations in archived cruise samples and for the photochemistry experiment. They are awaiting the arrival of supplies to begin the sorption/desorption experiment.
- Evaluating Galveston Bay's Resilience to Ocean and Coastal Acidification – HARC (Stephanie Glenn)
 - Communication with subcontractors is ongoing to develop the QAPP.
- Establishment of an Oyster Sentinel Program for Tracking *Perkinsus marinus* (Dermo) in Oysters of Galveston Bay – UHCL (Mandi Gordon)
 - Work is underway on drafting the QAPP.
- Tracking *Perkinsus Marinus* (Dermo) Infection in Sun-Cured Oysters - UHCL (Mandi Gordon)
 - Work is underway on finalizing the QAPP and drafting communications with participants.
- Monitoring to Assess Long-term Restoration Success in Galveston Bay Wetlands - TAMUG (Anna Armitage)

- The QAPP has been approved, and field sampling preparation has begun.

Announcements/Path Forward Items:

- WSQ Subcommittee meeting: Wednesday, June 11, 2025, 1:30 p.m.– 3:30 p.m.
- B&P Subcommittee meeting: Wednesday, July 9 2025, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- GBC meeting: Wednesday, July 16, 2025, 9:30 a.m.– 12:30 p.m.
- M&R 2025 Subcommittee Meetings
 - September 10, 2025 (9:30-11:30am)
 - December 10, 2025 (9:30-11:30am)
- Jenny Oakley announced that Houston Galveston Area Council (HGAC) will be releasing the 2025 Basin Highlights Report which is a characterization of the Luce Bayou watershed and summarizes all water quality data from the Clean Rivers Program (CRP) in the region. This information is being transferred into a StoryMap by the end of the month for the public. Additionally, updating the Water Resources Information Map that shows all available data from the CRP to be more interactive and user friendly.

Adjourn