

## **GALVESTON BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM (GBEP)**

### **Galveston Bay Council (GBC) Meeting Minutes – July 16, 2025**

#### **Attendees:**

**Galveston Bay Council Chair:** Bob Stokes (Galveston Bay Foundation)

**Galveston Bay Council Vice-Chair:** Vance Darr (Industry - Kuraray America, Inc.)

**Estuary Program Staff Lead:** Lisa Marshall (GBEP)

*The July 16, 2025, quarterly GBC meeting was held in a hybrid format with an in-person meeting at the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District and virtually on Microsoft Teams from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.*

**Members Present:** Scott Alford, Susan Bandy, Glenn Clingenpeel, Jeff DallaRosa (v), Vance Darr, Elizabeth Fazio Hale, Albert Gonzales, Jonathan Holley, Kristin Lambrecht , Mike Lee, Julie Masters, Kelly Mills, Helen Paige (v), Ana Partin (v), Dianna Ramirez, Ben Regner (v), Hanadi Rifai (v), Todd Running, Lindsey Savage, Caimee Schoenbaechler, Rusty Senac (v), Linda Shead, Philip Smith, Dean Southward, Charrish Stevens (v), Bob Stokes, Matthew Tilimon, Maria Valdez (v), Huy Vu (v), Kirk Wiles (v), Katie Wilson

**(v=Member present online; not counted in the quorum)**

**Members Not Present/Delegates:** Raven Blakeway\*, Shane Bonnot, Winfred Colbert, Juan Flores, Brian Koch, Michael Lange\*, Helen Paige, Laura Picariello\*, Ben Regner, Kari Sutton\*, Tracy Woody

**(\*=Member designated a proxy)**

**Proxies Present (GBC member absent/designated proxy):** Raven Blakeway/Brandon Ford, Mike Lange/Suzanne Simpson, Laura Picariello/Madgellen Cleary, Kari Sutton/Mollie Powell

**Current Vacancies:** None

**Other Attendees:** Alfonso Cantu, Jr., Tom Douglass, George Guillen, Nicole Hall, Yina Liu, Jon Powell, Laura Ryckman, Michael Shields, David Villarreal (v)

**Additional GBEP Staff Present:** Matthew Abernathy, Hope Cole, Jenelle Estrada, Zoe Gapayao, Lindsey Lippert, Christian Rines, Alejandra Trevino (v)

#### **Call to Order and Confirm Quorum**

Bob Stokes brought the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

#### **Introductions**

Mr. Stokes began by having the GBC members introduce themselves. Introductions began with in-person attendees, followed by members attending virtually.

Mr. Stokes reminded the GBC that virtual attendance is not included in the quorum. Given that the quorum was narrowly met for this meeting, Mr. Stokes emphasized the importance of in-person attendance, particularly during meetings involving council votes.

**Action Item: Approval of April 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Stokes called for approval of the April 16, 2025, meeting minutes. Glenn Clingenpeel motioned for the approval and Julie Masters seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously with no opposition or abstentions.

### **Report of the Program**

Lisa Marshall began the report of the program by introducing Hope Cole, GBEP's new Technical and Quality Program coordinator. Ms. Cole provided a brief introduction of herself to the GBC.

Ms. Marshall announced that Bob Stokes and Vance Darr have served in their roles as GBC chair and vice chair for two years, so the nominating committee is working to identify candidates for the vice chair position, with the hope that Mr. Darr will move into the Chair position. The nominating committee announcement and approval will occur at the October 2025 meeting.

Lastly, GBEP staff are reviewing the State of the Bay Symposium abstracts and the agenda will be finalized in September.

### **Report of the Chair**

Mr. Stokes' Report of the Chair thanked the GBC members for their participation and their support of Galveston Bay and reiterated the importance of the GBC and GBEP.

**Presentation:** *Getting to Know Council Member Maria Valdez* - Maria Valdez, DOW (Greater Houston Partnership)

Maria Valdez began her presentation by providing her background, including her education and professional experience in the environmental field. She then provided information on DOW's work in Texas and her role within the company. Ms. Valdez began her presentation by highlighting her role within Dow. She then elaborated on the environmental initiatives that DOW has in place and how they support the health of the Galveston Bay watershed.

Ms. Valdez's presentation is available on the [GBEP website](#).

### **Break**

**Presentation:** *One Health, a New Vision for Conservation?* - Jaime Gonzalez, Executive Director, University of Houston Institute for Ecological Resilience

Jaime Gonzalez began his presentation with an introduction to his position and the newly created Institute for Ecological Resilience at the University of Houston (UH). He then provided background on the UH Coastal Center, located in La Marque, TX, and its importance to the region and its place within the Institute for Ecological Resilience. Mr. Gonzalez then provided information on the concept of One Health, which combines environmental health, human health, and biodiversity health, and the correlation between them.

George Guillen asked how people can get in touch with Mr. Gonzalez to follow up with him. Mr. Gonzalez provided his email and included it in the chat.

Mr. Stokes asked how Mr. Gonzalez's prior work will be incorporated into the work at the UH Coastal Center. Mr. Gonzalez responded that local preserves like the UH Coastal Center provide seed material from native plants to incorporate into projects with nature-

based solutions. They also provide baseline information on what these habitats should look like, as a reference for projects.

Madgellen Cleary asked if they had been working with any of the medical services around the Houston area. Mr. Gonzalez stated they are working with Houston Methodist's Office of Sustainability, who are looking at water pollution through the One Health lens. Connecting conservation with public health continues to be a place of exploration.

Rusty Senac asked about efforts that can be provided to projects that are being planned now. Mr. Gonzalez stated that they are still in the "scoping phase" but that moving forward, they hope to be a "match maker" to help connect organizations that incorporate One Health principles with project managers that are interested in adding that factor. Mr. Senac then asked about the landscape work that [PBK Architects](#) (landscape architecture firm referenced in the presentation) does at schools as there is a school in his area that is being built. Mr. Senac added that PBK Architects has done all the other buildings in their district and Mr. Gonzalez said he would connect Mr. Senac with his contact at PBK Architects to discuss it further.

Linda Shead asked for more information on incorporating the idea of One Health into the consciousness of other organizations. Mr. Gonzalez stated they will be working on communications methods in the next year and that while the concept is not new, it can be renewed for today. An emphasis was put on talking to developers to find out what aspects of One Health will be most important for them to learn. A challenge of conservation is knowing that development is inevitable and finding the best ways to engage with developers on how to incorporate conservation with development. Ms. Shead also asked how to incorporate the ideas into the existing developments and structures as well.

Dean Southward asked if there were any property tax incentives for incorporating nature and conservation aspects into new developments. Mr. Gonzalez stated he did not know but was interested in learning more about the potential.

Dianna Ramirez asked about the long-term maintenance for projects like what is being done in Gulfton. Mr. Gonzalez responded that partnerships and philanthropy can be used and that in other areas, park districts can help support the maintenance needed. Novel ideas will need to be investigated and implemented.

Mr. Gonzalez's presentation is available on the [GBEP website](#).

## **Break**

**Presentation:** *The Distribution and Fate of Tire Rubber-Derived Chemicals in Galveston Bay* - Michael Shields, Ph.D., Texas A&M University (TAMU)

Michael Shield began his presentation with background information on the laboratory he works for at TAMU and the work they do. He then provided an update to the GBC on the status of the project. This included a background into why they are looking into tire degradation and the impacts on water quality. The current project leveraged samples taken for a project by Dr. Yina Liu from 2021-2023 and is analyzing the water and sediments for the presence and fate of 6PPD-quinone (6PPD-Q). Dr. Shields then provided a summary of the results to date and then took questions from the GBC.

Albert Gonzales stated he worked for five years at the Goodyear plant on Hwy 225 and during his time there he saw many different chemicals and additives that went into stormwater drainages that led to the bayous. Mr. Gonzales then asked if they had

investigated other chemicals in the water. Dr. Shields responded they have looked at forever chemicals in the water but have not looked at other chemicals in relation to tire degradation.

Dr. Guillen asked if any samples had been collected from areas upstream of the industrial areas near Galveston Bay and if the concentrations of 6PPD-Q found in sediments were going to be evaluated for toxicity. Dr. Shields has samples from the bayou that will be analyzed along with collaborations with watersheds near College Station, but those samples do not fall under the scope of this project. Regarding sediment toxicity, they hope that the work helps to inform future studies.

Tom Douglass referenced a previous Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) study of Lake Houston that found high levels of zinc, which were hypothesized to have come from tires, and asked if there was any research being done on 6PPD-Q in Lake Houston and its tributaries. Dr. Shields was not sure if there was, but commented that if it isn't being done already, he would not be surprised if it started soon.

Mr. Stokes asked about why there has not been a fish kill related to 6PPD-Q in this area, similar to what was seen in Coho Salmon in the Pacific northwest. Dr. Shields responded that the studies have revealed that different fish species are affected differently and it is still being investigated. Mr. Stokes then asked if it is known whether 6PPD-Q bioaccumulates and impacts humans. Dr. Shields responded he did not have any data on it.

Mike Lee asked if 6PPD is toxic or if it only 6PPD-Q. 6PPD oxidizes or reacts with ozone to become 6PPD-Q and the addition of the quinone is what makes it toxic. Dr. Guillen asked if the elevated ozone levels in the Houston area could make it more acutely toxic, and Dr. Shields stated that is what he would expect.

Dr. Shields' presentation is available on the [GBEP website](#).

#### **Presentation: Subcommittee Priorities for Section 320 and State Funds**

- Monitoring and Research – Jenelle Estrada
- Natural Resource Uses – Lindsey Lippert
- Public Participation and Education – Zoe Gapayao
- Water and Sediment Quality – Christian Rines

The subcommittee coordinators provided the priorities for their respective subcommittees for the fiscal 2027 project proposals; the presentation is available on the [GBEP website](#).

#### **GBC Members Roundtable: News and Announcements**

**Kristin Lambrecht (TDA):** The Star Fund has been activated, and any donations received are used as grant funding for farmers and ranchers impacted by disaster declarations. A link is available on the [TDA website](#).

**Lindsey Savage (TPWD):** TPWD will host several Certificate of Location workshops in the area. Certificates of Location allow areas of the bay to be leased for oyster harvesting and oyster restoration.

**Liz Fazio Hale (GCA):** The Committee on Natural Resources from the Texas Legislature had a lengthy discussion on the management of natural resources in Texas. Also, the

special session of the Texas Legislature begins on July 21, 2025, and special sessions last for 30 days.

**Madgellen Cleary (Sea Grant):** Texas Sea Grant thanked those who provided letters of support to Texas Sea Grant, considering that the new federal budget proposal includes the termination of the National Sea Grant Program.

Texas Sea Grant will also host a resiliency community of practice meeting and more information on the event will be sent out by the end of this year.

**Caimee Schoenbachler (TWDB):** There are three opportunities for stakeholder input to guide water science and research initiatives.

Open through July 31, 2025, a solicitation for stakeholder input for projects that support groundwater modeling and brackish groundwater research.

There will be a new solicitation in the coming weeks for stakeholder input for projects related to surface water science and flood priority research.

**Todd Running (H-GAC):** The Clean Rivers Program Basin Highlights Report for fiscal year 2025 is now available online.

The Greens Bayou Watershed Protection Plan stakeholder meeting is on July 23, 2025, from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

The Natural Resources Advisory Committee meeting will be on August 7, 2025, and will include the water quality management plan update.

The Chocolate Bay stakeholder meeting is from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Alvin library on August 7, 2025.

The Bacteria Implementation Group meeting is October 28, 2025.

**Dianna Ramirez (TxGLO):** Interns from the Austin office are doing a beach cleanup on July 26, 2025.

Staff changes, including Kevin Frenzel from the Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act (CEPRA) team, retired and Kelly Brooks will be the new manager. Jason Pinchback with Beach Watch also retired, and a replacement has not been named yet. Jeff Burroughs (Easement and Surface Leasing) retired, and Jason Smalley replaced him.

#### **Public Comment:**

**Tom Douglass:** The HCFCD is conducting the Solutions for Advancing Floodplain Evaluation and Resilience (SAFER) study and there are several upcoming community meetings. Information is available online at the [HCFCD website](#).

**Other Business:** N/A

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

**Upcoming Galveston Bay Council Meeting Dates:** October 15, 2025, January 21, 2026, April 15, 2026, and July 15, 2026. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the quarter from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. If there are known conflicts, GBC members are welcome to propose alternate dates to the GBC.