

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

**Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 3, 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 Gapaya

Attendees: Cindy Wilems, Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF); Kendall Guidroz, Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC); Kelli Ondracek, Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD); Wendy Reistle, University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL); Morton Sager, Bayou Preservation Association (BPA); Melissa Wong, Houston Zoo; Rowena McDermid, UHCL; Sandra Metoyer, UHCL; Christie Taylor, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension; David Sharp, Exploration Green Conservancy; Treasa Antony, Nature Heritage Society (NHS); Erin Kinney, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC); Katherine Wilson, Galveston County Health District (GCHD); Brandi Keller, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension; Liz Virgl, American Bird Conservancy (ABC); Tiffany Ritter, Houston Arboretum and Nature Center; Anna Weiss, Vision Galveston; Elizabeth Schneider Walla, Galveston Park Board; Joey Martinez, College of the Mainland (COM); Natasha Zarnstorff, GBF; Nicole Plowman, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD); Cecilia Pham, Houston Public Library (HPL); Yvette Steward, Audubon Texas; Huy Vu, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Kate Unger, National Wildlife Federation (NWF); Alenka Cardenas, Bayou City Waterkeeper; Amy Neblett, Artist Boat; Brittany McWhorter, Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN); Bryar Johnson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS); Carol Burton, Urban Harvest; Stephanie Gray, Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELF); Tara Stafford Ocansey, CELF; Mary Curtis (UHCL); Theresa Morris, Texas A&M University Galveston (TAMUG); Paige Breon (TAMUG); Jenny Oakley (H-GAC); Lisa Marshall (GBEP); Matthew Abernathy (GBEP); Christian Rines (GBEP); Lindsey Lippert (GBEP); Jenelle Estrada (GBEP); Hope Cole (GBEP)

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) Coastal Expo Kit Presentation

The subcommittee watched a video overview on their Coastal Expo loaner trunk kit. The kit includes 5 TEKS-aligned activities for grades 4-6, but people of all ages can enjoy them. The video overview can be found at this [link](#). If anyone is interested in

reserving a kit, please reach out to Nicole at Nicole.Plowman@tpwd.texas.gov or 281-534-0114.

FY 2027 Funding PPE Project Presentations

Presenters had five minutes to present their projects followed by questions and a short discussion.

- Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation: Cultivating Watershed Resilience Ambassadors through Civic Science in Grades 6-12
- Galveston Bay Foundation: Regional Watershed Education and Outreach
- Houston-Galveston Area Council: Coordination of the River, Lakes, Bays 'N Bayous Trash Bash
- Texas A&M University at Galveston: Sea Aggie Turtle Patrol - Gulf Center for Sea Turtle Research
- University of Houston-Clear Lake - Environmental Institute of Houston: Wings of Discovery: Teaching STEAM through Birds and Journaling
- University of Houston Clear Lake: GB Geospatial-Inquiry: Empowering Application of Relevant Understanding of Place (GB GEAR UP!)
- City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department: Connecting Communities to Houston's Prairie Ecosystems
- Texas A&M AgriLife: Health and Performance Monitoring of Green Infrastructure BMPs: A Pathway for High School Intern Career
- Houston-Galveston Area Council: How's the Water - Public Health Risk Awareness Outreach Campaign
- Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges: Salt Lake Native Marsh Shoreline Protection Project

Ranking Guidelines and Timeline for FY 2027 Project Selections

Zoe Gapayao informed the PPE subcommittee that they will receive the project ranking form after the meeting. Ranking forms are due by close of business on Wednesday, September 10, 2025. Projects are to be ranked with 1 as the highest, most favored rank. Comments and feedback to presenters will remain anonymous. Ms. Gapayao reminded the subcommittee of the current PPE subcommittee bylaws, which state, "To be eligible in matters requiring ranking, a member organization must have a member or designated proxy present (in-person and virtual) for the project presentation meeting and at least 2 of the 4 previous Subcommittee meetings." Each member organization will only submit one ranking form and any member organization that would receive money from a project cannot rank that project.

Top ranked projects will be presented to the Budget & Priorities (B&P) subcommittee for approval at the B&P meeting on October 1st. Selected projects will be presented to the Galveston Bay Council for final approval at the Council meeting on October 15th.

Ms. Gapayao reminded virtual attendees to send in a Conflict of Interest form with their ranking if they had not sent a signed copy back already.

Announcements

Cindy Wilems announced that the Texas Association for Environmental Education (TAAE) Annual Conference is taking place on October 24-26, at Camp Olympia in Trinity, TX. Early registration is open for \$350. Visit www.taae.org/conference/ for more information.

Brandi Keller announced that on October 6-7, Texas Sea Grant and the POCACITO Network is hosting Coastal Futures: Exploring Nature-Based Solutions. This is conjunction with researchers coming from Germany. It's a full two-day workshop with speakers and field trips, exploring nature-based solutions around the Galveston area. For more information, visit [Coastal Futures: Exploring Nature-Based Solutions](http://Coastal%20Futures%3A%20Exploring%20Nature-Based%20Solutions), or reach out to Brandi at brandi.keller@ag.tamu.edu.

Liz Virgl announced that SPLASH is hosting their Spook-A-Clean event on November 1 at Arthur Storey Park from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. This Halloween-themed bayou clean up for Houston birds will also include a costume swap! Register at www.splashtx.org/spookaclean.

Ms. Gapaya announced that September 20-27 is [National Estuaries Week](#) and encouraged subcommittee members to follow TCEQ's social media, where GBEP will be highlighting projects and partner events happening that week.

Jenny Oakley announced that H-GAC's Parks and Natural Areas Awards application is now open until September 30th. More information can be found at [Parks and Natural Areas Awards | Houston-Galveston Area Council \(H-GAC\)](#). The Parks and Natural Areas Roundtable will take place on Monday, October 6 from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at H-GAC. Speakers are the National Fitness Campaign and the City of Sugar Land Parks. More information can be found at [Parks and Natural Areas Roundtable Meeting Materials | Houston-Galveston Area Council \(H-GAC\)](#).

Ms. Gapaya also updated the subcommittee on GBEP's progress on planning the 2026 State of the Bay Symposium. Presenters will get an update on their abstracts shortly and the staff is working on assembling the symposium agenda. Registration will open in October.

Additionally, the Estuary Program would like to invite any member organizations who would like an outreach table at the symposium to please contact Ms. Gapaya at Zoe.Gapaya@tceq.texas.gov.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 3 at 1:30 p.m.- 3:30 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned