

Draft Agenda for the 12th State of the Bay Symposium: February 24-25, 2026

Day 1				
7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Registration			
8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Day One Opening Plenary Session (Exhibit Hall A) - Welcome by Galveston Bay Estuary Program, Lisa M. Marshall, Program Manager - Welcome Address by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Troy Hill, Water Division Director - Address by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Catarina Gonzales, Commissioner - Panel: Water Rights (National Wildlife Federation, Texas Water Trade, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Tributary Consulting)			
10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Morning Break - Opportunity to network and visit the exhibits and poster presentations (Exhibit Hall B)			
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session I			
	Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
	State of the Bay: Multiple Stressor Challenges and their Impacts on Galveston Bay Region and its Ecosystems	Legacy, Emerging Chemical and Biological Contaminants in Aquatic Ecosystems Part I	Creating and Maintaining Strong Partnerships for Education and Engagement	Building Bird Habitats
	Impacts on Water and Sediment Quality <i>Hanadi Rifai, University of Houston</i> Ecosystem Protection and Preservation <i>Bob Stokes, Galveston Bay Foundation</i> Impacts on Ecosystems <i>Antoinetta Quigg or alternate, Texas A&M University Galveston</i> Opportunities for Ecosystem Resilience to Extreme Heat <i>Meredith Jennings or alternate, Houston Advanced Research Center</i> Flood and Flood Resilience <i>Jonathan Holley, Harris County Flood Control District</i> Ecosystem Service Provisioning in Restored Salt Marshes: Changes Over Time <i>Anna Armitage, Texas A&M University Galveston</i>	Nano- and Microplastics in Marine Ecosystems: Sediment to Seafood <i>Bryan Gahn, Texas A&M University Galveston</i> Current State and Historic Trends in Persistent (PAHs, PCBs) and Emerging Pollutant (Nano(Micro) plastics of NMPs) Body-Burdens in Oysters and Fish from Galveston Bay <i>Astif Mortuza, Texas A&M University Galveston</i> Establishing a Research Framework and Baseline Conditions to Support Assessments of Cumulative Effects from Multiple Stressors in Galveston Bay Dolphins <i>Vanessa Mintzer, Galveston Bay Foundation</i>	Creating and Maintaining Strong Partnerships <i>Cindy Wilems, Galveston Bay Foundation</i> <i>Alicia Mein-Johnson, Harris County Precinct 3</i> Tools of Engagement Research-Based Strategies for Community Messaging, Outreach, and Engagement <i>Andrea Tantillo, Houston-Galveston Area Council</i>	High Island Rookery Resilience and Enhancement: 7 Years Later <i>Pete Deichmann, Houston Audubon</i> Restoration and Community Engagement: The Wulfert Bird Nesting Habitat Project <i>Elise Cormier, TetraTech</i> Building Resilience for Rookery Islands: Long-Term Waterbird Population Trends on North Deer Island <i>Tim Forrester, Audubon Texas</i> Enhancing Eastern Black Rail Habitat in Gulf Coast Marshes: The Role of Vegetation Management <i>Trevor Markwood, Texas A&M University</i>
12:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Luncheon (Exhibit Hall A), Keynote Speaker - Marcus Eriksen			
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session II			
	Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
	Collaborative Conservation Through Natural Resource Damage Assessments	Improving Water Quality in Galveston Bay with Healthy Soil and Green Infrastructure	Community Engagement with Birds	Oysters

	<p>Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration in Galveston Bay <i>Michael Cave, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i></p> <p>NRDA Sea Turtle Restoration on the Upper Texas Coast: Sea Turtle Nest Monitoring, Sea Turtle Rescue, Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Marine Debris Removal <i>Chris Marshall, Texas A&M University Galveston</i></p> <p>Construction and Monitoring of Dickinson Bay Bird Island 2 <i>Jeffrey Fato, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p> <p>Continued Placement of Beneficial Use Material at Pierce Marsh <i>Sally Clark, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p>	<p>Improving Water Quality in Galveston Bay with Healthy Soil and Green Infrastructure</p> <p><i>Charriss York, Texas A&M AgriLife</i></p> <p><i>Brian Koch, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</i></p> <p><i>Kelli Ondracek, City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department</i></p> <p><i>Brittani Flowers, Bayou Preservation Association</i></p> <p>Texas-Based Ecosystem Service Valuation for Benefit-Cost Analysis of Nature-Based Solutions <i>Michael Niebuhr, AgriLife</i></p>	<p>How we Help the Birds: A Look at Bird-Friendly Actions Taken by Community Members <i>Schylar Brown, Houston Audubon</i></p> <p>Filling in the Gaps: Using Houston Audubon Urban Bird Surveys to Improve the Quality of Community Science Datasets <i>Schylar Brown, Houston Audubon</i></p> <p>Where Birds Thrive, People Prosper: Creating Resilient Communities Through Bird City Texas Certification <i>Chloe Crumley Audubon Texas</i></p> <p>Beach Nesting Bird Conservation on the Upper Texas Coast: Stabilizing and Increasing Populations Through Habitat Protection, Population Monitoring, and Public Outreach <i>Sarah Belles, American Bird Conservancy</i></p>	<p>Management Strategies for Oyster Recovery and Fishery Sustainability in Galveston Bay <i>Christine Jensen, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i></p> <p>Lessons Learned from Adaptively Managing an Oyster Reef Impacted by Sedimentation <i>Kathy Sweezey, The Nature Conservancy</i></p> <p>The Galveston Bay Foundation's Oyster Shell Recycling Program: 14 Years of Growth and Future Goals <i>Shannon Batte, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p> <p>Sentinel Program to Track <i>Perkinsus marinus</i> in Oysters of Galveston Bay <i>George Guillen, University of Houston Clear Lake</i></p>
3:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	Dedicated Poster Presentation Session and Afternoon Break (Exhibit Hall B)			
3:45 - 5:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session III			
	Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
	Panel: Caring for Trinity Bay: Building an Interagency Partnership to Evaluate and Remove Aging Oil & Gas Infrastructure	Land Conservation	Exploration Green: A Nature-Based Solution for Stormwater Management in Houston, TX	Wetland Connections Workshop
	<p><i>D'Anne Stites, Texas General Land Office</i></p> <p><i>Brent Koza, Texas General Land Office</i></p> <p><i>Ryan Lytle, Texas General Land Office</i></p> <p><i>Texas Railroad Commission Representative, Texas Railroad Commission</i></p>	<p>Land Protection Efforts in the Galveston Bay Watershed <i>Matt Singer, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p> <p>Land Acquisition for Habitat Conservation and Environmental Education <i>Lindsey Savage, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i></p> <p>Armand Bayou Nature Center – Urban Acquisition and Conservation <i>Timothy Pylate, Armand Bayou Nature Center</i></p>	<p><i>Christie Taylor, Texas A&M AgriLife and Exploration Green Conservancy</i></p> <p><i>Jennifer Morrow, Clear Lake City Water Authority</i></p> <p><i>Matt Forster, Clear Lake City Water Authority</i></p> <p><i>Representative from the LAN engineering team</i></p> <p><i>Rich Sommer, Exploration Green Conservancy</i></p>	<p><i>Cindy Wilems, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p> <p><i>Emily Billin, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p> <p><i>Rachel Sunshine, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p>

		Increasing the Pace of Conservation in Southeast Texas: Challenges and Opportunities <i>Mary Anne Piacentini, Coastal Prairie Conservancy</i>	
5:00 p.m.	Evening Reception (Room A4)		

Day 2				
7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Morning Networking			
8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Day Two Opening Plenary Session (Exhibit Hall A) - Welcome by Galveston Bay Council, Vance Darr, Chair - Address by City of Galveston, Craig Brown, Mayor - Address by Galveston Bay Foundation, Bob Stokes, President - Presentation: Paul Montagna (Harte Research Institute)			
10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Morning Break - Opportunity to network and visit the exhibits and poster presentations (Exhibit Hall B)			
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session IV			
	Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
	Living Shorelines in the Galveston Bay System: Status, Considerations, and Long-Term Results Living Shorelines in the Galveston Bay System: Status, Considerations, and Long-Term Results <i>Jim Dobberstine, Lee College</i> <i>Cindy Howard, University of Houston Clear Lake</i> <i>Jeffrey Fato, Galveston Bay Foundation</i> Evaluating Saltmarshes as a Nature-Based Solution to Microplastic Pollution <i>Lydia Thurman, University of Houston Clear Lake</i>	Panel: Watershed-Based Planning and Implementation <i>Steven Johnston, Houston-Galveston Area Council</i> <i>Rachel Windham, Houston-Galveston Area Council</i> <i>Celina Gauthier Lowry, Texas A&M AgriLife</i> <i>Lucas F. Gregory, Texas Water Resources Institute</i> <i>Natasha Zarnstorff, Galveston Bay Foundation</i> <i>Nicole Hall, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i>	eDNA Biomonitoring in Galveston Bay <i>Yasmina Shah Esmaeili, Texas A&M University Galveston</i> <i>Guilherme Corte, Texas A&M University Galveston</i> <i>Jaelyn Rodriguez, Texas A&M University Galveston</i>	Flora and Fauna of Galveston Bay Morphometrics, Population Structure, and Spatial Distribution of Diamondback Terrapin in Texas Estuaries <i>Mandi Gordon, University of Houston Clear Lake</i> Seagrass Community in West Bay and Christmas Bay: 2016 - 2024 <i>Laura Ryckman, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i> Evaluation of Microplastic Loading in Marsh Habitats Associated with Texas Diamondback Terrapins (<i>Malaclemys terrapin littoralis</i>) <i>Gabrielle Hammerbach, University of Houston Clear Lake</i> Movement and Habitat Use of Green Sea Turtles in the Galveston Bay Estuary System <i>Madelyn Rupp, Texas A&M University Galveston</i>
12:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Luncheon (Exhibit Hall A), Keynote Speaker - Matt Aeberhard			

1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session V			
	Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
	Water and Sediment Quality Monitoring and Management	Community-Based Water Quality Initiatives	Data/Modeling	Historic and Future Bird Trends
	<p>Coastal Groundwater Dynamics in Galveston Bay <i>Dini Adyasari, Texas A&M University Galveston</i></p> <p>Application of Matrix-Assisted Laser Desorption/Ionization Time-of-Flight Mass Spec to Detect the Source of Enterococcus Contamination of Mustang Bayou <i>Chris Howard, University of Houston Clear Lake</i></p> <p>Targeted Bacteria Monitoring: A Holistic Overview of the Houston-Galveston Area Council's Projects <i>Cornell Evans, Houston-Galveston Area Council</i></p> <p>Developing a TMDL for a Stormwater-dominated Recreational Beach <i>Sam Bickley, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i></p>	<p>Clean Coast Texas: Providing Coastal Communities with Technical Assistance to Protect and Restore Water Quality <i>Scott Jones, Texas A&M AgriLife</i></p> <p>Enhancing On-Site Sewage Facility Outreach and Improvements on a Community Level with GIS-Based Tools and Local Partners <i>Kendall Guidroz, Houston-Galveston Area Council</i></p> <p>Public Awareness of Waterborne Pathogen Risk from Recreational Exposure: Insights from Galveston Beach Survey <i>Ashley Ross, Texas A&M University Galveston</i></p> <p>Water Quality, Debris, and Citizen Scientists in Galveston Bay <i>Natasha Zarnstorff, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p>	<p>Texas Clean Rivers Program Regional Water Resources Information Map <i>Jenny Oakley, Houston-Galveston Area Council</i></p> <p>Galveston Bay Regional Monitoring Database: What Can It Do For You? <i>Ryan Bare, Houston Advanced Research Center</i></p> <p>Next Steps in Estuarine Habitat Suitability Modeling in Galveston Bay: Integrating Process-Based and Data Driven Approaches <i>Ryan Hostak, TetraTech</i></p> <p>Land Cover Forecasting for the HGAC Region using TerrSet <i>Megha Shrestha, Houston-Galveston Area Council</i></p> <p>Leveraging the Texas Litter Database for Citizen Science and Watershed Stewardship <i>Kirsten Sorensen, Keep Texas Beautiful</i></p>	<p>Enhancing Habitat and Birdlife on the Bolivar Peninsula: A Historical Perspective <i>Wyatt Egelhoff, Houston Audubon</i></p> <p>Avian Conservation Initiatives at the Houston Zoo: Building for a Sustainable Future in Zoological Aviculture Programs and Global Conservation <i>Ric Urban, Houston Zoo</i></p> <p>60 Years of Avian Surveillance Within Harris County Mosquito and Vector Control <i>Elise Nishikawa, Harris County Mosquito and Vector Control</i></p> <p>Roseate Spoonbill in Galveston Bay: Apparent Trends in Breeding Population <i>Wyatt Egelhoff, Houston Audubon</i></p> <p>The State of the Attwater's Prairie Chicken (<i>Tympanuchus cupido attwateri</i>) in Texas and the AZA SAFE Conservation Initiative <i>Kyle McAuliffe, Houston Zoo</i></p>
3:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	Afternoon Break - Opportunity to network and visit the exhibits and poster presentations (Exhibit Hall B)			
3:45 - 5:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session VI			
	Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
	Habitat Restoration and Enhancement	Legacy, Emerging Chemical and Biological Contaminants in Aquatic Ecosystems Part II	Connecting Communities Through Environmental Education and Outreach	Dolphins

	<p>Native Plant Program for Lower Galveston Bay Watershed <i>Ricci Simmons, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p> <p>Construction and Monitoring of Dollar Bay-Moses Lake Marsh Terraces <i>Jeffrey Fato, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p> <p>An Upstream Piece of Galveston Bay's Ecosystem: Findings from an Urban Park's Native Habitat Restoration <i>Courtney Hall, Memorial Park Conservancy</i></p> <p>Building Ecological Resilience Through Urban Restoration and Community Science at the Houston Arboretum & Nature Center <i>Nova Morales, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center</i></p>	<p>A Five-Year Observation on the Spatial and Temporal Distributions of PFAS in Galveston Bay, TX, USA <i>Yina Liu, Texas A&M University Galveston</i></p> <p>PFAS in Texas and Galveston Bay Waters: Where are we Now? <i>Vanessa Hulse, Houston Advanced Research Center</i></p> <p>Applied Time Series Analyses (2000–2017) Of Vibrio Vulnificus And Vibrio Parahaemolyticus (Pathogenic and Non-Pathogenic Strains) In the Eastern Oyster, Crassostrea Virginica <i>Antoinetta Quigg, Texas A&M University Galveston</i></p> <p>Dioxin and Polychlorinated Biphenyls: Lessons Learned from two Decades of Monitoring, Data Analytics, and Modeling <i>Hanadi Rifai</i></p>	<p><i>Wendy Reistle, University of Houston Clear Lake</i></p> <p><i>Debbie Bush, University of Houston Clear Lake</i></p>	<p>From Flood to Lesion: Bottlenose Dolphins as Early Indicators of Estuarine Change <i>Lola Renauer, University of South Carolina</i></p> <p>Galveston Bay's Urban Bottlenose Dolphins: Updates on Residency and Threat Evaluation <i>Melanie Rogers, University of Houston Clear Lake</i></p> <p>Common Bottlenose Dolphins (Tursiops truncatus) as Bioindicators of Inorganic Chemical Pollution Along the Galveston Coast <i>Madison Hallmark, Texas A&M University Corpus Christi</i></p> <p>Land-Based Dolphin Surveys Conducted by Citizen Scientists: What we have Learned about Dolphin-Fisher Interactions at Seawolf Park <i>Alyssa Quackenbush, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p>
5:15 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Post-Symposium Sessions			
	Floral Ballroom A1			
	NRDA Public Meeting			