

GALVESTON BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM (GBEP)

Galveston Bay Council (GBC) Meeting Minutes – October 15, 2025

Attendees:

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

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

Estuary Program Staff Lead: Lisa Marshall (GBEP)

The Oct. 15, 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: Susan Bandy, Jeff DallaRosa, Vance Darr, Elizabeth Fazio Hale* (v), Albert Gonzales, Jonathan Holley, Kristin Lambrecht, Brian Koch, Kelly Mills, Helen Paige (v), Ana Partin (v), Laura Picariello, Molly Powell, Dianna Ramirez, Hanadi Rifai (v), Lindsey Savage, Caimee Schoenbaechler* (v), Rusty Senac, Dean Southward (v), Bob Stokes, Maria Valdez, Huy Vu (v), Katie Wilson (v), Tracy Woody

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

Members Not Present/Delegates: Scott Alford, Raven Blakeway*, Shane Bonnot, Glenn Clingenpeel*, Juan Flores*, Michael Lange*, Mike Lee Julie Masters, Ben Regner*, Todd Running, Linda Shead, Philip Smith, Charrish Stevens, Matthew Tilimon, Kirk Wiles

(*=Member designated a proxy)

Proxies Present (GBC member absent/designated proxy): Raven Blakeway/Antonya Harris, Glenn Clingenpeel/Heather Firn (v), Elizabeth Fazio Hale/Jo Wilson, Juan Flores/Anthony D'Souza, Mike Lange/Suzanne Simpson, Ben Regner/Matthew Molina, Todd Running/Rachel Windham, Caimee Schoenbaechler/Dr. Amin Kiaghadi, Shane Simpson/Jack Newton (v),

Current Vacancies: Regional/Local Governments

Other Attendees: Jenny Claycombe (v), Jim Dobberstine, Gene Muller, Mary Anne Piacentini (v), Michael Roberts (v), Jimmy Sumrall, Lori Traweek (v), David Villarreal (v), Sinthuka Vivekananthan (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. The quorum was met for this meeting.

Action Item: Approval of July 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Stokes called for approval of the July 16, 2025, meeting minutes. Dianna Ramirez motioned for the approval and Jonathan Holley seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously with no opposition or abstentions.

Report of the Program

Lisa Marshall reminded all members that if they had not done so already, to please sign the conflict-of-interest form. She also reminded anyone with a conflict of interest to please note that during the voting discussions. Members online were asked to submit the form to Ms. Marshall before the end of the meeting.

Ms. Marshall announced that registration for the State of the Bay Symposium opened at 9:00 a.m. on Oct. 15, 2025, and that hotel reservations are also available online. She also noted that a GBC member dinner will be held the evening before the symposium, and more details would be sent out soon.

Ms. Marshall then provided an update on the dates for the 2026 GBC meetings, which will be on January 21, April 15, July 15, and Oct. 21, 2026.

Lastly, Ms. Marshall stated that while the new chair and vice chair will be nominated later in the meeting, she would first like to thank Mr. Stokes for his work as the GBC chair for the past two years. She noted that he has been an advocate for GBEP and the GBC and has consistently championed the mission and work of GBEP. His support has been instrumental in supporting increased funding and visibility and we are sincerely thankful for this.

Report of the Chair

Mr. Stokes thanked the GBC members and GBEP staff for their work and stated it had been an honor to work with the GBC and GBEP staff throughout his career and as the GBC chair for the past two years.

Mr. Stokes then introduced Molly Powell as the new GBC representative from Port Houston. Ms. Powell then provided a brief introduction and background on herself for the GBC.

Mr. Stokes then announced that Vance Darr has accepted the nomination to be the new chair of the GBC and Elizabeth Fazio Hale has accepted the nomination to be the new vice chair.

Mr. Darr provided the biography of Ms. Fazio Hale and Ms. Fazio Hale said this is an honor and that she looks forward to serving as the vice chair. Mr. Darr then provided his background for the GBC.

Mr. Stokes then called for a joint motion for Mr. Darr to be the GBC chair and Ms. Fazio Hale to be the vice chair. Brian Koch made the motion, and Rusty Senac seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation: Long-term Monitoring of Living Shorelines - James Dobberstine, Ph.D., Lee College

Jim Dobberstine, Ph.D., provided an overview of the long-term research that he and his students have been conducting on living shorelines around Galveston Bay. Dr. Dobberstine began with a background on the erosion issues around Galveston Bay along with the types of typical shoreline armoring used. Next, he discussed the history of shoreline loss around Galveston Bay and then provided insight into alternative shoreline

protection processes. This research involves monitoring living shorelines, specifically areas that also have nearby locations that are traditionally armored and unprotected areas. The remainder of the presentation highlighted the work that has been done to evaluate the benefits of small-scale restoration projects for the purpose of adaptive management.

Jeff DallaRosa asked if they investigated any of the restoration work done by Cheri O'Brien in Christmas Bay. Dr. Dobberstine replied that there was significant literature review done for this project, but many places did not meet the criteria of having both positive and negative controls near to the restoration site. Lindsey Savage commented that Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) are currently doing habitat surveys and new imagery, and data will be available soon.

Albert Gonzales asked if there was insight into what the sources would be of microplastics in Trinity Bay. Dr. Dobberstine stated they were not sure, but that they noticed that microplastics were more prevalent upstream (in the bayous, in the northern part of the bay) and the amount decreased as the samples got closer to the Gulf.

Mr. Senac asked for recommendations to help areas where previous projects had failed. Dr. Dobberstine commented that it is difficult because there are a variety of metrics that impact the severity of erosion, and that additional engineering and modeling is sometimes necessary to determine the best method to proceed. Another option is to use multiple barriers in a high energy environment, similar to a dune system, to help protect the area. Dr. Dobberstine then suggested contacting Jeffrey Fato at the Galveston Bay Foundation and that the Texas General Land Office (TxGLO) also has some useful resources.

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

Presentation: *Getting to Know Council Member Jeff DallaRosa* - Jeff DallaRosa, CenterPoint Energy, Utilities Representative

Jeff DallaRosa provided his background and a brief introduction to the GBC before starting his presentation. Mr. DallaRosa began his professional career with GBEP in 2000 and left in 2010 to join CenterPoint Energy. He currently manages the ecological group on the electrical side for the Houston region and works in the avian protection program. Mr. DallaRosa then provided a background on CenterPoint in the region and his role with the company. He highlighted several projects that relate to the GBC and its partners.

Mr. Stokes asked if the eagles used the relocated nest. Mr. DallaRosa replied that the birds used a different nest for a few years before moving back into the relocated nest in 2014.

Mr. Gonzales asked if there have been any problems with alligators with the decrease in rainfall and Mr. DallaRosa replied that they have had issues in the past, but none recently.

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Break

Presentations & Discussion of Fiscal 2026 Additional Projects and Budget and Fiscal 2027 Work Plan: A series of short presentations by GBEP staff covering the projects and programmatic costs being proposed

The subcommittee coordinators provided a brief overview of the projects proposed by their respective subcommittees. After the presentation, Hope Cole, GBEP Technical and Quality Program Coordinator, provided an overview of the proposed budget for the fiscal 2026 additional projects and fiscal 2027 work plan.

A copy of the project summaries and budget are available on the [GBEP website](#).

Action Item: Approval of each item in the proposed work plan

Mr. Stokes called for a vote for the fiscal 2026 additional projects and each of the subcommittee proposed project and budget recommendations. The table below provides the results of each of the votes. All recommendations passed unanimously.

Program Area	Motion	Second	Abstain	Conflict of Interest
Fiscal 2026	Rusty Senac (Nature Tourism)	Dianna Ramirez (Texas General Land Office)	Harris County Flood Control District Houston-Galveston Area Council Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Texas Conservation Partners (Proxy) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Proxy) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (virtual)	N/A
Fiscal 2027 WSQ	Brian Koch (Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board)	Rusty Senac (Nature Tourism)	Galveston Bay Foundation Gulf Coast Authority (Proxy) Harris County Flood Control District Houston-Galveston Area Council Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Texas Conservation Partners (Proxy) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Proxy) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (virtual)	N/A
Fiscal 2027 NRU	Susan Bandy (League of Women Voters)	Mollie Powell (Port Houston)	Galveston Bay Foundation Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Texas Conservation Partners (Proxy) Texas Parks and Wildlife Department U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Proxy) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (virtual)	N/A
Fiscal 2027 PPE	Laura Picariello (Texas Sea Grant)	Rusty Senac (Nature Tourism)	Gulf Coast Authority (Proxy) Harris County Flood Control District Houston-Galveston Area Council Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Texas Conservation Partners (Proxy) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Proxy) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (virtual)	N/A
Fiscal 2027 M&R	Dianna Ramirez (Texas General Land Office)	Brian Koch (Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board)	Galveston Bay Foundation Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Texas Conservation Partners (Proxy) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Proxy) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (virtual)	Texas Water Development Board (OCA)

Presentations & Discussion of Federal Fiscal 2026 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) GBEP Work Plan: A short presentation by GBEP staff covering the projects and budget being proposed.

The Education and Outreach Coordinator provided an overview of the projects proposed for funding in federal fiscal 2026 through IIJA. Ms. Cole then provided an overview of the budget for the proposed IIJA projects.

A copy of the project summaries and budget are available on the [GBEP website](#).

Action Item: Approval of each item in the proposed IIJA work plan

Mr. Stokes called for a vote for the federal fiscal 2026 projects and budget as presented. The table below provides the results of the vote, which passed unanimously.

Program Area	Motion	Second	Abstain	Conflict of Interest
FFY 2026 IIJA Projects	Susan Bandy (League of Women Voters)	Jonathan Holley (Harris County Flood Control District)	Galveston Bay Foundation Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Texas Conservation Partners (Proxy) Texas Parks and Wildlife Department U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Proxy) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (virtual)	N/A

GBC Members Roundtable: News and Announcements

Dianna Ramirez (TxGLO): The TxGLO Coastal Roundup will be on East Beach in Galveston on April 18, 2026.

The Coastal Management Program request for proposals will open on March 1, 2026.

The Jones Bay Bird Island project and the Baytown Nature Center oyster reef project both were completed recently, and the Rollover Pass Bird Island project is in pre-bid.

Jonathan Holley (HCFCD): Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) is accepting feedback on the Harris County Flood Resilience Plan. Additional information is available on the [HCFCD website](#).

Brian Koch (TSSWCB): The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) received 30 proposals for funding through Section 319. The proposals are being reviewed at this time, and selected applicants will be contacted in the next few months.

Bob Stokes (GBF): Bike Around the Bay is this weekend, so be mindful of cyclists on the road.

Lisa Marshall (GBEP): If your organization is interested in having an outreach booth at the State of the Bay Symposium, please contact either Ms. Marshall or Zoe Gapayao.

Rachel Windham (H-GAC): The Bacteria Implementation Group fall meeting is on Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2025, from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

The Natural Resources Advisory Committee meeting is on Thursday, Nov. 6, 2025, from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Information for both of those meetings is available at [h-gac.com](#).

The wastewater operator training website is now live at [www.texaswatercareers.com](#). This site helps to increase awareness about this industry and career opportunities.

Kelly Mills (TCEQ): TCEQ has had some recent leadership changes. Bobby Janecka's time as a commissioner has ended and Governor Abbott appointed Tanya Miller as a new commissioner, effective Oct. 1, 2025. Mr. Mills also invited everyone to register for the upcoming State of the Bay Symposium.

Dr. Amin Kiaghadi (TWDB): The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) also has had recent leadership changes. Bradley Franks and Ashley Morgan both joined the TWDB and Tanya Miller was appointed as a commissioner at TCEQ.

TWDB also has two stakeholder opportunities to submit project ideas. These are not funding opportunities but are ideas for future projects. The first is related to flood planning and flood science and is open through Oct. 31, 2025. The second opportunity for projects to advance surface water science closes on Oct. 15, 2025.

TWDB also has a new [video on their website](#) that shows TWDB and the U.S. Geologic Survey deploying and monitoring a buoy in Trinity Bay.

Antonya Harris (USACE): The Coastal Texas Project, Section G28, is in the design phase to create a small four mile section of breakwater along the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway adjacent to Bolivar Peninsula to prevent erosion and restore habitat.

For segment S2G Orange (Sabine to Galveston Bay Coastal Storm Risk Management Project), the open comment period closed on Oct. 9, 2025, and the report of the Supplements Environmental Impact Statement is expected to be completed in late 2026, at which time it will be open for public comment.

Public Comment: N/A

Other Business: N/A

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

Upcoming Galveston Bay Council Meeting Dates: Jan. 21, 2026, April 15, 2026, July 15, 2026, and Oct. 21, 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.