



WATER AND SEDIMENT QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE GALVESTON BAY COUNCIL



Meeting Minutes Wednesday, December 10, 2025 1:30PM – 3:30PM

Subcommittee Chair: Brian Koch, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)

Subcommittee Vice Chair: Ryan Bare, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC)

GBEP Representative: Christian Rines

Call to Order

Attendees: Brian Koch (TSSWCB), Ryan Bare (HARC), Christian Rines (GBEP), Caroline Emery (TCEQ), Kaylei Chau (EIH-UHCL), Zuli Lucena (USGS), David Villareal (TDA), Linda Shead (various non-profits), Tom Douglas (various non-profits), Sarah McCaffrey (TCEQ), Celina Gauthier Lowry (TX A&M AgriLife), Michael LaMontagne (UHCL), Michael Roberts (The Coastal Trust), Kendall Guidroz (H-GAC), Sam Hill (TFS), Katie Wilson (GCHD), Jodi-Ann Burton (Vision Galveston), Natasha Zarnstorff (GBF), Erin Kinney (HARC), Lisa Marshall (GBEP), Lindsey Lippert (GBEP), Jenelle Estrada (GBEP), Zoe Gapayao (GBEP), Hope Cole (GBEP), and Matthew Abernathy (GBEP).

Approval of the September 10, 2025 minutes - Ms. Rines opened the meeting with approval of the minutes. Mr. Koch motioned to approve the minutes and Mr. Bare seconded. The minutes were approved with no changes.

New Business

Presentation: *General Information and Current Guidance on PFAS* — Caroline Emery, Toxicologist, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Presentation: *Digging Deeper - Addressing Soil Health to Improve Water Quality in the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed* — Celina Gauthier Lowry, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Presentation: *Repair and Replacement of Failing On-Site Sewage Facilities (OSSFs) for Homeowners in Disadvantaged Communities with Vulnerable Populations* — Kendall Guidroz, Houston-Galveston Area Council

**Presentation, notes, and Q&A available upon request.*

Subcommittee Business

Project Updates from WSQ Project Mangers

- Enhancing Clear Creek Watershed Protection and Galveston Bay Plan through Community Engagement and Monitoring (BPA) - BPA has developed educational signage and is in the process of installing pet waste stations with signage in the watershed. The team has also tabled several outreach events in the area.
- Strategic Implementation of Green Infrastructure Best Management Practices in the Double Bayou Watershed (HARC) - The project is wrapping up May 2026, so the team is working on the strategic planning implementation portion of the project. The team started the project by deploying the SWAT+ model to determine where in the watershed nature-based solutions could have the most impact in terms of improving water quality and have since shifted from this strategy to a geospatial analysis approach. This will help inform the recommendation for which nature-based solutions should be implemented in the watershed.
- Repair and Replacement of Failing On-Site Sewage Facilities (OSSFs) for Homeowners in Disadvantaged Communities with Vulnerable Populations (H-GAC) - Update provided during project presentation.
- Watershed Protection Plan Development for Greens Bayou (H-GAC) -The Partnership met on November 19 to discuss bacteria reduction calculations that will help with implementation strategy selection. The next public meeting will be held on January 29, 2026. Details will be posted to the project website (www.greensbayoupartnership.weebly.com) this week.
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Demonstration Site Development for Greenspace Education in the Galveston Bay Watershed (TX A&M AgriLife) - The project just wrapped up, and the Contract will be ending December 31. The project successfully installed a rainwater harvesting system that will be used by students in an existing greenhouse and two educational rain gardens that were planted during a nature-based solutions workshop in October 2024. The team also recently installed supplemental plantings in the rain gardens.
- Digging Deeper: Addressing Soil Health to Improve Water Quality in the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed (TX A&M AgriLife) - Update provided during project presentation.

- Supporting Permeable Alternatives to Conventional Pavement in the Lower Galveston (TX A&M AgriLife) – The team has been working closely with the Galveston Bay Coalition to gauge the barriers/needs regarding permeable alternatives. The second step of the project will be to engage local practitioners in Galveston and Brazoria counties to assess their experience with these types of landscapes, their willingness to install permeable alternatives to conventional pavement, and the customer interest that they have seen with these solutions. There is currently an online form that is being shared with local firms, so please let Ms. Lowry know of any landscape professionals that may be interested in participating. Ms. Rines will send out a link to the interview form to the subcommittee for distribution. Results from the project can be applied to other projects across the state.
- Application of Rapid Methods of Microbial Source Tracking to Assess the Source of Fecal Contamination to Western Galveston Bay (UHCL) – The team is working on validating the concentrating protocol using the concentrating pipette with spiked samples and clean water controls. They’ve completed DNA extraction but are struggling with the crAssphages and other indicators due to issues with the qPCR, so they are trying to locate a facility that can run those samples.
- Targeted Microplastics Monitoring in the Waters of Galveston Bay and its Tributaries (USGS) – The amendment to extend the Agreement to May 31, 2027, was recently approved. The plan was to start sampling in the fall but with the government shutdown, plans have shifted, and the team will now start sampling in the spring, with the intent to finish everything over the summer.
- Evaluation of Nature-Based Stormwater Infrastructure to Reduce Pollution in Galveston Bay – The Contract was executed on November 21, 2025 and a project kickoff meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2025. H-GAC is currently working on approvals for the Sub-contract with the Environmental Institute of Houston at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. Next steps include an initial stakeholder meeting in FY26 Q2 to finalize study sites (if anyone is interested in attending this stakeholder meeting please contact Jenny Oakley at jenny.oakley@h-gac.com) and development of the project’s Quality Assurance Project Plan.
- West Lake Houston Basin Implementation – H-GAC attended the Magnolia Nature Expo outreach event on November 1 and continues to work with stakeholders to distribute pet waste stations. Forestry implementation is expected in late February/early March of 2026.
- Clear Creek Watershed Protection Plan (H-GAC) – H-GAC continues to prioritize this watershed in seeking implementation opportunities and hopes to reach out to stakeholders to let them know about an upcoming project to develop a WPP in the neighboring Armand Bayou watershed starting in FY27.

- Cotton Bayou TMDL/ Chocolate Bayou I-Plan Development (H-GAC) – No update.
- Bacteria Implementation Group (H-GAC) – No update.
- Galveston Bay Coalition of Watersheds (TX A&M AgriLife) – Provided in Ms. Lowry’s update for the Supporting Permeable Alternatives project.

Roundtable/Partner Announcements and Updates:

Ms. Rines announced that future WSQ meetings are currently set for the second Wednesday beginning each state fiscal quarter, but they may change depending on internal discussions with other subcommittee coordinators. Calendar invites will be sent once a decision is made.

Ms. Gapayao announced that the registration for the State of the Bay Symposium is still up with early registration ending in early January, so if you haven’t registered yet, please do so as soon as possible. There are also plenty of outreach tables left. Ms. Gapayao dropped her email in the chat for those interested organizations.

Ms. Rines announced that GBEP will be moving offices this week, so all March subcommittee meetings will be in the new GBEP across located across the street on Gemini.

Old Business

Upcoming GBEP meetings:

B&P Meeting – Wednesday, January 7, 2026 (1:00pm-3:00pm)

GBC Meeting – Wednesday, January 21, 2026 (9:30am -12:30pm)

WSQ Subcommittee Meetings

- Wednesday, March 11, 2026 (1:30pm-3:30pm)
- Wednesday, June 10, 2026 (1:30pm-3:30pm)
- Wednesday, September 9, 2026 (1:30pm-3:30pm)
- Wednesday, December 9, 2026 (1:30pm-3:30pm)

Adjourn