

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

**Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 3, 2026
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

Hybrid Meeting Via Microsoft Teams and In-Person

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 Gapayao

Attendees: Kendall Guidroz, Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC); Sunsan Bandy, League of Women Voters (LWV); Erin Kinney, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC); Mary Curtis, University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL); Brandi Keller, Texas A&M AgriLife/Texas Sea Grant (TXSG); Sadie Berry, TXSG; Hailey Reese, TXSG; Sandra Metoyer, Friends of Flower Garden Banks; Matthew Abernathy, University of Houston Coastal Center; Amanda Hackney, Black Cat GIS; Amy Neblett, Artist Boat; Paige Breon, Texas A&M University Galveston (TAMUG); Debbie Bush, UHCL; David Sharp, Exploration Green Conservancy; Elizabeth (Schneider) Walla, Galveston Park Board (GPB); Bethany Foshee, Coastal Prairie Conservancy (CPC); Jodi-Ann Burton, Vision Galveston; Kate Unger, National Wildlife Federation (NWF); Katie Wilson, Galveston County Health District (GCHD); Liz Virgl, American Bird Conservancy; Rowena McDermid, UHCL; Nicole Hall, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ); Carolyn Pope, TAMUG; Tiffany Ritter, Houston Arboretum; Treasa Antony, Nature Heritage Society; Huy Vu, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Brittani Flowers, Bayou Preservation Association (BPA); Stephanie Gray, Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELF); Andrea Barrera, BPA; Wendy Reistle, UHCL; Christina Taylor, Texas A&M AgriLife; Lisa Marshall (GBEP); Christian Rines (GBEP); Lindsey Lippert (GBEP); Jenelle Estrada (GBEP); Hope Cole (GBEP); Ivette Gomez Rabago (GBEP)

Introduction to the New Galveston Bay Habitat Project Database

Amanda Hackney of Black Cat GIS introduced the subcommittee to GBEP's tool created for resource managers, agency staff, researchers, consultants, and other GBEP stakeholders involved in habitat protection and restoration. The interactive tool integrates spatial information from conservation and restoration projects funded through GBEP's Natural Resource Uses (NRU) Subcommittee. The database can be accessed at galvbaydata.org.

State of the Bay, Fifth Edition

Erin Kinney from HARC gave a summary of the feedback for the State of the Bay update that HARC received during our joint subcommittee meeting on May 20. The State of the Bay is a resource for historical context and up-to-date analysis of the conditions in and around Galveston Bay. It serves as a reference for scientists, natural resource managers, outreach specialists, and other GBEP stakeholders. The 5th Edition will focus on around 3 Priority Issues and how they impact/are impacted by Galveston Bay and its watershed. All subcommittee members are encouraged to rank their top 3 Priority Issues through this [link](#). For any questions or additional comments to HARC, please reach out to them at sotb@harcresearch.org. Additionally, the current version of the State of the Bay can be accessed at stateofgalvbay.org.

Fiscal Year 2028 PPE Subcommittee Priorities

The subcommittee participated in an open discussion about priorities for projects to be funded in fiscal year 2028 through GBEP's 320 and state funding. Our 320 and state funding comes from the Clean Water Act Section 320 funds that National Estuary Programs receive from the EPA, then, for GBEP, those funds are matched by the state. Zoe Gapayao went through the Engage Communities priority from the Galveston Bay Plan and their action plans and corresponding actions. She showed current PPE projects and the actions they are fulfilling. Ms. Gapayao also gave a summary of points relevant to the PPE Subcommittee that were brought up during discussions about cross-subcommittee collaboration. The subcommittee discussed the opportunity to collaborate with the Water and Sediment Quality Subcommittee around outreach to local governments and regulated entities, the importance of scientific communications, empowering community members to be stewards, and scientific literacy through research-based projects.

The subcommittee agreed on the following FY 28 PPE Priorities:

- Connecting new audiences to existing/completed on-the-ground projects in the watershed.
- Empowering K-12 students and/or adults to positively impact their local environment through increased scientific literacy and community projects.
- Opportunities to host workshops/networking events to provide technical assistance for local leadership (local governments, MUDs, schoolboards, the public) on key topics.
- Conservation and environmental workforce development.

The timeline for our request for proposals are as follows:

- Release of Request for Proposals - June 22, 2026
- Proposals Due - July 24, 2026
- Send Proposals to Subcommittee Members for Review - August 12, 2026, although Ms. Gapayao mentioned that PPE's proposals may be sent to the subcommittee for review a few days before this date
- Present Proposals to Subcommittees for Council Recommendation - September 2, 2026, for NRU and PPE and September 9, 2026, for M&R and WSQ
- Present Proposals to B&P Subcommittee for Final Recommendation - September 30, 2026
- Present Proposals to Galveston Bay Council for Approval - October 14, 2026

Current PPE Project Updates

- Mobilizing the Environmental Education Community through Prairie Education Phase II (NPAT): They are halfway through their first week of summer camp, which are going well so far.
- Wetland Connections (GBF): They will be hosting their second workshop on June 11. This Wetland Careers Showcase will focus on non-science careers in the conservation field. Mountain and Wave Films will be recording video footage of the showcase.
- Resiliency in Education and Green Infrastructure (GBF): This project established GBF's Trinity Bay Discovery Center as a demonstration site for nature-based stormwater infrastructure. On-the-ground installation has included retrofitting an existing pond, creating bioswales, and installing rain barrel gutters. They hosted several tree plantings this spring. They are planning year 2 of teacher development workshops, which will be held for 5 days at TBDC on June 22-26. They are hosting a community open house on June 13 from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. at TBDC that will showcase nature-based stormwater infrastructure and connect the community to coastal resiliency and environmental groups.
- Community Outreach (UHCL/KPRC): This project has already been closed out but Ms. Gapayao updated the subcommittee that the Houston Life interview series won a silver Telly Award, which selects recipients from an international pool of creators.
- Stopping Plastics and Litter Along Shorelines in Houston's Bayous and Beyond (SPLASH): They have already met all their education and outreach metrics. SPLASH will be hosting their final clean up in July 2026. The project is getting ready to close out and they are currently working on their task reports.
- Engaging Under-resourced Communities in Conservation Phase II (BPA): This project has closed out the project of second phase of EUCC that was a 3-part exercise in community education and outreach. They recruited college-level young adults to serve as watershed stewards for local community organizations to advance outreach efforts, developing stakeholder engagement process, and other projects. This provided additional capacity to these smaller organizations that don't often have the staff capacity to be as active and present in their local neighborhoods. Of the four Watershed Stewards, three are gainfully employed in the conservation industry.
- Trash Bash (H-GAC): This year's Trash Bash event took place back in March. The last item for this grant is to host trainings for leaders who would like to use Trash Bash games in their communities, particularly the stakeholders part of the Brays and Sims Bayou Watershed Protection Plan process. These trainings will happen later this month or in July.
- City of Houston Nature Trails Master Plan (HPARD): This project has been began hosting their stakeholder group meetings led by the Siglo Group, their consultants assisting with the creation of this plan. Their stakeholder groups include a technical stakeholder group and a community stakeholder group.
- Texas Envirothon (UHCL): They celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Texas Envirothon program. This year's competition was held in Nacogdoches, TX, at Stephen F. Austin University. Twelve teams competed in the competition and South Texas ISD Science Academy from Mercedes, TX, will go on to represent Texas in July in Mississippi. Through this project, they were able to provide teachers with about \$4000 worth of materials including field guides and other

classroom materials. They are working with Mountain and Wave Film and the Texas A&M Forest Service to create and upload their forestry videos.

Announcements

Ms. Gapayao thanked everyone who attended the joint subcommittee meeting on May 20, 2026. She informed the subcommittee that GBEP is still accepting feedback through this [link](#).

Amy Neblett of Artist Boat announced that World Oceans Day would be happening on Saturday, June 6, which includes art and science workshops.

GBF is hosting their 2026 Trinity Bay Discovery Center GREEN Open House on June 13, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

CELF will host their two-day teacher professional development workshop happening July 29 and 30 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Rice University. This workshop is free for K-12 teachers and non-formal educators and will focus on student-driven initiatives that tackle local challenges and transform school communities. You can [Register Now: Secure Your Free Spot Here](#) and [View the Event Flyer: Download and Share the Flyer](#). We encourage you to please forward this invitation to teachers, administrators, and education advocates in your network so that this opportunity may reach new teachers. Please reach out to stephanie@celfeducation.org with any questions.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Galveston office will be hosting the Texas Riparian and Stream Ecosystem Education Program on July 1st in La Marque, TX. This workshop will provide different Continuing Education Units and will be the full day.

Summer workshop Neighborhood Resilience Network - June 20 - Bayou Preservation Association - sustainability workshops for community to learn about being sustainable at home - first workshop will be about yard waste (June 20) - the rest will be on the third Saturday of July and August - practical and actionable for everyday residents - provide appropriate tools and take home kits relevant to each topic. [June 20 - Yard Waste](#), [July 18 - Rainwater Harvesting](#), [August 15 - Pollinator Gardens](#).

Friends of Flower Garden Banks in partnership with NOAA will be hosting a full-day social sciences workshop focusing on survey development methods, small group interviews, focus sessions, and how to analyze qualitative data. There will also be an opportunity for structured networking and collaboration to see how we can apply these teachings to current projects and collaborate across organizations. This workshop will be held on July 13 at the Fort Crockett Ballroom on Galveston Island with a \$10 event registration. Event flier will be shared when it is available.

Future 2026 PPE Subcommittee Meeting Dates

- September 2, 2026, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
- December 2, 2026, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned