Galveston Bay Estuary Program: 20 years of successful partnerships.

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Clean Waters Initiative
Houston Galveston Area Council
What is an estuary?
28 National Estuary Programs

[Map of the United States showing various estuaries and regions]
The Galveston Bay Estuary Program

- A Program of TCEQ established in 1989 to provide comprehensive ecosystem-based management for this economically valuable resource.
- **Mission:** To preserve and protect Galveston Bay for generations to come.
- **Non-regulatory, voluntary partnership** with citizens, local governments, industry, recreational anglers and commercial fisherman, conservation organizations, port and marinas, river authorities, federal and state agencies, and academic institutions.
Stakeholder Involvement

- Addressing multiple bay uses requires collaboration.

- **Council**: 41 members
  - 5 subcommittees:
    - Water & Sediment Quality - WSQ
    - Natural Resources Uses - NRU
    - Public Participation and Education - PPE
    - Monitoring and Research - M&R
    - Budget and Priorities - B&P

Federal Agencies (7)

Private Sector (7); Environmental/Citizens’ Groups (7)

Galveston Bay Council

Regional / Local Governments (9); Research & Academia (2)

State Agencies (9)
What do we do?

• **Implement The Plan:**
  – foster collaboration
  – build partnerships
  – leverage & acquire funds
  – implement priority projects

• **Outreach**
  – Presentations, exhibiting
  – support partner events
    • Bay Day and Trash Bash

• **Information sharing**
  – Status and Trends monitoring
  – State of the Bay Report
  – State of the Bay Symposium
Galveston Bay is Fishing & Boating

• Over half of Texas’ recreational fishing revenues - worth $2.8 billion/year

• 1/3 of the state’s commercial fishing income—worth $358 million/year

• Second to only Chesapeake Bay in estuary productivity

• Second largest recreational boating capital in US.
Galveston Bay is Industry

• It is the petrochemical production capital of the nation….and the 2nd largest in the world!
• One third of the nation’s petroleum refining.
Galveston Bay is Ports and Shipping

- **Port of Houston:**
  - #1 in US exporting
  - #1 in handling breakbulk (loose) cargo
  - 1.9 million TEUs (containers) in 2012

- **Ship channel-related business**
  - supports more than 785,000 jobs in Texas – worth about $118 billion/year
Galveston Bay’s Challenges

• **Habitat Conservation**
  – No. 1 priority identified by stakeholders.

• **Public stewardship and recognition of Galveston Bay’s value as a natural resource.**

• **Water quality and water conservation**
Estuary Program Accomplishments

• Restored &/or protected 24,218 acres of wetlands and important coastal habitats since 2000
• Implemented successful water quality projects
• Fostered first bay-wide seafood safety program
• Numerous awards
• Back the Bay public outreach campaign
Galveston Bay Watershed
#1 Challenge: Habitat Loss

- Nearly 35,000 acres of wetlands were lost between 1950 and 1990
- Freshwater- 53% of loss (1950-1990)
- Over 9,000 acres freshwater wetlands (1992-2002)

Photo Courtesy of Woody Woodrow, USFWS
Importance of Wetlands

- Attenuate waterborne pollutants
- Retain water during rainfall events
- Reduce shoreline erosion
- Provide habitat for fish and wildlife
- Provide opportunities for recreation
- Add aesthetic value in surrounding communities
Galveston Bay Partnership
Conservation Accomplishments

• Protected and restored 24,218 acres of wetlands and coastal habitats
• Secured $82.5 million in external contributions for habitat conservation
• West Galveston Bay a major focus of conservation activities
West Galveston Bay
North Deer Island Shoreline Protection

Photo Courtesy of Woody Woodrow, USFWS
Galveston Island State Park
Galveston Island State Park - 2010

Carancahua Cove
August 2010
Settegast Coastal Heritage Preserve
West Bay Conservation Initiative

- West Bay Watershed covers 900,000 acres, is mostly undeveloped, land use is primarily agricultural
- The watershed is relatively pristine in terms of intact contiguous habitats, stream corridors, lack of urbanization, and water quality
West Bay Conservation Initiative
-Preserved Lands-

Approximately 10,000 acres of preserved habitat adjacent to West Bay, including:

- Galveston Island State Park
- Pierce Marsh
- Sweetwater Preserve
- SCENIC GALVESTON I-45 Corridor and Virginia Point Preserve
- McAllis Point
- Ostermayer Bayou
- Settegast Coastal Heritage Preserve
- Follets Island
- Savannah Oaks
- Bulanek Farms

Actively seeking to secure additional remaining coastal natural areas, focusing on mainland part of watershed
Ongoing and Future Projects in West Galveston Bay
Partnerships
It’s How It Gets Done
Back the Bay

A public outreach campaign that aims to build awareness, encourage support and improve the environmental quality of Galveston Bay.
Campaign Focus

Awareness, Support and Action ultimately lead to the overall goals of:

- Habitat preservation
- Water conservation
- Water quality
Back the Bay Initiatives

Comprehensive campaign including:

- Logo
- Advertising materials
- Campaign website
- Digital Partner Toolkit
- Community outreach
- Media relations
- Paid media
Water Conservation Ads

- Native Plants Conserve Water and Preserve Galveston Bay.
- Conserve Water:
  - Protect native plants and preserve habitats that support a healthy bay. (Left)
  - Don't Conserve Water:
  - Spring mural art honors the water of the Galveston Bay. (Right)
Back the Bay Billboard

RUNOFF FROM YOUR HOUSE ENDS UP IN GALVESTON BAY.

BACKTHEBAY.org
Habitat Preservation Ads
Outreach Booth
Partner Tools
Partner Tools in Use
You’re more connected than you think…
Partnering with Take Care of Texas
Watershed Protection Initiatives

1. Bastrop Bayou
2. Chocolate Bayou
3. Highland Bayou
4. Dickinson Bayou
5. Bacteria Implementation Group Target Area
6. Cedar Bayou
7. Double Bayou
8. Oyster Waters
9. West Bay
Storm Water Wetland Program
Brays Bayou Storm Water Treatment Wetland
Preserving Galveston Bay for Generations to Come…
Visit TakeCareOfTexas.org to:

- Pledge to Take Care of Texas
- See resources and games for kids
- Order FREE publications
- Find ways to do your part with online resources
- Link to our YouTube, Facebook and Twitter
Thank You
TCEQ staff, you are part of GBEP more than you think!

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