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## II. Review of Fiscal Year 1992

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The *EPA/State Management Conference Agreement* (Publication GBNEP-1, October, 1989) established a plan for the five years of work leading to creation of a CCMP in 1994. Below are listed elements of work accomplished by the GBNEP in relation to the *EPA/State Management Conference Agreement*,.

### ***Identification and Ranking of Priority Problems***

All work relating to this element has been successfully accomplished. Creation of the *Priority Problems List* was accomplished ahead of schedule and in accordance with the *EPA/State Management Conference Agreement* (as described in previous annual work plans). In conjunction with the *Ecosystem Impact Matrix* and the *Action Plan Topics List* (presented in the Introduction) the Program has successfully focused on agreed-upon goals, often in the face of potentially strong distractions.

Two recent projects have helped increase both the understanding of and emphasis upon the problems facing the Bay. First was a *Galveston Bay Ecosystem Conceptual Model*, now nearing completion and fully described more completely as a scientific project in Section III. The conceptual model includes the important habitats in Galveston Bay, their inter-relationships, and the effects of human uses of Galveston Bay. A multi-tiered approach allows use by the public, as well as by scientists and managers.

Second was recent completion of a video production describing the significance of the Galveston Bay ecosystem in both its structure and function. The video has proved to be a valuable visual tool to help express the complexity of the natural ecosystem function and human alterations. The video also serves as a companion to the *Ecosystem Conceptual Model* in encouraging an understanding of the more complex aspects of the ecosystem.

### ***Program Inventory***

All work relating to this element has been successfully accomplished. As described by the *EPA/State Management Conference Agreement*, the Program Inventory had a two-fold purpose: identification of existing agency data sets related to Galveston Bay, and compilation of existing management jurisdictions and activities by governmental agencies. The GBNEP determined that these purposes were best accomplished by separate projects: a *Data Base Inventory* and a *Bay-wide Management Survey*.

The *Data Base Inventory* contains complete descriptions and specifications for existing Bay-related data sets. The inventory consists of an electronic-searchable data base of data set descriptions, including access information. The *Coastal Preserves Regulatory Surveys* and the *Coastal Preserves Regulatory Evaluations* identified, described, and evaluated all management jurisdictions and activities

within the Christmas Bay and Armand Bayou Coastal Preserves. These projects were expanded in a *Bay-wide Management Survey*, which identified and described jurisdictions on the ecosystem scale.

### ***Base Programs and "Action Now" Implementation***

Work under this element continues. Approach to this item involves evaluation of existing agency management activities and early corrective actions where possible. Opportunities have been identified throughout the Program for management improvements prior to formal approval of the CCMP in 1994. These initiatives are summarized below.

One GBNEP initiative created two Texas Coastal Preserves in ecologically unique portions of Galveston Bay: Christmas Bay and Armand Bayou. The designations occurred in FY 1991 under a joint program of the General Land Office and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. In FY 1992, ongoing work included *Coastal Preserve Regulatory Evaluations*, *Coastal Preserves Management Plans* and implementation of management. These activities involve key inter-agency initiatives for water quality and habitat conservation, and were designed to serve as a "test case" for similar future CCMP initiatives on the bay-wide scale, and therefore were coordinated at the Policy Committee level.

A second early management initiative involved identification and correction of illegal discharges along portions of the Bay shoreline. The *Shoreline Survey for Point Source Discharges* identified unregulated or illegal discharges to the Bay. These cases were submitted to appropriate agencies, and enforcement reports were received detailing actions taken to bring discharges into compliance. In general, violations did not contribute substantial pollutant loading to the Bay. Many of the violations, however, involved discharges to tributaries with limited circulation.

A significant project entitled the Citizen's Pollution Reporting Hotline was established in FY 1992. The Citizen's Advisory Steering Committee previously identified needs for increased public awareness about point and nonpoint source pollution, easier pollution reporting for citizens, improved cost-effective monitoring of the Bay, and an assessment of the effectiveness of current agency response. The Hotline (1-800-3 OUR BAY) was established in February, 1992, and receive a major publicity push in Spring, 1992.

Following opening of the Hotline, public and resource agency response was immediate and positive. Early call tracking indicates a call rate of up to several thousand per year. Citizens are generally grateful to have a single phone number to contact; they would otherwise have to know that spills in the water should be reported to the General Land Office, spills on land should be reported to the Texas Water Commission, and pollution from underground should be reported to the Texas Railroad Commission.

## ***Data and Information Management System (DIMS)***

Work under this element continues. Although a DIMS was not specifically required by federal NEP guidance, such a system was deemed necessary by the Management Conference and was therefore included in the *EPA/State Management Conference Agreement*. Commitments were made and carried out for identification of DIMS requirements, a feasibility study and report, and choice and implementation of the best DIMS alternative. The *DIMS Strategy* incorporates centralized information but decentralized data processing.

Components of the DIMS Strategy were detailed in previous annual work plans. These include: creation of a *Galveston Bay Information Center*; drafting of a written and electronic *Galveston Bay Literature Survey*; creation of a written and electronic *Data Base Inventory*; development and use of NOAA's *Coastal Ocean Management, Planning, and Assessment System* (COMPAS); utilization of the Texas Natural Resource Information Center (TNRIS) as a data archive; use of the EPA Ocean Data Evaluation System as an additional data archive; and acquisition of maps, aerial photography, and satellite imagery.

While initial creation of these DIMS tools has been largely accomplished, most are of an ongoing nature and will continue into the future. The Galveston Bay Information Center is well established, with a firm commitment by Texas A&M University and the Texas Institute of Oceanography for this Center to become permanent. Some technical aspects of data handling are not yet fully developed, pending state-wide agreement on data protocol (for example, agreement on a state-wide geographic information system protocol). An FY 1993 project to manage monitoring data will round out the efforts of the GBNEP to assure that data handling in the future is efficient, and "connects" managers to vital information about the resources they manage.

## ***Characterization of Historical Trends, Current Status, and Human Impacts on Galveston Bay***

Characterization of estuarine problems and their probable causes is now culminating. Numerous individual projects have been developed to a draft final stage. Review by the Management Conference and final report publication in the GBNEP Publication Series is proceeding for many of the key studies begun early in the program. Delays have resulted from some slow responses by resource agencies to provide information, Principal Investigator delays in meeting project schedules, and from the lengthy time required for the Management Conference review of final reports.

Work on the Characterization Report has begun, even though some characterization projects have not reached final Management Conference approval. A scientific symposium and other support projects planned for the coming year will fulfill this element, resulting in publication of the *Galveston Bay Environmental Characterization Report* by Fall, 1993.

## ***Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan***

The CCMP was begun in Fiscal Year 1992, with accomplishment of the following elements:

1. Agreement on the *Action Plan Topics List* to provide the organizational structure for the CCMP and to provide guidance for the task force process being utilized for drafting of action plans.
2. Convening of sixteen Action Plan Task Forces to develop the action plans themselves. The Task Forces will have completed two rounds of meetings in FY 1992, and will produce initial action plan outlines for public review during the coming year.
3. Drafting of and agreement upon a *CCMP Outline* to encompass the sixteen Action Plan Topics, and including the following additional sections: Environmental Characterization Summary; Regulatory Framework for Action Summary; Financial Plan; Public Review Summary; and Federal Consistency.
4. Drafting of and agreement upon a *CCMP Time Line*, encompassing a start-to-finish plan for the three years of work to draft, review, and revise the CCMP.
5. Drafting of and agreement upon an *Action Plan Format* as a standard guide for all task forces, contractors, and staff to facilitate the development of the individual Action Plans that will constitute the CCMP.
6. Agreement on an approach to financial planning, including convening of a task force of the Policy Committee to coordinate the CCMP Financial Plan. A CCMP Costing Project (see Part IV of this document) will directly contribute to this process in FY 1993.
7. Creation of a work scope for a project to result in a CCMP monitoring strategy (detailed in Part IV).

In total, these efforts address the *Management Conference Agreement* requirements for a CCMP which includes a financial plan, management alternatives development, and a monitoring program.

### ***Redirection of Program Activity***

The greatest challenges and strengths in meeting program commitments have changed little from those identified in the first year of work (see Publication GBNEP-5, pages 14-16). Most challenges result from the ambitious expectations of the program, the short time available for accomplishing these expectations, and the consensus approach required for the work of the Program to have lasting effect. The Program is quickly approaching a stage in which attitudes of citizens and government leaders will have a greater bearing on success than will factual findings or administrative procedures.

During FY 1992, the greatest departure from original plans have resulted from time extensions for individual projects. These delays have not affected the overall anticipated schedule for the CCMP, rather they relate to the characterization of the Bay's problems and the completeness of our understanding of these problems during early drafting of the CCMP. The Characterization Report is now expected to be delayed by at least six months beyond the original commitment in the *EPA/State Management Conference Agreement*.

Among the reasons for project delays are:

1. Delays by project Principal Investigators which result from slowness of agency responses to requests for data and information. Some agencies responses in supplying data were greater than six months.
2. Delays by project Principal Investigators resulting from logistical or technical problems encountered only after work began-- problems which could not have been anticipated in advance during project scheduling.
3. Delays resulting from lengthy review by the Management Conference. Review has delayed final publication of some characterization studies, but will not prevent the Management Conference from utilizing draft final reports during drafting of Action Plans.