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## I. Introduction

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The coming year will culminate five years of hard work by hundreds of individuals, each with an interest in the Galveston Bay ecosystem. Their interests range from economic (in the case of private industries and commercial fishing), to regulatory (for government agencies) and personal (the people who simply value and enjoy the Bay). Their work is establishment of a plan—the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, or CCMP—to govern our use of this resource well into the next century.

In five sections, this work plan describes how the drafting of the CCMP will be completed. First, this Introduction highlights some of the key work elements addressed by the Program. Second, a more detailed description of these work elements highlights accomplishments of Fiscal Year 1993 (September 1, 1992 through August 31, 1993; also see publication GBNEP-17). Also included in this section is a summary of Management Conference redirection of previous work plans. Third is a project-by-project summary of the 75 GBNEP initiatives begun to date to lead toward the comprehensive plan. Fourth is a description of projects proposed by the Management Conference for the coming Fiscal Year 1994 (September 1, 1993 through August 31, 1994). Fifth, and finally, is a statement of anticipated sources of funding for these projects during the coming year.

***Identification and Ranking of Priority Problems.*** (Complete) The GBNEP began its work by identifying the problems affecting Galveston Bay. The resulting *Priority Problems List* then served as a guide for funding a series of scientific projects designed to identify status, trends, and probable causes at the root of concerns about the Bay. During FY 1993, emphasis has been on revising our concept of these problems based on the findings of the scientific studies. Specifically, the Priority Problems List has been detailed in matrix form, and is being developed into a report and related series of fact sheets to succinctly summarize the large body of new knowledge about the Bay. In this way, the drafting of action plans for the CCMP can proceed with the best possible understanding of the "State of the Bay."

***Program Inventory.*** (Complete) In order to make the best possible use of existing programs in the CCMP, several projects were undertaken and completed to identify and describe these programs. The results of these projects continue to guide our planning effort. No new work under this element is necessary.

***Base Programs and "Action Now" Implementation.*** (Base Programs complete; "Action Now" ongoing). Base programs identified in the inventory were evaluated for effectiveness to determine possible CCMP initiatives. This was accomplished at two levels: in pilot phase for creation of two new Coastal Preserves in Galveston Bay, and bay-wide for use in the CCMP itself. A number of early actions are being taken to improve bay conditions, even prior to completion of the CCMP, and are described in detail.

***Data and Information Management System (DIMS).*** (Complete). Substantial work was accomplished to establish a permanent Galveston Bay Information

## Program Goals

The Galveston Bay Estuary System is a public asset of immense value and is worthy of preservation and improvement to realize its full potential in enriching the lives of the citizens of Texas and the United States. In developing goals for the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, consideration should be given to development of responsible, compatible uses of this resource with utmost respect for its natural biological systems. The challenge is to manage the human interaction with the bay, including municipal, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and recreational uses so that the utility and long-range value of this resource can be maximized. Accordingly, an important goal is to determine the capacity of the bay to accept and tolerate human interaction, e.g. pollutants, consistent with maintenance and improvement of its biological systems.

*Goal I. It shall be the long-term goal of the State of Texas to maintain and enhance the water quality in the Galveston Bay system, and to reduce and ultimately eliminate harm resulting from the entry of pollutants to the water and sediments, including harm resulting from the alteration of natural estuarine gradients.*

*Goal II. It shall be the long-term goal of the State of Texas to maintain and enhance the living resources in the Galveston Bay system, including commercial, recreational, and ecologically significant species populations, and also including the habitats upon which these species depend.*

*Goal III. It shall be the long-term goal of the State of Texas to prevent increases in human health risks associated with the Galveston Bay system, and to minimize and eventually eliminate human-induced health risks and losses to commerce and recreation due to harvest or contact restrictions.*

Center and to identify, describe, and acquire published resources and unpublished data sets concerning Galveston Bay. This effort helped supply the factual information necessary for comprehensive planning.

***Characterization of Historical Trends, Current Status, and Human Impacts on Galveston Bay.*** (Ongoing) The numerous scientific studies of the Bay are now culminating in drafting of the *Galveston Bay Environmental Characterization Report*. This report is being developed as a summary of ecological and other technical findings from the Galveston Bay characterization effort. The report is being written in plain English for managers, decision-makers and scientists. The primary goal of the report is to convey complete information about estuarine problems and related environmental status and trends for use in management planning. This effort was greatly facilitated by the convening of the Second State of the Bay Symposium, February 4-6, 1993. This major gathering of scientists, managers, and the public substantially advanced our understanding of Galveston Bay, and resulted in a published proceedings summarizing some 60 projects in the Bay.

***Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan.*** (Ongoing) This element is, of course, the ultimate goal of the GBNEP, and has occupied a substantial portion of staff and Management Conference member time. Some of the work accomplished or ongoing includes: drafting an "Issues and Alternatives" document, with full conference and public review; convening a CCMP work shop for the Management Committee and other key individuals; determining and applying criteria for ranking of the alternative initiatives identified; identifying monitoring needs; convening "focus groups" to encourage special involvement of industry and other groups in creating the Draft CCMP; compiling the Draft CCMP itself; and appointing and convening the Financial Planning Committee to begin creation of an implementation funding strategy.

Each of the above activities are described in more detail in Part II of this document. Overall, the GBNEP remains on schedule for achieving its goals.

