
**APPENDIX A.
PRIORITY PROBLEMS LIST**

Origin of the Priority Problems List

The Galveston Bay National Estuary Program is charged with developing a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan to recommend priority corrective actions to address the problems in Galveston Bay. The first step to accomplish this task has been to develop a consensus within the Management Conference concerning what these problems are, and how they rank in importance. This list has resulted from a ten month process that contained the following elements:

- * February, 1989- Approval by the Policy Committee of a Draft Priority Problems List based on the Governor's Supplemental Nomination of Galveston Bay as an Estuary of National Significance.
- * April, 1989- Two public meetings held to receive public input. Numerous comments received and incorporated.
- * July-October, 1989- Scientific/Technical Advisory Committee appoints Priority Problems subcommittee. Extensive deliberations concerning identity and rankings of problems result in modified Draft Priority Problems List.
- * September, 1989- Eight Galveston Bay Public Forum meetings held to receive public comment. Comments compiled by the Citizen's Advisory Steering Committee for recommendation to the Management Committee.
- * October, 1989- Management Committee reviews recommendations from Scientific/Technical Advisory Committee and Citizen's Advisory Steering Committee. Final integrated list is agreed upon for recommendation to the Policy Committee.
- * November, 1989- Policy Committee approves final Priority Problems List as guidance for projects leading to a CCMP. The List is to be reviewed annually to reflect our current knowledge of the estuary.

Purpose of the Priority Problems List

The problems identified are, by consensus, the most significant challenges facing the Galveston Bay National Estuary Program in accomplishing its goals of protecting and enhancing Galveston Bay.

This list is therefore intended to serve as a guide to target expenditure of program resources during conception and implementation of projects leading to a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan.

Within the List, the four major problems (identified by letters A -D) are ranked in order of importance and are considered to be clearly independent. The second order problems within each major problem (identified by number) area are interdependent and may contribute or interact with problems of equal or higher category.

A. REDUCTION/ALTERATION OF LIVING RESOURCES

1. Loss of Physical Habitat

- * wetlands and sea grasses
- * oyster reefs
- * shallow bay bottom (unvegetated)

2. Alteration of Salinity Gradients

- * impoundment, diversion, and interbasin transfer of fresh water inflow
- * bathymetric and circulatory changes (salinity intrusion)
- * unengaged inflows from rainfall in coastal watersheds

3. Alteration of Nutrient and Organic Loading

- * eutrophication and hypoxia
- * point and nonpoint sources

4. Bathymetric and Circulatory Changes

5. Land Subsidence and Sea Level Rise
6. Chemical and Pathogenic Contamination (biotic imparement)
 - * point and nonpoint sources
7. Increased Turbidity and Sedimentation

B. PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

1. Discharge of Pathogens to Bay Waters
 - * point and nonpoint sources
2. Chemical Contamination of Water, Sediments, and Living Organisms
 - * point and nonpoint sources
3. Restriction of Contact Recreation
 - * chemical and pathogenic contamination

C. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

1. Regulatory Problems
2. Fisheries Resource Depletion
3. Marine Debris

D. SHORELINE EROSION

1. Land Subsidence and Sea Level Rise
2. Bathymetric and Circulatory Changes
3. Loss of Buffer Vegetation (wetlands)
4. Use of Littoral Property