

Draft Agenda for the 12th State of the Bay Symposium: February 24-25, 2026

Day 1- Tuesday, February 24, 2026				
7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Registration			
8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Day One Opening Plenary Session (Exhibit Hall A) - Welcome by Galveston Bay Estuary Program Manager, Lisa M. Marshall - Address TBD - Panel: Water Rights (Texas Water Trade, TPWD) - Address by City Council Member District C, Abbie Kamin			
10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Morning Break - Opportunity to network and visit the exhibits and poster presentations (Exhibit Hall B)			
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session I			
	Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
	State of the Bay: Multiple Stressor Challenges and their Impacts on Galveston Bay Region and its Ecosystems	Legacy, Emerging Chemical and Biological Contaminants in Aquatic Ecosystems	Creating and Maintaining Strong Partnerships for Education and Engagement	Building Bird Habitats
	Impacts on Water and Sediment Quality <i>Hanadi Rifai, University of Houston</i> Ecosystem Protection and Preservation <i>Bob Stokes, Galveston Bay Foundation</i> Impacts on Ecosystems <i>Antoinetta Quigg or alternate, Texas A&M University Galveston</i> Opportunities for Ecosystem Resilience to Extreme Heat <i>Meredith Jennings or alternate, Houston Advanced Research Center</i> Flood and Flood Resilience <i>Tina Petersen or alternate, Harris County Flood Control District</i> Ecosystem Service Provisioning in Restored Salt Marshes: Changes Over Time <i>Anna Armitage, Texas A&M University Galveston</i>	Legacy, Emerging Chemical and Biological Contaminants in Aquatic Ecosystems <i>Antoinetta Quigg, Texas A&M University Galveston</i> <i>David Hala, Texas A&M University Galveston</i> <i>Karl Kaiser, Texas A&M University Galveston</i> <i>Ashley Ross, Texas A&M University Galveston</i>	Creating and Maintaining Strong Partnerships <i>Cindy Wilems, Galveston Bay Foundation</i> <i>Alicia Mein-Johnson, Harris County Precinct 3</i> Tools of Engagement Research-Based Strategies for Community Messaging, Outreach, and Engagement <i>Andrea Tantillo</i> Seeding Local Resilience: Lessons from Galveston Island <i>Arsum Pathak</i>	High Island Rookery Resilience and Enhancement: 7 Years Later <i>Pete Deichmann, Houston Audubon</i> Restoration and Community Engagement: The Wulfert Bird Nesting Habitat Project <i>Erin Hague, TetraTech</i> Building Resilience for Rookery Islands: Long-Term Waterbird Population Trends on North Deer Island <i>Tim Forrester, Audubon Texas</i> Enhancing Eastern Black Rail Habitat in Gulf Coast Marshes: The Role of Vegetation Management <i>Trevor Markwood, Texas A&M University</i>
12:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Luncheon (Exhibit Hall A), Keynote Speaker - Matt Aeberhard			
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session II			
	Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
	Collaborative Conservation Through Natural Resource Damage Assessments	Improving Water Quality in Galveston Bay with Healthy Soil and Green Infrastructure	Community Engagement with Birds	Oysters

	<p>Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration in Galveston Bay <i>Michael Cave, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i></p> <p>NRDA Sea Turtle Restoration on the Upper Texas Coast: Sea Turtle Nest Monitoring, Sea Turtle Rescue, Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Marine Debris Removal <i>Chris Marshall, Texas A&M University Galveston</i></p> <p>Construction and Monitoring of Dickinson Bay Bird Island 2 <i>Jeffrey Fato, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p> <p>Continued Placement of Beneficial Use Material at Pierce Marsh <i>Sally Clark, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p>	<p>Improving Water Quality in Galveston Bay with Healthy Soil and Green Infrastructure</p> <p><i>Charriss York, Texas A&M AgriLife</i></p> <p><i>Brian Koch, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</i></p> <p><i>Kelli Ondracek, City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department</i></p> <p><i>Brittani Flowers, Bayou Preservation Association</i></p> <p>Texas-Based Ecosystem Service Valuation for Benefit-Cost Analysis of Nature-Based Solutions <i>Michael Niebuhr, AgriLife</i></p>	<p>How we Help the Birds: A Look at Bird-Friendly Actions Taken by Community Members <i>Schylar Brown, Houston Audubon</i></p> <p>Filling in the Gaps: Using Houston Audubon Urban Bird Surveys to Improve the Quality of Community Science Datasets <i>Schylar Brown, Houston Audubon</i></p> <p>Where Birds Thrive, People Prosper: Creating Resilient Communities Through Bird City Texas Certification <i>Chloe Crumley Audubon Texas</i></p> <p>Beach Nesting Bird Conservation on the Upper Texas Coast: Stabilizing and Increasing Populations Through Habitat Protection, Population Monitoring, and Public Outreach <i>Sarah Belles, American Bird Conservancy</i></p>	<p>Management Strategies for Oyster Recovery and Fishery Sustainability in Galveston Bay <i>Christine Jensen, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i></p> <p>Lessons Learned from Adaptively Managing and Oyster Reef Impacted by Sedimentation <i>Kathy Sweezey, The Nature Conservancy</i></p> <p>The Galveston Bay Foundation's Oyster Shell Recycling Program: 14 Years of Growth and Future Goals <i>Shannon Batte, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p> <p>Sentinel Program to Track <i>Perkinsus marinus</i> in Oysters of Galveston Bay <i>George Guillen, University of Houston Clear Lake</i></p>
3:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	Poster Presentation Session and Afternoon Break (Exhibit Hall B)			
3:45 - 5:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session III			
	Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
	Panel: Caring for Trinity Bay: Building an Interagency Partnership to Evaluate and Remove Aging Oil & Gas Infrastructure	Contaminants Part I	Exploration Green: A Nature-Based Solution for Stormwater Management in Houston, TX	Land Conservation
	<p><i>D'Anne Stites, Texas General Land Office</i></p> <p><i>Brent Koza, Texas General Land Office</i></p> <p><i>Ryan Lytle, Texas General Land Office</i></p> <p><i>Texas Railroad Commission Representative, Texas Railroad Commission</i></p>	<p>Nano- and Microplastics in Marine Ecosystems: Sediment to Seafood</p> <p><i>Bryan Gahn, Texas A&M University Galveston</i></p> <p>Current State and Historic Trends in Persistent (PAHs, PCBs) and Emerging Pollutant (Nano(Micro) plastics of NMPs) Body-Burdens in Oysters and Fish from Galveston Bay <i>Astif Mortuza, Texas A&M University Galveston</i></p> <p>Establishing a</p>	<p><i>Christie Taylor, Texas A&M AgriLife and Exploration Green Conservancy</i></p> <p><i>Jennifer Morrow, Clear Lake City Water Authority</i></p> <p><i>Matt Forster, Clear Lake City Water Authority</i></p> <p><i>Representative from the LAN engineering team</i></p> <p><i>Rich Sommer, Exploration Green Conservancy</i></p>	<p>Land Protection Efforts in the Galveston Bay Watershed <i>Matt Singer, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p> <p>Land Acquisition for Habitat Conservation and Environmental Education <i>Savannah Horton, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i></p> <p>Armand Bayou Nature Center (Placeholder Title) <i>Timothy Pylate, Armand Bayou Nature Center</i></p> <p>CPC Acquisition <i>Mary Anne Piacentini or other, Coastal Prairie Conservancy</i></p>

		Research Framework and Baseline Conditions to Support Assessments of Cumulative Effects from Multiple Stressors in Galveston Bay Dolphins <i>Vanessa Mintzer, Galveston Bay Foundation</i>		
5:00 p.m.	Evening Reception (Room A4)			

Day 2- Wednesday, February 25, 2026				
7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Registration			
8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Day Two Opening Plenary Session (Exhibit Hall A) - Welcome by Galveston Bay Council Chair, Vance Darr - Address by City of Galveston Mayor, Craig Brown - Address by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Chairwoman, Brooke Paup - Presentation: Dr. Paul Montagna (Harte Research Institute)			
10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Morning Break - Opportunity to network and visit the exhibits and poster presentations (Exhibit Hall B)			
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session IV			
	Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
	Living Shorelines in the Galveston Bay System: Status, Considerations, and Long-Term Results	Panel: Watershed-Based Planning and Implementation	eDNA Biomonitoring in Galveston Bay	Flora and Fauna of Galveston Bay
	Living Shorelines in the Galveston Bay System: Status, Considerations, and Long-Term Results <i>Jim Dobberstine, Lee College</i> <i>Cindy Howard, University of Houston Clear Lake</i> <i>Jeffrey Fato, Galveston Bay Foundation</i>	Panel: Watershed-Based Planning and Implementation <i>Steven Johnston, Houston-Galveston Area Council</i> <i>Rachel Windham, Houston-Galveston Area Council</i> <i>Celina Gauthier Lowry, Texas A&M AgriLife</i> <i>Lucas F. Gregory, Texas Water Resources Institute</i> <i>Natasha Zarnstorff, Galveston Bay Foundation</i> <i>Nicole Hall, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i>	eDNA Biomonitoring in Galveston Bay <i>Yasmina Shah Esmaeili, Texas A&M University Galveston</i> <i>Sheila Kitchen, Texas A&M University Galveston</i> <i>Guilherme Corte, Texas A&M University Galveston</i> <i>Jaelyn Rodriguez, Texas A&M University Galveston</i> <i>Nicholas Versfelt, Texas A&M University Galveston</i>	Morphometrics, Population Structure, and Spatial Distribution of Diamondback Terrapin in Texas Estuaries <i>Mandi Gordon, University of Houston Clear Lake</i> Seagrass Community in West Bay and Christmas Bay: 2016 - 2024 <i>Laura Ryckman, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i> Evaluation of Microplastic Loading in Marsh Habitats Associated with Texas Diamondback Terrapins (<i>Malaclemys terrapin littoralis</i>) <i>Gabrielle Hammerbach, University of Houston Clear Lake</i> Green Sea Turtle Tracking Project <i>TBD</i>
12:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Luncheon (Exhibit Hall A), Keynote Speaker - Marcus Eriksen			

1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session V			
	Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
	Water and Sediment Quality Monitoring and Management	Community-Based Water Quality Initiatives	Data/Modeling	Historic and Future Bird Trends
	<p>Coastal Groundwater Dynamics in Galveston Bay <i>Dini Adyasari, Texas A&M University Galveston</i></p> <p>Application of Matrix-Assisted Laser Desorption/Ionization Time-of-Flight Mass Spec to Detect the Source of Enterococcus Contamination of Mustang Bayou <i>Chris Howard, University of Houston Clear Lake</i></p> <p>Targeted Bacteria Monitoring: A Holistic Overview of the Houston-Galveston Area Council's Projects <i>Cornell Evans, Houston-Galveston Area Council</i></p> <p>Developing a TMDL for a Stormwater-dominated Recreational Beach <i>Sam Bickley, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i></p>	<p>Clean Coast Texas: Providing Coastal Communities with Technical Assistance to Protect and Restore Water Quality <i>Scott Jones, Texas A&M AgriLife</i></p> <p>Enhancing On-Site Sewage Facility Outreach and Improvements on a Community Level with GIS-Based Tools and Local Partners <i>Kendall Guidroz, Houston-Galveston Area Council</i></p> <p>Public Awareness of Waterborne Pathogen Risk from Recreational Exposure: Insights from Galveston Beach Survey <i>Ashley Ross, Texas A&M University Galveston</i></p> <p>Water Quality, Debris, and Citizen Scientists in Galveston Bay <i>Natasha Zarnstorff, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p>	<p>Texas Clean Rivers Program Regional Water Resources Information Map <i>Jenny Oakley, Houston-Galveston Area Council</i></p> <p>Galveston Bay Regional Monitoring Database: What Can It Do For You? <i>Ryan Bare, Houston Advanced Research Center</i></p> <p>Next Steps in Estuarine Habitat Suitability Modeling in Galveston Bay: Integrating Process-Based and Data Driven Approaches <i>Ryan Hostak, TetraTech</i></p> <p>Land Cover Forecasting for the HGAC Region using TerrSet <i>Megha Shrestha, Houston-Galveston Area Council</i></p> <p>Leveraging the Texas Litter Database for Citizen Science and Watershed Stewardship <i>Kirsten Sorensen, Keep Texas Beautiful</i></p>	<p>Enhancing Habitat and Birdlife on the Bolivar Peninsula: A Historical Perspective <i>Wyatt Egelhoff, Houston Audubon</i></p> <p>Avian Conservation Initiatives at the Houston Zoo: Building for a Sustainable Future in Zoological Aviculture Programs and Global Conservation <i>Ric Urban, Houston Zoo</i></p> <p>60 Years of Avian Surveillance Within Harris County Mosquito and Vector Control <i>Elise Nishikawa, Harris County Mosquito and Vector Control</i></p> <p>Roseate Spoonbill in Galveston Bay: Apparent Trends in Breeding Population <i>Wyatt Egelhoff, Houston Audubon</i></p> <p>The State of the Attwater's Prairie Chicken (<i>Tympanuchus cupido attwateri</i>) in Texas and the AZA SAFE Conservation Initiative <i>Kyle McAuliffe, Houston Zoo</i></p>
3:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	Poster Presentation Session and Afternoon Break (Exhibit Hall B)			
3:45 - 5:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session VI			
	Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
	Habitat Restoration and Enhancement	Contaminants Part II	Next Generation Earth System Science: A Framework for Transdisciplinary Collaboration Among Research, Education, and Outreach	Dolphins

	<p>Native Plant Program for Lower Galveston Bay Watershed <i>Ricci Simmons, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p> <p>Construction and Monitoring of Dollar Bay-Moses Lake Marsh Terraces <i>Jeffrey Fato, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p> <p>An Upstream Piece of Galveston Bay's Ecosystem: Findings from an Urban Park's Native Habitat Restoration <i>Courtney Hall, Memorial Park Conservancy</i></p> <p>Building Ecological Resilience Through Urban Restoration and Community Science at the Houston Arboretum & Nature Center <i>Nova Morales, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center</i></p>	<p>A Five-Year Observation on the Spatial and Temporal Distributions of PFAS in Galveston Bay, TX, USA <i>Yina Liu, Texas A&M University Galveston</i></p> <p>PFAS in Texas and Galveston Bay Waters: Where are we Now? <i>Vanessa Hulse, Houston Advanced Research Center</i></p> <p>Applied Time Series Analyses (2000–2017) Of Vibrio Vulnificus And Vibrio Parahaemolyticus (Pathogenic And Non-Pathogenic Strains) In The Eastern Oyster, Crassostrea Virginica <i>Antoinetta Quigg, Texas A&M University Galveston</i></p> <p>Dioxin and Polychlorinated Biphenyls: Lessons Learned from two Decades of Monitoring, Data Analytics, and Modeling <i>Hanadi Rifai</i></p>	<p>Next Generation Earth System Science: A Framework for Transdisciplinary Collaboration Among Research, Education, and Outreach</p> <p><i>Sandra Metoyer, University of Houston Clear Lake</i></p> <p><i>Wendy Reistle, University of Houston Clear Lake</i></p> <p><i>Debbie Bush, University of Houston Clear Lake</i></p>	<p>From Flood to Lesion: Bottlenose Dolphins as Early Indicators of Estuarine Change <i>Lola Renauer, University of South Carolina</i></p> <p>Galveston Bay's Urban Bottlenose Dolphins: Updates on Residency and Threat Evaluation <i>Melanie Rogers, University of Houston Clear Lake</i></p> <p>Common Bottlenose Dolphins (Tursiops truncatus) as Bioindicators of Inorganic Chemical Pollution Along the Galveston Coast <i>Madison Hallmark, Texas A&M University Corpus Christi</i></p> <p>Land-Based Dolphin Surveys Conducted by Citizen Scientists: What we have Learned about Dolphin-Fisher Interactions at Seawolf Park <i>Alyssa Quackenbush, Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p>
5:15 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Post-Symposium Sessions			
	Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2		
	<p>Wetland Connections Workshop</p> <p><i>Galveston Bay Foundation</i></p>	<p>NRDA Public Meeting</p>		