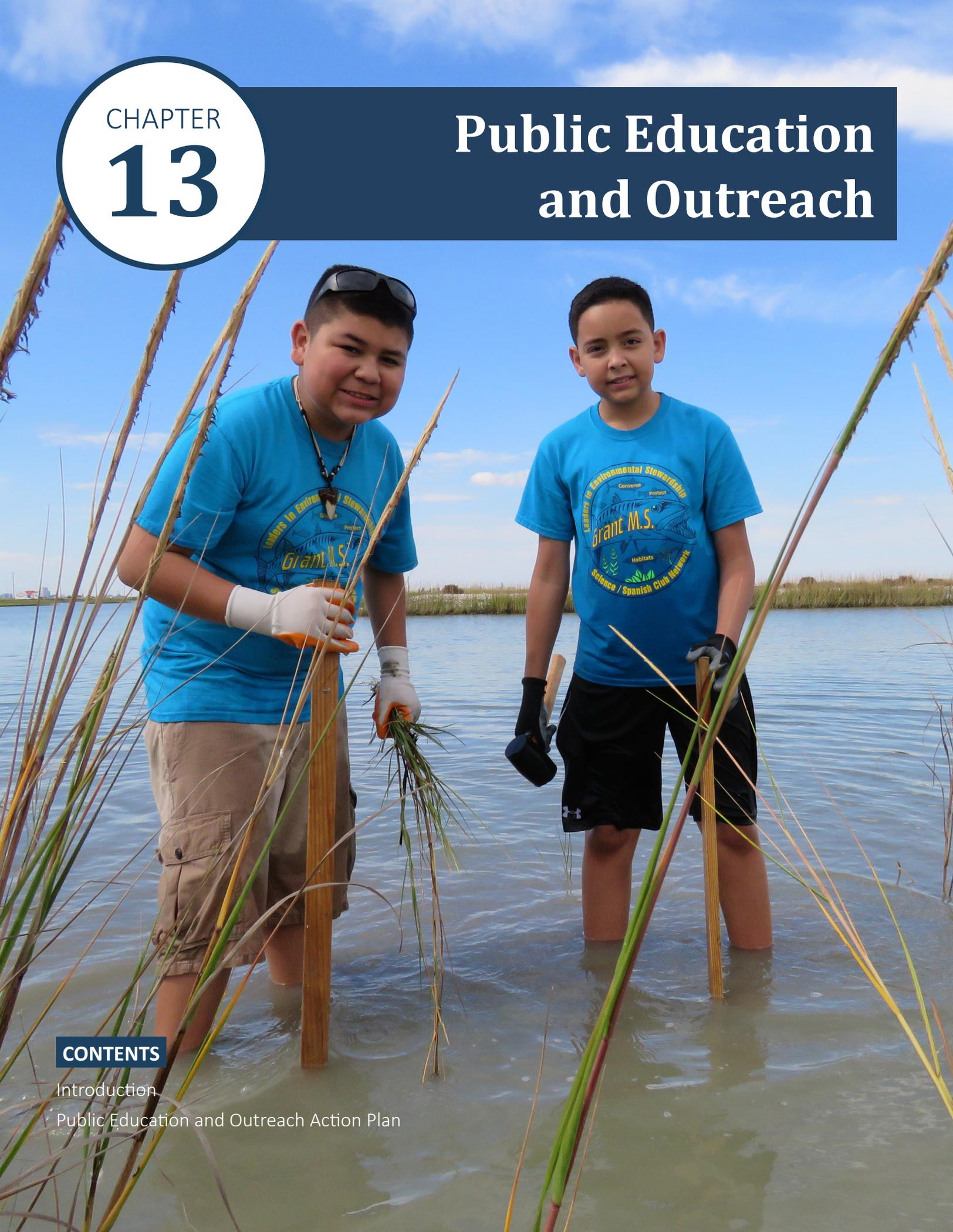


CHAPTER

13

Public Education and Outreach



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Introduction

Public Education and Outreach Action Plan

Introduction

One of the most important goals of the Bays Plan is to educate citizens about the ecology of the bay system, its many environmental and economic values, and how an individual can make a positive difference to ensure its long-term health. Helping residents and visitors to understand the complex issues concerning bay resource management will be a priority. In addition to understanding how the bay system functions, it is important that citizens develop a sound appreciation for the significant value and economic impact derived from the bay resources.

The Environmental Education and Outreach component of the 2017 Bays Plan is designed to: (1) raise the public's environmental awareness; (2) foster community stewardship of bay resources; and (3) increase individual involvement in bay resource management issues. To accomplish this, the CBBEP conducts outreach activities that target culturally diverse audiences of environmental professionals, resource users, and the general public. Education and outreach incorporates science-based content into a range of programs and methodologies that are systematically tailored to key audiences around priority coastal resource issues. Programs have a strong emphasis on the science, research, and monitoring activities supported by the CBBEP and its partners and utilize a locally focused approach to foster stewardship.

The CBBEP implements a comprehensive regional public outreach strategy to reach people of all ages. The strategy focuses on effective use of media (particularly social media), development of user-friendly educational materials (in languages other than English when necessary), and establishment of an electronic clearinghouse on bay-related information. These and other tools are developed and refined with strong emphasis given to the science which supports the actions of the Bays Plan. Target audiences for the education and outreach strategies listed above include the general public, recreational users, government officials, and commerce/industry.

The Coastal Bend is fortunate to have a number of recurring events and festivals that focus on educating the public about the value of coastal resources and how to be better stewards of these resources. Implementation of these festivals and events requires the continued support of numerous partners and volunteers. The cornerstone of these events is the 'Earth Day – Bay Day' celebration hosted annually in Corpus Christi, Texas by the Coastal Bend



ACCOMPLISHMENT: Coastal Issue Forums

The Coastal Bend Bays Foundation (CBBF) is a public interest organization dedicated to the conservation of freshwater and coastal natural resources for current and future generations through consensus, facilitation, communication, advocacy, research and education. The CBBF strives to bring together diverse interests to achieve the Coastal Bend's environmental and economic objectives.

Every month, the CBBF hosts a public forum on regional resource management issues. The forums began in 1991 and have proven to be very popular with local citizens. They are designed to bring together diverse community interests to identify problems and seek solutions.

Guest speakers are natural resource experts, government officials, and industry representatives who present information on a range of issues. Past forums have focused on topics like healthy fisheries, heavy metals in drinking water, endangered species protection, climate change, wind farms, land use planning, freshwater inflows, local industry, and bay debris. The presentations allow visitors to interact with and learn from experts, and most importantly, they provide an opportunity for dialogue between competing user groups.

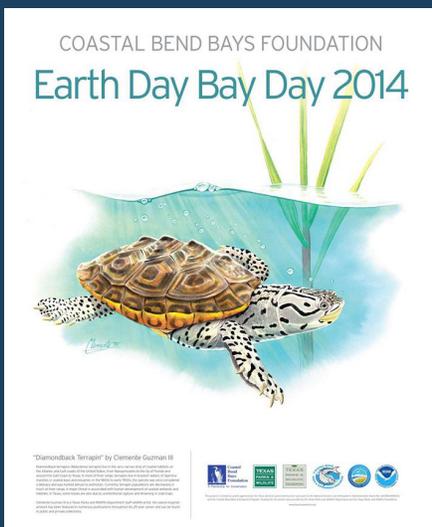
◀ **INVOLVING THE PUBLIC IN RESTORATION** activities is an important component of the CBBEP Public Education and Outreach Program. (Photo by the CBBEP)



ACCOMPLISHMENT: Earth Day - Bay Day

Presented by local nonprofit, the Coastal Bend Bays Foundation (CBBF), Earth Day - Bay Day has become one of the City of Corpus Christi's best attended and most enjoyably educational family events. This free event provides education, entertainment, and resources to the public to promote awareness and inspire conservation for our coastal wildlife and environments.

Each year, the day-long festival offers an array of family-friendly activities that focus on connecting people to nature, such as native animal exhibits, a petting zoo, birds of prey exhibitions, and a catch-and-release fish pond. The CBBF has hosted Earth Day - Bay Day annually since 1999. Nearly 10,000 visitors attend annually to see nearly 100 exhibitors, presenters, and vendors at the event.

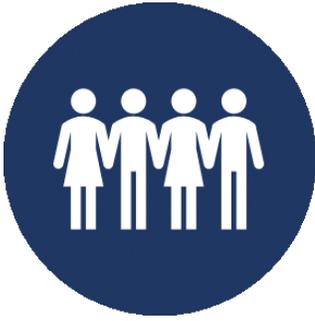


EARTH DAY - BAY DAY posters feature works by a different local artist each year.

Bays Foundation (CBBF), a local nonprofit organization dedicated to the health and productivity of the local bays and estuaries. The event educates thousands of residents and visitors to the Coastal Bend on the importance of environmental stewardship and appreciation for our coastal natural resources - all while having fun. Dozens of local, regional, and state organizations, businesses, and government agencies join CBBF to provide free education, entertainment, and resources to the public to promote awareness and inspire conservation for our coastal wildlife and environments. The CBBEP is a proud supporter of Earth Day - Bay Day, as well as several other local events and educational festivals, such as the Hummerbird Festival (Rockport, Texas) and the Whooping Crane Festival (Port Aransas, Texas)

Other actions of the Bays Plan focus on how best to achieve stewardship through individual involvement and responsibility for sound environmental practices. The CBBEP and its local partners provide opportunities for the general public, including youth, to volunteer for stewardship-oriented activities like clean-up events and marsh grass planting days. Personal involvement with nature in the form of stewardship projects will not only benefit the environment but the individual as well. Coupled with this is the CBBEP's support for environmental recognition programs, with awards and public recognition given to those individuals and groups who have demonstrated environmental leadership in the Coastal Bend.

By working to promote public/private partnerships in this fashion, the Bays Plan can achieve its educational goals more quickly and with more lasting success. However, there will always be the need for continued dialogue between competing user groups, as well as continued opportunities for the public to learn about current management issues. A relaxed, public forum allows for individual input into the public policy debate, and the CBBF has served such a function for many years by hosting monthly 'Public Issue Forums.' The Bays Plan calls for continued support for the CBBF's efforts to host Forums that provide information about resource management issues to the public. The Bays Plans also calls for support of other types of meetings that are designed to provide an opportunity for citizens to gain knowledge about and participate in the public policy debate (e.g., scientific meetings, regulatory meetings, civic organization meetings). This is increasingly important as the Coastal Bend prepares itself for ever-increasing numbers of people wanting to make use of the bays and estuaries. Minimizing conflict through informed discussion will help achieve the overall objective of ensuring the public's safety, health, and enjoyment of our bays and estuaries.



PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Action Plan

GOAL

Increase public understanding and stewardship of bay resources.

OBJECTIVE

PEO 1: Implement an innovative public education and outreach strategy to improve understanding and stewardship of bay resources.

ACTIONS

- PEO 1.1: Develop and distribute information and outreach materials for targeted audiences.
- PEO 1.2: Support events that focus attention on bay resources and uses.
- PEO 1.3: Promote public participation in stewardship activities.
- PEO 1.4: Support public meetings that improve understanding and stewardship of bay resources.
- PEO 1.5: Promote recognition of individuals and programs that protect our bays and estuaries.



Public Education and Outreach 1.1

Develop and distribute information and outreach materials for targeted audiences.

The future of the Coastal Bend relies on a well-educated public to be wise stewards of the environment that sustains us, our families and communities, and future generations. CBBEP implements a comprehensive regional outreach strategy to reach people of all ages. Target audiences for education and outreach materials include the general public, recreational users, government officials, and commerce/industry. The regional outreach strategy employed by CBBEP includes effective use of the media, development of user-friendly educational materials, and maintenance of an electronic clearinghouse on bay-related resource information. These and other tools will be developed and refined with strong emphasis given to the science which supports the actions of the Bays Plan.

STEP 1:

Implement a variety of innovative outreach techniques to provide information to targeted audiences. Techniques may include, but are not limited to, the use of social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram), videos (YouTube), newsletters, project updates, public service announcements, website, press releases, project signage, and collateral (e.g., brochures, fact sheets, stickers). Languages other than English will be used when appropriate.

STEP 2:

Organize and maintain electronic clearinghouse on bay-related resources.

STEP 3:

Organize and maintain contact list for distribution of education and outreach materials.

STEP 4:

Support the implementation of the "Port Industries of Corpus Christi's Community Survey." Use survey results to identify needs and opportunities for environmental education and outreach in the Coastal Bend.

STATUS



UNDERWAY: The CBBEP maintains current social media accounts and websites, utilizes email marketing services for maintaining a contact list and distribution of information, produces educational project signage at public access locations where appropriate, and maintains a current collection of collateral for distribution by the CBBEP as well as other stakeholders. The CBBEP organizes and maintains a database on our website of all final reports for projects funded by the CBBEP, as well as other documents relevant to current issues or topics of concern in our bays and estuaries. The CBBEP continues to support the Port Industries of Corpus Christi's Community Survey conducted biennially.

TIMEFRAME



2017-2037: Steps will be implemented, as needed, throughout the applicable life of this plan.

COST



ESTIMATED COST: \$

POTENTIAL FUNDING: CBBEP Programmatic funds (EPA 320 funds, TCEQ, Local funds); PICC; Private industry; Foundations; RESTORE Act; NRDA; NFWF

PARTNERS



LEAD: Steps 1-3 = CBBEP; Step 4 = CBBEP, PICC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: CBBF; HRI; Local governments (i.e., cities and counties); Local media outlets (e.g., television, newspapers, radio); MANERR; TAMUCC; Texas Sea Grant; TPWD; TSA; USFWS; UTMSI

PERFORMANCE METRICS



1. Social media statistics (e.g., number of “Likes,” “Reach” statistic for individual posts, number of subscribers/followers).
2. Number of visitors to CBBEP website.
3. Amount of collateral distributed.
4. Number of public surveys completed.



Public Education and Outreach 1.2

Support events that focus attention on bay resources and uses.

One of the most important goals of the Bays Plan is to educate citizens about the ecology of the bay system, its many environmental and economic values, and how an individual can make a positive difference to ensure its long-term health. The Coastal Bend is fortunate to have a number of recurring events and festivals that focus on educating the public about the value of coastal resources and how to be better stewards of these resources. Implementation of these festivals and events requires the continued support of numerous partners and volunteers.

STEP 1:

Assist with the planning, organization, and implementation of Earth Day – Bay Day, an annual festival hosted by CBBF that focuses attention on coastal resources by providing the appropriate mix of education, entertainment, and bay-related, hands-on fun.

STEP 2:

Support partner efforts to host various community events and educational festivals that enhance awareness of the value of coastal resources (e.g., Hummerbird Festival, Whooping Crane Festival).

STATUS



UNDERWAY: The CBBEP annually assists with the planning, organization, and implementation of Earth Day-Bay Day, as well as supports other annual events such as CCA, DU, and SEA banquets, National Estuaries Day celebrations, and Hummerbird and Whooping Crane festivals.

TIMEFRAME



2017-2037: Steps will be implemented as events and festivals occur, which is often on an annual basis.

COST



ESTIMATED COST: \$

POTENTIAL FUNDING: CBBEP Programmatic funds (TCEQ, Local funds); Local governments (e.g., City of Corpus Christi); Foundations (e.g., The Trull Foundation); Private industry (e.g., PICC)

PARTNERS



LEAD: CBBEP; CBBF

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: City of Corpus Christi; Local governments; Chambers of Commerce; Conservation organizations (e.g., CCA; DU; SEA); MANERR; Resource agencies (e.g., TGLO, TPWD, USFWS); Universities (e.g., HRI, TAMUCC, UTMSI)

PERFORMANCE METRICS



1. Number of partner festivals/celebrations supported by CBBEP.
2. Number of attendees at festivals/celebrations supported by CBBEP.
3. Number of volunteers involved in festivals/celebrations supported by CBBEP.
4. Number of attendees at Earth Day – Bay Day.
5. Number of volunteers participating in Earth Day – Bay Day.



Public Education and Outreach 1.3

Promote public participation in stewardship activities.

CBBEP and its local partners promote enhanced conservation of coastal resources by providing opportunities for the general public to participate personally in stewardship-oriented projects. Previous opportunities have included volunteer involvement in marsh and oyster restoration activities and participation in clean-up events at beaches and bay shorelines. Personal involvement with nature will in the form of stewardship projects benefits the individual as well as aiding in species and ecosystem survival.

STEP 1:

Support efforts to involve volunteers in clean-up events of beaches and bay shorelines.

STEP 2:

Support efforts to involve volunteers in restoration activities, such as planting marsh grass and bagging oyster shells.

STATUS



UNDERWAY: The CBBEP plans, organizes and implements an annual Rookery Island Clean Up, and supports the CBBF in implementation of the fall and spring Adopt a Beach Clean Ups, as well as marsh planting events. The CBBEP also hosts industry and other volunteer groups at the Nueces Delta Preserve for volunteer work and stewardship building activities.

TIMEFRAME



2017-2037: Steps will be implemented as clean-up events and restoration activities occur. Clean-up events typically occur on at least an annual basis, while the schedule for restoration activities is less predictable due to the dependency on available funds.

COST



ESTIMATED COST: \$

POTENTIAL FUNDING: CBBEP Programmatic funds (EPA 320 funds, TCEQ, Local funds); CMP; Private industry (e.g., Citgo); Foundations; NRDA; NFWF; RESTORE Act

PARTNERS



LEAD: CBBEP

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: CBBF; CCA; MANERR; TAMUCC; TGLO; TNC; TPWD; Conservation organizations (e.g., Sierra Club, Surfrider Foundation); Industry (e.g., Citgo)

PERFORMANCE METRICS



1. Number of volunteers participating in clean-up events.
2. Pounds of trash collected during clean-up events.
3. Number of volunteers participating in restoration projects.
4. Acres planted with marsh grass by volunteers.
5. Acres of oyster reef restored through volunteer assistance.



Public Education and Outreach 1.4

Support public meetings that improve understanding and stewardship of bay resources.

As the population in the Texas Coastal Bend region continues to grow, there will be greater utilization and demand for natural resources. In order to achieve effective management and to minimize conflicts between user groups, public participation in the decision-making process is necessary. There must be opportunities for the public to learn about current management issues, as well as a chance for dialogue between competing user groups. Public forums and meetings allow citizens to learn information about coastal resource management issues, while also providing the opportunity to provide input into the public policy debate.

STEP 1:

Coordinate and implement “Coastal Issue Forums” and other forums as needed on regional resource management issues.

STEP 2:

Support efforts to host scientific meetings (e.g., Texas Bays and Estuaries Meeting) that promote the sharing of scientific findings related to Texas coastal resources.

STEP 3:

Promote participation in other public meetings designed to promote citizen involvement in the management and policy debates (i.e., regulatory meetings).

STEP 4:

Enhance public understanding of resource management and policy issues by providing presentations to local civic organizations (e.g., Rotary Club).

STATUS



UNDERWAY: The CBBEP will continue to support the CBBF and monthly Coastal Issue Forums, scientific meetings, and workshops that promote the sharing of scientific findings related to Texas coastal resources (e.g., Texas Bays & Estuaries Meeting). CBBEP will also continue to promote participation in public meetings such as the Nueces Estuary Advisory Committee, City Councils, and TMDL-related implementation planning or watershed protection planning (e.g., Oso Creek and Bay Coordination Committee; Cole and Ropes Park Coordination Committee, and Lower Nueces River Watershed Protection Plan). Finally, CBBEP provides presentations on current issues and topics of concern, as well as success stories and general environmental stewardship to local organizations such as Rotary and World Affairs Council.

TIMEFRAME



2017-2037: Forums and meetings will take place repeatedly throughout the applicable life of this plan – some will be repeated on a monthly or annual basis, while others will be implemented irregularly.

COST



ESTIMATED COST: \$

POTENTIAL FUNDING: CBBEP Programmatic funds (EPA 320 funds, TCEQ, Local funds); NFWF; NRDA; RESTORE Act

PARTNERS



LEAD: Step 1 = CBBF, CBBEP; Steps 2-4 = CBBEP

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Civic organizations (e.g., Rotary Club, Kiwanis); MANERR; Resource agencies (e.g., TCEQ, TPWD, TSSWCB, USFWS); Universities (e.g., HRI, TAMUCC, UTMSI)

PERFORMANCE METRICS



1. Number of public forums and meetings supported by CBBEP resources.
2. Number of attendees at public forums and meetings supported by CBBEP resources.
3. Number of presentations provided by CBBEP staff to local civic organizations.



Public Education and Outreach 1.5

Promote recognition of individuals and programs that protect our bays and estuaries.

Recognition programs, with appropriate awards and public recognition given to those individuals and groups who have demonstrated environmental leadership, will help promote enhanced stewardship of our coastal resources.

STEP 1:

Support recognition programs that acknowledge and award individuals and programs that demonstrate environmental leadership in the Coastal Bend region (e.g., CBBF Annual Conservation & Environmental Awards Banquet; CCA Banquet; DU Banquet).

STATUS



UNDERWAY: The CBBEP annually assists with the planning, organization, and implementation of the CBBF Conservation & Environmental Awards Banquet, as well as supports other annual events such as CCA, DU, and SEA banquets where individuals and programs are awarded.

TIMEFRAME



2017-2037: Support for recognition events will be provided annually throughout the applicable life of this plan.

COST



ESTIMATED COST: \$
POTENTIAL FUNDING: CBBF; CCA; DU; SEA

PARTNERS



LEAD: CBBEP
POTENTIAL PARTNERS: CBBF; CCA; MANERR; TAMUCC; TGLO; TNC; TPWD; Conservation organizations (e.g., Sierra Club, Surfrider Foundation); Industry (e.g., Citgo)

PERFORMANCE METRICS



1. Number of awards given to individuals and programs for environmental leadership.