



Deer Park Community Advisory Council

Summary of February 22, 2016 Meeting

Galveston Bay Receives “C” in Report Card Presented to DPCAC

Anja Borski of the Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF) returned to the Deer Park Community Advisory Council (DPCAC) to present GBF’s first Galveston Bay Report Card. She had solicited input from DPCAC community and industry members in late 2014, and did so at this meeting for the second edition of what is to be an annual evaluation of the health of the bay. Overall, the bay received a “C” because it is faring well despite significant challenges such as habitat and shellfish declines, pollution, and the impacts of coastal change.

The report was prepared by the Galveston Bay Foundation, a nonprofit established in 1987 to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources of the Galveston Bay estuarine system and its tributaries. Galveston Bay is the largest bay in Texas and provides the region numerous economic and ecosystem benefits. For example, one-third of the state’s commercial fishing revenue and half of the recreational fishing revenue come from Galveston Bay.

Borski said that Galveston Bay actually starts in our own backyards. Products that we use on our yards and in our gardens can be washed down storm drains during rainfall events and will eventually drain into Galveston Bay. Half of Texas’ population lives in the Galveston Bay watershed, the area of land whose streams and rivers all drain into this bay. The Galveston Bay watershed includes the Trinity River and thus begins in the Fort Worth and Dallas areas.

The grading system is like that of a traditional academic report card with an “A” to “F” grading system. However, indicators of bay health could receive an “I” grade because the public had high interest in the topic, but the available data were insufficient or outdated or. The bay received a B for Water Quality, C’s for Coastal Change and Human Health Risks, and D’s for Wildlife, Pollution Events and Sources, and Habitat. Additional information may be found in the slides. The entire report is posted at www.GalvBayGrade.org. It may also be found by going to the Galveston Bay Foundation general website at www.galvbay.org.

Supported by a grant from the Houston Endowment, and implemented by GBF and Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC), the report card's goal is to engage community members in meaningful discussion about Bay health topics. GBF has received a grant from the EPA to translate the next report card into Spanish.

Borski emphasized that everyone could help improve Galveston Bay by using less fertilizer, planting rain gardens, picking up pet waste, and protecting habitats such as wetlands and forests. Also, people can volunteer to restore habitats, clean up around the bay, and let local and state officials know that cleaning up the bay is important to them. Galveston Bay needs to remain brackish for habitats to survive, but that can only happen if fresh water flow to the Bay is adequate.

DPCAC will meet again on Mon. Mar. 28 to hear DPCAC plants describe their community relations programs. Visitors are welcome! For details about the 6 p.m. meeting, contact facilitator Diane Sheridan at 281-326-5253. Visit www.deerparkcac.org to read recent meeting topics, find links to useful resources on emergency communications and the environment, see lists of DPCAC community and plant members, and read our mission and purpose statements.