

Galveston Bay Foundation

GBF GAZETTE

Volume 20, Issue 1

Q1 Gazette

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TRASH BASH 2010

Saturday, March 27
Time: 8:30 - 11:30 am
Lunch and Door Prizes
11:30 am
Location: Sims Bayou
Glenbrook Park, 8201
North Bayou Drive

Please join GBF and thousands of other volunteers to do our part in cleaning up the environment, and participate in the largest statewide event to educate the public about the importance of our water resources.

Please contact GBF to register and to receive directions and your site assignment,
jmintzer@galvbay.org or
281.332.3381 X 207.

"Clean it like you mean it!"

GBF Accepts Presidential Award for Contributions at North Deer Island

On December 2, 2009, the North Deer Island Protection Team received the Coastal America Partnership Award, the only environmental award of its kind given by the President of the United States, for its efforts to protect the most important colonial water bird rookery on the upper Texas coast, North Deer Island.

The project spanned over nine years and protected 1.7 miles of North Deer Island's rapidly eroding shoreline. Erosion was destroying highly productive habitat for up to 30,000 nesting pairs of birds using this island, including the brown pelican, shown in the picture above, and two priority-bird species—the threatened reddish egret and white-faced ibis—plus 16 other bird species on the Audubon Society's bird island sanctuary.

Partners barged in 24,100 tons from a rock quarry in Missouri, down the Mississippi River and the Intracoastal Waterway, to create 7,100 feet of stone breakwater and armored shoreline. The planning, engineering, and construction costs for the eight-year endeavor were over \$3.2 million.

The island's marshes provide valuable nursery habitat for shrimp, redfish, and other important fish species.

The Coastal America Awards Program recognizes outstanding efforts and excellence in leadership for protecting, preserving and restoring the nation's coastal resources and ecosystems. Coastal America Awards have been presented annually since 1997.

GBF was a partner on the project along with Audubon Texas, NRG Energy, EPA Gulf of Mexico Program, EPA Region-6, Houston Audubon Society, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality--Galveston Bay Estuary Program, Texas General Land Office, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



GBF President, Bob Stokes, accepts the award from Eileen Sobeck, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, US Department of Interior.

Galveston Bay Foundation

News from the President

By Bob Stokes

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TMDL Outreach Specialist
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I am pleased to tell you that we have completed another successful year at the Galveston Bay Foundation. We now enter our twenty-third year in existence, having been formed in 1987. A visionary group of concerned citizens came together in 1987 because they believed it was important to preserve and protect this great bay that so many cared about. They gave us our start and launched us towards an admirable mission, but ultimately, we wouldn't still be here today without the support of our members, donors, volunteers, and friends. And for that I thank you. As a staff, we work hard every day to make you proud of the work GBF does and we look forward to another strong year ahead of us.

We've printed a list of our 2009 donors near the back of this edition of the Gazette. Please be sure to take a look at this group. Although our average donation was down slightly in 2009, no doubt due to the economic conditions that surround us, we managed to grow our number of donors as compared to 2008. We are always working to grow our group of supporters, so please help us spread the word to friends and colleagues! But in addition to donors, we're also fortunate to have a dedicated group of volunteers who support the work of the Galveston Bay Foundation. This list is too numerous to print, but we hosted over 1200 volunteers in 2009. The activities they engaged in ranged from serving on our board to staffing a GBF table at one of the many events we attend, to planting a stem of marsh grass during Marsh Mania at one of our many restoration sites. We truly could not accomplish a fraction of what we accomplish without our volunteers!

Looking forward in 2010, we will continue our many established and well know projects and events including Marsh Mania and Bay Day. We will continue with our large scale restoration projects and our invasive species re-

moval of Brazilian peppertree on Galveston Island. We will work with a whole new batch of students to create mini-marsh nurseries at their middle schools through "Get Hip to Habitat." But we will also look for new projects to implement.

One area where this is evident is our advocacy work. We have put more staff focus on our advocacy efforts over the last year or so. We continue to work with the EPA and Harris County to make sure the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site is cleaned up as quickly as possible. Scott Jones, our environmental policy and outreach specialist, has made dozens and dozens of presentations about the need to maintain freshwater inflows into Galveston Bay. He also continues to work with a group of stakeholders who are determining how much freshwater Galveston Bay needs over time to maintain its productivity. One of our newest staff members, Lisa Miller-Marshall, is working to create an implementation plan for reducing bacteria in the oyster waters of Galveston Bay. She just completed a public meeting with a room packed full of interested citizens who want to help with the process.

As we move into the New Year, please be sure to let us know your thoughts. We truly appreciate your support as a member, volunteer, or friend, but we would also be glad to hear your thoughts. Just recently, we heard from a member in Anahuac who asked us to support the Texas Parks & Wildlife Crab Trap removal there. We wound up lending staff and volunteer support to the effort and, working with two local game wardens, removed 175 crab traps from Trinity Bay! But regardless of whether you contact us directly, I'd like to say thank you one more time. Thanks again for your support of our efforts to preserve, protect, and enhance Galveston Bay.



GBF is a 501(c)(3) organization affiliated with EarthShare of Texas and with Restore America's Estuaries.

Total Maximum Daily Loads Implementation Plan

Oyster fisheries in Galveston Bay produce more oysters than any single water body in the United States, in fact, more than the combined production of both Louisiana and Washington, making them important commercially to the area. In addition, oysters serve an important ecological role as filter feeders in the estuary influencing conditions such as water clarity and phytoplankton abundance. Oysters create reef habitats utilized by many other species and serve as an important indicator of the overall health of a bay ecosystem.

To ensure the continued health of these important ecosystems, the State of Texas requires that bay and gulf waters that have the proper conditions be suitable for producing and harvesting edible species of clams, oysters, or mussels, and for various other uses. However, data assessed in 2002 showed that localized sections of six bay segments in the Upper Texas Coast are not suitable for harvesting shellfish because of elevated bacteria concentrations. The use of waters for oyster harvesting, also called the oyster waters use, is the most commonly impaired use among Texas bay and gulf waters.

Bacteria from human and animal waste may indicate the presence of disease-causing microorganisms that pose a threat to public health. Bacteria from the water can accumulate in oysters and other shellfish, making them unsafe to eat, especially since some shellfish are often eaten raw.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has developed a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for fecal coliform, the pollutant that contributes to the impairment of the six segments. A TMDL is like a budget for pollutants. It estimates the amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still support its designated uses. The affected segments are Upper Galveston Bay (Segment 2421), Trinity Bay (Segment 2422), East Bay (Segment

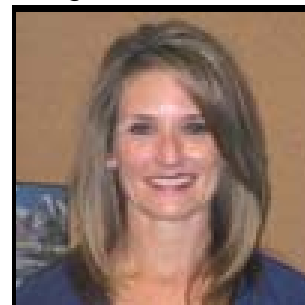
2423), West Bay (Segment 2424), Chocolate Bay (Segment 2432), and Lower Galveston Bay (Segment 2439).

The Galveston Bay Foundation is currently assisting TCEQ with the development of an Implementation Plan for the TMDL in these sensitive areas. Implementation plans describe the actions that local, regional, and state organizations must take to reduce pollutants to levels established in TMDLs. GBF will be inviting stakeholders to get involved in developing reduction measures and a monitoring plan to lower the bacteria concentrations in the oyster waters of the Upper Gulf Coast.

The development of the implementation plan is an opportunity for stakeholders to provide input and influence what the plan looks like; to participate in the process. A stakeholder meeting was held on February 24th at the Clear Lake Park. If anyone is interested in getting involved or participating in a workgroup, please contact Lisa Miller-Marshall at (281) 332-3381 X215.

Meet New GBF TMDL Outreach Specialist Lisa Miller-Marshall

Please join us in welcoming Lisa Miller-Marshall to the Galveston Bay Foundation staff. Lisa is the TMDL Outreach Specialist responsible for facilitating stakeholder involvement to the TMDL Implementation Plan, assisting the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in the drafting of the Plan, and coordinating associated outreach activities, of which you just read about. We are excited about her role and are looking forward to everyone meeting her. Welcome, Lisa!



GBF Completes Fourth Conservation Easement

The Galveston Bay Foundation is enthusiastic about new conservation easement lands on West Galveston Island. The Foundation has been working with Sweetwater 8 Mile, Ltd., the grantor, to complete two phases of conservation easements adjacent to GBF's currently owned 456-acre "Sweetwater" property.

Phase I took place in December 2009, when a 37.03-acre tract was closed on and transferred to conservation easement status. Phase II should be finalized in the near future, which will bring another 42.97 acres to easement status.

Securing land through conservation easements is critical for the sustainability of the Galveston Bay ecosystem, and as a result of this new easement, prime birding and marsh habitat will be protected forever.

The site's prairie and wetland habitat is frequented by egrets, herons, hawks, sandhill cranes, ospreys, roseate spoonbills, among many other birds and wildlife types.

The easement land and GBF's Sweetwater property are located near 103rd Street in Galveston, Texas.



The south shoreline of the conservation easement contains 20-50 feet of fringe marsh (mostly smooth cordgrass, *Spartina alterniflora*), which grades into coastal prairie habitat when moving northward across the tract. This habitat is an important part of the ecology of Galveston Bay.

Thank you, Houston Boat Show Volunteers!

The Galveston Bay Foundation was fortunate to have 36 dedicated volunteers help us at our booth at the Houston Boat Show on January 8-17, 2010. Our volunteers worked enthusiastically at Reliant Center to bring awareness to our "Pump It, Don't Dump It" boater waste education campaign. Thanks to all of you for your time and commitment to GBF!

If you would like information on how to become a volunteer, as well as information about our various events, please visit our website, www.galvbay.org. If you are already a volunteer, we ask that you update your email address with GBF by contacting Tiffany Anders at 281.332.3381 X203 or tanders@galvbay.org. This will enable us to cut the cost of postage and save our precious trees!



A few of our dedicated volunteers had time for a photo op! Volunteers pictured to the left: "Spotlight volunteer" Scott Bird, Lambert 'Woodie' Brotemarkle Jr., and Scott Deboyes. Volunteer pictured to the right, Tommy Holmes.



Spotlight on ...GBF Volunteer and Member Scott Bird



This issue's spotlight is on GBF member and volunteer extraordinaire Scott Bird. An oil industry professional, Scott was looking to volunteer with an organization that has a positive impact on the environment. Scott was introduced to GBF at the

Classic Keels and Wheels event and has been a devoted GBF volunteer since 2008. Scott said of his decision to volunteer, "When I found out about GBF, I realized that it provided an ideal opportunity for me to get involved in protecting and preserving something that was special to me. It also allowed me to learn more about my home area and to meet lots of great people who care about the Bay environment and want to preserve it for our enjoyment as well as the enjoyment of future generations."

Scott has volunteered at a number of GBF events, including Bay Day 2008, Clean Up Around the Bay 2008, Houston Boat Show 2008-2010, Marsh Mania 2008-2009, and the LyondellBasell Bike Around The Bay 2009.



Scott removes trash and debris from the Virginia Point Peninsula Preserve during "Clean Up Around the Bay" after Hurricane Ike devastated Galveston and the surrounding bay areas.



Scott helps at the 2009 LyondellBasell Bike Around the Bay registration table. It may look like night, but that's because the sun hasn't come up yet!



When asked about his favorite GBF volunteer experience, Scott singled out the Clean Up Around the Bay event at the Virginia Point Peninsula Preserve following Hurricane Ike. Scott said, "It gave me a chance to see the devastation first hand, but also to help out directly by joining in for a day of hard work with some great people."

Scott is a resident of Clear Lake, and enjoys kayak fishing and taking vacations to Galveston and Tiki Island. He was excited to see that many of his favorite kayak fishing spots are featured on a GBF informational poster.

GBF values Scott's hard work and enthusiasm, and we look forward to working together to preserve, protect, and enhance Galveston Bay!

Galveston Bay Children's Art Calendar Award Ceremony & Reception

The Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF) held an awards ceremony and reception on January 27th to celebrate the winners of the Galveston Bay Children's Art Calendar. For the past 18 years, the GBF has provided an exciting outreach opportunity to local fifth graders with the Galveston Bay Children's Art Calendar.

Students around the Houston and Bay Area were asked, "What people, plants, or animals can you find in and around Galveston Bay?" or "Who uses Galveston Bay?" Through their knowledge and creativity, they drew pictures with their interpretation of the answer to one of those questions. The Galveston Bay Children's Art Calendar is made possible by sponsors, NRG Texas and NRG's retail electricity business, Reliant Energy. GBF, NRG Texas, and Reliant Energy have a shared mission to protect the natural ecosystems, restore essential habitat, and educate and involve the public in environmental stewardship.

Each year, GBF receives over 500 entries. In its 18 years, GBF estimates that this project has reached over 10,000 students. This year, GBF distributed 1,300 entry forms to ten participating schools. Fourteen winners were chosen: one for each month, plus the front and back covers of the calendar. Each school that submitted entries had at least one winner selected.

GBF, NRG Texas and Reliant Energy would like to congratulate the following 2010 Galveston Bay Children's Art Calendar winners: Loren Baskin-Almazan, Post Oak School (Private); Andrea Contreras, Crockett Elementary (Houston I.S.D.); Rebecca Hall, Mont Belvieu Elementary (Barbers Hill I.S.D.); and from Goose Creek I.S.D., Micah Dempsey, Victoria Walker Elementary; Devin Dunn, Alamo Elementary; Jennifer Guerra, Victoria Walker Elementary; Matthew Moser, Crockett Elementary; Rogelio Perez, Stephen F. Austin; Jesus Quiroga, San Jacinto Elementary; Daisy Shumate, James Bowie Elementary; Josue Torres, Travis Elementary; Jordan Wells, James Bowie Elementary; and Kelley Whitehead, James Bowie Elementary.



Pictured above top: GBF President, Bob Stokes; GBF Manager of Educational Programs, Della Barbato; and Reliant Energy's Director of Public Affairs, Gene Fisseler, along with three of the Galveston Bay Children's Art Calendar winners. Family and friends watch as winners receive Certificates of Excellence at the awards ceremony.

Pictured below: Bob and Della with eleven of the fourteen art calendar winners.



Thank You 2009 Event Sponsors and Supporters!

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ExxonMobil
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GLO Coastal Management Program
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
NRG Energy, Inc.
Restore America's Estuaries
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

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We Look Forward to Working With You in 2010!

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Restore America's Estuaries 5th National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration



Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) 5th National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration will be held November 13-17 at the Galveston Island Convention Center.

We invite you to be a part of the only national conference that focuses exclusively on coastal habitat restoration. Healthy coasts and estuaries are essential to the social, economic, and ecological well-being of everything that depends on them. Successful habitat restoration at all scales is critical to ensuring vibrant coasts. The Conference will bring timely national attention to the challenges and opportunities for restoration and will bring together a unique blend of people involved in policy, outreach, science, strategy, business, and on-the-ground restoration work.

For more information and to register on-line, visit www.estuaries.org/conference.

GBF Annual Meeting set for March 23



Please save the date for our
Annual Meeting.

Date: Tuesday, March 23

Time: Social: 6:30-7:30 pm;

Presentation: 7:30-8:30 pm

Location: Children's Museum of Houston

1500 Binz, Houston, TX 77004

We are pleased to announce that Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) President and Chief Executive Officer, William C. Baker, will be our featured speaker. Will has been President and CEO of the CBF since 1982, but has worked at the CBF since 1976, when he came to work as an intern at the request of one of CBF's trustees. Under Will's leadership, CBF received the nation's highest environmental honor the 1992 Presidential Medal for Environmental Excellence.



GBF is thrilled to have such an amazing speaker for our annual meeting, and we hope you will join us!



GALVESTON BAY FOUNDATION

17330 Highway 3
Webster, TX 77598

Telephone: (281) 332-3381
Fax: (281) 332-3153
www.galvbay.org

The mission of the Galveston Bay Foundation is to preserve, protect and enhance the natural resources of the Galveston Bay estuarine system for present users and for posterity.



GBF Gazette underwriting provided by our valued partner, the Port of Houston Authority.

Photos in this month's issue of the GBF Gazette contributed by:
www.CBF.org
GBF Staff

For event details and volunteer opportunities, visit our website at www.galvbay.org.

ADVOCACY
CONSERVATION
EDUCATION
RESEARCH



We hope you'll join us at our **Annual Meeting on March 23rd** with featured speaker, **Will Baker!**
See page 11 for details.

Save These Dates:

Tuesday, March 23rd

Annual meeting, Children's Museum of Houston

Saturday, March 27th

Trash Bash, various locations

Saturday, April 24th

Oyster Restoration Benefit, 18th Street Pier Bar & Grill, San Leon, TX

Saturday, May 1st and Saturday, June 5th

Marsh Mania, various locations

Saturday, May 15th

Bay Day, Kemah Boardwalk

For more details on these events and to learn how to get involved, please visit our website at www.galvbay.org!