WATER USE EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION AS TOOLS TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF GALVESTON BAY

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RESTORE AMERICA’S ESTUARIES SUMMIT
DECEMBER 10-15, 2016
GALVESTON BAY: PRODUCTIVITY

- 2nd most productive bay in the U.S.
- Most productive in Texas
- 1/3 of both recreational and commercial seafood harvests in the state
- Recreational fishing: $2.8 million
- Commercial:
  - 50% of Texas’ shrimp harvest
  - 25% of Texas’ crab harvest
  - 60% of Texas’ oysters harvest (prior to Ike): $30 million

Needs freshwater inflows to maintain productivity
Region C: Dallas/Fort Worth
Region H: Houston

Galveston Bay relative to Houston
What is the problem then?

Population Growth

State/Regional Water Planning

Climate

Policy and Regulations
REGIONAL WATER PLANNING ISSUES:

- Water shortages by 2020
  Region C: 125,037 ac-ft; by 2070: 1.3M ac-ft
  Region H: 347,034 ac-ft; by 2070: 1.2M ac-ft

1 ac-ft = 325,851 gallons!

- Lack of inclusion of e-flows
- High prioritization of water projects
- Conversion from groundwater to surface water use
- Increase of re-use

Granted Texas' surface water rights since 1900's do not contain environmental conditions
REGULATORY ISSUES:

Protection levels resemble drought levels

Galveston Bay Freshwater Inflow Protection
Summer
State Protection 50% Level vs. Historic Inflows

Freshwater inflow to bay
- Historic inflows
- State protection

- Trinity River flows
- San Jacinto River flows


September 2016: 160,000 ac-ft
OUR APPROACHES TO THESE ISSUES

• Research:
  • Publications: Bays in Peril, WC by the Yard
  • Texas Water Conservation Scorecard

• Advocacy and Policy Work:
  • Water Utilities (one-on-one; symposium, networking meetings); opinion articles

• Outreach and Education:
  • Yard sign: “This Yard is Conserving the Water Supply”
  • Galveston Bay Water Brigade
  • Designing new messaging for outreach materials
TEXAS WATER CONSERVATION SCORECARD

• 1st water conservation scorecard
• 306 Texas water utilities assessed

Get the score in your phone!
Texaswaterconservationscorecard.org
GALVESTON BAY WATER BRIGADE:
SAVE WATER. SAVE THE BAY.

• Focuses on WC for the environment – “At the Watershed level”

• Designed for water utilities programs:
  • Designing Social Media Kit

• Microsite: Pledging opportunity and resources

• Provides a different angle to conventional WC programs

• City of Houston’s Green Office Challenge

TAKE THE PLEDGE AT: WWW.GBWB.ORG
FOR BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS
CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS:

Challenges:

• RWPG’s current focus is to meet human-related water needs (2016)
• TCEQ Standards of protection won’t be revised until 2021

Next Steps:

• Continue working through outreach and education: Water Conservation
• Continue securing freshwater inflows through other strategies: Purchasing of water rights
• Work with other media outlets to raise awareness
Thank you!

Questions?

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