

The meeting will begin shortly



Please mute your microphone until called for questions.



Please disable your video unless you are speaking.



Please enter your name and title in the chat.



Please insert questions in chat or raise hand to speak.



This meeting is being recorded.



Houston-Galveston
Area Council

NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Thursday, February 6, 2025, 1:30 PM

Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Meeting

NRAC Agenda

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions

2. Certify Quorum

A quorum of 12 is required to conduct committee business.

NRAC Agenda (continued)

3. Approve Meeting Report

Request approval of August 1, 2024 and November 7, 2024 meeting reports. Copies shared via email and available on the NRAC Extranet website.

NRAC Agenda (continued)

4. Membership

H-GAC staff will provide a brief status update on membership.

Discussion:

- Are current members interested in renewing their terms?
- Are members willing to form a nominating subcommittee to fill unrenewed terms/vacancies?

Action:

Request committee approval of Tom Douglas to the role of Vice Chair

NRAC Agenda (continued)

5. Environmental Committee Highlights

Coordinators for H-GAC environmental committees will provide information on activities and updates from the past quarter.

- Regional Flood Management Committee (Rachel Windham for Amanda Ashcroft)
- Solid Waste Management Committee (Wendy Almanzan)

Regional Flood Management Committee

- Met on January 15, 2025
- Justin Bower provided an update on regional priority projects under the Community Development Block Grant - Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) Program.
- Merryl Holmes (Texas Division of Emergency Management) discussed recent NOFO announcements from FEMA hazard mitigation assistance programs, important application deadlines, and how to apply. For more information, please reach out to merryl.holmes@tdem.texas.gov.
- The next meeting will be in person at H-GAC on:

April 16th

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

NRAC Agenda (continued)

5. Environmental Committee Highlights

Coordinators for H-GAC environmental committees will provide information on activities and updates from the past quarter.

- Regional Flood Management Committee (Rachel Windham for Amanda Ashcroft)
- Solid Waste Management Committee (Wendy Almanzan)

NRAC Agenda (continued)

6. Environmental Program Highlights

H-GAC Staff will highlight Community & Environmental Planning projects to seek comment and feedback from Committee members.

- Clean Rivers Program (Todd Running)
- Targeted Monitoring on Halls Bayou (Erica Underwood)
- Watershed Protection Plan Projects Update (Rachel Windham)
- Parks and Natural Areas Roundtable Update (Andrea Tantillo)

Parks and Natural Areas Roundtable Overview

- Fall park tour November 13 at Exploration Green
- Annual Awards Celebration February 21 at H-GAC
- Spring park tour March 20 at Willow Waterhole

Contact Information

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Find more at: [h-gac.com/
parks-and-natural-areas](http://h-gac.com/parks-and-natural-areas)



NRAC Agenda (continued)

7. Subcommittees

Water Innovation Strategies of Excellence Subcommittee

Staff coordinator, Rachel Windham, will provide an update on the status of the Water Innovation Strategies of Excellence Awards and future action.

2025 WISE AWARDS

Applications open on
Monday, March 3, 2025
and close on
Friday, April 4, 2025.

h.gac.com/wise-awards



CATEGORIES

- 🔥 Policy and Planning
- 🔥 Education and Public Awareness
- 🔥 Completed Effort (Greater than \$200K)
- 🔥 Completed Effort (Less than \$200K)
- 🔥 Research and Monitoring
- 🔥 Program Performance
- 🔥 Individual Excellence

2023 WINNERS

- 🔥 **none submitted**
- 🔥 The Woodlands Township Environmental Services
- 🔥 Gulf Coast Authority
- 🔥 City of Bay City Parks and Recreation
- 🔥 City of Mont Belvieu
- 🔥 Buffalo Bayou Partnership
- 🔥 **none submitted**
- 🔥 *Special recognition was given to Texas Water Resources Institute for Community Outreach*

2024 WINNERS

- 🔥 SWA Group and Partners
- 🔥 Galveston Bay Foundation
- 🔥 Howard Hughes - Bridgeland
- 🔥 City of La Marque
- 🔥 HCFCD & Partners
- 🔥 City of West University Place
- 🔥 Teri MacArthur
- 🔥 *Special recognition was given to City of Galveston for Innovation in Water Resources Management*

Make changes to categories?

Ideas for judges?

Repeat 2024 timeline?



NRAC Agenda (continued)

8. Topics of the Day

Bill Ervin, Senior Planner at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, will present an overview of the Homeowner Wastewater Assistance Program and discuss progress with implementing on-site sewage facility remediation throughout the region.



H-GAC's Homeowner Wastewater Assistance Program

Failing OSSFs within our Region



Permitted and Unpermitted OSSFs



Authorized Agent	Permitted Systems 2023	Unpermitted Systems 2023	TOTAL OSSFs 2023
Austin	5,731	2,728	8,459
Brazoria	16,375	26,103	42,478
Chambers	1,776	6,091	7,867
Colorado	605	318	923
Fort Bend	14,452	10,050	24,502
Galveston	7,556	7,852	15,408
Grimes	4,931	4,048	8,979
Harris	34,501	47,326	81,827
Liberty	2,694	16,024	18,718
Matagorda	1,669	4,628	6,297
Montgomery	33,498	55,572	89,070
San Jacinto	0	0	0
Walker	6,015	5,500	11,515
Waller	5,323	8,586	13,909
Wharton	1,804	5,406	7,210
Brookside Village	43	N/A	43
City of Manvel	334	N/A	334
City of Surfside Village	565	N/A	565
San Jacinto River Authority	3,370	N/A	3,370
TCEQ Region 12	3,274	N/A	3,274
Total	144,516	200,232	344,748

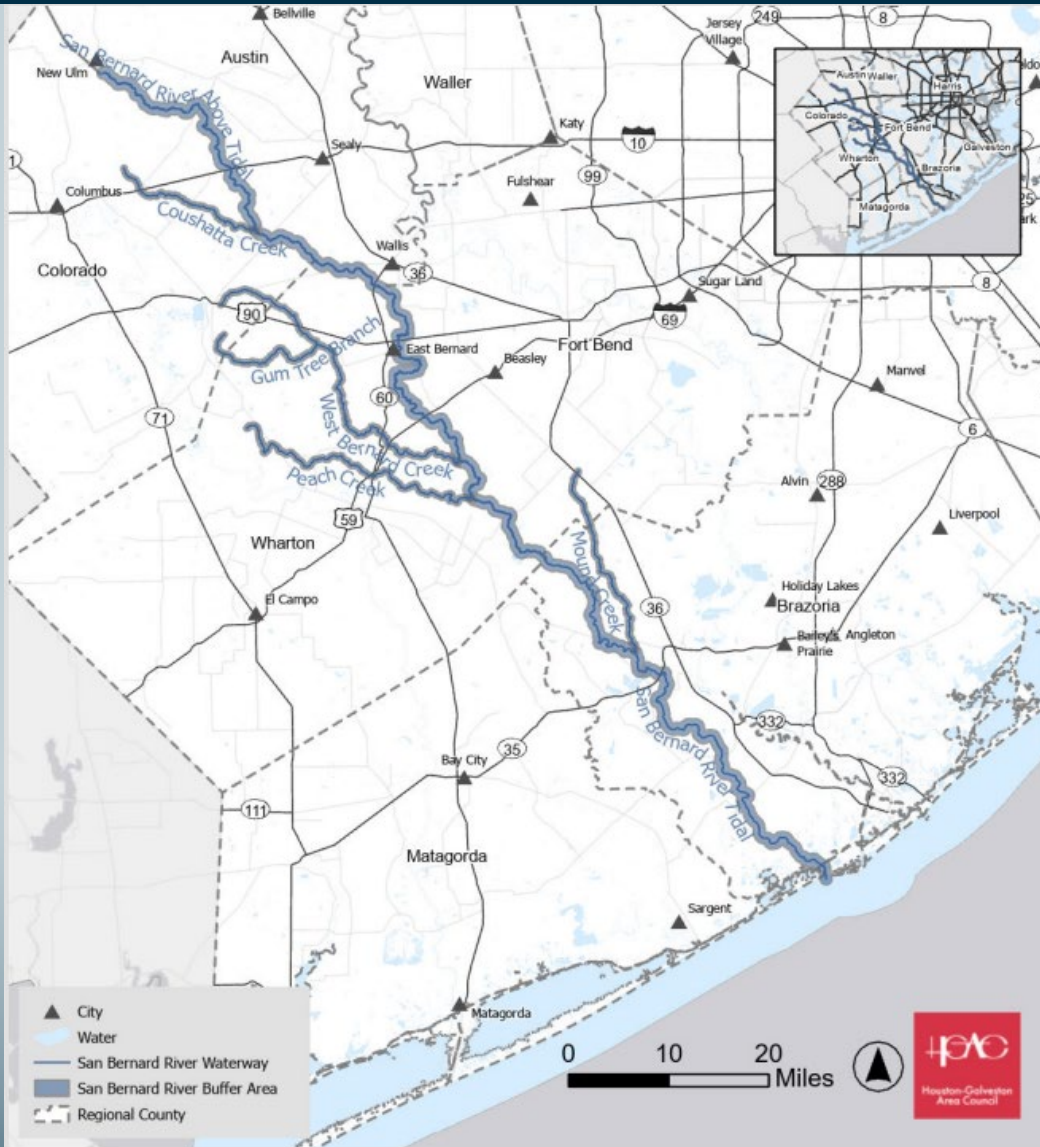
Applicant Qualifications

- **Homeowner Wastewater Education Workshop:** the applicant must attend a wastewater education workshop on OSSFs.
- **Ownership & Residence:** the applicant must own and reside in the home (no rental properties, vacation homes, etc.) and must own both the home and the property
- **Eligible Counties:** the applicant must reside in Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller, or Wharton County.
- **Combined Household Income:** the income of all members of the household must not exceed 80% of the median income for the county
- **Inspection:** an inspection of the OSSF must be conducted to verify failure or malfunction
- Homeowners may be eligible for funding even if under enforcement action for violation of TCEQ rules (we have multiple funding sources are available).

H-GAC Homeowner Wastewater Assistance Program

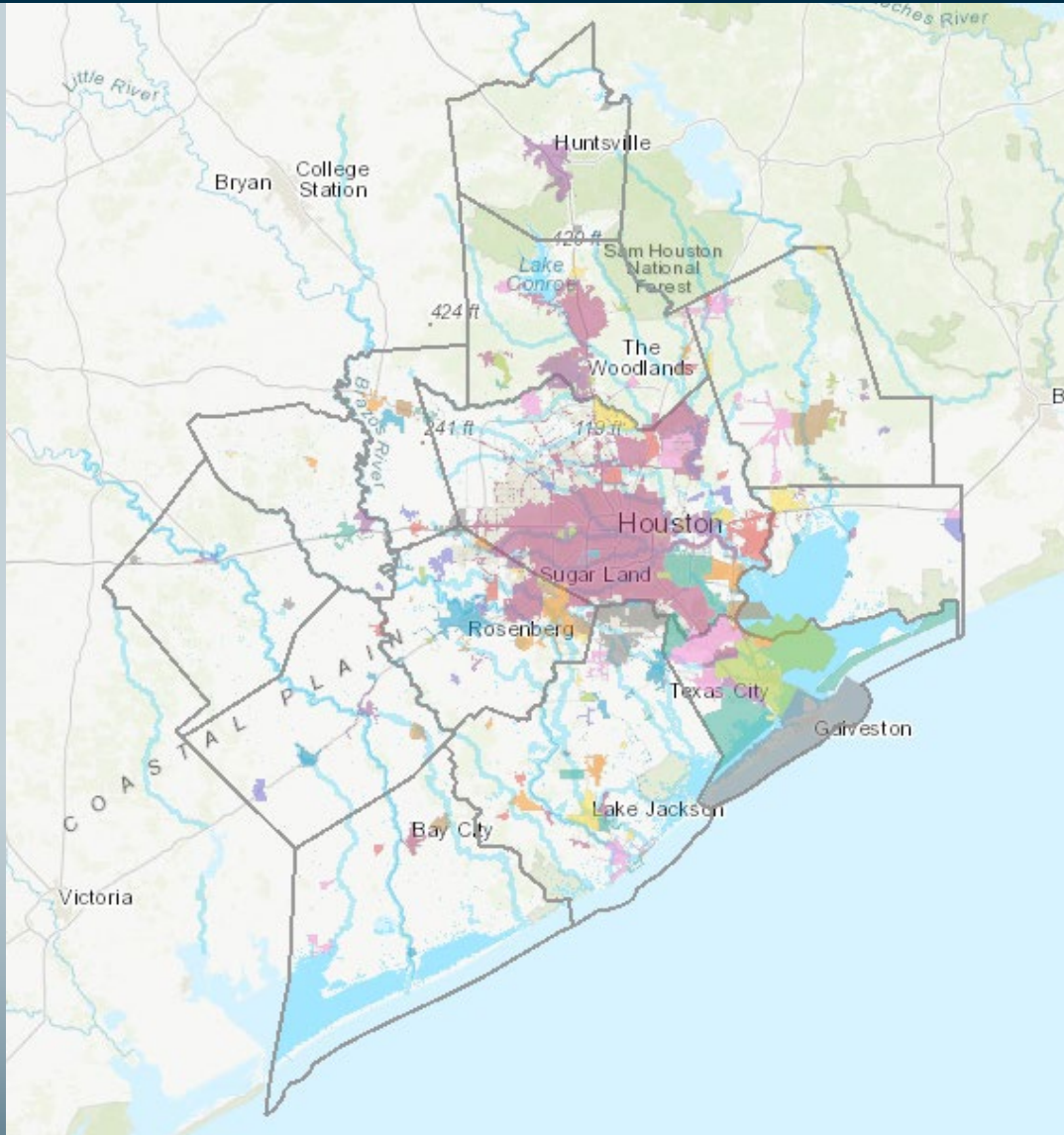
- Currently the Water Resources Group at H-GAC has two Supplemental Environmental Programs (SEPs) and four other programs that deal with repair or replacement of OSSFs
 - TCEQ SEP
 - Harris County District Attorney's Office SEP
 - Olin Community Grant
 - Friends of the River San Bernard Grant
 - TCEQ/GBEP BIL (multi-year contract)
 - Wells Fargo Grant
- Total funds available are almost \$400,000
- All programs have environmental benefits, helping affected communities avoid harmful environmental impact from failing OSSFs
- Texas A&M AgriLife has a program for OSSF pumpouts with no stipulations
 - Bill Hyder
 - OSSF Program Coordinator
 - (979) 314-8268
 - william.hyder@ag.tamu.edu

Friends of the River San Bernard



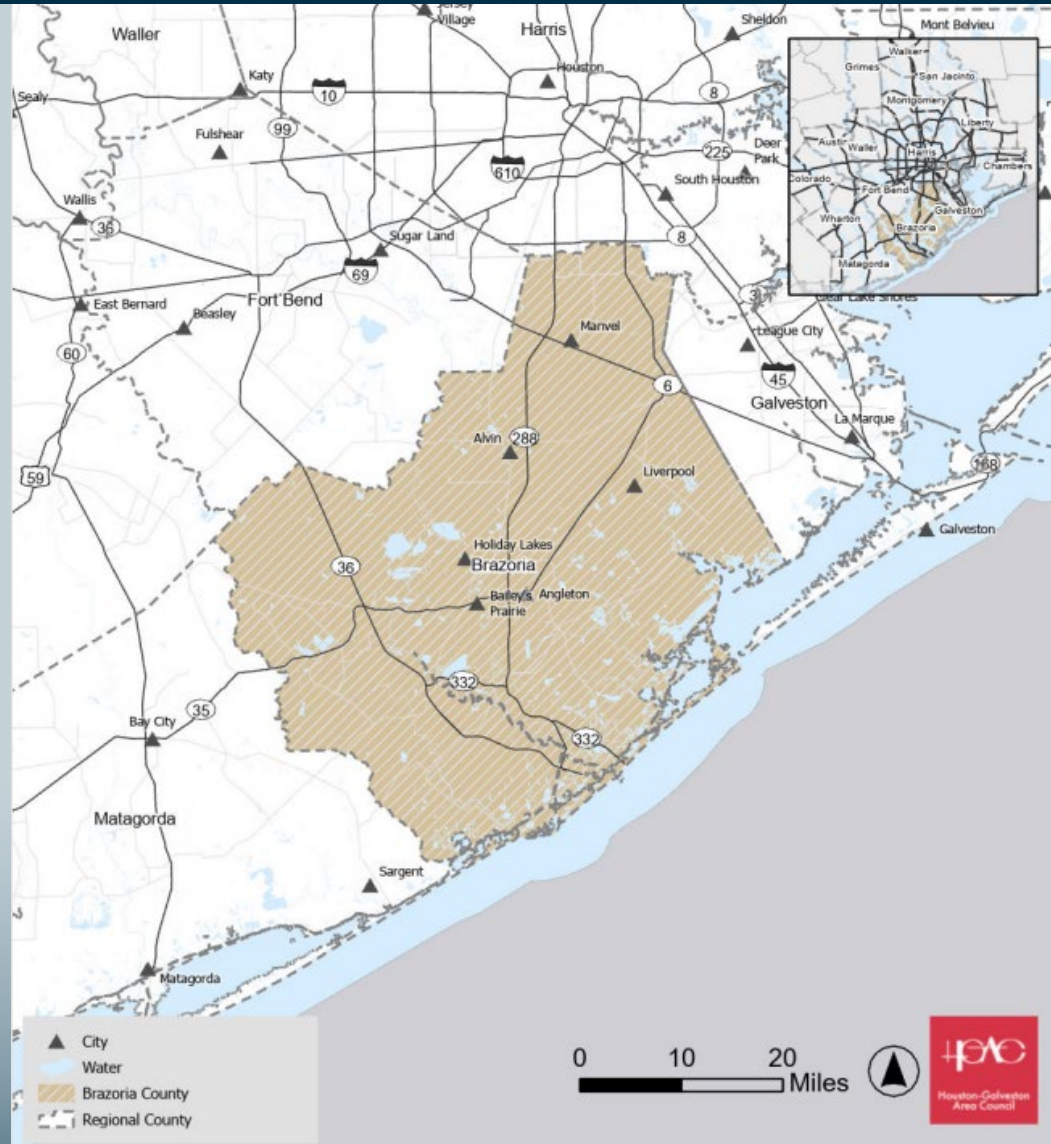
- Funding: through grant from Friends of the River; they may potentially participate in this funding annually.
- Coverage: The property must be located in close proximity to the river or its main tributaries.
- For:
 - Repair or Replacement of OSSFs
 - Pumpouts of OSSFs
- Eligibility Requirements:
 - Failed or failing system
 - Owner lives in and owns the property
 - The property is not new construction for sale
 - Owner must not earn more than 80% of median household income for that county.

Harris County District Attorney (HCDA)



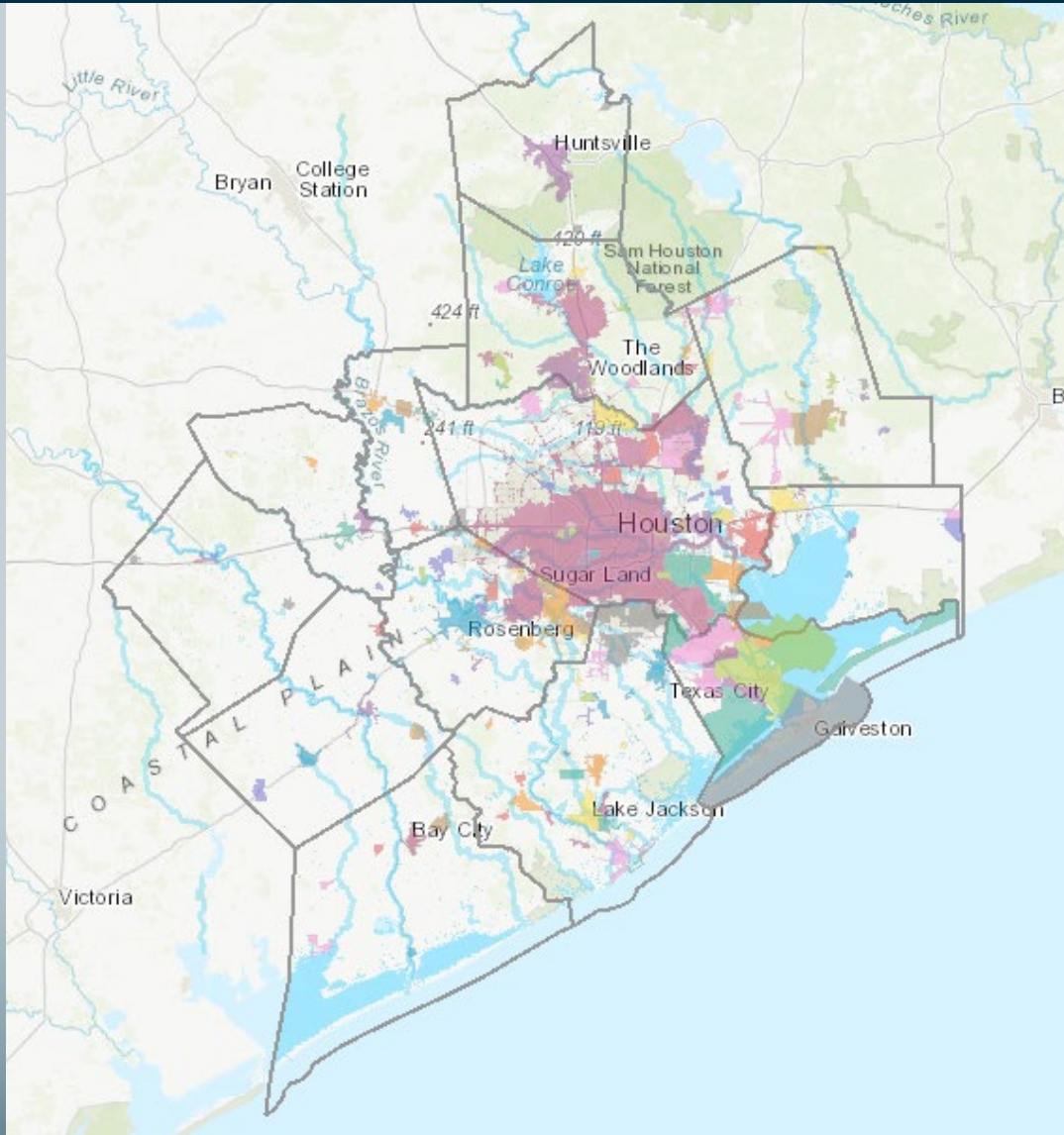
- Funding: dollars directed to HCDA environmental projects as settlement of enforcement action fines
- Coverage: 13 County H-GAC Region
- For:
 - Repair or Replacement of OSSFs
 - Pumpouts of OSSFs
- Eligibility Requirements:
 - Failed or failing system
 - Owner lives in and owns the property
 - The property is not new construction for sale
 - Owner must not earn more than 80% of median household income for that county.

Olin Grant



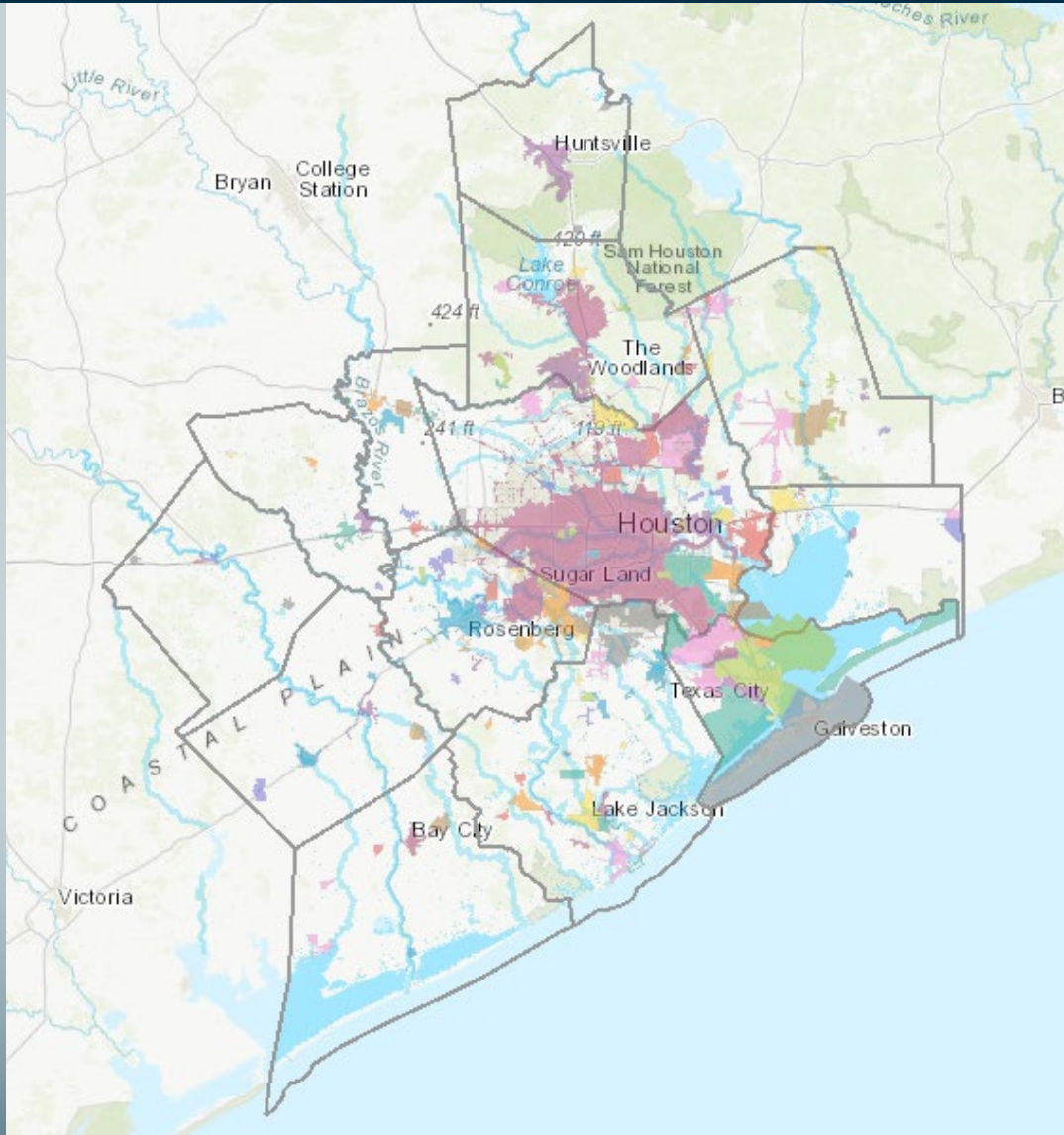
- Funding: through corporate and employee giving program
- Coverage: Brazoria County only
- Scope:
 - Repair or Replacement of OSSFs
 - Pet waste Stations
 - Clean-up of dilapidated sites or dumps
- Eligibility Requirements:
 - Failed or failing system
 - Owner lives in and owns the property
 - The property is not new construction for sale
 - Owner must not earn more than 80% of median household income for that county.

TCEQ SEP



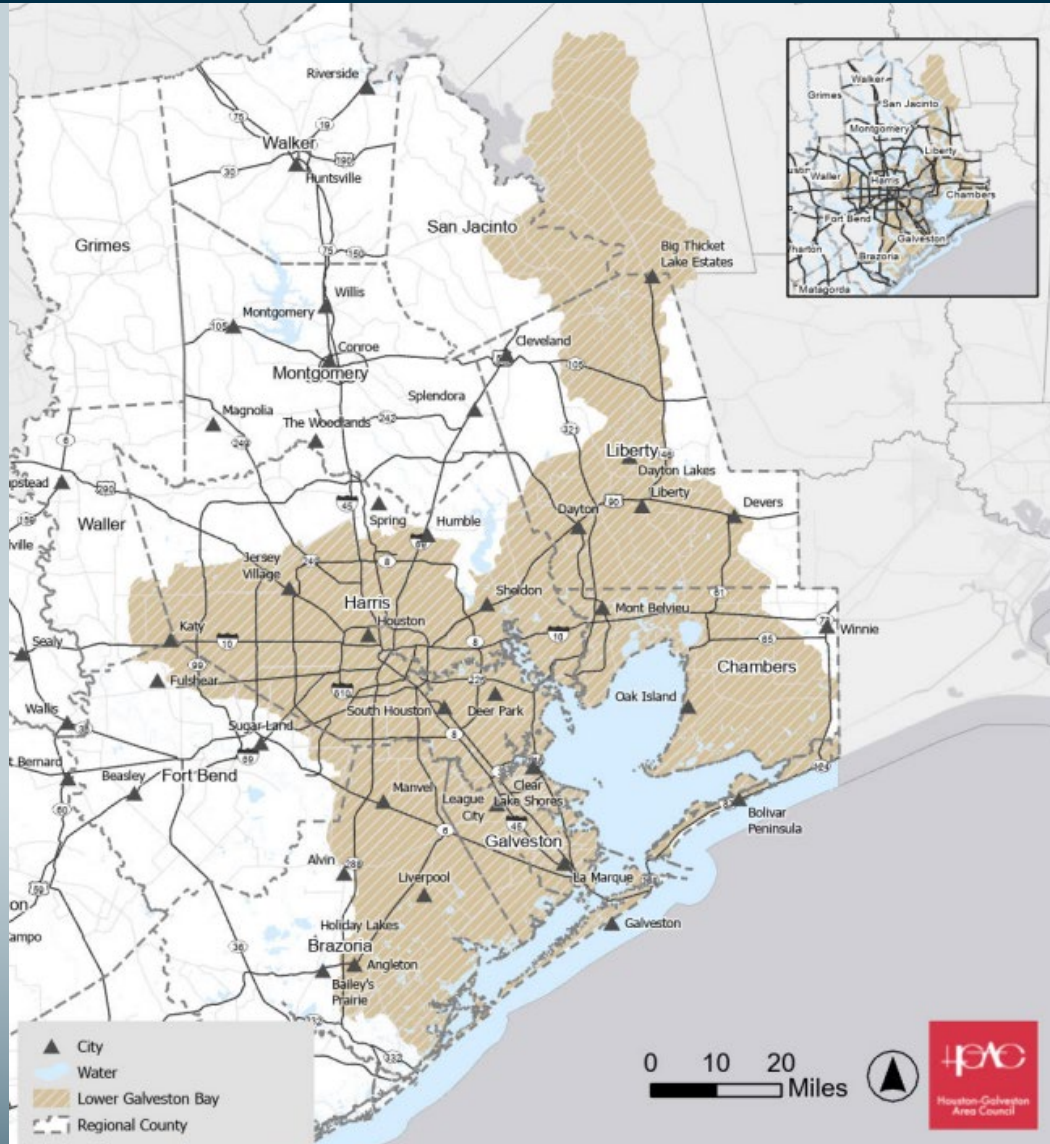
- Funding: dollars directed to TCEQ approved environmental projects as settlement of enforcement action fines
- Coverage: 13 County H-GAC Region
- Scope:
 - Repair or Replacement of OSSFs
- Eligibility Requirements:
 - No code enforcements on the homeowner
 - Failed or failing system
 - Owner lives in and owns the property
 - The property is not new construction for sale
 - Owner must not earn more than 80% of median household income for that county.

Wells Fargo Grant



- Funding: through a grant from Wells Fargo
- Coverage: 13 County H-GAC Region
- Scope:
 - Conduct Homeowner OSSF Operations and Maintenance Course
 - OSSF Pumpouts
 - Wastewater Workforce Development
- Eligibility Requirements:
 - Vulnerable Communities
 - Attend Homeowner Education Workshop
 - Applicant must live in and own the home
 - Applicant must not earn more than 80% of the median household income for the county

TCEQ/GBEP BIL

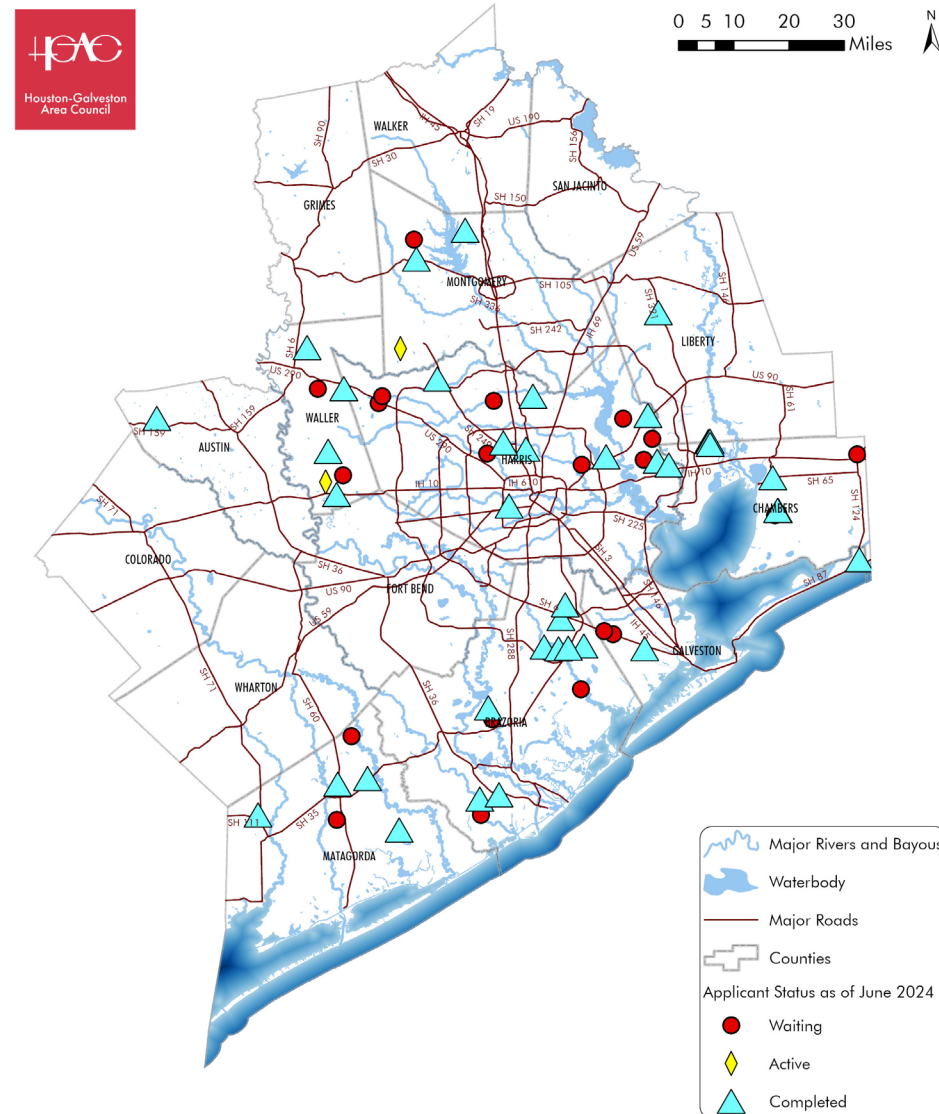


- Funding: Bi-Partisan Infrastructure Law (2021); Administered by GBEP
- Coverage: Lower Galveston Bay
- Scope:
 - Repair or Replacement at least 25 OSSFs
 - Conduct Homeowner OSSF Operations and Maintenance Course
- Eligibility Requirements:
 - Vulnerable and Unrepresented Communities
 - Failed or failing system
 - Attend Homeowner Education Workshop
 - Applicant must live in and own the home
 - Applicant must not earn more than 80% of the median household income for the county

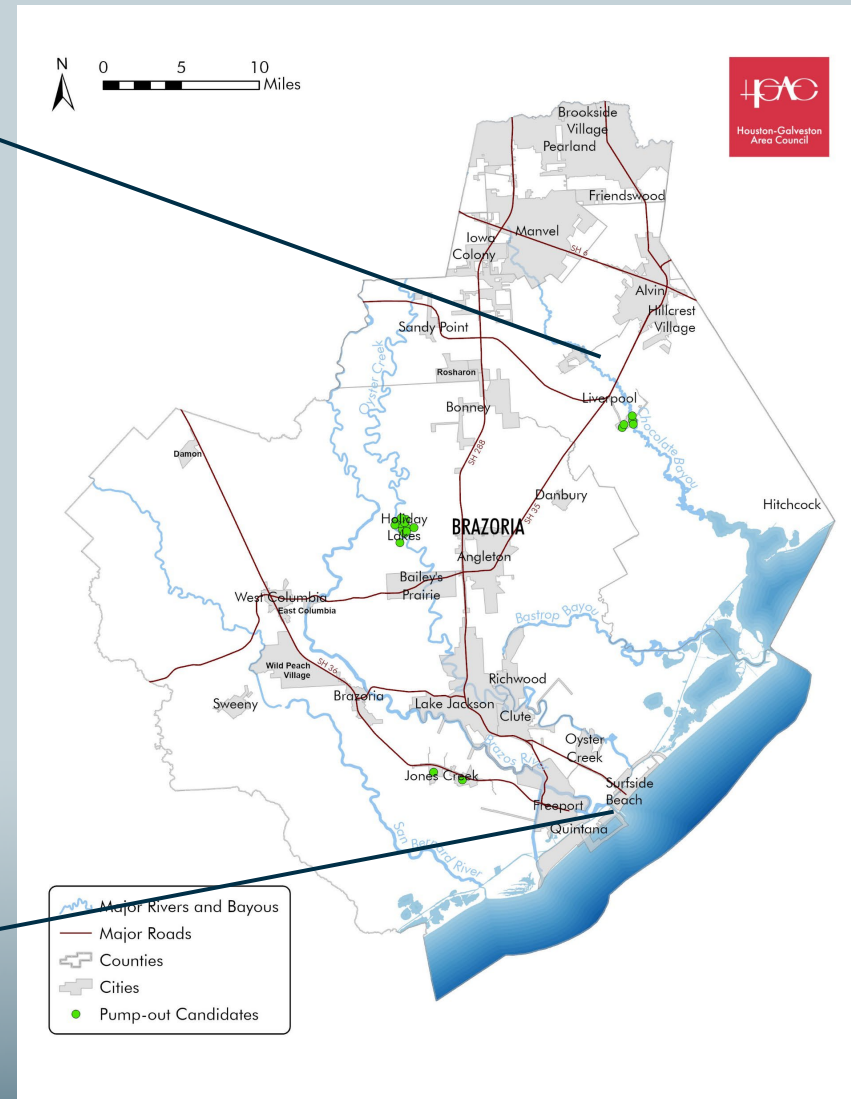
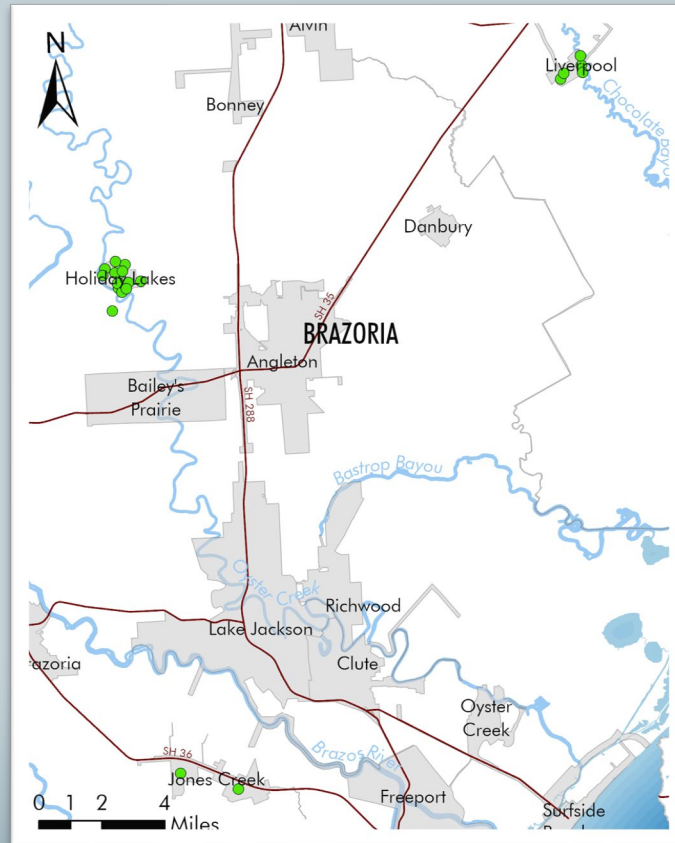
Focus on Communities

- Two big challenges for the Homeowner Wastewater Assistance Program are:
 - Scarce and sporadic funding
 - Though significant at the individual level, impacts are sometimes limited at the community or environment level
- The Wells Fargo grant is a good example of being able to focus efforts in a targeted area with specific communities which included Liverpool and Holiday Lakes.
- Recent funding through the Bi-partisan Infrastructure Law, allows us to focus on vulnerable communities where we can make a difference in their lives financially and environmentally.
- At H-GAC we continue to look for public and private funding opportunities that can allow us to make a difference with our communities.

HWAP – Replacements & Repairs



HWAP – Pumpouts



HWAP – By the Numbers

County	Completed Replacements	Completed Repairs	Currently Waiting	Pump-outs
Austin	1	-	-	-
Brazoria	6	6	7	24
Chambers	6	-	3	-
Colorado	-	-	-	-
Fort Bend	-	-	-	-
Galveston	2	-	3	-
Grimes	-	-	-	-
Harris	5	3	7	-
Liberty	-	4	-	-
Matagorda	3	1	2	-
Montgomery	2	2	5	-
San Jacinto	-	-	-	-
Walker	-	1	-	-
Waller	6	-	2	-
Wharton	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	31	17	29	24

Resident Feedback

"There are no words to express our gratitude and appreciation for everything that was done to help us... This was no small task, and we recognize all of the effort and financial funding that went into this project... This is something we are beyond grateful for, we are blessed to have crossed paths, we can never repay the financial assistance and kindness."

- H-GAC Homeowner Wastewater Assistance Program participant

Contact Information

Bill Ervin

Senior Planner

Houston-Galveston Area Council

Phone: (713) 993-2438

Email: bill.ervin@h-gac.com



NRAC Agenda (continued)

8. Topics of the Day (continued)

Staff coordinator, Rachel Windham, will provide the results of the Needs Assessment survey and facilitate discussion for ways to improve committee engagement.



Needs Assessment Survey

The purpose of the Needs Assessment was to collect feedback on the composition, function, and future of the Natural Resources Advisory Committee

Natural Resources Advisory Committee (NRAC) Needs Assessment

1. How long have you served on the NRAC?

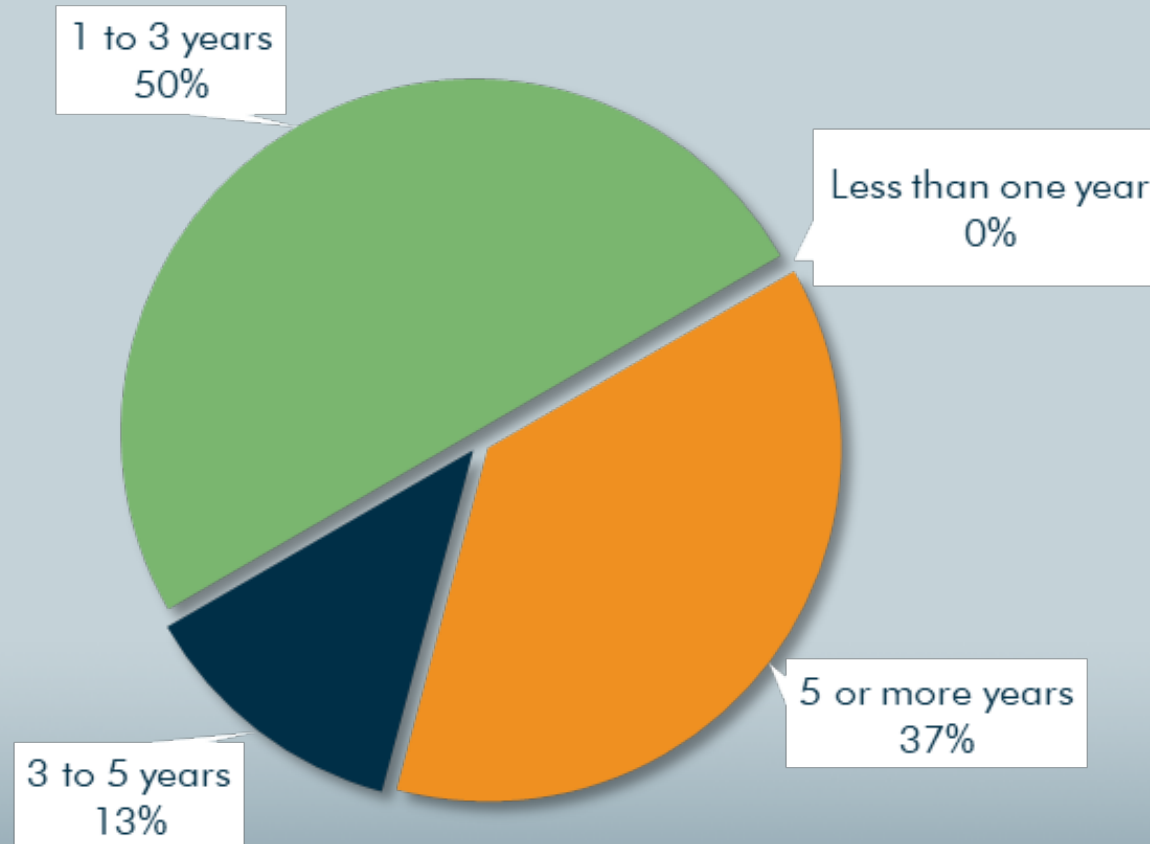
- ☐ Less than one year
- ☐ 1 to 3 years
- ☐ 3 to 5 years
- ☐ 5 or more years

2. Which of the following areas do you represent?

- ☐ Government
- ☐ Business/Industry
- ☐ Community Organizations
- ☐ Residents
- ☐ Other

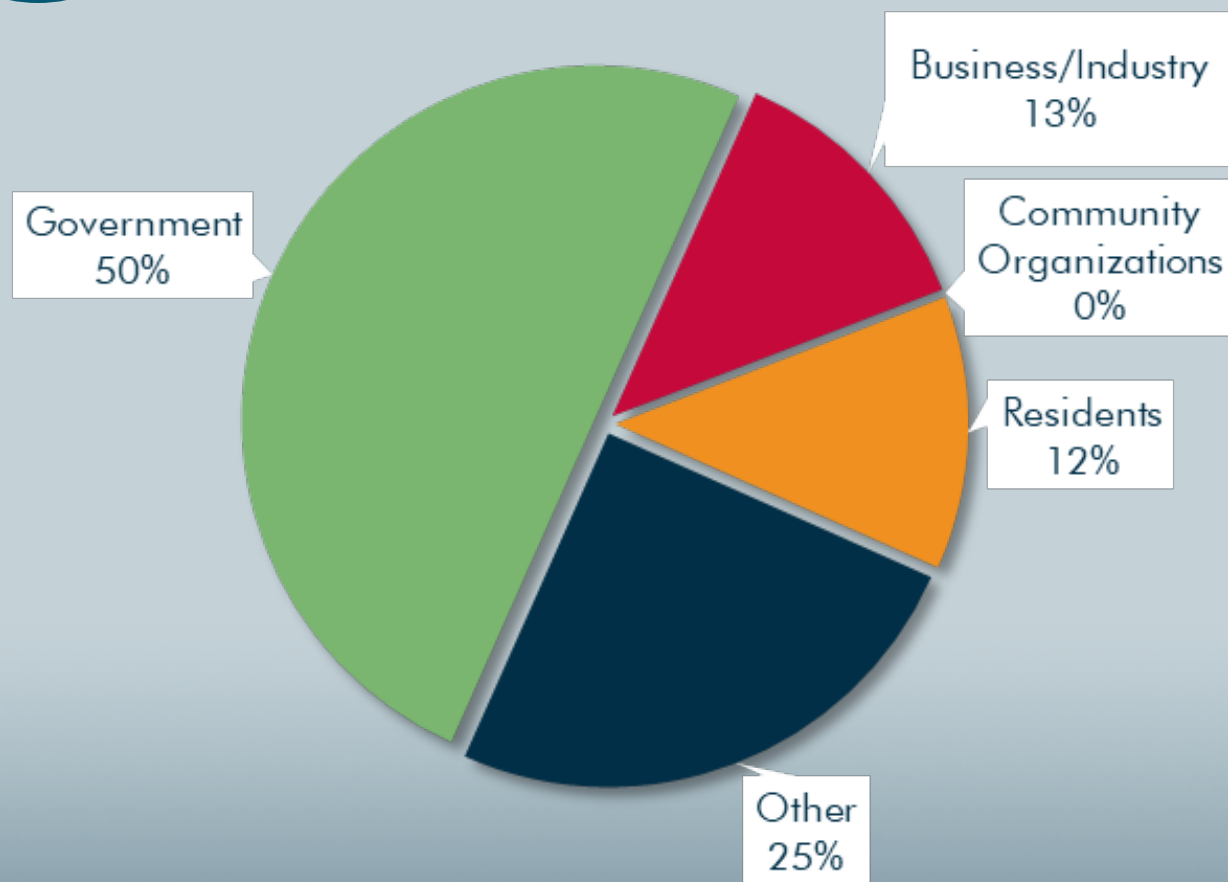
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Member Information



All respondents have served on the committee for one or more years.

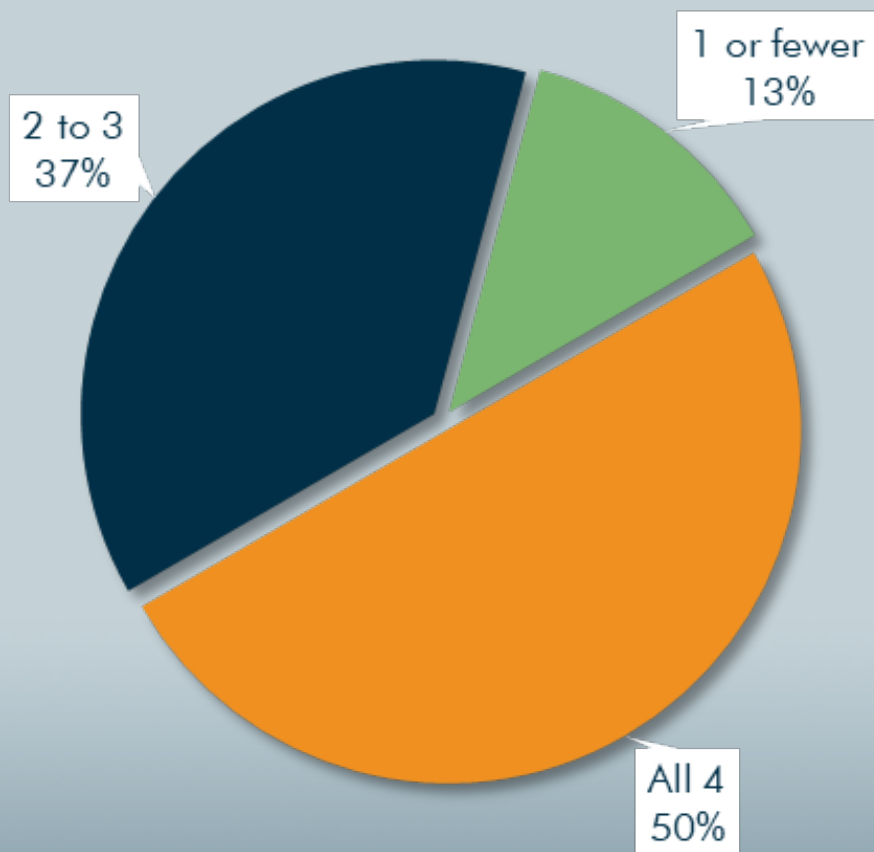
2 Participation



Most respondents were government representatives. "Other" responses included:

- Conservation/government
- Mission to protect waters of the state and industry partners

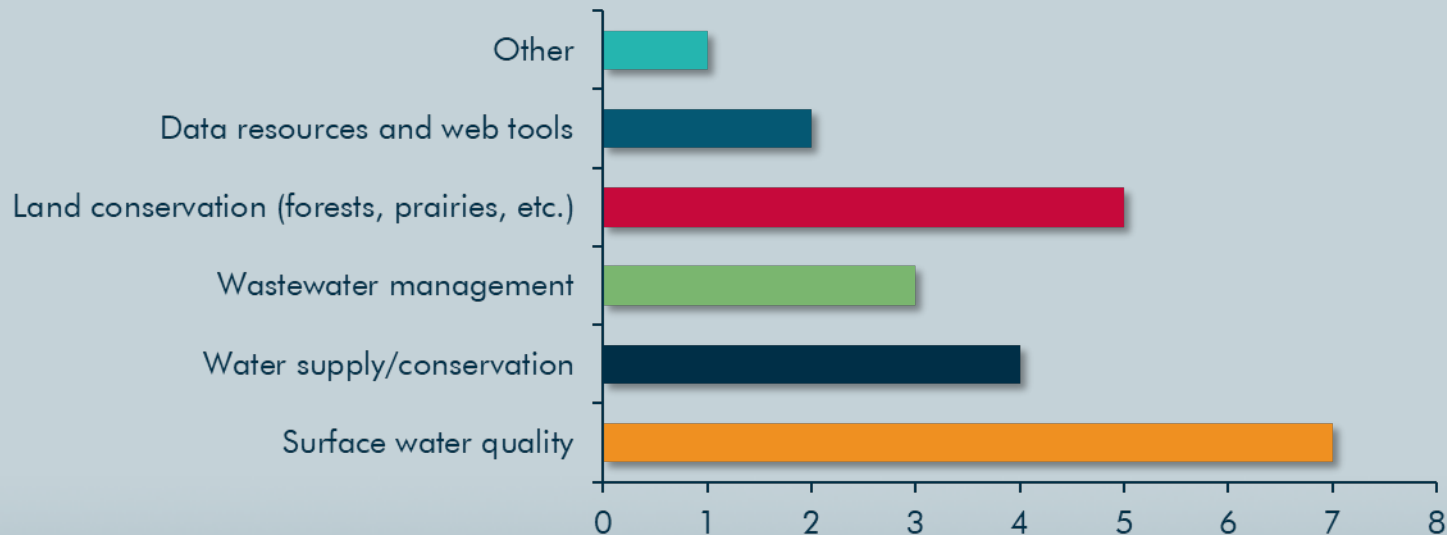
3 Attendance



50% of the respondents attend all four quarterly meetings. The most common barrier to attendance was schedule conflict. Other options included time commitment, lack of interest, and "other." No further comment was provided for "other."

4

Priorities



“Other” responses included:

- Floodplain management and flood mitigation

Recommended topics included:

- Simple to use data resources
- Protected species, their habitat, and management/maintenance activities that affect or improve natural resources related to protected species. Suggested speakers include Kelly Norrid from TPWD.

5

Representation

All respondents answered “yes” to the question: does the NRAC incorporate enough representation of groups that have interest in natural resources?

6

Engagement

Discussion:

How can H-GAC better engage members of the NRAC?

For example, one respondent suggested updates of NRAC activities between quarterly meetings.

NRAC Agenda (continued)

9. Roundtable Discussion

NRAC members can bring up issues of import and/or interest for edification and/or discussion at this time. Please take advantage of this agenda item.

Announcement

Texas

WATERSHED STEWARD



The Texas Watershed Steward program is a free, educational workshop designed to help watershed residents improve and protect their water resources by getting involved in local watershed protection and management activities.

**Spring, TX
February 13, 2025
1:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.**

**George H.W. Bush Community Center
6827 Cypresswood Dr., Spring, TX 77379**

The workshop will provide an overview of water quality and watershed management in Texas, including a discussion on the Cypress Creek watershed. Best management practices local stakeholders may use to help improve and protect their water quality will be highlighted. Free continuing education credits/CEUs are offered for a wide variety of professional disciplines. For a complete list of continuing education offered, or to register, visit our website or call the number below.

**Pre-register for the workshop by
going to:**

**<https://tw.s.tamu.edu/workshops/registration>
or call 979.321.5935**

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

TEXAS STATE
Soil & Water
CONSERVATION BOARD

Workshop provided through Clean Water Act §319(h) nonpoint source grant funding from the TSSWCB and U.S. EPA.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

Announcement



Join us for our hybrid workshop on microplastics in surface waters

Tuesday, February 25

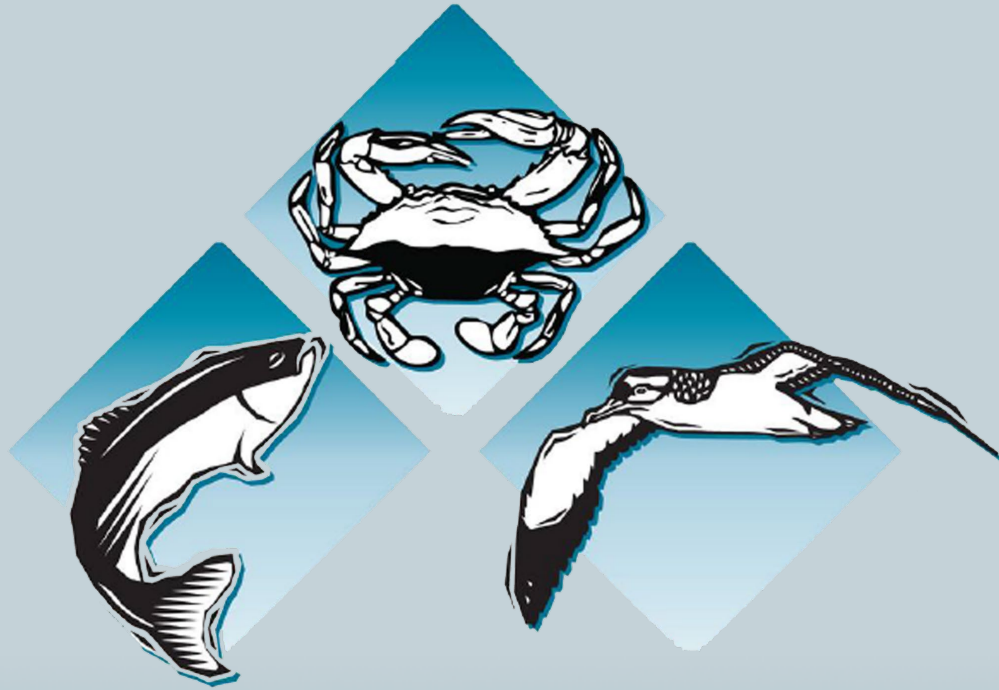
from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

in person at H-GAC and virtually on Zoom!



<https://www.h-gac.com/clean-water-initiative-workshops>

Announcement



RIVER, LAKES BAYS 'N BAYOUS TRASH BASH®

Register to attend this year's event at a site near you!
Saturday, March 29



<https://www.trashbash.org/>

NRAC Agenda (continued)

10. Public Comment

Members of the public can sign up to public comment. Three minutes allotted for each public comment.

NRAC Agenda (continued)

11. Next Meeting Date

Unless otherwise notified, the next scheduled meeting is:

Thursday, May 1, 2025 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

This meeting will be held as a hybrid in-person/online event.

12. Adjourn