



Houston-Galveston
Area Council

H-GAC's Regional Resilience Roundtable

April 2, 2026

9:00 AM – 2:30 PM CST

A G E N D A

9:00 AM

Check-in, Networking (*Light refreshments served*)

9:30 AM

Justin Bower

Director of Community & Environmental Planning
Houston-Galveston Area Council

Keynote:
9:40 AM

Stevee Franks

Regional Section Chief, Recovery and Mitigation
Texas Division of Emergency Management

10:00 AM

Christopher Steubing, PE, CFM

Executive Director
Texas Floodplain Management Association

10:30 AM

Jet Hays

Deputy Director for Integration, Community Development and Revitalization
Texas General Land Office

11:00 AM

Charriss York

Associate Program Director, Mitigation, Disaster Assessment and Recovery
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

11:15 AM

Dr. Katherine Byers

Government Relations Officer
Houston Food Bank

11:30 AM

Closing of Part 1:

Networking, Instructions, & Lunch (for those who pre-registered)

12:00 PM

Workshop Sessions Begin

Join a session; more details below.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, H-GAC provides for reasonable accommodation for persons attending H-GAC functions. Requests should be received by H-GAC 24 hours prior to the function.



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TODAY'S PRESENTERS

Justin Bower



Justin Bower is the Director of Community and Environmental Planning at the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GA)C, where he leads the agency's natural resources, disaster resilience, community planning, and public safety programs. Justin holds a master's degree in urban affairs and public policy from the University of Delaware and has spent over 20 years leading natural resources and urban planning efforts for a variety of local government and non-governmental organizations.

For the past 16 years, Justin has worked at H-GAC to further the agency's mission to support our local communities in improving water quality, flood resilience, and conservation efforts. Justin has a passion for bringing together partners and resources to enhance our region's natural and community resilience. As part of a lifelong love of the natural world, Justin is actively involved in many leadership roles with natural resource and wildlife efforts in the region. Together with his wife and two young daughters, Justin enjoys exploring the diversity of our region's landscapes, wildlife, and communities.

Stevee Franks



Stevee Franks is the Regional Section Chief for Recovery and Mitigation at the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) Region 4, where she covers 13 counties in Southeast Texas.

Before joining TDEM, Stevee worked for the Collin County Behavioral Health Authority, University of Texas at Dallas, Office of Emergency Management for the City of McKinney, Hagerty Consulting, Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and the Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas at Sam Houston State University.

Franks holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice as well as a master's degree in security studies, both from Sam Houston State University. Franks is excited to call Southeast Texas home, where she looks forward to raising her family. In her spare time, you can find her reading, listening to music and True Crime podcasts, hiking, and counting the days to Halloween.



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Christopher Steubing, P.E. CFM,



Executive Director for the Texas Floodplain Management Association (TFMA), which supports over three thousand members and over 2600 credentialed floodplain administrators in the state of Texas. These professionals work for local governments, consultants, state agencies and more, and are responsible in many ways for educating the public and defining the risk of floodplains on public infrastructure and private property, and identifying mitigation measures and solutions to reduce risk exposure.

Chris is a professional engineer and certified floodplain administrator with over 29 years of experience, ranging from city, county, and private-sector experience, where he held roles including Assistant City Manager, City Engineer, County Engineer, Director of Public Works, and Regional Construction Manager for RaceTrac Petroleum. He has extensive experience in city management, bond program development and delivery, engineering, floodplain management, program/project management, alternative project delivery, performance management, process workflow, and operations. He received his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M University in 1996 and became a professional engineer in 2002 and a Certified Floodplain Administrator in 2004. He completed the LBJ School of Public Affairs Public Executive Institute in 2016. Chris spent over 16 years with the City of Sugar Land before retiring in 2023.

Chris has been married for over 29 years to his wife, Darla, and they have three kids. As a devoted husband, dad, and professional engineer, he understands the balance of career and family and the responsibilities that come with both.

Jet Hays



Jet Hays is the Deputy Director, of Program Integration for the Community Development and Revitalization (CDR) Division of the Texas General Land Office. He oversees CDR specific automation systems, Studies focusing on improving CDR housing programs and improving planning tools and Liaison with State and Federal Agencies. He is responsible for maintaining the State sponsored FEMA short term housing program in a standby status. He has been with the GLO since 2017.

Jet served 33 years with the Texas National Guard, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. He was responsible for the Disaster Recovery Planning and Operations where he developed and refined hazard plans for events such as hurricane response, floods, severe winter weather, special security, and catastrophic events. His duties also included economic and agribusiness improvement



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projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Afghanistan. He has extensive experience in training armored units, securing sensitive sites, Information Operations, and Weapons of Mass Destruction Identification and Response. Jet's military service also included overseas assignments in Afghanistan, Iraq, Djibouti, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Jet is a "5th Generation Native Texan" on both his mother and father's side. He received a Bachelor of Business Administration from Texas A&M 1984, a Master of Arts in Anthropology from Texas Tech in 1998 and a Graduate Certificate in Homeland Security from the George Bush School of Government at Texas A&M University in 2012.

Charriss York



Charriss York is the Associate Program Director for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Disaster Assessment & Recovery (DAR) Mitigation Branch. She joined Texas Community Watershed Partners (TCWP), a program of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, in the spring of 2006. In 2008, she took over the Stormwater Program and became a Program Director in 2020.

Charriss has worked on numerous stormwater initiatives and previously led the Green Infrastructure for Texas (GIFT) Program. Her work focuses on increasing awareness of stormwater, non-point source pollution, and Low Impact Development. She has contributed to projects implementing on-the-ground examples of stormwater best management practices and stormwater wetlands in Galveston and Harris Counties. Charriss has also led the Wetland Restoration Team for TCWP, taught at both the high school and college levels, and worked on conservation projects for the Buffalo Bayou Partnership. She holds a B.S. in Biology from Truman State University and an M.S. in Botany from Oklahoma State University.

Dr. Katherine Byers



Dr. Byers has 20 years of experience in direct service, policy analysis, advocacy, and research. She has a master's in social work and graduated from the University of Houston with a doctorate in political science. She has developed and helped pass and implement several pieces of important legislation, including the suspension versus termination of Medicaid benefits for youth in juvenile detention. She works at the Houston Food Bank as the Government Relations Officer responsible for public policy at the federal, state and local levels, coordination of disaster response with government officials, and civic engagement.



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WORKSHOP AGENDA

12:00 PM

Community Hazards & Resource Management (CHARM)
Conference Room A

Plan Integration for Resilience Scorecard™ (PIRS™)
(Part 1 of 2), Note: Continues into the 1–2 PM slot.
Conference Room B

Green Infrastructure Toolkit & Ecosystem Service Benefit Values
Conference Room C

Grant Writing Tips & H GAC's Funding Development Program
Conference Room D

1:00 PM

Empowering Decision Makers with Flood Resilience Data,
Conference Room A

Plan Integration for Resilience Scorecard™ (PIRS™)
(Part 2 of 2)
Conference Room B

Green Infrastructure Toolkit & Ecosystem Service Benefit Values
Conference Room C

Plan Maintenance Matters
Conference Room D

2:00 PM

Roundtable Discussion

2:30 PM

Closing Remarks, Adjourn

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TODAY'S WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Green Infrastructure Toolkit & Ecosystem Service Benefit Values

This session will dive into the work conducted to quantify environmental benefits and develop Texas-specific ecosystem service benefit values to support the evaluation of nature-based solutions in Benefit-Cost Analysis. Participants will also learn about the Green Infrastructure (GI) Toolkit, including the Implementation Guide and GI Design Sets. The toolkit aims to support the integration of GI solutions to enhance infrastructure resilience and sustainability, ensuring that every GI project starts with the right approach. A hands-on activity will then guide participants through these topics, providing practical experience to apply and utilize in future work.



Christie Taylor
Program Director
Green Infrastructure for Texas (GIFT)
Disaster Assessment and Recovery (DAR)
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
christina.taylor@ag.tamu.edu

Christie Taylor is the Program Director of the Green Infrastructure for Texas (GIFT) Team with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Disaster Assessment & Recovery Mitigation Branch. She has been with AgriLife since December 2018 as part of the GIFT team running the Stormwater Wetland Program. Before joining the team, she worked as a wetland consultant and independent wetland delineator for 14 years.

Christie holds a B.S. in Marine Biology from Texas A&M University – Galveston and a M.S. in Rangeland Ecology and Management from Texas A&M University.



Michael Niebuhr
Program Coordinator
Green Infrastructure for Texas (GIFT)
Disaster Assessment and Recovery (DAR)
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
michael.niebuhr@ag.tamu.edu

Michael Niebuhr serves as the Green Infrastructure Program Coordinator with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Disaster Assessment & Recovery Mitigation Branch, partnering with communities across Texas to advance nature-based solutions for flood mitigation and municipal planning. He designs and delivers trainings, technical resources, & workshops that help local leaders integrate green infrastructure into policies, capital projects, and long-term resilience strategies. He also provides technical assistance and collaborates with elected officials & planning entities to strengthen sustainable stormwater management efforts. With more than 15 years of experience in habitat restoration & conservation, Michael has led oyster restoration initiatives and supported community-driven environmental stewardship along the Texas coast.



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Introducing and Exploring the Plan Integration for Resilience Scorecard™

This session will introduce and then, through audience participation, explore the capabilities and applications of the Plan Integration for Resilience Scorecard™ (PIRS™) methodology. Communities can use the PIRS™ tool to systematically and spatially assess – and then integrate – their networks of plans to strengthen hazard resilience, maximize public investments, and reduce disaster impacts. PIRS™ has been applied in over two dozen cities, to date, and is a preferred method for plan integration of the American Planning Association.



Matthew Malecha, PhD

Instructional Assistant Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning
Director, Plan Integration for Resilience Scorecard™ (PIRS™) Lab
Core Faculty, Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center
College of Architecture, Texas A&M University
mmalecha@arch.tamu.edu

Matthew Malecha is an Instructional Assistant Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning at Texas A&M University and Director of the Plan Integration for Resilience Scorecard™ (PIRS) Lab at the Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center. Dr. Malecha's research focuses on community resilience to natural hazards—specifically the roles of plans, policies, and regulations, and their interactions with underlying social and spatial characteristics. The PIRS™ Lab aims to improve community resilience planning across Texas, the United States, and internationally through applied research, outreach, and education to implement and advance the PIRS™ methodology.



Siyu Yu, Ph.D., AICP

Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning
Core Faculty, Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center
Vice-Director for Policy Research, Microclimatic-Design Research: Global Network (MDRGN), Texas A&M University
yusiyu_1989@tamu.edu

Siyu Yu is an assistant professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning, a core faculty member with the Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center (HRRC), and Vice-Director for Policy Research with the Microclimatic-Design Research: Global Network (MDRGN) at Texas A&M University. Dr. Yu's experience spans land use, plan integration, and resilience issues in the United States, principally in the Gulf Coast region, as well as internationally in the Netherlands and Japan. Much of Yu's current research focuses on the development, application, and extension of the Plan Integration for Resilience Scorecard (PIRS) methodology. She holds a Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Science from Texas A&M University and is certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners.



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Community Hazards & Resource Management (CHARM)

An interactive session where participants use a GIS-based planning tool to visualize and test land use scenarios in real time. Attendees will collaboratively explore how their decisions on development, conservation, and infrastructure impact community resilience, hazard mitigation, and resource management. Through hands-on mapping and group discussion, participants will gain practical experience with scenario planning to better inform sustainable and disaster-resilient community strategies.



Kelsey Johnson

Planning Program Director,
Community Hazards & Resource Management (CHARM)
Disaster Assessment and Recovery (DAR)
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
kelsey.johnson@ag.tamu.edu

Kelsey Johnson is the CHARM Planning Team Lead for the DAR Mitigation Branch, a community planning and resilience-focused program within Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's Disaster Assessment and Recovery (DAR) Unit. She leads and contributes to projects that strengthen community resilience across Texas and the greater Gulf Coast region, coordinating closely with geospatial analysts to design interactive planning exercises using GIS models and spatial tools for both technical and non-technical audiences. Prior to joining DAR in 2023, Kelsey spent 12 years as Assistant Director and Senior Planner at Mississippi State University's Gulf Coast Community Design Studio. Her work has spanned coastal resilience planning, watershed planning and implementation, regional housing and fair housing equity assessments, community health impact assessments, neighborhood planning in underserved communities, and community engagement strategy development.

CHARM Staff



Amanda Cain, CFM



Erika Pham



Carlos Reyes



Dana Raborn, AICP



Dana Borham



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Grant Writing Tips & H GAC's Funding Development Program

This session provides an overview of H-GAC's Funding Development Program and practical tips for developing competitive grant applications. Participants will gain strategies to strengthen project readiness, align with funder priorities, and avoid common pitfalls to improve grant success.



Meghan Lyons, MBA

Manager, Funding Development
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Meghan.Lyons@h-gac.com

Meghan Lyons is a grants and contracts leader with more than 16 years of experience managing complex federal, state, and philanthropic funding portfolios. She currently serves as Funding Development Manager at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, where she leads regional technical assistance efforts and designs strategies to strengthen grant readiness and competitive funding outcomes for local governments.

Previously, Meghan directed enterprise-wide grants and contracts operations at the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute and advised executive leadership at Harris County on funding strategy, compliance, and intergovernmental partnerships. Across her career, she has built internal control systems, improved compliance frameworks, and guided organizations through the full grant lifecycle from pre-award strategy to audit readiness. Meghan holds an MBA and is passionate about helping public entities strengthen systems, mitigate risk, and maximize impact through strategic funding.



Cassie Jones

Senior Grant Coordinator
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Cassie.Jones@h-gac.com

With over 20 years of experience in community and public health, Cassie A. Jones is a dedicated community builder, and experienced program coordinator who specializes in creating, developing, and turning evidence-based programs into real-world impact. She is fueled by a passion for the environment and focuses on uniting diverse regional partners to tackle systemic challenges from the ground up. By empowering people through collaboration and action, her work turns collective commitment into sustainable, positive change.



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Empowering Decision Makers with Flood Resilience Data

This session describes the Texas General Land Office (GLO) River Basin Flood Studies (RBFS) for the Central Region, outlining the mission of the Study, what has been accomplished to date, and how communities can use the data and tools to reduce flood risk and advance mitigation projects.



Jet Hays

Deputy Director for Integration, Community Development and Revitalization, Texas General Land Office

Jet Hays is the Deputy Director, of Program Integration for the Community Development and Revitalization (CDR) Division of the Texas General Land Office. He oversees CDR specific automation systems, Studies focusing on improving CDR housing programs and improving planning tools and Liaison with State and Federal Agencies. He is responsible for maintaining the State sponsored FEMA short term housing program in a standby status. He has been with the GLO since 2017.



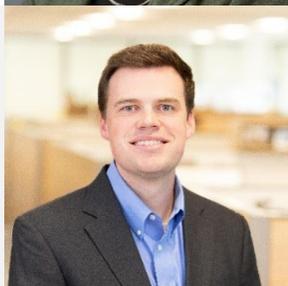
Ashley Poe, P.E., CFM, Freese and Nichols

Ashley currently serves as the Project Manager for the GLO Central Region after serving as the Deputy Project Manager through last phase, managing the execution of work by all technical teams (Outreach, Data, Modeling, and Funding) in coordination with GLO, other Region teams, and Technical Partners. She currently manages the FNI Central Texas Stormwater team and has a background in stormwater planning and modeling, Drainage Master Plans, floodplain management and compliance, and FEMA modeling and mapping.



Maggie Puckett, P.E., CFM, Freese and Nichols

Maggie currently serves as the Deputy Project Manager for the GLO Central Region after serving as the Alternatives Analysis Modeling Manager last phase, overseeing activities including collaborative development of the Hot Spot and Alternatives Analysis SOPs, Alternatives Analysis Pilot Study, and Hot Spot Analysis. Maggie is a Stormwater Project Manager in the Central Texas group and has a strong background in stormwater planning and H&H modeling as well as TWDB regional and state flood planning.



Mark Pauls, P.E., CFM, Freese and Nichols

Mark Pauls is a Technical Advisor and Quality Controls reviewer for the GLO Central Region, providing oversight of alternatives analysis modeling this phase and baseline modeling development in the previous phase. Mark is an experienced Project Manager and H&H Modeler in the FNI Western Gulf Coast Stormwater Group. His experience includes conceptual stormwater studies, master plans, mitigation alternatives, preliminary engineering reports, and capital improvement program prioritization. He has extensive experience developing dynamic stormwater models and has worked with local, state, and

national flood management entities to identify existing problems and develop solutions and recommendations for design.



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Plan Maintenance Matters

This session guides participants through effective maintenance of Hazard Mitigation Plans, emphasizing the importance of regular review meetings with key stakeholders such as emergency managers, public officials, and community partners. Attendees learn what documents to prepare and which sections of the plan to review, including mitigation action status, recent hazards, and changing community risks. The session includes a walkthrough of a model meeting agenda, tips for tracking plan updates, and practical tools for ongoing plan improvement.



Amanda Ashcroft, AICP, CFM

Senior Planner

Houston-Galveston Area Council

Amanda.Ashcroft@h-gac.com

Amanda Ashcroft is an AICP-certified planner and a Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) with a robust background in public outreach, stakeholder engagement, and project management. With extensive experience in collaborative community planning, Amanda is dedicated to promoting equitable and sustainable growth across Texas. Currently serving as a Resilience Planner at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, she manages the Hazard Mitigation Program, leading hazard mitigation plan development and updates, as well as regional flood mitigation initiatives, and works closely with various stakeholders to enhance community resilience.

Amanda's earlier roles include impactful positions in urban planning and environmental management, where she contributed to the drafting of development codes and zoning ordinances, conducted community engagement initiatives, facilitated resilience planning workshops throughout Texas, and led educational outreach on floodplain management.

An alumna of Texas A&M University at Galveston, Amanda holds a Master of Marine Resources Management and a Bachelor's degree in Coastal Environmental Science and Society, complemented by a minor in Economics. She is an active member of several professional organizations, including the American Planning Association, the Association of State Floodplain Managers, and the Texas Floodplain Management Association.



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