



Bay Briefings



A PROGRAM OF THE TCEQ

GI-348 2/06

Galveston Bay Estuary Program • 17041 El Camino Real, Suite 210 • Houston, TX 77058 • Phone: 281/218-6461 • Fax: 281/218-6807 • Email: gbep@tceq.state.tx.us • Web site: www.gbep.state.tx.us

Shoreline Management

Overview

Galveston Bay supports a wide variety of uses, including industrial processing (such as oil and gas extraction and petrochemical operations), shipping, fisheries, recreation, and tourism. These activities have a direct affect on the shorelines of the bay and its tributaries.

Development along the shoreline often creates problems through disturbance or destruction of habitats, modification of flood plains, worsening pollution, increasing erosion, and introduction of litter.

Shoreline Change

A shoreline assessment by the Galveston Bay Estuary Program showed that, by 1995, 326 miles (22 percent) of the nearly 1,500-mile Galveston Bay shoreline had been developed for human uses. Shoreline development is often accompanied by the installation of hard structures, such as bulkheads and

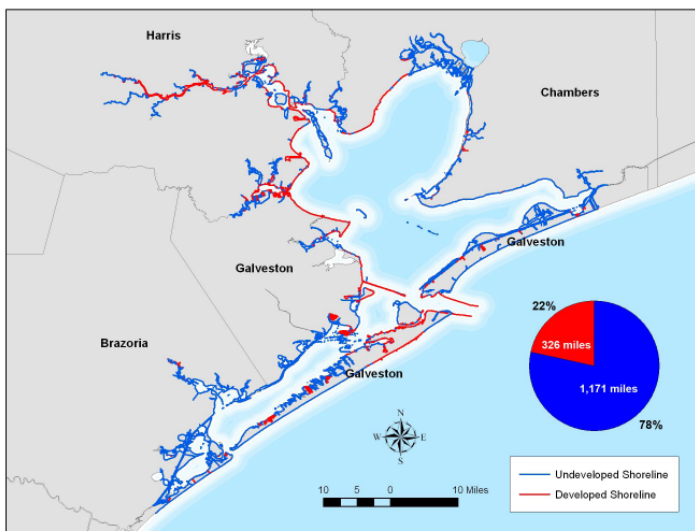
retaining walls. Installation of hard structures can destroy habitat, worsen water quality, and increase erosion along adjacent shorelines.

Outlook for Shoreline Access

Shoreline access around the bay is a concern of recreational users. The bay sustains many types of recreational uses, including boating, fishing, and wildlife watching. It is often difficult to know how many people use the bay, and at how many locations they access it.



Shoreline access is important for wade fishermen and other outdoor recreational users. Source: Armand Bayou Nature Center.



Product of the Galveston Bay Status and Trends Project, Houston Advanced Research Center, 2005
Data Source: Texas Bureau of Economic Geology, 1995

Map depicting location and extent of developed and undeveloped shoreline in Galveston Bay in 1995. Source: Map created by the Galveston Bay Status and Trends Project, Houston Advanced Research Center. Data Source: University of Texas, Bureau of Economic Geology Environmental Sensitivity Index (1995).

Public shoreline access is generally limited to a few boat ramps, shoreline parks, fishing piers, and bridges and roads bordering the bay. As population around the bay increases, demand for additional public access facilities is likely to grow.

Local governments and private organizations have undertaken efforts to acquire land along bay shorelines for public recreational facilities. Several municipalities, such as League City, Seabrook, and Texas City, have improved parkland and public access to the bay and its tributaries. However, lack of funding or available property often prevents the acquisition of land for public facilities.

A number of projects promote low-impact recreational opportunities around the bay. The Texas Parks and Wildlife

Department has completed the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail, which provides access and observation sites to birders along the Texas coast. A number of birding trail sites are located around Galveston Bay.

The cities of Pasadena, Webster, League City, La Porte, Baytown, Seabrook, and others are developing trails and shoreline access for low-impact recreational opportunities along area bayous. The Harris County Flood Control District is integrating recreation, habitat, and shoreline access efforts into its flood control projects. The Galveston Bay Foundation developed *Galveston Bay Drive and Discover* as a guide for the public to important natural resource areas around Galveston Bay. Additionally, the Texas General Land Office has developed a guide to shoreline access points in the bay area.

What the Estuary Program Is Doing

The Galveston Bay Estuary Program implements the Shoreline Management Action Plan that combines long-range conservation goals with efforts to increase public access to the bay.

The Estuary Program is also helping improve access to the bay by funding local planning efforts that promote shoreline access and working with local conservation organizations that include shoreline access in their habitat-protection efforts.



Shoreline erosion-control and marsh-restoration project at Little Cedar Park in La Porte. Source: City of La Porte.

What You Can Do

- Get involved in local park planning by working with your city or county parks department.
- Join a watershed working group. Such groups often work to improve habitat, water quality, and shoreline access along bay tributaries.
- Work with your coastal community public officials to develop and implement shoreline protection and access plans.

For more information about these activities, please visit the Estuary Program Web site at www.gbep.state.tx.us.



T E X A S C O M M I S S I O N O N E N V I R O N M E N T A L Q U A L I T Y

The TCEQ is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. The agency does not allow discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation or veteran status. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this document may be requested in alternate formats by contacting the TCEQ at 512/239-0028, Fax 239-4488, or 1-800-RELAY-TX (TDD), or by writing P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087.