



Beach Action Plan

BMAC

February 2012

Background

Per the request of the Galveston Island Park Board of Trustees, a strategic planning session was held on Friday, February 24, 2012 with members of the Beach Maintenance Advisory Committee (BMAC) to determine short and long-term priority actions which would ultimately improve the quality and management of Island beaches under the jurisdiction of the Park Board.

During the brainstorming meeting, action items were divided into four categories: Operations, Advocacy and Outreach, Beach Nourishment Projects and Research. Operations relate to the Park Board's on-going responsibility for beach grooming and maintenance, Advocacy and Outreach refers to institutional activities targeting distinct stakeholder groups (Home Owner Associations, visitors, beach goers, and the public in general), Beach Nourishment Projects identify specific interventions to improve beach profiles and Research addresses identified needs for additional study or investigation.

All identified activities are envisioned to be accomplished either through direct budgetary allocations and the dedication of staff time or in collaboration with community partners, local institutions or organizations.

The brainstorming activity produced the following comprehensive list of actions/ activities identified by the group:

Operations

- Develop a three to five year Master Plan for Beach Management,
- Develop, communicate and abide by a well iterated policy for the management of seaweed,
- Standardize operational procedures for distinct levels of maintenance, categorizing beaches according to usage patterns,
- Educate managerial and supervisory staff concerning the procedures,
- Evaluate current seaweed cleaning procedures,
- Conduct analysis of current costs for beach maintenance and evaluate funding sources,
- Commit to the development of environmentally responsible beach park facilities,

Advocacy and Outreach

- Produce and distribute interpretative materials regarding seaweed cleaning and beach management,
- Work thru schools to coordinate the delivery of summer environmental programs for students and visitors,
- Develop publicity schedules in local magazines to educate users and residents in regards to beach management practices, beach safety and environmental codes of conduct,
- Partner with the City Permitting Office to have standardized beach maintenance guidelines attached to permits granted to the HOAs,
- Understand and communicate the economic impact of Sargassum on Galveston beaches,
- Support the development of a winter Texans environmental educational program offering innovative outreach activities such as brown bag lunches with speakers,
- Provide information on seaweed and beach maintenance on the Park Board Website,
- Promote public awareness for “National Beach Day” in conjunction with the “Adopt a Beach” program,
- Set a “Free Day at the Beach” for schools and locals to encourage local ownership of beaches,
- Develop communication channels with stakeholders such as HOAs and hoteliers.

Beach Nourishment Projects

- Serve as a review committee for technical firms on shoreline restoration projects,
- Establish a shoreline protection pilot project along the Seawall,
- Partner with the GLO in the shoreline protection project at the end of the Seawall,
- Work to identify and increase funding for beach nourishment projects,
- Increase solicitations for grant funds, reach out to other institutional partners for grant writing, and incorporate data gathered from studies to establish needs,
- Develop a database for beach profiling which would capture and analyze data relative to the changing topography of the beaches,
- Plan for emergency issues, such as red tide, and develop a contingency fund,
- Define and understand the roles and responsibilities of the various institutions/ agencies involved in beach maintenance, permitting and oversight, (Park Board, City of Galveston, GLO, etc)
- Facilitate regular meetings between entities to clarify roles and leverage resources,
- Actively participate in the current Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study,

Research

- Develop and report on key performance indicators utilizing a report card format,
- Evaluate and consider beach certification opportunities such as "Blue Wave".

Workshop Conclusions

In order to establish priorities, the group vetted these action items based on their level of importance. Each participant was given an opportunity to select five items which they felt measurable success could be made. The resulting Top Priorities list represents the top ten action items identified by participants. The list is ranked by importance as determined from a voting process. Additional Priorities lists actions that were noted, but not ranked in the top ten.

Top Priorities

1. Develop Key Performance Indicators for beach management utilizing report card format,
2. Develop a three to five year Master Plan for Beach Management,
3. Establish a shoreline protection project on the Seawall,
4. Produce and distribute interpretative materials regarding seaweed cleaning and beach management,
5. Work to identify and increase funding for beach nourishment projects,
6. Develop publicity schedules in local magazines to educate users and residents in regards to beach management practices, beach safety and environmental codes of conduct,
7. Develop, communicate and abide by a well iterated policy for the management of seaweed,
8. Commit to the development of environmentally responsible beach park facilities,
9. Promote public awareness for "National Beach Day" in conjunction with the "Adopt a Beach" program,
10. Develop a database for beach profiling which would capture and analyze data relative to the changing topography of the beaches.

Additional Priorities

- Define and understand the roles and responsibilities of the various institutions/ agencies involved in beach maintenance, permitting and oversight,
- Facilitate regular meetings between entities to clarify roles and leverage resources,
- Set a "Free Day at the Beach" for schools and locals to encourage local ownership of beaches,
- Develop communication channels with stakeholders such as HOAs and hoteliers.
- Increase solicitations for grant funds, reach out to other institutional partners for grant writing, and incorporate data gathered from studies to establish needs,
- Plan for emergency issues, such as red tide, and develop a contingency fund,
- Conduct analysis of current costs for beach maintenance and evaluate funding sources,
- Work thru schools to coordinate the delivery of summer environmental programs for students and visitors,

- Partner with the City Permitting Office to have standardized beach maintenance guidelines attached to permits granted to the HOAs,
- Actively participate in the current Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study,
- Evaluate and consider beach certification opportunities such as "Blue Wave".