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# THE BEND



News of the  
Coastal Bend's Bays & Estuaries

Government Publications  
Texas State Documents

Vol. 3, No.1 - Winter 1996 MAY 06 1997 ✓

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## Second Bay Summit Well - Attended

### Panelists Discuss Wide Range of Environmental Topics

The CCBNEP's Bay Summit attracted nearly two hundred Coastal Bend citizens with a common interest — the preservation and protection of our natural resources — in early September. The outstanding attendance demonstrates the value citizens place on the Coastal Bend environment.

The purpose of the event was to present the public with an environmental report card for Coastal Bend bays and estuaries. Renowned researchers engaged in CCBNEP studies characterizing the health of the estuaries presented their findings. They also accepted questions from the audience during panel discussions that followed. Topics discussed ranged from living resources (plants and animals), to water quality, and freshwater needs of the estuary.

### Living Resources

Researchers served notice that some of the plants and animals of the Coastal Bend have experienced historical losses and face environmental

stresses that could further impact bay productivity. Although estuarine plant and animal populations are generally healthy, there are some areas of con-

“Some say it is possible to have a healthy environment and sustainable economy. The fact is, it is not only possible, it is necessary. With good science and common sense, we can develop solutions to prevent problems in the first place.”

**TNRCC Commissioner John Baker in Bay Summit opening remarks.**

cern. For example, seagrasses are being stressed and show some declines due to brown tide, dredging, and boat propeller scarring. Substantial losses of seagrass meadows could impact the entire estuarine ecosystem, affecting fish, crab, and bird populations.

The leading cause of species decline in the Coastal Bend is habitat loss and degradation. Currently, diverse habitats in our area provide food and protection for more than 490 bird species. But each year, habitat is destroyed to accommodate human land uses.

Researchers concerned about this trend recommend finding a balance between human uses of

the bays and estuaries while minimizing impacts to the natural system.

see Bay Summit, page 5

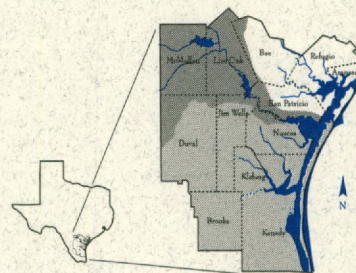
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Corpus Christi Bay National Estuary Program Study Area



The second Bay Summit attracted nearly 200 Coastal Bend Citizens.



## CCBNEP Hosts Meeting of Data and Information Transfer Committee

The Gulf of Mexico Program/Data and Information Transfer Committee (DITC) held its fourth meeting in late October, this time hosted by the CCBNEP at the Natural Resources Center on TAMU-CC campus. Data management has become an increasingly important element of all governmental programs, and the Gulf of Mexico Program looks to its DITC to provide direction on such topics as common metadata formats, database software, and the public accessibility of a broad range of data sets pertaining to the health of the Gulf of Mexico.

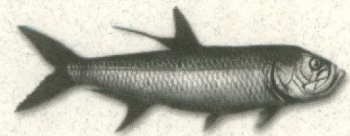
Public accessibility has been greatly enhanced in recent years with the advent of the World Wide Web, upon which the Gulf Program has established the Gulf Information Network (GIN). This distributed net-

work will eventually provide a clearinghouse for data and information generated by the seven Gulf of Mexico National Estuary Programs (NEPs). For readers with Internet access, the GIN home page can be found at <http://www.pelican.gmpo.gov>.

Meanwhile, the seven Gulf NEPs are working to formalize a partnership with the Gulf of Mexico Program for several purposes, including enhanced coordination in the planning and implementation of management actions. Jim Giattina, the Gulf of Mexico Program Director, has expressed interest in utilizing the seven NEP sites as focal points for implementing many of the Gulf Program's management initiatives. In addition, the long-term plan is to syn-

chronize the 'state-of-the-bay' reports produced by each of the NEPs, and to then produce a 'state-of-the-Gulf' report on roughly a triannual basis.

"The ultimate goal of the new partnership", says CCBNEP Director, Richard Volk, "is to engender a greater understanding of the large-scale processes at work in the Gulf, and thus the stewardship needed to protect its functions. After all, the health of the Gulf is intrinsic to our own healthy bays and estuaries ... and vice-versa".



## Storm Drain Stenciling Kits Available

Removing trash from the bayfront and off our streets is one way to reduce the amount of trash in our bays. However, going straight to the source to prevent it is actually the most desirable solution, and in the long-run the least expensive.

**DUMPING HERE  
POLLUTES  
OUR WATER**

Over the past 20 years, nonpoint source (NPS) pollution has become the leading cause of water quality degradation in lakes, rivers and coastal areas. In developed areas where roads, parking lots, sidewalks, and lawns replace the natural porous terrain, stormwater picks up sediments, toxic chemicals, debris and bacteria.

The most common route for NPS pollution is the network of storm drains that carry rainwater from

streets directly into waterways. To raise awareness about NPS pollution and its causes, storm drain stenciling efforts have sprung up in communities throughout the country.

Thanks to a pollution prevention grant awarded by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission's (TNRCC) CLEAN TEXAS 2000 program has made storm drain stenciling materials available to volunteer groups in the Coastal Bend. Mylar stencils reading, "Dumping Here Pollutes Our Water," along with a manual on how to conduct a storm drain stenciling event, are available. Contact the CCBNEP office at 512/980-3420.

Corpus Christi residents can also call the city's Stormwater Hotline at 512/880-3800 for information on participating in a city-sponsored storm drain stenciling event.

"Around the Bend" is produced quarterly by the Corpus Christi Bay National Estuary Program with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and The Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission. The newsletter design and layout is done by East Meets West Productions, Inc. For more information about the Program, call 512/980-3420

Contributors to this issue include: Doug Baker, John Giles, Jennifer Lorenz, Mercedes Salinas, and Richard Volk.

News items, photographs, and letters are welcome and may be submitted to the CCBNEP office, Natural Resources Center, TAMU-CC, 6300 Ocean Drive Suite 3300, Corpus Christi, Texas 78412. The submission deadline for the next newsletter is February 1, 1997.

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## CCBNEP Looks at Organizations Working on the Coastal Bend Environment

Have you ever wondered how many federal, state, regional, and local agencies work to manage and protect the environment in the Coastal Bend? Or about the non-governmental agencies working to protect our natural resources? Or what about the effectiveness and coordination of their efforts?

The new CCBNEP report "An Inventory and Analysis of Bay Management Structure for the Corpus Christi Bay National Estuary Program Study Area" answers those questions, and many more. The report analyzes the institutional framework protecting natural resources, assesses the effectiveness of these efforts, and recommends changes to improve coordination among institutions in the Coastal Bend. The inventory is serving the CCBNEP in the development of the Coastal Bend Bays Plan.

In researching this report, over 100 governmental and non-governmental entities were surveyed about their activities in the CCBNEP study area. Based on survey responses, and current scope of involvement with CCBNEP priority issues, 69 institutions were identified and documented in the report. For each of these, the report details information about the mission, current activities, and programmatic resources.

The report elaborates further on 37 of those identified institutions. These were selected because of their strong role with CCBNEP's current initiatives, and future potential role in resource protection. The analysis of these institutions includes their formal objectives, current activities, and potential for future activities.








The use of matrices throughout the publication simplifies the information into understandable tables (see sidebar). Matrices indicate the role of each institution, and the priority issues it addresses. If you want to

find out who to contact regarding environmental volunteer programs, technical assistance, or education and outreach, consult this publication.

It is available at all state depository libraries and on the Internet at <ftp://www.tnris.state.tx.us/pub/ccbnep>.

### Environmental Management Needs Identified

The report "An Inventory and Analysis of Bay Management Structure" identifies management needs for CCBNEP priority issues. The figure indicates the priority issues, and lists contributing factors with existing management gaps. The Coastal Bend Bays Plan will include recommendations to address identified needs.

CCBNEP Priority Issues	Factors
 <b>Altered Freshwater Inflow into Bays and Estuaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water conservation, reuse, and technology advances</li> </ul>
 <b>Condition of Living Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over-utilization of living resources</li> </ul>
 <b>Loss of Wetlands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disturbance of submerged habitats from trawling, prop washing and other activities</li> </ul>
 <b>Degradation of Water Quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persistent brown tide events in the upper Laguna Madre</li> <li>Tidal discharge of oil field produced waters</li> <li>Atmospheric pollution</li> </ul>
 <b>Altered Estuarine Circulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modifications to natural passes and bay bottoms (e.g., oyster reefs and seagrass beds)</li> <li>Artificial barriers to water circulation (e.g., causeway, groins and jetties)</li> <li>Industrial intakes/discharges</li> </ul>
 <b>Bay Debris</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oil exploration/production facilities</li> <li>Industrial and Construction sites</li> </ul>
 <b>Public Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deposition of bioaccumulating toxic substances into the estuary</li> <li>Existing sediment sources of toxins</li> </ul>

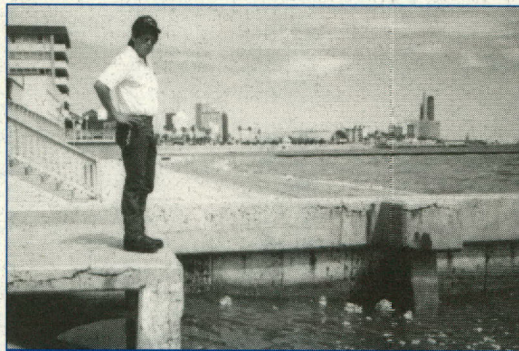


## Get Involved! Become An Urban Volunteer

The Coastal Bend Council of Governments (CBCOG) and the city of Corpus Christi are working with the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission's Texas Watch team to implement a volunteer storm water monitoring program called Urban Watch in Corpus Christi. This program will focus on testing the water quality of rivers, creeks and bays, in and around the city.

Urban Watch volunteers will use a test kit to detect pollutants in storm water from the city's drainage system. Monitors will test several parameters such as, temperature, turbidity, pH, detergents, copper,

phenols, chlorine, and ammonia nitrogen. In addition, monitors will look for oil sheens, trash, sewage, and sur-



City of Corpus Christi employee Jose Raul Rodriguez stands above one of the many stormwater outfalls that discharge to Corpus Christi Bay. Refuse and trash discarded on the streets are carried through the storm drain system and deposited in the bay.

face scum at sampling sites. The City will use the data to get a better picture of the extent of storm water pollution and to develop educational programs to keep storm water runoff as free of pollutants as possible.

**Mark Your Calendars!** Citizens interested in Urban Watch can find out more about the program by attending a meeting on Thursday, January 16, 1997 at 6 p.m. at the Corpus Christi Central Library's La Retama meeting room, located at 805 Comanche Street. The CBCOG and the City will be available to answer questions and provide information on how to become a volunteer. For additional information call John Giles at the CBCOG at 512/883-5743.

Volunteers should be at least 14 years old and for those under 18, adult supervision may be required.

## Point & Click for CCBNEP Publications

CCBNEP publications are now just a point and a click away! Anyone with Internet access can download these publications from the Texas Natural Resources Information System (TNRIS) Web Site. The current list of available publications includes:

Publication Title	TNRIS Folder
An Inventory and Analysis of Bay Management Structure for the CCBNEP Study Area	baymgmt
Current and Historical Trends of Brown Tide and Red Tide Phytoplankton Blooms in the CCBNEP Study Area	brwntide
A Conceptual Ecosystem Model of the CCBNEP Study Area	ecomodel
Current Status and Historical Trends of the Estuarine Living Resources within the CCBNEP Study Area - Volumes I - IV	lvgrcrs
Characterization of Nonpoint Sources and Loadings to the CCBNEP Study Area	npntsrc

Downloads are available at the Internet address: <ftp://www.tnr.is.state.tx.us/pub/ccbnep>. The CCBNEP plans to continue to make this service available as new publications become available. If you have trouble downloading these files, email the TNRIS at: [webmaster@twddb.state.tx.us](mailto:webmaster@twddb.state.tx.us).

And don't forget to check out the CCBNEP web page, <http://www.sci.tamucc.edu/ccbnep>. Our Web Site is continually updated. Soon, look for executive summaries of new reports, helpful Internet links, and the new booklet, Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries: The Changing Face of a Landscape.



## Bay Summit, from page 1

### Water Quality

During water quality discussions, many researchers expressed a need to better understand the impacts of point source and nonpoint source pollution. CCBNEP characterization studies nearing completion will help provide some of those answers. Researchers recommend that improvements to water quality can be accomplished by first quantifying point source impacts and exploring incentives to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

### Freshwater Inflows

The value of freshwater inflows - environmental and economic - were discussed at some length. The economic impact of a productive bay is evidenced by sport and commercial fisheries. Arguably, some of the best fishing in Texas is found in the Coastal Bend.

Commercial black drum landings are

at record highs and South Texas recreational fishing enjoys national notoriety. Tourism, a growing industry also benefits directly from the many recreational opportunities afforded by clean and productive estuarine waters.

All researchers were in agreement about the importance of freshwater to the productivity of the estuary. Indeed, our estuaries are defined by the freshwater they receive. However, regional demand for freshwater is expected to grow. Studies by the CCBNEP and others are underway to address this growing human demand. Modeling studies being conducted by the US Geological Survey, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, and the Texas Water Development Board are aimed at determining inflow requirements for the CCBNEP study area. These studies will provide some answers for the region's long-term water management needs.

The Bay Summit clearly illustrated an

improved understanding of the environmental conditions facing our bays and estuaries. This understanding precedes the development of regional consensus for actions to preserve and protect our resources. Although there is still much to learn, one thing is certain - planning for the future will help us avoid short-sighted solutions that compromise the long-range health and productivity of our environment.

## Award-Winning Environmental Author Coming to Corpus Christi

The Coastal Bend Bays Foundation and the Environmental Science Department at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi are excited to announce the speaking engagement of an award-winning environmental author who will address the issue of "coasts in crisis".

Don Hinrichsen, based in London and New York, and author of numerous environmental publications, will be the featured speaker. His presentation will draw from his recent work in studying over 40 coastlines from around the globe and from his newest book, titled "Living on the Edge: Managing Coasts in Crisis".

Hinrichsen is presently a United Nations Consultant and was the former Editor-in-Chief of the World Resources Report which won the Rose Award for Publishing Excellence.

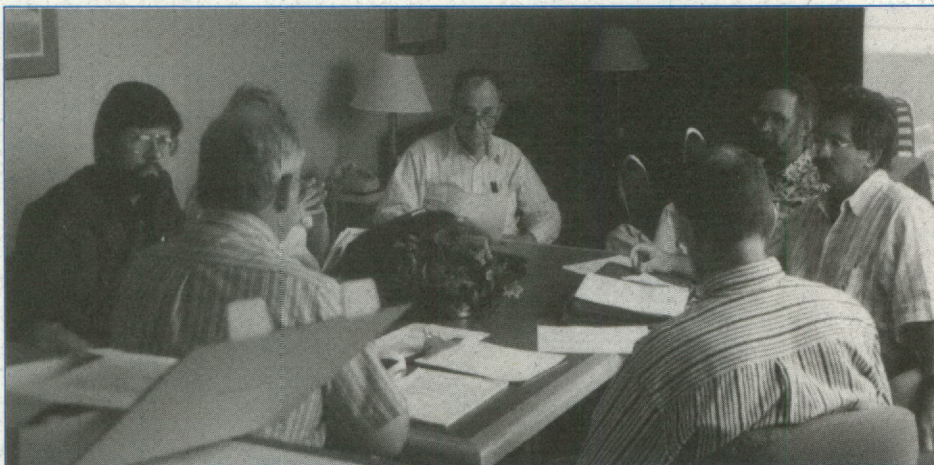
National Estuary Program participants are especially invited to attend this presentation as Hinrichsen will provide a global view of part of his ongoing program to document coastal area management programs and projects.

The slide presentation and speech will take place at the Warren Theater, Monday, January 27th beginning at 7:00 p.m. For more information call the Coastal Bend Bays Foundation at 882-4363.

## Environmental Goals Workshop Follows Bay Summit

Building on the momentum of the Bay Summit, Action Plan Task Force members convened the following day for the Environmental Goals Workshop. They continued work on the Draft Coastal Bend Bays Plan which is scheduled for release December 1997. The presentations

at the Bay Summit provided the Task Force members with information about the conditions of the bays and estuaries in the CCBNEP study area. Task Force members study this, and any new information, as they continue developing the Coastal Bend Bays Plan.



Brown Tide Task Force members discuss presentations made during the Bay Summit. Task Force members pictured left to right: Richard Kiesling, Kyle Spiller (back to camera), Dinise Nutt (hidden), Henry Hildebrant, Chris Onuf, (back to camera), Bob Harraghy, and John Fails.



## Calendar of Upcoming Events/Meetings

January 14	CCBNEP Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting
January 16	Management Committee Meeting Urban Watch Meeting, Central Library
January 20	Task Force Team Leaders & Financial Planning Advisory Committee
January 25	Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day, City of Corpus Christi
January 27	Presentation by author, Don Hinrichsen, Environmental Author, Warren Theater, TAMU-CC
February 12	Program Implementation Committee Meeting
February 13	Management Committee Meeting
February 17	Financial Planning Advisory Committee Meeting
March 20-22	CCBNEP All-Conference Workshop
April 8	Management Committee Meeting
April 9	Policy Committee Meeting

For More Information Call: 512/980-3420



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## HOLIDAY TRIVIA



One of every 11 dollars you spend on gifts goes to packaging. Approximately 373 million greeting cards, 35 million trees, 29 million rolls of wrapping paper and 17 million bows will be purchased this holiday season.

**Please trim your Holiday trash! You'll save our landfills and save money too!**

### NEXT NEWSLETTER

- CCBNEP Shrimp By-catch Study
- Water & Sediment Quality in the CCBNEP Study Area
- Selected Public Health Issues

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