

The Impact of the Summer of Seaweed on The Tourism Industry



GALVESTON
★ ISLAND ★
Where the Texas Coast Begins.



What is the Galveston Island Park Board of Trustees?

- **The Galveston Island Park Board of Trustees is a Governmental entity created by a Special Act of the Texas Legislature in 1962 for the Purpose of Directing all Tourism Efforts for Galveston**
- **The nine member Board of Trustees is appointed by the Galveston City Council.**
- **The Park Board employs an Executive Director who serves as General Manager for the Operations of the Properties and Programs under the Jurisdiction and Leadership of the Park Board and also employs a Full-time year-round Staff with additional Seasonal Employees**
- **The Park Board Nourishes, Maintains, Cleans and Manages the Islands Beaches and Beach Parks, Manages the Galveston Island Beach Patrol, Manages the Convention and Visitors Bureau and Markets the Island**
- **The Park Board is funded by Hotel Occupancy Tax, Beach User Fees, Beach Concessionaire Fees and Grant Proceeds. The Galveston Park Board does not receive any Property or Sales Tax Support**

Park Board of Trustees

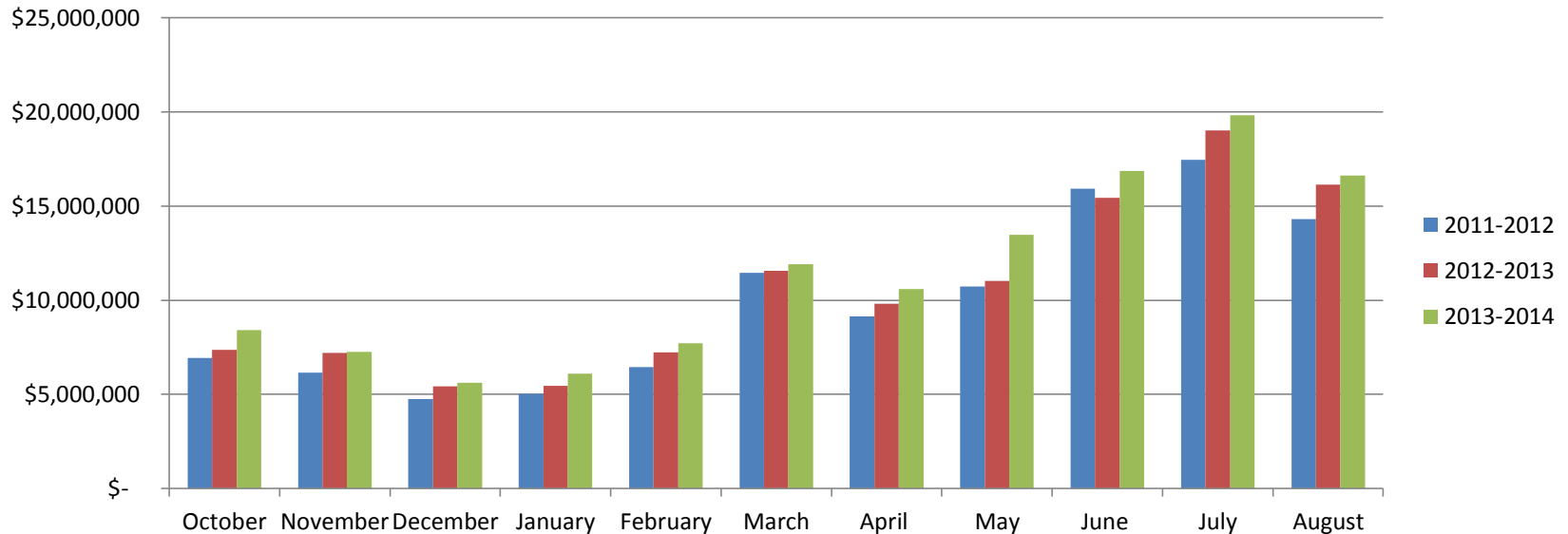
MISSION

*The mission of the Park Board of Trustees is to **position Galveston Island among the top five tourist destinations in the State** of Texas by accepting **responsibility for Galveston's number one industry: tourism.***

How do we Measure Success?

- **Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections**
- **Beach Admissions**
- **General Perception of Galveston**

Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections (HOT)



- July is Highest producing month (\$20,000,000)
- Dec & Jan are Lowest producing months (\$5,500,000)
- May saw greatest gain, despite cold weather and June was slow growth.
- July had a 'respectable' 13% growth
- Not necessarily concerned with 2014 due to Advance Reservations
- More of a concern with 2014's Potential Impact on 2015
- Enhanced Marketing Efforts with "Feel Good" Information

Beach Park Admissions 2013 & 2014

	2013	2014	Net Gain/Loss
East Beach	484,290	438,570	-10
Stewart Beach	857,531	813,404	-5.5%
Pocket Parks	158,395	130,379	-18%
Total	1,500,216	1,382,353	-8%

Other Beach Season Challenges of 2014

- March 22nd Texas City-Y Oil Spill which closed East Beach for one month and Stewart Beach for a week.
- Heavy rain during two of East Beaches biggest events and rain during the first part of the July 4th holiday

So when your Beaches look like this...



And the Headlines Say...

- **Seaweed assaults Galveston beaches**
Beach cleanup begins as mounds of stinky Sargassum threaten to turn off tourists
- **Tourists grumble as Galveston seaweed clean-up continues**
Gigantic stinking piles of algae wash ashore daily on island in unending volumes
- **Seaweed looms over Galveston holiday weekend**
- **Sargassum, Galveston's Seaweed that Won't Quit**
- **Galveston seaweed raises more turtle concerns**

What do you Do!

Your “Boots on the Ground” colleagues will be your best advisors in regards to the physical aspects of managing the situation On The Beach!

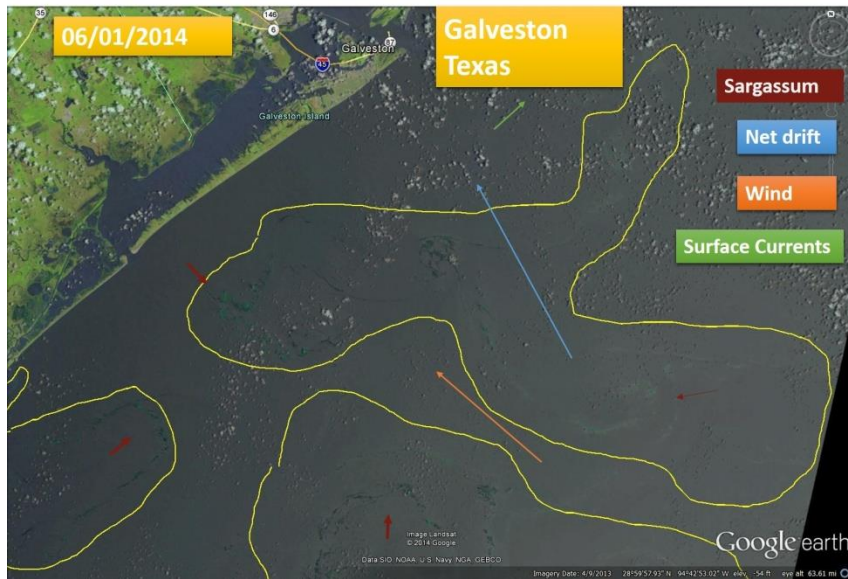
Stay on Top and Ahead of the Issue – “Are we getting the Job Done”

Listen to the public – What are the Touch Stones for the People you Serve



Deploy all Resources to their Most Efficient and Best Use Possible.

Managing the Sargassum Landings May Prove to be Less Challenging than Managing Public Perception!



BE PROACTIVE!

**Managing the Press and Public
Perception is Equally as Important!**

Public Outreach

Communicate with Visitors



SEAWEED

THE 8TH WONDER OF THE WORLD

Please EXCUSE THE SEAWEED
WHILE MOTHER NATURE
REBUILDS OUR BEACHES

FUN FACTS

SEAWEED IS:

- A floating ecosystem
- Important to create dunes and conserve sand
- An invaluable food source for coastal birds
- A natural occurrence along all coastal destinations



Join the SEAWEED SCAVENGER HUNT

GRAB A BUCKET AND
SHAKE OUT A HANDFUL OF
FLOATING SEAWEED TO FIND:



Seaweed Scavenger Hunt



The poster features a decorative top border with green seaweed illustrations. The title 'SEAWEEED SCAVENGER HUNT' is prominently displayed in blue and green. Below the title, a paragraph explains that seaweed is a natural occurrence along all coastal destinations during late spring and summer months, and that the name incorrectly implies that these brown algae have little value. A section titled 'SEAWEEED IS A FLOATING ECOSYSTEM - now see for yourself!' encourages participants to grab a bucket and a handful of floating seaweed and quickly shake it out to see which creatures appear. A 'SEAWEEED CHECKLIST' section follows, listing five items: SHRIMP, MOLE CRAB, SEAHORSES, SEA BEANS (AKA hamburger bean and sea hearts - finding one is good luck), and SARGASSUM FISH. Each item has a checkbox and a small illustration. The SARGASSUM FISH section includes a detailed description of the fish's unique adaptations for living among seaweed.

SEAWEEED SCAVENGER HUNT

Seaweed is a natural occurrence along all coastal destinations during late spring and summer months. The name seaweed incorrectly implies that these brown algae have little value.

SEAWEEED IS A FLOATING ECOSYSTEM
- now see for yourself!

Grab a bucket and a handful of floating seaweed. Quickly shake it out to see which creatures appear.

SEAWEEED CHECKLIST

- SHRIMP** 
- MOLE CRAB** 
- SEAHORSES** 
- SEA BEANS**
(AKA hamburger bean and sea hearts - finding one is good luck) 
- SARGASSUM FISH**
The Sargassum Fish is a fascinating creature that has adapted in a very specific and interesting way to live among the sargassum weeds.
The harmless fish's pectoral fins are flexible and limblike and can actually be used to grasp the weed. 

Seaweed Bucket Brigade Event

Over 50 People, most with Marine Biologist backgrounds, volunteered to teach the Public about the Environmental Benefits of Seaweed and how it is a Safe Habitat for Marine Life.

Over 3,000 Beachgoers Participated!



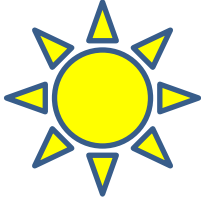

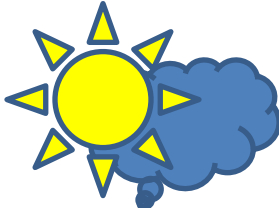
Managing the Media

Humanistic/Feel Good topics were offered to the Media. For example a story on “Smelly Seaweed “ was replaced with a Story on The NOAA Fisheries Sea Turtle Facility.

Other Feel Good Topics were our Future Nourishment Projects, the Parks Master Plan, the Sand Management Plan, the Bucket Brigade, the TAMUG SEAS Program and Seaweed Enhanced Dune Pilot project , “It’s Island Time” Messaging and Imagery Campaign and many more...



So at the End of the Day How did the “Summer of Seaweed” impact Tourism in Galveston Island?

- **Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections** 
- **General Perception of Galveston** 
- **Beach Admissions** 

Thank You!