



MEETING MINUTES  
Oyster Sub-Committee  
Pensacola & Perdido Bays Estuary Program  
June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 10:00 – 12:00 CT  
Virtual Meeting  
[Recording Link](#)

ATTENDEES

Logan McDonald	PPBEP
Whitney Scheffel	PPBEP
Donald Killorn	PPBEP
Matt Posner	PPBEP/Escambia County
Emerson Cheney	PPBEP
Anne Birch	TNC
Laura Geselbracht	TNC
Andrea Graves	TNC
Christian Wagley	Healthy Gulf
Amanda Croteau	UWF
Jane Caffrey	UWF
Beth Fugate	FDEP
Chris Verlinde	UF/IFAS Santa Rosa
Haley Gancel	UF
Kara Radabaugh	FWC
Katie Konchar	FWC
Kent Smith	FWC
Gina Alvarez	FWC
Matthew Davis	FWC

1. Presentation, *Whitney Scheffel*

- a. Anne Birch, TNC, announced that the East Bay Oyster Habitat Restoration project is scheduled to break ground on July 14 (*since rescheduled to August*). The project will construct 33 oyster reefs along Blackwater and East Bays in Santa Rosa County.
  - b. Whitney Scheffel, PPBEP, provided a recap for participants about PPBEP's role of incorporating the Oyster Fisheries and Habitat Management Plan priorities into the Program's CCMP and information/updates on oyster related efforts.
    1. PPBEP have completed drafts of their Education and Outreach Strategic Plan and Action Plan
      - a. EOC members provided feedback on the draft Education and Outreach strategy on June 24<sup>th</sup>.
      - b. TC members will review and provide feedback on the PPBEP draft Action Plan on July 27<sup>th</sup>.
    2. PPBEP oyster related efforts:
      - a. Education and outreach initiatives
      - b. National Estuaries Week events
      - c. Research related efforts
      - d. Living Shoreline Marine Contractor Training (Community Grant funded)
      - e. Monitoring
        - i. National Coastal Condition Assessment and National Wetland Condition Assessment intensifications (NCCA/NWCA)
    3. Oyster mapping update
      - a. Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties
        - i. MREC working with PPBEP and TNC staff to conduct oyster mapping and analysis in the Pensacola Bay system.
        - ii. Final reports for both counties will be completed by the end of August 2021.
2. Oyster Sub-Committee Structure Discussion
    - a. Sub-Committee overview (See Pg. 2)
      - i. W. Scheffel presented the oyster sub-committee overview and requested feedback on the structure, membership, and tasks of the committee. The sub-committee will be composed of standing members of the oyster stakeholder working group and other interested parties.
    - b. Fact-finding vs. Advisory (See Pg. 3)

- i. Participants reached consensus on the oyster sub-committee remaining a fact-finding sub-committee of the PPBEP's Technical Committee and will provide feedback to PPBEP staff for recommendations to the Policy Board (when applicable).
  - c. Chair and Co-Chair responsibilities (See Pg. 3)
    - i. Discussion on roles of the committee chair and co-chair. Chris Verlinde, UF/IFAS, and Beth Fugate, DEP, volunteered to serve as co-chairs.
- 3. General Discussion
  - a. Katie Konchar, FWC, asked if the fish community surveys conducted by Dr. Baker, DISL/USA, overlapped with areas scanned in the oyster mapping effort. W. Scheffel confirmed that the areas surveyed overlapped with sites mapped by MREC.
  - b. Meeting participants discussed general intent of the oyster sub-committee and agreed to focus on prioritization and future goals during the next meeting.
  - c. Kent Smith, FWC, suggested that oysters may be a good focus area/flagship for the PPBEP, like Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP) and their focus on seagrass.
- 4. Next Meeting (*tentative* August 24<sup>th</sup>)
  - a. At the next meeting, the committee will vote on and appoint chair and/or co-chairs.
  - b. Anne Birch and Katie Konchar offered to present on a proposed restoration project that is based on outputs from the existing Habitat Suitability Model (TNC) and the Ecosystem Services Model (EPA/TNC).
  - c. Logan McDonald, PPBEP, mentioned the need for committee input on a future oyster documentary film the Program hopes to move forward on in the near future.
  - d. Meeting participants will discuss future meeting content and committee goals and project prioritization. The format of the next meeting will be a hybrid (in-person/virtual) format.
  - e. Anne Birch and Kent Smith suggested that prioritizing committee actions should be a critical component of upcoming meetings.
  - f. Anne Birch suggested that the committee alternate meeting times between daytime and evenings in order to ensure that watermen are able to attend.