



Technical Committee Minutes

October 25th, 2022, 10:00 – 12:00 CT
Virtual Meeting | [Meeting Recording](#)

Attendees

Matt Posner	PPBEP
Whitney Scheffel	PPBEP
Logan McDonald	PPBEP
Haley Gancel	PPBEP
Madi Ross	PPBEP
Molly McDaniel	PPBEP
Tucker Reynolds	PPBEP
Paul Looney, Chair	WRA
Casey Fulford, Vice-Chair	AACD
Amy Mathis	UF CCS
Barbara Albrecht	PWA, BFA, UWF AIMS
Beth Fugate	DEP
Bob Bendick	TNC
Brandi Woolery	Dewberry
Brandon Jarvis	EPA
Brent Wipf	Escambia County
Chris Boyd	Troy University
Christa Court	UF
Christian Wagley	Healthy Gulf
Christine Angelini	UF CCS
Christopher Plymale	EPA
Collin Ortals	UF CCS
Dana Morton	Escambia County
Darryl Boudreau	NFWFMD
David Loy	Atkins
Don Blancher	Moffatt & Nichol
Eric Schneider	ESA
Heather Woodard	SAS
Jacqueline Lane	Friends of Perdido Bay
Janet Bowman	TNC
Janice Gilley	Florida Senate
Jeannette Kelson	Wood
Jeff Helms	Moffatt & Nichol
Jessica Graham	SASJBEP
Jiahua Zhou	UF
John Williams	Community Member



Justin Bousquin	EPA
Katie Baltzer	TNC
Kristin Bennett	TetraTech
Naisy Dolar	Santa Rosa County
Ryan Rossi	SASJBEP
Shelley Alexander	Santa Rosa County
Tanya Linzy	Santa Rosa County
Tricia Kyzar	UF CCS

1. Call to Order

2. Welcome and Introductions

New attendees Christa Court (UF/IFAS Food and Resource Economics), Collin Ortals (UF-CCS), and John Williams (Community Member) introduced themselves to the Technical Committee.

3. Approval of July 26th, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Barbara Albrecht (PWA, BFA, UWF AIMS) made a motion to approve the July 26th, 2022, Meeting Minutes. Shelley Alexander (Santa Rosa County) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Partner Presentations

a. Christine Angelini and Collin Ortals (UF CCS) – Northwest Florida Water Quality Improvement Project

UF Center for Coastal Solutions provided an overview of a project funded by the Florida Legislature that aims to assess water quality and economic trends and create a data repository to inform future infrastructure improvement projects. The project's main objective is to create a comprehensive infrastructure improvement strategy, with an actionable, integrated funding roadmap to improve water quality in Northwest Florida, which includes a data-driven and stakeholder-informed prioritization of gray and green infrastructure solutions and a collaboratively (multi-state, multi-county) developed strategy to secure funding for high priority solutions.

Discussion was held on priority areas and concerns within the watershed including wastewater and habitat conditions. Suggestions for a common language used on vulnerability measures were introduced and location-based solutions vs. regional solutions.



b. Shelley Alexander (*Santa Rosa County*) and Chris Boyd (*Troy University*) – Living Shoreline Suitability Model for the Pensacola Bay System

C. Boyd presented an update on the Living Shoreline Suitability Model (LSSM) and corresponding interactive viewer ([Story Map](#)) he completed for the Pensacola Bay System, originally developed by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. The presentation provided background on coastal habitat degradation, shoreline erosion, and the benefits living shorelines can provide to coastal communities as well as factors that were incorporated into the model. The LSSM aims to provide recommendations for expanding the use of living shorelines and other nature-based solutions, while also providing options for remediating existing hardened infrastructure. S. Alexander provided information on how Santa Rosa County plans to educate community members and stakeholders on the benefits of different shoreline protection options.

Discussion was held on how this project will relate to the CCMP Action Plan.

5. Staff Updates

a. Final CCMP and Public Comment Summary (*Whitney Scheffel, Senior Scientist*)

The CCMP public comment period was open from August 4th – 28th. Seventeen responses were received from community stakeholders and partner agencies. Feedback included comments regarding content edits and additions for clarity, additions of partners or locations of interest to various actions, and alignment with existing guiding documents. Staff compiled and evaluated feedback and feasible and relevant recommendations were incorporated, where appropriate. The final adoption of the CCMP by the Board will occur at the October Policy Board Meeting. The finalized CCMP was shared highlighting the main sections. View the CCMP [here](#).

b. State of the Bays (*Whitney Scheffel, Senior Scientist*)

PPBEP staff is working on the first State of the Bays report and will launch the digital platform in the new year. The main indicator groups include water quality, habitat, land use, and wildlife. The report will provide an overview of how conditions have changed over time, the current condition of the bays, and efforts that are underway to improve the condition of the bays. Staff plans to engage the Technical Committee in the development of future State of the Bays reports, which could include additional indicators or metrics as PPBEP and partners continue to fill data gaps.

c. PPBEP Annual Work Plan (*Matt Posner, Director*)

The Annual Work Plan will include FY22-23 Programs, Projects, and Partnership Priorities like organizational structure, research and monitoring priorities, and policy and technical assistance. Project input provided at the April 2022 Management Conference Meeting including a living shoreline cost share program, sedimentation studies, microbial source tracking water quality studies, and policy



recommendations for stormwater and green infrastructure projects will also be incorporated.

d. Project Updates

i. Seagrass mapping and trawling survey (*Whitney Scheffel, Senior Scientist*)

PPBEP partnered with the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) to conduct seagrass extent mapping and trawling surveys. Flight transects were completed in September by NV5 Geospatial for both Pensacola and Perdido Bay systems. Multispectral imagery will be processed to assess the current extent of seagrass habitat and will serve as an update to the 2017 seagrass maps. Trawling surveys were conducted throughout the Pensacola and Perdido Bay systems to add to an existing historical dataset as well as provide current information on juvenile fish communities across seagrass habitats to track species changes over time. Final reports will be available in early 2023.

ii. Seagrass monitoring (*Whitney Scheffel, Senior Scientist*)

The Program partnered with researchers at the University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Lab to complete seagrass surveys to collect data on species and macroalgal cover, canopy height, and water quality parameters. Ninety-five sites were selected across lower Pensacola Bay, lower Perdido Islands, Big Lagoon, and Santa Rosa Sound adding to existing sites established as part of an existing National Park Service monitoring effort. Sediment cores were also collected to evaluate dormant seagrass seed densities.

iii. Upper watersheds assessment (*Whitney Scheffel, Senior Scientist*)

PPBEP is partnering with University of West Florida (UWF) researchers and community scientists to conduct water quality monitoring along the upper reaches of the watersheds to fill previously identified data gaps. A total of 24 sites were selected throughout the Perdido, Escambia/Conecuh, and Yellow/Shoal sub-watersheds across a gradient of land-use categories. Water quality parameters being measured as part of this assessment include conductivity/salinity, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, chl-a, dissolved nutrients, bacteria, and more. Field work is due to be completed in November.

iv. Economic valuation (*Matt Posner, Director*)

PPBEP partnered with FSU staff to conduct an Economic Impact and Valuation assessment for the Pensacola and Perdido Bays watersheds. The analysis found that businesses located within a half mile of the estuaries employ more than 84,000 people and generate nearly \$8 billion in sales, and the estuaries are estimated to contribute \$2.7 billion to property values and \$81 million to consumer spending.

e. National Estuaries Week (*Logan McDonald, Community Outreach Coordinator*)

National Estuaries Week was a successful celebration with participation in events across the watersheds. The week-long celebrations included the Brews for the Bays



program, guided kayak and bike tours, the 2022-2023 Community Grant Symposium, an estuary themed earring collection, and many other events.

f. 2022 – 2023 Community Grant Awards (*Logan McDonald, Community Outreach Coordinator*)

Eight new Community Grant Projects were awarded for the upcoming project term.

Projects include:

- Blackwater Soil and Conservation District’s No-Till Seed Drill Rental Program
- Escambia County’s Coastal Landscaping Workshop & Plant Giveaway
- Franklin’s Promise OysterCorps Program
- Navarre Beach Marine Science Station’s Aquatic Care Team
- National Wildlife Federations Manatee’s and Meadows Program
- Northwest Florida State College’s Santa Rosa Sound and Pensacola Bay System Peripheral Oyster Mapping Project
- University of West Florida’s Pensacola and Perdido Bay System Streambank Erosion Project
- University of West Florida’s Zooplankton and Water Quality Monitoring of the Perdido Bay Project

g. Marketing contract – Impact Campaigns (*Logan McDonald, Community Outreach Coordinator*)

Staff are working with Impact Campaigns and Hatchmark Studios, to develop and launch an Estuary 101 Campaign. Community stakeholders recently participated in a marketing workshop and provided feedback on the best ways to engage the community through membership, pledges, and business support. The Estuary 101 Campaign will launch in the new year.

h. Oyster Sub-Committee Meeting (*Whitney Scheffel, Senior Scientist*)

The next meeting will be a round-table discussion with community stakeholders and partner agencies to identify solutions to water quality impairments impacting Pensacola Bay System oysters.

- i. Tentative: January 31st 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM; Location: Santa Rosa County Extension Office (Milton, FL)

6. Remembering Jessica Bibza (*Matt Posner, Director*)

Discussion was held on ways the Program and its partners can honor and recognize Jessica Bibza’s memory and contributions to the Pensacola and Perdido Bay area and the greater Gulf region. Suggestions included a cycling or slow ride fundraiser event, a manatee outreach internship, and a scholarship or award in her honor. PPBEP and interested partners will continue discussions on potential events, programs, and/or awards to continue Jessica’s legacy.

7. Discussion Items



a. 2023 Technical Committee Priorities and Meeting Schedule

Paul Looney (Chair, WRA) reviewed ideas for how the Technical Committee can prioritize actions in the 2023 project year. Ideas for how the TC can help the EP with engaging Alabama partners, developing monitoring partnerships, the future development process for State of the Bays reports, assisting the Program with implementation of the Annual Work Plan, and tracking success and performance measures of projects and programs. More suggestions from the TC were requested. In the upcoming year, the TC will be shifting to a quarterly meeting schedule.

8. Around the Room/Announcements

- a. Jackie Lane (Friends of Perdido Bay) shared a result summary of recent algal growth potential tests conducted by Hydrosphere Research with water samples collected from two sites in upper Perdido Bay. J. Lane voiced her concerns over the declining conditions in Perdido Bay.
- b. Jeanette Kelson (Wood) announced that the final public meeting for the Carpenter Creek and Bayou Texar Watershed Management Plan is being held on November 15, 2022, at the Bayview Community Center. For more information, contact J. Kelson at jeanette.kelson@wsp.com.
- c. Eric Schneider (ESA) shared job opportunities.
[Senior Environmental Scientist | ESA](#)
[Wetland Scientist | ESA](#)

9. Next Meeting

- a. February 28, 2023