



Environmental Justice Committee Minutes

November 1st, 2022, 5:30 – 6:30 PM CT

[Recording Link](#)

Attendees

Matt Posner	PPBEP
Molly McDaniel	PPBEP
Whitney Scheffel	PPBEP
Logan McDonald	PPBEP
Haley Gancel	PPBEP
Brian Wyer	Gulf Coast Minority Chamber of Commerce
Rev. Dr. Calvin Avant	Unity in the Family Ministry
Casey Fulford	AACD
Gloria Horning	Anthropocene Alliance, Environmental & Social Justice Scientist
John Ellis	Santa Rosa Band of Lower Muscogee
Kyle Buck	EPA
Rev. Dr. Calvin Avant	Unity in the Family Ministry
Ryan Kirby	Escambia County

1. Call to Order

2. Welcome and Introductions

Molly McDaniel (PPBEP) opened the meeting. Program staff and all participants introduced themselves. Brief overview of agenda before beginning staff updates.

3. Staff Updates

a. Establishment of Environmental Justice Committee (*Molly McDaniel, Volunteer Coordinator*)

At the October 26, 2022 Policy Board Meeting, the Board approved the establishment of the Environmental Justice Committee. The informal workgroup will shift to a standing committee. Quarterly meetings will be scheduled for 2023. This transition to standing committee requires that that members nominate and vote on a committee chair and co-chair. The responsibilities for these roles include running meetings, providing input on meeting agendas in advance, giving committee updates at Policy Board meetings, and serving on the community grant selection committee. Members may self-nominate or submit nominations to mnmcDaniel@ppbep.org.

b. 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 occurred at the October Policy Board Meeting. The finalized CCMP was shared highlighting the main sections and specific community resilience action items related to the Environmental Justice Committee.

View the CCMP [here](#).

c. Community Resilience Survey Update (*Molly McDaniel, intern*)

An overview of the Community Resilience Project was given. The project includes collaboration with the City of Pensacola and other stakeholders to assess residents' perceptions of sea level rise and other local risks associated with climate change. 100 responses have been received as of November 1, 2022. The survey will be extended through the end of the year. Outreach efforts were highlighted including tabling at local festivals and in libraries around the city. G. Horning (Anthropocene Alliance, Environmental & Social Justice Scientist) and J. Ellis (Santa Rosa Band of Lower Muscogee) recommended reaching out to neighborhood associations in addition to current efforts.

4. Partner Presentation

Kyle Buck (EPA – Gulf Breeze): Identifying Barriers to Representation and Access

Kyle Buck (EPA) presented data related to local social vulnerability and spur conversations among the committee in terms of goal setting and identifying priorities. Several maps were shared that illustrate areas that may be of concern. Layouts presented include:

- Social Vulnerability (scored low to high within watershed)
- Demographic Index (EPA EJ Screen Tool)
- Superfund Proximity and Public Housing
- Brownfield Locations
- Land Cover (Percent Tree Canopy and Percent Impervious Surfaces)
- Park Access (Drive time network analysis)
- Food Deserts
- Access to Amenities
- Baseline Resilience Indicators in Communities (BRIC-dream).

Efforts are underway to compile this data down to a parcel level to better visualize hot spots within residential areas and locations where resources can be added/protected. K. Buck noted that these issues tend to overlap and present in the same areas.

5. Discussion Items

a. 2023 Environmental Justice Committee Priorities and Goals



M. McDaniel shared comments on behalf of committee members who were unable to attend.

- Christian Wagley (Healthy Gulf) advised the group to let science guide and inform actions on environmental justice issues in our area and would like to see the committee look into energy justice and climate justice issues, including those that relate to a just transition to renewable energy at fair prices rather than high rates charged by investor-owned monopoly utilities.

b. Community Concerns & Current Work

Ryan Kirby (Escambia County) updated the workgroup about an upcoming Environmental Justice review of county codes and ordinances that will include recommendations for the Board of County Commissioners. Focuses will be on neighborhoods in the Wedgewood area to look at the creation of buffers between incompatible land uses. R. Kirby shared a web portal for water quality data for Marcus Bayou and announced that Escambia County submitted a grant application for a regional stormwater pond to collect water from Olive Heights.

Reverend Dr. Calvin Avant (Unity in the Family Ministry) shared updates on the project with Escambia County EJ Ad-hoc community to address problems in the Wedgewood, Olive Heights, and Rolling Hills communities. Dr. Avant discussed the work with Escambia County to pursue Justice 40 funding for infrastructure improvements for stormwater management in underserved communities and suggested that PPBEP investigate how Justice 40 funding could support our program goals and our ability to assist local EJ communities.

Additional discussion was held among participants on examples of local stormwater issues and flooding.

Matt Posner (PPBEP) addressed Dr. Avant's comment on investigating the Justice 40 initiative, stating that the Estuary Program is aware of and will be pursuing, in addition to developing a watershed-wide EJ/social vulnerability needs assessment, the Justice 40 initiative. Also

M. Posner discussed upcoming funding opportunities through the EPA Gulf of Mexico Division and NOAA:

- EJ funding opportunity that will direct \$1 million to each gulf state
- nutrient reduction in urban, suburban, and rural environments
- community resilience and habitat restoration projects.

M. Posner reiterated that the Estuary Program is happy to support efforts that will be of benefit to the community.

Dr. Avant shared that he will be attending COP 27 in Egypt later this month and will be bringing these local issues to the international stage at the Environmental Justice Pavilion. A discussion was held on the Unity in Family Ministry's current



process of recruiting students to their Environmental Career Workers Training Program.

c. Quarterly Meeting Schedule for 2023

i. March TBD

ii. June TBD

iii. September 5th

iv. November 7th or December 12th

6. Wrap Up and Final Comments

M. McDaniel discussed with the workgroup Winter/Spring events & festivals that are relevant to the environmental justice and community resilience project. Members with any event or festival recommendations can email mnmcdaniel@ppbep.org.

K. Buck asked for clarification on the timeframe for and whether locations had been identified for the Community Resilience Project.

M. Posner announced that the EJ Needs Assessment will be completed in early 2023. A framework for the Needs Assessment will be drafted between now and the March 2023 Meeting. The framework may include focus areas, prioritized locations, and specific action.

Casey Fulford (AACD) proposed adding protection and preservation of agricultural lands throughout the watershed to 2023 committee priorities. C. Fulford shared resources including the American Farmland Trust's Farms Under Threat 2040 Report, web resources, and mapping. A discussion was held on where more information can be found (farmland.org). Additional information will be attached.

7. Next Meeting - March 2023



**PENSACOLA
& PERDIDO BAYS
ESTUARY PROGRAM**

Thank you for your participation in this effort so far. Please feel free to share any additional comments or feedback with program staff! Emails or phone calls can be directed to Molly McDaniel at mnmcDaniel@ppbep.org or (850) 595-0796.