



MINUTES
Education & Outreach Committee

August 10, 2023 at 4:00 PM CT

[Meeting Recording](#)

Present Parties:

Logan McDonald	PPBEP
Matt Posner	PPBEP
Whitney Scheffel	PPBEP
Haley Gancel	PPBEP
Madi Ross	PPBEP
Molly McDaniel	PPBEP
Rick O'Connor, Chair	Florida Sea Grant
Bethanne Edwards	Innisfree Hotels
Carrie Stevenson	UF IFAS
Chris Verlinde	Santa Rosa County
Samantha Bolduc	Escambia County

1. Call to Order

2. Introductions

3. Approval of February 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Samantha Bolduc (Escambia County) made a motion to approve the February 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Carrie Stevenson (UF | IFAS) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Staff Updates (*Logan McDonald, Community Outreach Coordinator*)

a. NOAA B-WET Grant Update

Staff provided an update on the program's NOAA Bay-Watershed Education & Training (B-WET) Program grant. The project kicked off with a weeklong Teacher Professional Development Workshop held in June where teachers from Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa County high schools participated in hands-on activities, field trips, and guest presentations all about the status of local oysters in the Pensacola Bay area.

Implementation of the oyster curriculum will begin in the Fall for Pensacola, West Florida, Gulf Breeze, Navarre, and Fort Walton Beach high schools. The curriculum includes the incorporation of student investigations, field and lab experiences, local case studies, and student action projects.

After the 2023-2024 school year, a project evaluation for the students and teachers will be administered. This will allow for lesson refinement and the



opportunity to distribute the lessons to other teachers and schools and submission to NOAA for inclusion in their educational resources portal.

b. The Humble Oyster Documentary

The Humble Oyster documentary that explores the past, current, and future conditions of oysters in the Pensacola Bay System was completed and premiered at WSRE in May. An accompanying in-Studio episode further explains the history and conditions of local oysters.

[The Humble Oyster](#)

[In-Studio: Hope on the Half Shell](#)

c. National Estuaries Week (NEW)

i. 9/9 – Palafox Market promotion

ii. 9/16 – Alabama Coastal Cleanup @ Seminole Boat Launch

8:00 am – 12:00 pm

[Registration](#)

iii. 9/18 Lunch & Learn: TBD

Samantha Bolduc (Escambia County) suggested terrapins as a topic. Rick O'Connor (Florida Sea Grant) offered to give a terrapin presentation and give an update on the Great Scallop Search.

iv. 9/19 Trivia at Coastal County

6:30 – 8:30 pm

[Registration](#)

v. 9/22 Community Grant Symposium, 5:30-8:30, Bayview Community Center

The Symposium will include presentations from our previous grant awardees and the announcement of our newly awarded Community Grant recipients.

[Registration](#)

vi. 9/23 Guided Paddle – Big Lagoon

d. Pensacola Seafood Festival | September 29th-30th and October 1st

e. Pensacola Lionfish Tournament | October 21st and 22nd

f. Full Moon Paddle | October 28th

g. Jessica Bibza Manatee Slow Ride | November 11th

5. Discussion Items

a. Evening for the Estuaries - Silent Auction Support & Invitations

Staff opened the floor for committee members to suggest Silent Auction ideas and to request that members help spread the word about the Gala.

Bethanne Edwards (Innisfree Hotels) offered to try and arrange an Orange Beach basket for the Silent Auction.

b. Trash Free Waters Outreach Campaign (Molly McDaniel, Volunteer Coordinator)

Staff shared the initiatives of the final implementation phase for the Trash Free Water Program. The outreach campaign is planning to focus on a short video



series that tours Carpenter and Jones Creek in Escambia County and Pond Creek in Santa Rosa County. A recycling initiative is included for both counties to better inform the public on proper waste management.

c. Bay Day Escambia County – 1st graders

A discussion was held for the planning and logistics of hosting Escambia County Bay Day in 2024. Rick O'Connor (Florida Sea Grant) shared input on the Escambia County Elementary School student field trips. Second through fifth-grade students already have priority field trips planned. First-grade students do not have a priority field trip and Bay Day could be planned to prioritize that grade level.

Carrie Stevenson (UF | IFAS) suggested using a system to evenly distribute the field trip invitation across the county by selecting one school per district and inviting all the first-grade classes from that school. Schools would rotate annually. Discussion was held on scheduling this fall and identifying feasible dates.

6. 2023 Meetings & Dates

a. October 12th Evening for the Estuaries

City of Orange Beach Coastal Arts Center
6:30 – 9:00 PM

b. December 14th Education & Outreach Committee

Discussion was held on what timing the committee prefers for future Education & Outreach meetings. PPBEP will schedule the next committee meeting earlier in the day.

7. Around the Room/Announcements

Logan McDonald (PPBEP) shared the application for Conservation Corps of the Forgotten and Emerald Coast, which is hiring corps members for Escambia County.

[Application](#)

Rick O'Connor (Florida Sea Grant) shared the successes of the Marine Contracting and Permitting class, the new lead for the Marine Science Academy (Jason Mellos), and upcoming events and workshops.

- Beach vitex & cogon grass invasive plant surveys | August 18th
- [2023 Lionfish Removal Challenge](#) | September 16th
- Cuban Treefrog Removal Workshop | September 28th
- STEM to Stern Workshop | November 2nd

Samantha Bolduc (Escambia County) shared the upcoming schedule for the Perdido Key Garden Volunteer Workdays. Three scheduled workdays for the Fall will be held on the third Friday of the month during September, October, and November.

Carrie Stevenson (UF | IFAS) shared the upcoming [Climate Smart Floridians Course](#) and the [Uplands Master Naturalist Program](#).

8. Meeting Adjourned