



## Environmental Justice Committee Minutes

September 26th, 2023, 2:30 – 4 PM CT  
Hybrid Meeting | [View Zoom Recording](#)  
PPBEP Office | 226 S. Palafox Pl. 5<sup>th</sup> floor

### Attendees

Matt Posner	PPBEP
Molly McDaniel	PPBEP
Haley Gancel	PPBEP
Dr. Calvin Avant	Unity in the Family Ministry
Bethanne Edwards	Innisfree Hotels
Kristin Bennett	Tetra Tech
Darryl Boudreau	NWFWMD
Jeanette Kelson	WSP
Joe Taylor	Franklin's Promise Coalition, CCFEC
Kyle Buck	EPA
Ryan Kirby	Escambia County
Latonia Viverette	WSP
Brian Wyer	Gulf Coast Minority Chamber of Commerce

### 1. Call to Order

### 2. Welcome and Introductions

Molly McDaniel (PPBEP) opened the meeting by providing introductory information about the purpose of the Environmental Justice Committee and invited attendees to introduce themselves to the group.

### 3. Approval of June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Meeting Minutes (pg. 2)

Ryan Kirby (Escambia County) made a motion to approve the June 6th, 2023, Meeting Minutes. Kyle Buck (EPA) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### 4. Partner Share - Update from Escambia County's Ad-Hoc Environmental Justice Committee and Air Quality Monitoring Program (Ryan Kirby, Escambia County)

- a. The Escambia County Ad-Hoc Environmental Justice Committee seeks to provide a space to discuss environmental justice concerns and determine ways to address those concerns and provide more information when necessary. There were no updates from the Committee at the time of our meeting. Those interested in participating in the County's Ad-Hoc EJ meetings should contact Ryan Kirby for more information and meeting times.
- b. The Escambia County Air Quality Monitoring Program is now live and real-time activity can be viewed at [myescambia.com/airquality](https://myescambia.com/airquality). The network consists of 12 particulate matter sensors throughout the county. The sensors are also visible on and contributing to the [AirNow Fire and Smoke Map](#). Discussion was held on the potential expansion of the network and additional site selection. At this time, the county does not have plans to purchase additional sensors, but residents can get involved by purchasing a sensor for their homes and connecting it to the network. Learn more about the sensors and how to connect a personal sensor to the network at <https://www2.purpleair.com/>.

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 [info@ppbep.org](mailto:info@ppbep.org)



5. **Discussion** (*Molly McDaniel, PPBEP*)

a. Future Environmental Justice Committee Engagement Strategies

i. Discussion on Meeting Schedule, Timing, & Potential Locations for Hybrid Meetings

- Committee members stated that continuing with the mid-afternoon might allow for greater participation from members who are able to fit the meetings into their workday. It was recommended to keep the 2:30 pm meeting time unless there was a need to engage with specific people or interested parties. At that time, it would be best to arrange a special meeting and coordinate according to their schedules. Attendees requested a copy of the current email distribution list of individuals receiving meeting invites, so they could make recommendations on additional invitees they thought should be involved. ([Linked list](#))
- Estuary Program staff expressed interest in connecting with active neighborhood and community leaders to help shape the Environmental Justice Needs Assessment and overarching strategy in addition to acting as a conduit and support for potential funding opportunities. Attendees encouraged staff to connect with the Council of Neighborhood Association Presidents of Pensacola (CNAPP) and attend neighborhood association meetings to advertise the Program and the EJ committee to an expanded audience. Specific associations mentioned were Belmont Devilliers, Century, and Cantonment area. Latonia Viverette (WSP) recommended that the Estuary Program define target audiences/areas by mapping using EJ screening tools (several exist, but specifically mentioned: Climate and Economic Justice Screening tool). Others recommended connecting with Social Service providers for on the ground insight and connections.

ii. Priorities and Future Discussion Topics

- Staff are seeking input from the committee on potential topics for discussion at future meetings as well as gauging interest from attendees on starting meetings with brief presentations from partners and others on their current work similar to the opening conversation about Escambia County's Air Quality Monitoring Network. Members shared about other programs that focus on climate literacy programs and the value of broadcasting grant/funding/technical assistance opportunities to communities and facilitating participation. Attendees shared that there may be opportunities for the Estuary Program to collaborate with the National Academies of Science Gulf Scholars program or programs of a similar nature. Dr. Calvin Avant (Unity in the Family Ministry) shared that they have been awarded a NAS grant working with local middle schoolers on STEM programming. Dr. Avant also shared about an active visual storytelling project that engages high school students.

b. Developing an EJ Capacity and Needs Assessment

i. Drafting and Next Steps

- Staff shared example strategies that other similar efforts have utilized in the past. Common strategies rely on virtual methods to collect information about capacity and current activities from recognized community groups. Members of the committee recommended starting with a more informal approach wherein staff seek out local actors, meet with them, and focus on learning about their organization first, and then sharing more about the Estuary Program and its EJ efforts. Members advised that community concerns may not always be framed as an explicit environmental concern but rather as a more informal complaint about conditions. This kind of informal conversation has the potential to open doors for education in both directions. Joe Taylor (Franklin's Promise, CCFEC) shared about the value of working with youth similar to the model that

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the Conservation Corps of the Forgotten and Emerald Coasts uses. It was emphasized that community engagement norms should emphasize mutual respect and provide that all participants are working together with mutual ownership of the outputs. Dr. Avant highly recommended using a community participatory science model for any research involving communities.

- Staff are looking for connections with community members and leaders that can facilitate participation in these conversations and expand the perspective of the committee. PPBEP is interested in collaboration and supporting the efforts of others. These committee meetings are open to the public and invitations can be extended and/or posted anywhere by anyone.

#### **6. Around the Room Updates**

- a. Dr. Avant (Unity in the Family Ministry) is looking for communities that are interested in disaster training sessions at the start of 2024.
- b. Kristin Bennett (Tetra Tech) invited staff to introduce the Environmental Justice Committee to the City of Pensacola Environmental Advisory Board on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### **7. 2023 Meetings & Events**

- a. September 22<sup>nd</sup>: Community Grant Symposium
- b. October 12<sup>th</sup>: Evening for the Estuaries Gala



## Environmental Justice Committee Minutes

June 6th, 2023, 6 – 7:30 PM CT

Virtual Meeting | [Meeting Recording](#)

### Attendees

Matt Posner	PPBEP
Molly McDaniel	PPBEP
Bethanne Edwards	Innisfree Hotels
Darryl Boudreau	NWFWMD
Jeanette Kelson	WSP
Joe Taylor	Franklin's Promise Coalition, CCFEC
Kyle Buck	EPA
Ryan Kirby	Escambia County

### 1. Call to Order

### 2. Welcome and Introductions

Molly McDaniel (PPBEP) opened the meeting by providing introductory information about the purpose of the Environmental Justice Committee and invited attendees to introduce themselves to the group.

### 3. Approval of March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Meeting Minutes (pg. 2)

Ryan Kirby (Escambia County) made a motion to approve the March 14th, 2023, Meeting Minutes. Kyle Buck (EPA) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### 4. Staff Updates

#### a. Management Conference Breakout Session Summary *(Molly McDaniel, Community Resilience Intern)*

Staff provided a summary of the discussion held during the Environmental Justice and Resilience Breakout Session at PPBEP's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Management Conference on Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>. The session was focused on gathering participants' input on two topic areas related to the objectives of PPBEP's draft Environmental Justice Strategy. The first half of the conversation sought information and assistance from participants to identify communities and local champions that the Estuary Program can partner with and support as a part of this initiative. During the session, staff also sought examples of specific problem areas and potential projects that may fit within the Program's scope. The second half of the session asked participants to reflect on how the natural resources of the watershed are currently being used and factors that may be a barrier to equitable access or use. A draft summary document from the Breakout Session can be found here: [EJ Breakout Session Summary](#). A complete summary of the Management Conference proceedings will be available at a later date.

K. Buck acknowledged that many of the issues identified during the Breakout Session may be outside of PPBEP's scope of work as it relates to protection and restoration of watershed resources. Perhaps the Program's role when confronted with problems that lie beyond our scope of work is to support and elevate the efforts of partner organizations working in these areas. It may be advised that the Estuary Program set initial priorities based on what efforts might have the greatest initial impact in terms of building connections within target communities, generating buy in, and alleviating the burden of limited capacity when possible.

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D. Boudreau (NWFWMMD) mentioned a NOAA Underserved Communities grant opportunity on the horizon that emphasizes building capacity, restoring habitat, and supporting urban communities and ecosystems.

Additional discussion was held on the need for refined, user-friendly mapping tools to accurately identify EJ communities and reduce the likelihood that vulnerable households and parcels will be obscured within a larger area. J. Taylor (Franklin's Promise) restated the need for building capacity within these communities and addressing the needs and barriers identified by community members.

## 5. Discussion

### a. **Draft Environmental Justice Strategy & Action Plan ([Link to Document](#))**

Discussion was held on the purpose and need for the EJ Strategy and Action Plan. The strategy outlines the 5 objectives established and workshopped at prior meetings that will be used to group actions together. The document has been updated to incorporate key findings from the Breakout Session according to how they align with the objectives.

D. Boudreau inquired as to whether PPBEP had explored participating in youth mentorship opportunities through local schools to engage with youth and suggested that could be an opportunity to expand the program's reach and engagement.

B. Edwards (Innisfree Hotels) shared several potential organizations/partners that could be helpful for connecting with community networks and linked them to the chat. J. Taylor commented that collaboration could be mutually beneficial in building trust and developing relationships with local groups.

Estuary Program staff will follow-up with committee members and other community members throughout the summer to further develop action items and goals for the strategy. The draft strategy document has been uploaded to share point and can be accessed and edited using this link ([Link to Document](#)). Committee members are welcome to make comments and suggestions in the document or contact Program staff to share feedback.

## 6. Around the Room Updates

- a) Restore America's Estuaries Inclusive Coasts Initiative: <https://estuaries.org/inclusive-coasts/ici-communities-of-practice/>
- b) PPBEP 2023-2024 Community Grant Program Applications will be opening later this summer. The Community Grant Program funds action projects that serve to restore, preserve, connect, inform, and educate. Through these action projects, the Estuary Program's vision is to create a healthy and sustainable environment, economy, and community. Learn more here: [Pensacola & Perdido Bays Estuary Program - Community Grants](#)
- c) [Franklin's Promise Coalition](#) will be recruiting a new cohort of participants from the Pensacola area starting in early July. Stay tuned for updates.

## 7. Next Meeting

- a. August 29, 2023

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 [info@ppbep.org](mailto:info@ppbep.org)