



## MINUTES

### Education & Outreach Committee

December 14, 2023 at 11:00 AM CT

Virtual

[Meeting Recording](#)

#### Present Parties:

|                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Logan McDonald       | PPBEP             |
| Matt Posner          | PPBEP             |
| Bailey Walkinshaw    | PPBEP             |
| Molly McDaniel       | PPBEP             |
| Rick O'Connor, Chair | Florida Sea Grant |
| Thomas Derbes        | Florida Sea Grant |
| Victoria Deycard     | EPA               |
| Chasidy Hobbs        | UWF               |

#### 1. Call to Order

#### 2. Welcome and Introductions

##### a. Bailey Walkinshaw, Community Outreach Assistant

Logan McDonald (PPBEP) introduced Bailey Walkinshaw (PPBEP) as the new Community Outreach Assistant.

#### 3. Approval of August 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Thomas Derbes (Florida Sea Grant) made a motion to approve the August 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Rick O'Connor (Florida Sea Grant) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 4. Committee Chair/Vice Chair Elections

Rick O'Connor (Florida Sea Grant) self-nominated for Committee Co-Chair. A vote was held, and the nomination passed unanimously.

Thomas Derbes (Florida Sea Grant) self-nominated for Committee Co-Chair. A vote was held, and the nomination passed unanimously.

#### 5. Staff Updates

##### a. Organizational Transition Update (*Matt Posner, Director*)

The transition to a fully independent organization is complete as of October 1, 2023.

##### b. Events (*Logan McDonald, Community Outreach Coordinator*)

###### i. Evening for the Estuaries Gala



The Evening for the Estuaries Gala was a successful event and brought in an abundance of silent auction items. Feedback surveys were sent out to attendees, and the consensus was that people were pleased with the location and timing of the event. Next year's gala will be held at the same location, the Coastal Arts Center of Orange Beach, on October 17, 2024. Staff will be sending out Save the Dates earlier than this past year and will be reaching out to the Education and Outreach Committee as it gets closer to the event to help publicize the gala.

**ii. Jessica Bibza Panhandle Manatee Ride**

PPBEP and Bike Pensacola hosted a Panhandle Manatee Slow Ride fundraiser to honor Jessica Bibza's legacy. The event raised over \$800 for supporting the Jessica Bibza Panhandle Manatee Internship and had more than 100 participants. Susan Bastajian (Realtor, Keller Williams) graciously sponsored the event, which covered the permit and a group escort from the Pensacola police department.

**c. Trash Free Waters Update** (*Molly McDaniel, Volunteer Coordinator*)

- i. The Teacher Clean Campus Initiative has been completely closed out; two local high schools implemented the Trash Free Waters curriculum, completed a student-led campus assessment to identify problem areas on their campus, and wrote proposals for strategies to implement for reducing litter. Cleanup supplies, educational campaign materials, and trash cans were provided to the local schools so they can continue implementing trash cleanups on their campus. Discussion was held on whether the high school program will be continued, and staff clarified that the high schools will be leading the program independently.
- ii. Staff have been working with ECUA to design new recycling bin labels to educate community members on what can and can't be recycled. The new informational labels are expected to roll out in 2024 and will be installed by ECUA.
- iii. PPBEP is working with Santa Rosa County on designing a wrap for the solar powered compactors that will be installed at Pond Creek. The messaging will include similar language from Estuary 101 in addition to facts about marine debris and some of the common debris items found specifically at Pond Creek.
- iv. Molly McDaniel (PPBEP) shared that she will be starting a new position with the EPA in Gulf Breeze in the new year and is working to get everything wrapped up before leaving PPBEP next Wednesday. Meeting participants congratulated her on the new position.



## **6. Discussion Items**

### **a. CCMP Reporting**

Discussion was held on what metrics should be included for outreach focused projects for the CCMP reporting. Rick O'Connor (Florida Sea Grant) discussed metrics required by Florida Sea and suggested that volunteer hours might be of interest to the PPBEP so that the monetary value could be calculated. Chasidy Hobbs (UWF) suggested reporting the watershed that the activity occurred in.

### **b. 2024 Priorities**

#### **i. Education Programs**

1. B-WET support will continue through the 2024-2025 academic year due to major delays from FWC for the special activities license. Collections will be taken in the summer and frozen so that students will have spat to look at during the fall semester. In 2025, PPBEP will start offering an annual Teachers on the Bay workshop with rotating topics each year.
2. Field trips will be offered as three different packaged program options that schools can pick from: Seagrass Sleuths (seining), Snorkeling, and Kayaking. Staff are discussing and looking into potential restrictions that may inhibit the availability of these programs, such as age restrictions for kayaking due to liability.
3. Staff participated in a Watershed Game training and teachers have expressed an interest in help for facilitating the game in the classroom. Staff will need to coordinate training sessions in the new year. Rick O'Connor (Florida Sea Grant) mentioned Carrie Stevenson (UF | IFAS) is trained in the Watershed Game as a facilitator.
4. Homeschool programs will be offered once a semester, one in the fall and one in spring.

#### **ii. Outreach Programs**

1. Monthly kayak tours will be offered starting in May and ending in October.
2. Restoration Rambles is a new program that will be casual guided hikes at local restoration sites starting in October and ending in April. The first Restoration Ramble will be on New Years Day.
3. Tidal Talks will be a quarterly evening lecture series with locations rotating throughout the watersheds. The lecture series would provide program or partner updates in a non-technical, easily digestible presentation format.
4. Trivia will be offered approximately bimonthly and will be an additional volunteer opportunity for those that are 21 and older. In addition, there will be brewery pop ins for The Humble Oyster screening.



5. Corporate Lunch and Learns will be informational talks targeting community members that work at major employers such as Navy Federal, NAS, and large hospitals.

**iii. Volunteer Programs**

Volunteer trainings will kick off in February for spring programming such as Panhandle Manatee, Bay Ambassadors, and Critter Collectors. Other opportunities that will be available later in the year include Watershed Game Facilitators and Vertical Oyster Gardening.

**iv. Messaging**

1. Staff received feedback from the 2023 Management Conference that there is a demand for bay friendly yards signs. Staff will be working on signage design mockups, which may incorporate inspiration from south Florida signs that include pictures of manatees to make the connection for individuals that nutrients impact local charismatic megafauna.
2. Estuary Explorers will have a bigger roll out in 2024 to encourage more residents and visitors to go out and explore the different locations.
3. Staff will be collaborating with Eric Sparks on messaging for the Living Shorelines Cost Share program.
4. Oyster shell recycling will be contracted out through OysterCorps, and staff will revisit branding, coverage for shell recycling in the Pensacola and Perdido Bay watersheds, developing resources such as window clings for participating businesses, and emphasize increasing program visibility to the public.
5. Trash Free Waters video series are anticipated to roll out in late spring.
6. Resilience mailers are going out in early 2024! The mailers are intended to encourage individuals to consider flood insurance options and is a collaborative effort with the city of Pensacola, Carrie Stevenson (UF | IFAS), and other partners.

**c. Watershed Game Dates**

A poll will be sent out in the next monthly newsletter accompanied by the meeting minutes to gauge the best time for a Watershed Game meeting.

**d. 2024 Meeting Dates**

Education and Outreach Committee meetings will be held on **August 8<sup>th</sup>** and **November 7<sup>th</sup>**, in addition to the Management Conference which is scheduled for **April 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Staff asked for feedback regarding meeting around lunch for the future meetings. There was no opposition to the proposed meeting times, therefore future meetings are expected to continue around the same time.



## 7. Around the Room/Announcements

Rick O'Connor (Florida Sea Grant) shared upcoming workshops and the success of the Living Shorelines Contractor workshop, which is held across the state of Florida and will be coming back to the panhandle next spring to Apalachicola.

- **Panhandle Regional Artificial Reef Workshop | February 7<sup>th</sup>**  
Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center in Ft. Walton Beach, FL
- **Panhandle Regional Lionfish Workshop | February 8<sup>th</sup>**  
Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center in Ft. Walton Beach, FL
- **Living Shorelines Contractor Workshop | April 11-12<sup>th</sup>**

Discussion was held on the potential to align living shoreline efforts between contractors and the Living Shorelines Cost Share program for working with private homeowners.

Florida Sea Grant will be working with Visit Pensacola to develop a self-guided paddle trail, which will include a series of QR codes along waterways. Rick O'Connor (Florida Sea Grant) extended the opportunity for PPBEP to collaborate on the paddle trail if interested.

Rick O'Connor (Florida Sea Grant) shared that four scallops were found during the 2023 Scallop Search, and that himself and Thomas Derbes (Florida Sea Grant) will be increasing efforts for next year. Florida Sea Grant in Escambia County is beginning to monitor for HABs in 2024. There was discussion on surveying the percent of hardened shorelines due to the interest in tracking horseshoe crab nesting sites and concern that hardened shorelines may be inhibiting nesting. Staff mentioned Troy University might have percentage of hardened shorelines information.

Victoria Deycard (EPA) shared that Pensacola State College out at Warrington has a Charter High School where all seniors must complete a job shadow for their capstone project. EPA has restrictions that make it difficult for students to shadow, but that could be a potential outreach opportunity for PPBEP or partners. Logan McDonald (PPBEP) shared that we have volunteer opportunities that may be of interest to the high school students as well.

Chasidy Hobbs (UWF) shared that Dr. Matthew Schwartz will be joining the Earth and Environmental Science department again as a faculty member at the University of West Florida and is developing a research agenda, and that there could be potential opportunities to work with PPBEP.

## 8. Meeting Adjourned