



## 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	NFWFMD
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 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: [E 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.



D. Boudreau (NFWFMD) 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 Molly McDaniel at [mnmcDaniel@ppbep.org](mailto:mnmcDaniel@ppbep.org) or (850) 595-0796.



## Environmental Justice Committee Minutes

March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 6:00 – 7:30 PM CT

Virtual Meeting | [Meeting Recording](#)

### Attendees

Matt Posner	PPBEP
Haley Gancel	PPBEP
Molly McDaniel	PPBEP
Casey Fulford	AACD
Kyle Buck	EPA
Rev. Dr. Calvin Avant	Unity in the Family Ministry
Ryan Kirby	Escambia County

### 1. Call to Order

### 2. Welcome and Introductions

### 3. Approval of November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Ryan Kirby (Escambia County) made a motion to approve the November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, Meeting Minutes. Kyle Buck (EPA) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### 4. Chair / Co-Chair Nominations and Elections

Matt Posner (Director, PPBEP) highlighted some of the key roles and responsibilities of the committee leadership positions. He reported that nominations for Ryan Kirby and Kyle Buck had been sent in prior to the meeting and asked participants for any additional chair and co-chair nominations. Hearing none, M. Posner suggested that R. Kirby and K. Buck serve as Co-Chairs for the Committee.

Casey Fulford (AACD) made a motion to elect Ryan Kirby and Kyle Buck as Co-Chairs of the Environmental Justice Committee for 2023. R. Kirby seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### 5. Staff Updates

- a. **Community Resilience Survey Update** (*Molly McDaniel, Community Resilience Intern*)  
M. McDaniel provided an overview and update of the Resilience Readiness Project. The project includes collaboration with the City of Pensacola and other stakeholders to assess city residents' perceptions of sea level rise and other local risks associated with climate change through the administration of an online survey. The survey period ended on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022, and the survey received 184 total responses. The survey results will be used to inform community-based resilience action through the development and implementation of a pilot resilience project. The update highlighted the outreach efforts used to reach residents and a review of preliminary survey results. For a closer look at the survey results please see the [One Drive Link](#).



- A discussion of potential pilot projects followed, and committee members provided feedback on the concepts and project as a whole.
- Calvin Avant (Unity in the Family Ministry) expressed concern that this survey did not reach the EJ communities in the city and therefore does not reflect their concerns or needs.  
M. McDaniel clarified that this project predates the formation of the EJ Committee and the survey itself was developed to assess broader community resilience throughout the City of Pensacola, not just the status of EJ communities in the city. M. Posner followed up with a question regarding advice on how to expand PPBEP's reach into these communities for future efforts. C. Avant recommended focusing on community centers, churches, and Latino and Black Media to ensure that this information is reaching the communities.
- Staff were advised that projects that increase access to information and distribution of educational materials where they are needed will likely be more impactful to communities from both EJ and resilience perspectives. C. Avant mentioned that his organization collects and distributes materials from Escambia County's Emergency Management Office to community members each year and is looking to develop an app that community organizers can use to communicate with residents in the event of a disaster.

## 6. Discussion

### a. **Draft Environmental Justice Strategy Feedback** (*Matt Posner, Director and Molly McDaniel, Community Resilience Intern*)

Staff presented a set of draft objectives for PPBEP's EJ strategy to the Committee for feedback. The draft objectives are: (1) To understand and address how the overburdened communities relate to and use the estuary and its resources, (2) To understand and address barriers to equitable and safe access to the estuary and its resources, (3) To understand and address barriers to participation in PPBEP events, resources, and decision making, and (4) Enhance public understanding of watershed-wide environmental justice concerns. These objectives are meant to serve as a reference for what PPBEP and the EJ Committee wants to accomplish over the next 5-10 years.

Objectives 1-3 are concerned with first, gathering more information about the issues EJ communities are facing and second, developing actions that will begin addressing those issues. Objective 4 is concerned with using PPBEP's platform to elevate the watershed's EJ concerns and increase awareness of these issues. This strategy is also meant to provide a means for PPBEP to enhance, elevate, and supplement ongoing efforts by other individuals and community organizations working in the EJ space and should not result in the duplication of efforts.

- Committee members provided feedback and recommendations to staff on the phrasing used and the structure of the document to eliminate exclusionary language and create a more logical flow. Acknowledging that this strategy applies to the PPBEP's entire watershed, the term 'Estuary' will be removed from



Objectives 1-3 to reflect that broader scope. Changing ‘estuary’ to ‘watershed’ both becomes more inclusive and highlights that no matter where the individual is located in the watershed, their use/access to resources has an impact on the broader system.

- Questions were raised about how the information about these communities would be gathered and used. C. Avant recommended utilizing a model similar to that of community participatory research through which the data that is collected is then made available to the communities being studied for their use.
- It was also suggested that an additional objective focused on identifying specific EJ communities and networks would be the logical first step to better understand and address the issues in these communities since these concerns are often location specific and spatially clustered. K. Buck agreed to produce a map identifying these EJ communities.
- A brief conversation about long term targets and accomplishments concluded this portion of the discussion.
- Staff will work with the Committee Co-Chairs to further refine the structure and language of the draft Strategy to bring back before the Committee at the next meeting.

#### **7. Around the Room Updates**

Staff and committee members had a brief discussion on current funding opportunities.

- [Gulf of Mexico Environmental Justice Grants Program Request for Applications](#)
- [The Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program](#)
- Additional Opportunities: [Environmental Justice Grants, Funding, and Technical Assistance](#)

#### **8. 2023 Meetings & Events**

- a. May 4<sup>th</sup>: Management Conference
- b. June 6<sup>th</sup>: Environmental Justice Committee
- c. August 29<sup>th</sup>: Environmental Justice Committee
- d. November 14<sup>th</sup>: Environmental Justice Committee

#### **9. Next Meeting**

- a. June 6, 2023: 6:00 – 7:30 pm