



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. CT
Santa Rosa County BOCC Chambers
6495 Caroline Steet, Milton, FL 32570

Meeting Recording

Members Present

Colten Wright, Chair	Santa Rosa County
Jared Moore, Vice Chair	City of Pensacola
Mike Kohler	Escambia County
Tim Burr	City of Gulf Breeze
Vernon Compton	City of Milton
Ashlee Hofberger	Escambia County
Mike Norberg	Okaloosa County
Kerry Smith	Santa Rosa County

Members Absent

Woody Speed	City of Orange Beach
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Interested Parties Present

Matt Posner	PPBEP
Whitney Scheffel	PPBEP
Bailey Walkinshaw	PPBEP
Mary Jane Bass	Beggs & Lane
Darryl Boudreau	NWFWMD
Kate Dawson	Moffatt & Nichol
Tyler Jacobs	Moffatt & Nichol
Paul Looney	WRA

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call (*Matt Posner, Executive Director*)

Staff called the roll. A quorum was present.

3. Public Comment

None

4. Approval of Board Agenda

The agenda was changed by moving Items 7a and 7b to the next board meeting.

Commissioner Kerry Smith (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Colten Wright (Santa Rosa County) seconded the motion. The motion passed



unanimously.

5. Approval of March 26, 2025, Board Minutes

Vernon Compton (City of Milton) requested Landowner Resource Management Service to be added to the partnership acknowledgements listed in the third board update.

Councilperson Jared Moore (City of Pensacola) made a motion to approve the March 26, 2025, meeting minutes with the requested change. Commissioner Mike Kohler (Escambia County) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Staff Updates

a. Director's Update (*Matt Posner, Executive Director*)

i. NFWF Awards \$10 Million to PPBEP for Oyster Restoration Initiative

Staff shared that the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation approved a \$10 million award to PPBEP for the Oyster Restoration Initiative.

ii. EPA and RESTORE Visit

Staff joined Escambia County staff for a visit with the new regional EPA administrator along with the RESTORE council.

iii. Panhandle Estuarine Restoration Team Meeting

Staff attended the 7th Annual Panhandle Estuarine Restoration Team (PERT) meeting at Camp Helen. Zach Schang (*Project Coordinator*) will be taking over Matt Posner's (*Executive Director*) co-chair role for PERT.

iv. 4th Annual Management Conference Meeting

PPBEP held its 4th Annual Management Conference Meeting with Chief Dan Helms as keynote speaker. Staff thanked the board members that were able to be in attendance and gave a brief overview of the breakout sessions.

v. Strategic Planning

Staff are currently undergoing a strategic planning effort with idgroup. There will be a session scheduled with board members in the future.

vi. Events, Legislative Updates, and Appointments

1. Florida Legislative Updates

A. PPBEP appropriation is included in the draft budget, however the budget still needs to be approved.

B. The Water Management District Watershed Partnership Program is a request of \$25million for Northwest District projects from Perdido to St. Marks.

2. National Estuary Program Appropriation

Staff have established a relationship with Representative Jimmy Patronis' office and submitted language requesting for PPBEP to be added in the



administration's budget for National Estuary Programs through his office.

3. Santa Rosa County Land Development Code Task Force
Staff are serving on the Santa Rosa County Land Development Code Task Force and anticipate the task force will wrap up in early June.
4. NFWF National Coastal Resilience Fund Pre-Proposals
Staff anticipate hearing back within the next few weeks if pre-proposals for the Carpenter Creek Restoration design or Deadman's Island Restoration preliminary design are invited for full proposal submission.
5. Sedimentation Action Plan RFQ
Staff have released a Request for Qualifications for the Sedimentation Action Plan as part of NOAA Transformational Habitat grant that was awarded for the Oyster Restoration Initiative. The intention of the action plan is to identify primary sources of sedimentation, set a goal target, and develop a list of prioritized projects.
6. Living Shoreline Assistance Program
Staff launched the Living Shoreline Assistance Program (LSAP) in Alabama covering the Perdido Bay Watershed area and have received 35 applications. Staff have completed 16 site assessments so far. The first open house for the Florida side had 17 attendees. Staff anticipate launching LSAP for the Pensacola Bay watershed area around August of this year.
7. Oyster Shell Recycling Program
Staff reported that over 100 tons of oyster shells have been collected, surpassing the grant deliverable mark. The recycled shell will be used for future restoration projects and helps save space in landfills. The Oyster Shell Recycling Program recently welcomed Atlas Oyster House as a new restaurant shell recycling partner.

b. Technical Update (*Whitney Scheffel, Senior Scientist*)

i. Oyster Spat and Larval Monitoring

Staff have begun field work for oyster spat and larval monitoring in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency, University of West Florida, and Dauphin Island Sea Lab. Staff shared an overview of the spat array prototype design and ongoing field work. Ten sites across Pensacola Bay will be monitored to assess spat settlement and larval sampling, which will be used to inform the Oyster Restoration Initiative efforts. Full deployment of the array is expected by late May or early June, following adjustments to the prototype. Staff have met with Jacobs to discuss design and placement for the initial 100 hectares.



ii. **2025 State of the Bays Report**

Staff are finalizing the 2025 State of the Bays Report, which will include a refreshed layout and new features such as interactive maps. Staff provided an overview of the new layout and key features of the 2025 report, including the introduction of fisheries as a new indicator.

iii. **Gulf Alliance All Hands Meeting**

Staff attended the Gulf Alliance All Hands Meeting in Biloxi. Logan McDonald (*Community Outreach Coordinator*) is the new Education & Engagement Team State Co-Lead for Florida and attended the entire week-long meeting. Other staff attended Monday workshops centered on water quality data parameters, the development of estuary-specific data dashboards, and discussions with groups across the entire gulf region.

c. **Outreach Update** (*Bailey Walkinshaw, Community Outreach Assistant*)

i. **Trash Free Waters Video Awards**

The PPBEP short film Trash Free Waters produced by Lensea received multiple awards: Pensacola Advertising Awards for Gold Addy for Public Service and Best of Show, and District 4 Addy Awards for Gold Addy for Public Service and the Charlie Award in Public Service.

ii. **Earth Day Restoration Ramble**

Staff held a special edition Restoration Ramble for Earth Day featuring a creek cleanup along Carpenter Creek. Staff were joined by Moffatt & Nichol, the selected consulting firm for the Carpenter Creek Restoration Project.

iii. **Critter Catcher Volunteer Trainings**

Staff held two Critter Catcher volunteer trainings to recruit and train new volunteers ahead of June for Summer Seagrass Sleuths.

iv. **Manatee Season Kicked Off**

Staff issued a joint press release with Dauphin Island Sea Lab's Manatee Sighting Network on manatees migrating to the northern Gulf region during the summer.

1. Panhandle Manatee season has kicked off with Kaylee Beasley, the 2025 Manatee Outreach Intern, leading manatee outreach efforts at various community events and holding outreach boat ramp days.
2. Manatee Ambassadors joined staff for a volunteer appreciation day of touring the Gulfarium's new Manatee Cove exhibit for rescued manatees.

v. **Escribano Point WMA Kayak Tour**

Staff held the first kayak tour of the 2025 season at Fundy Bayou, located in Escribano Point Wildlife Management Area (WMA). June's paddle tour will be



for a private Wounded Warriors group, so the next publicly available paddle tour will be in July.

vi. Upcoming Events:

1. VOG Volunteer Event
2. World Ocean's Day Paddle Tour for Wounded Warrior Group
3. Summer Seagrass Sleuths Returns in June

vii. Community Grant Program

Staff provided updates on 2024-2025 award cycle Community Grant recipients and a brief overview on the 2025-2026 pre-application response for the Community Grant Program.

7. Action Items

a. Approval of Quarterly Financial Statements

This action item was moved to the next board meeting.

b. Approval of FY24-25 Mid-year Budget Amendment

This action item was moved to the next board meeting.

c. Ratifying Approval of a Contract with Moffatt & Nichol, Inc. for P2425-01 Carpenter Creek Restoration Design and Permitting Services

Councilperson Jared Moore (City of Pensacola) made a motion to ratify approval of a contract with Moffatt & Nichol, Inc. for P2425-01 Carpenter Creek Restoration Design and Permitting Services, in the amount of \$691,769.68 for base services and \$3,361,516.86 for optional services, for a total contract value of \$4,082,786.54. Vernon Compton (City of Milton) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

d. Approval of Revisions to the FY25-26 Community Grant Program Process

Commissioner Mike Kohler (Escambia County) made a motion to approve changes to the Community Grant Program process beginning in the FY25-26 cycle. Vernon Compton (City of Milton) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

e. Approval of Florida Department of Environmental Protection Grant Agreement No. DH019, in the amount of \$2,858,000, for the Pensacola and Perdido Watersheds Microbial Source Tracking Project

Vernon Compton (City of Milton) made a motion to approve, and authorize the Executive Director to sign, Florida Department of Environmental Protection Grant Agreement No. DH019, in the amount of \$2,858,000, for the Pensacola and Perdido Watersheds Microbial Source Tracking Project. Councilperson Jared Moore (City of Pensacola) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Committee Updates

None



9. Board Updates

None

10. Public Comment

None

11. Adjourned