



MINUTES

Education & Outreach Committee

Thursday, February 12, 2026

12:00-1:00 PM CT

Virtual

[Meeting Recording](#)

Present Parties:

Samantha Pitts	PPBEP
Thomas Derbes, Co-Chair	Florida Sea Grant
Shannon McGlynn, Co-Chair	ADEM
Pearson Ellison	City of Orange Beach Coastal resources
Heather Patten	Community Member
Madison Murphy	Pensacola School of Liberal Arts
Molly McDaniel	Keep Okaloosa Beautiful
Christian Wagley	Healthy Gulf
Bethanne Edwards	InnisFree Hotels
Chris Verlinde	Santa Rosa County
Catherine Rider	Community Member
Carrie Stevenson	UF IFAS Extension
Victoria Deycard	Community Member
Meghan Easley	Community Member
John Easley	Community Member

1. Call to Order

2. Welcome and Introductions

3. Approval of February 6, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Thomas Derbes (Florida Sea Grant) made a motion to approve the February 6, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Carrie Stevenson (UF IFAS Extension) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Staff Updates & Discussion *Samantha Pitts, Education and Outreach Program Manager)*

a. Education & Outreach Intern

The Program's new Education and Outreach Intern, Adrienne Brendtro, will start on February 18th. She will be the primary lead for the Panhandle Manatee Program and support other education programs through 2026.

b. PPBEP Strategic Plan

Staff provided a high level overview of [PPBEP's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan](#), intended to serve as a living document to guide the organization growth of



the program through the next 5 years. There are 5 Areas of Strategic Focus, each with their own set of Goals and Action Items to help ensure sustainable growth through the next 5 years.

c. Evening for the Estuaries Gala

The 4th Annual Evening for the Estuaries Gala will be on Friday, October 16th at the Pensacola Yacht Club. Staff are excited to bring the gala to Pensacola for its fourth year and are expecting an increase in attendance due to the venue change. Partners with silent auction ideas or donations are encouraged to contact staff. Tickets are expected to go on sale in August.

d. Management Conference

The 5th Annual Management Conference Meeting will be April 8th at the Sanders Beach-Corinne Jones Resource Center. The meeting structure is new this year, with sessions for partner lighting talks, roundtable discussions and a local perspective panel. The event is free and open to the public, with lunch provided. Partners who are interested in presenting or have discussion topics to suggest should include them on their registration form:

<https://ppbep.wufoo.com/forms/rlqgtj01tdgnj/>

e. Upcoming Events

- i. February 15th– Mardi Gras Bead Clean Up
- ii. February 20th Restoration Ramble – [Tot Trot at Shoreline Park](#)
- iii. March 7th – [West Florida Fire and Nature Festival](#)
- iv. March 20th Restoration Ramble – [Carpenter Creek Headwaters Park](#)

5. Role of Education Committee Discussion

Staff have been evaluating the role of all program committees to ensure that they're effectively engaging program partners and providing benefit to partners and staff. Staff led the committee through a discussion exercise with the web-based MURAL platform. Results are attached.

6. Education & Outreach Strategy Exercise

Ahead of the 2027 CCMP Update, staff are beginning to evaluate the Education and Outreach strategy. This will be the first round of stakeholder engagement as staff begin to review current programs, CCMP alignment and growth opportunities. Staff led the committee through a discussion exercise with the web-based MURAL platform. Results are attached.

7. Next Meeting: April 30th Evening Social

To better support networking and partner collaboration, staff are planning an Evening Social for the next EOC meeting. Staff will still provide program updates and provide an opportunity for Around the Room announcements, but the focus will be on a less structured format focused on collaboration.



8. Around the Room/Announcements

- a. Carrie Stevenson (UF IFAS Extension) shared that IFAS Extension will be hosting the [Florida Master Naturalist Coastal System Course](#), starting on March 10th.
- b. Christian Wagley (Healthy Gulf) announced the [Gulf Coast Whale Festival](#) will be March 7th at the Gulfside Pavilion on Pensacola Beach and will feature local environmental organizations, a talk from whale researcher Laura Engleby and other presentations.
- c. Chris Verlinde (Santa Rosa County) shared that the County will be hosting Bay Day on April 17th for 200 5th Graders and anyone interested in having a station should contact her.

9. Meeting Adjourned



Education & Outreach Committee 2.12.2026 Meeting Mural Board Outputs

Education and Outreach Committee Discussion

What value or benefit does this committee provide to you or your organization?

- Getting full appreciation for the work PPBEP is doing and how my programming can supplement
- Partnerships for community-wide efforts
- Networking
- Expanding reach and awareness across broader watershed - wider audience and new partners
- Gaining additional knowledge about current education/outreach initiatives
- To enhance our hotel guest education program through opportunities for collaboration and partnership
- Info and updates on new and ongoing edu programs, opportunity to engage with the community and strengthen our personal knowledge
- Connect with Partners in the Basins and leverage resources
- Networking opportunities & Community involvement
- Partnerships for outreach and ed opportunities.
- More info/context about how what happens in other parts of the state/US effect the estuary program.
- Listen to New Ideas and figure out where we can plug in to be involved
- Connections and collaborations
- Brainstorming
- Networking and collaboration on programs
- Support for various programs and ideas.

How could this committee better support environmental educators, both formal and informal?

- Seconding networking hours/events and opportunities for career development
- In person events, both social and learning; even more of the walk-hike-bike-paddle tours focused on educators; especially some urban/community tours showing best practices
- "Happy Hours" or "Networking Hours"
- Online & In-Person
- Trainings/Workshops on Marine Education/How to lead a program/interpretation/collection skills
- Seconding partnering with other orgs that provide training. Online training for curriculum development for educational programs



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- Networking and spotlighting partners / assets
- Partner with other organizations that provide trainings?
- Online trainings
- General opportunities for career development
- -education based
- Some of the Esc. HS have an Artificial Reef program. I know other teachers in SRC that would like to participate in ARs.
- Connecting teachers with resources and being more intentional with resources and inviting them to join our discussions. Ask them for feedback to what they need.
- In-person workshops
- Opportunities for classroom teachers to meet with the informal education providers in order to create field trips/hands on learning opportunities/ enrich programs
- Formal educators-afterschool online presentations/discussion sessions
- Showcase other programs/schools/teachers programs,
- I like that this spans multiple states, lean on that!
- Ideas to better engage visitors through protection of natural resources

How could this committee better support the broader community?

- Provide support for summer day camp programs that reach local youth
- focus activities on supporting the six action plan goals in the CCMP
- Perhaps partnering with libraries to host/table education based events?
- Ask Community top 3 priorities and try to build partner programs and workshops to help facilitate watershed stewardship
- Organize events at community centers to broaden reach in neighborhoods
- Hands-on efforts like the city's Urban Canopy tree planting, expand to broader region
- Promote Southern Association of Marine and National Association Marine Educators
- Share a list of programs that you all offer and the time of year they're available for educators / homeschool /library programming

Who is missing from the committee or program partners that should be here?

- Satori Foundation (at Pens Yacht Club)
- Environmental Education Association of Alabama (their conference is next month!)
- I'm with AL sustainable ag network, maybe there's something there. Not sure, but ag and conservation/water do connect
- 350 Pensacola (Pensacola Community Action Network)
- 4-H
- Alabama Cooperative Extension System - Each County has an office
- Baldwin County Environmental Educators
- Homeowners' Associations



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- Pensacola Big Game Fishing Club
- City of Pensacola Parks & Rec (Heather Patten)
- Ocean Hour
- Florida Shellfish Aquaculture Association (Adrienne Johnson)
- Fishing and diving charter operators
- Homebuilders' Association
- Florida Association of Environmental Professionals (FAEP)
- Local Tribal groups

Education and Outreach Strategy Discussion

What is/are your favorite PPBEP Education and Outreach Program(s)?

- The community grant workshop/presentations at Bayview
- Field trips; community science (esp. seining/touch tank)
- Mardi Gras Bead Cleanup
- I loved the touch tank at community events
- Community science! So important for citizen engagement
- Bring Back The Bayous :)
- Estuary Week and Lunch and Learns
- Citizen/Community science
- Community Events and K-12 Curriculum/ Field Trips

What is a program area you think we are lacking or missing?

- We need an Oysterfest.
- A focus on the built environment; the science tells us that it's the design of our neighborhoods and buildings that has the largest impact on our waterways
- Inspiring more creative endeavors--events/workshops on plein air painting along a waterway; nature writing
- Smart Yards and Stormwater Management
- Sensory-based (forest bathing, silent hikes, etc.) - accessible opportunities
- Training for the public in civic engagement--how local govt. works, public speaking, etc.; so that these folks can be better advocates
- High school student networking/job shadow?
- Cooking Demos/local seafood promotion
- Policy education
- Maybe night programs? (specific to nocturnal animals). <- The Night Paddle was awesome
- For kids: meet and greet with biologists etc. It's always cool for them to meet people who do the work in their community!
- Highlighting local efforts that don't get seen on news outlets, etc



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- some contests that get youth interested and studying (art? essay?)
- Stormwater/Green infrastructure → Extension does a two-day webinar on stormwater issues and science, we will share so word gets out to PPBEP list

What audiences are missing or could be better engaged?

- Foster kids
- Training or outreach specifically targeted to elected officials
- Underserved families
- People with additional needs - Sensory, physical, etc.
- Young adult/high school
- Fishermen (Recreational/Commercial/For Hire)

Of the 6 CCMP Program Areas, what 3 would you consider priorities the Education & Outreach Committee?

1. Source of Watershed Information: 9 Votes
2. Improve Water Quality: 6 Votes
3. Conserve & Restore Critical Habitat: 5 Votes
4. Strengthen Community Resilience: 4 Votes
5. Restore & Conserve Fish and Wildlife: 4 Votes
6. Reduce Sedimentation: 1 Vote

General Feedback

- I saw this on social media, and was not sure exactly what it entailed but as an educator was curious. I'm not sure if there is need/want for members who are not with a partner org. Perhaps a teacher/educator specific group would be beneficial at some point?
- How can we attract conferences and symposiums to our area?
- If/when you're interested in spreading reach over in Okaloosa County, KOB can help connect with folks over here and volunteer groups