



MINUTES
Education & Outreach Committee

Thursday, August 8, 2026

11:00-12:00 PM CT

Virtual

[Meeting Recording](#)

Present Parties:

Samantha Pitts	PPBEP
Bailey Walkinshaw	PPBEP
Thomas Derbes, Co-Chair	Florida Sea Grant
Sigrid Rehrig	ECUA
Kindall Butler	Escambia County
Leah Schultz	Wildlife Sanctuary of NWFL
Darryl Boundreau	NWFWMDC
Charlene Mauro	NBMSS
Shirley Hail	Community Member
Sara Cady	Community Member
Delani Spaulding	OysterCorp
Chris Verlinde	Santa Rosa County
Chloe Ray	PPBEP
Zach Schang	PPBEP
Adrienne Brendtro	PPBEP

1. Call to Order

2. Welcome and Introductions

3. Approval of February 12, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Sigrid Rehrig (ECUA) made a motion to approve the February 12, 2026, Meeting Minutes. Kindall Butler (Escambia County) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

a. Pensacola Bay Oyster Reef Program

The Pensacola Bay Oyster REEF Program, funded by a NOAA B-Wet Grant officially concluded on July 31st, 2026. The project engaged 11 teachers and 129 students across Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. Although grant funding is no longer available, teachers can continue activities in the 26-27 School Year and beyond with the materials and resources provided.

Samantha Pitts (PPBEP) thanked Charlene Mauro with Navarre Beach Marine



Science Station and Matt MacGregor with West Florida High School for their efforts to help get the project completed.

b. Summer Outreach Highlight

PPBEP staff have engaged 4,500 people this year through community events, summer camp programs and family programs. Samantha Pitts (PPBEP) acknowledged Adrienne Brendtro, the Education and Outreach Intern, for her hard work developing summer reading programs with the West Florida Public Libraries and leading classroom programs for Play Pensacola Summer Camp, in addition to managing the Panhandle Manatee Program and assisting with general PPBEP programming.

c. Eyes on Seagrass Update

Bailey Walkinshaw (PPBEP) and Whitney Scheffel (PPBEP) lead the first Eyes on Seagrass training on May 16th. PPBEP took over the program from Florida Sea Grant and UWF and will continue hosting it as a new Community Science program. Staff trained 32 volunteers who work in pairs or small teams to monitor local seagrass beds once a month from April to September. To date, 32 observations from reported and staff look forward to sharing results at a later date.

d. Evening for the Estuaries Gala

The 4th Annual Evening for the Estuaries Gala is planned for Friday, October 16th at the Pensacola Yacht Club. Tickets should go on sale shortly. New this year will be a live auction, in addition to the silent auction. Partners who may know of business or individuals with possible donations should reach out to Samantha or Bailey.

e. National Estuary Program Designation

PPBEP staff continue to work towards National Estuary Program designation and are working through the final administrative process with EPA and FDEP. Staff anticipate federal funds to be available early 2027.

5. Education & Outreach Strategy Update

Staff have been working to update the Education and Outreach Strategy ahead of the larger CCMP update process in 2027. Using feedback collected during the February EOC meeting, staff reviewed the original 2022 EO Strategy and considered which programs had been completed, which were ongoing and identified areas for growth. The Draft 2027 Education and Outreach Strategy takes a broader approach to program areas. It does not seek to identify specific programs and activities but identify core program functions and roles within the community.

The Draft 2027 Education and Outreach Strategy features six new objectives and would entirely replace Goal 1 of the existing CCMP. Staff guided participants through a Mural Board exercise to collect feedback. This is the first of several



stakeholder engagement sessions so there will be future opportunities for feedback.

The Mural Board remains [live here](#) for additional feedback.

6. National Estuaries Week & Partner Events

National Estuaries Week will run September 20th- 27th this year. Staff are working to plan a Mind and Body Wellness event, a VOG Build Event, a Lunch N Learn with program partners and will be tabling at the Pensacola Seafood Festival. PPBEP will also be hosting it's first Sticker Contest for the month of September. A winner will be selected from both the Youth and Adult categories and will have their designs printed and shared as an official PPBEP sticker until September 2027.

To help support partner efforts, staff will also be creating a regional National Estuaries Week calendar to be shared through PPBEP newsletter and social media channels. Partners are encouraged to submit their events using the form [linked here](#).

7. Next Meeting: November 12th Give Back Event

Committee consensus supported a Give Back/Volunteer event for the next EOC meeting on November 12th. Staff will work with committee chairs and partners to identify an opportunity, so stay tuned for details.

8. Around the Room/Announcements

- a. Sigrid Rehrig, ECUA, made the committee aware that ECUA offers free educational tours of its facilities. It could be both an EOC gathering or for another interested organization.
- b. Leah Schultz, Wildlife Sanctuary of Northwest Florida, announced that the Sanctuary will be hosting WildFest on October 10th from 12-3pm to celebrate the Sanctuary's 44th Anniversary. The call for vendors will go out soon but interested organizations can contact Leah directly at outreach@pensacolawildlife.com
- c. Thomas Derbes, Florida Sea Grant, announced the Escambia and Santa Rosa Extension offices will be hosting the six-week Uplands Master Naturalist Course from September 23rd to October 28th. Registration closes September 17th. [Sign up here](#).

9. Meeting Adjourned