



## **Policy Board Meeting Minutes**

March 30, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. CT  
Gulf Breeze Community Center  
800 Shoreline Dr, Gulf Breeze, FL  
[Meeting Recording](#)

### **Members Present**

Robert Bender, Chair	Escambia County
Woody Speed, Vice Chair	City of Orange Beach
Mike Norberg	Okaloosa County
Shannon Rice	City of Milton
Ben Boutwell	Town of Century
Jeff Bergosh	Escambia County
David Piech	Santa Rosa County
Ann Hill, ph	City of Pensacola
Ashley Campbell, rep	Baldwin County
Cherry Fitch, rep	City of Gulf Breeze

### **Member Absent**

Bob Cole	Santa Rosa County
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### **Interested Parties Present**

Matt Posner	PPBEP
Whitney Scheffel	PPBEP
Logan McDonald	PPBEP
Emerson Cheney	PPBEP
Haley Gancel	PPBEP
Madi Ross	PPBEP
Amy Newbold	EPA
Beth Fugate	DEP
Bird Davidson	TNC
Brian Underwood	CBEC
Carrie Stevenson	UF/IFAS
Casey Fulford	AACD
Chasidy Hobbs	UWF
Chips Kirschenfeld	Escambia County
Chris Curb	Flood Defenders
Edgar Miller	Gulf Breeze
Elizabeth Major	LW Voters
Heather Hyde	Jacobs
Heather Patten	UWF CETES Student
Jill Fleiger	FDACS
Marc Wyatt	EPA
Kent Wimmer	Defenders of Wildlife
Naisy Dolar	Santa Rosa County
Paul Looney	WRA



Samantha Able  
Trent Matthews  
Wade Lehmann

Gulf Breeze  
USDA-NRCS  
EPA

## **1. Call to Order**

## **2. Roll Call**

M. Posner called the roll. A quorum was present. Ashley Campbell will serve as the new Baldwin County representative, taking the place of Dan Dealy (retired) on the Policy Board.

## **3. Approval of January 26, 2022, Policy Board Minutes**

Commissioner Piech (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to approve the January 26, 2022 meeting minutes. Commissioner Bergosh (Escambia County) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **4. Guest Presentations**

- Shellfish Harvesting Area Classification Changes in the Pensacola Bay System  
*Jill Fleiger, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services*
  - J. Fleiger provided an update on the current water quality trends (e.g., fecal coliforms) in Escambia and East Bays preventing areas from being re-opened for harvest.
  - An overview map of sampling stations and proposed boundaries showed updated prohibited areas and conditionally approved areas.
  - Discussion and Q/A followed regarding current aquaculture business impacts, reclassification of new locations, data reevaluation processes, and potential causes of declining water quality.
  - General commentary was made on the importance of water quality improvement projects (stormwater and wastewater focused), opportunities to restore restricted areas, and funding initiatives that could help reclassification efforts.
- Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape Designation  
*Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife*
  - K. Wimmer presented information on the new Sentinel Landscape designation in the Northwest Florida area. The designation covers 16 counties and has around 50 partners that supported the designation. This effort seeks to address the needs of local communities and advance the priorities of federal, state, and NGO's partners alongside military missions.

## **5. Staff Updates**

- **Director's Update** (*Matt Posner, Executive Director*)
  - i. **Finance Subcommittee**

The first finance subcommittee meeting was held on March 24<sup>th</sup> at the PPBEP office. Commissioner Piech was elected as the Finance Subcommittee Chair. Mike Norberg was elected as the Finance Subcommittee Vice Chair. The subcommittee reviewed EPA PPBEP and TFW Grant expenditure reports. Approval of EPA TFW budget



amendments passed. Discussion was held on the PPBEP FY22-23 Draft Budget.

**ii. Legislative Update**

The Florida Legislature approved PPBEP's state appropriations request. Other local appropriations dealing with natural resource restoration and water quality improvements of note were designated to the Milton WWTP, Town of Century Water Meter Replacement, UF NWFL data and analytical work, and many other projects. M. Posner provided a legislative update on SB882, SB494, HB965, and HB7053.

**iii. EPA Budget Amendment Update**

The EPA Trash Free Waters grant amendment is under final review by the EPA.

**iv. Business Partnership Program**

The Business Partnership Program kicked off with a successful event in February that was held at Perfect Plain. Keynote speakers included Donnie McMahon (Pensacola Bay Oyster Co.) and Mayor Grover C. Robinson, IV. Staff have engaged additional business partners, including presentations to the Downtown Rotary Club and the Pensacola Chamber of Commerce.

**Save the Date:**

Santa Rosa County Business Partnership Event  
May 19, 2022 from 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM C.T.  
Santa Rosa County Chamber of Commerce  
4315 Avalon Boulevard, Milton, FL

**v. Management Conference Meeting**

PPBEP's first annual Management Conference brings together stakeholders, committee members, and staff to collaboratively develop projects that support the implementation of the CCMP goals.

**Register Now:**

Lunch & Management Conference Meeting  
Wednesday, April 13, 2022 from 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM  
Sanders Beach- Corinne Jones Resource Center  
913 South I Street, Pensacola, FL

Sunset Social  
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM C.T.  
Pensacola Bay Ferry  
750 Commendencia Street, Pensacola, FL

• **Technical Update** (*Whitney Scheffel, Senior Scientist*)

**i. CCMP Development Status, Schedule, and Next Steps**

- The first CCMP draft has been distributed to selected editors in February of 2022. PPBEP has received and started incorporating the editors' feedback. A



CCMP design consultant has been selected and the Management Conference Meeting is scheduled for April 13<sup>th</sup>.

- PPBEP staff is currently working on the first draft of the technical characterizations and monitoring strategy. Staff are planning CCMP Engagements, set to be held in May of 2022.
  - The CCMP Timeline is still on track, with the CCMP being finalized in July of 2022. Following the CCMP completion, the State of the Bays report, and an associated Gala Fundraiser will finalize the CCMP process in August of 2022.
- **Outreach Update** (*Logan McDonald, Community Outreach Coordinator*)
    - i. **Community Grant Update**
      - The Perdido Key Coastal Demonstration Garden hosted a successful volunteer workday on January 29<sup>th</sup> to prepare the site for an upcoming planting event. The final planting event is scheduled for April 23<sup>rd</sup>, where volunteers will help plant native plants at the Perdido Key Community Center.
      - EscaRosa OysterCorps continues to collect recycled oyster shells from participating local seafood restaurants and grow marsh plants in their plant nursery. In March, OysterCorps members hosted a plant-splitting event with Pace High School Marine Science students. The students split *Spartina alterniflora* plants from the OysterCorps nurseries to bring back to their classroom and take care of.
      - The Town of Century has completed site mapping and an inventory for Fischer's Landing. Educational signage and a sedimentation study are underway. WRA (project contractor) partnered with St. Paul's and the Estuary Program to host a field trip for students to learn about the site and the watershed. Students visited Fischer's Landing and Project GreenShores in Pensacola Bay to compare the upper and lower portion of the watershed.
      - University of South Alabama's video sampling and processing on oyster reefs is complete. Data QA/QC is underway.
      - The UWF Historical Ecology team has been working to assess and digitize historical records in partnership with archive and archaeology faculty and staff. Presentations have been scheduled for April 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> for the Florida Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, and April 29<sup>th</sup> for the UWF Biology Seminar. Events have been scheduled to engage the public on April 20<sup>th</sup>, time and location TBD, and May 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM C.T. at Odd Colony.
      - The Pensacola MESS Hall's Estuary Exhibit is now open. Staff visited the Estuary Exhibit in February to check out the new additions. The exhibit includes an augmented reality sandbox where children can explore how topographical changes affect river dynamics.
      - IHMC has developed its app. Recruitment and roll-out of the app are coming soon. IHMC partnered with the City of Pensacola for AR-enabled artworks at the Bayview Center. Plans for an AUV building are underway.
      - Santa Rosa County has created new watershed signage for 12 watersheds and installation is underway. Two outreach events are being scheduled at the Tiger Point Recreation Center and the Pace Recreation Center.



**ii. Trash Free Waters** (*Emerson Cheney, TFW Volunteer Coordinator*)

- The new year has brought 12 more dedicated volunteers to regularly help monitor the litter booms.
- Hurlburt Field volunteers visited the Jones Creek site and conducted a park-wide cleanup collecting 117 lbs. of trash in total.
- PPBEP is partnering with Visit Pensacola to schedule a cleanup of Jones Creek on May 5<sup>th</sup> as a National Travel and Tourism Week event.
- TFW curriculum was implemented in February at West Florida High School with Mr. MacGregor's Marine Science classes. The high school lessons consist of general watershed dynamics and the impacts of trash in our waterways. A mini case study activity was completed by the students for escaped trash on the West Florida High School campus. Students collected over 20 lbs. of trash in total and logged all their data using the Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol datasheet.
- Future TFW curriculum implementation is underway, including a tentative Pace High School presentation before the end of the 2021-22 school year and an elementary school field trip to Jones Creek with the Creative Learning Academy on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

**iii. Internships**

- PPBEP is offering three summer internships: Manatee Outreach Intern, Resilience Intern, and Development Intern. All summer internship positions will start in May.
- Staff plan to open three fall internships: Trash Free Waters Intern, Outreach Intern, and Research Intern.

**iv. Events**

Since January, PPBEP has hosted, planned, and partnered on several events.

**February:**

Oyster Lunch & Learn Webinar | PPBEP, SRC, TNC

Mardi Gras Bead Collection & Downtown Pensacola Tree Cleanup

**March:**

Balance on the Blackwater Kayak Tour | PPBEP, FPAN

Oyster Spat Array Deployment | FWC, PPBEP

**April:**

1<sup>st</sup> – Volunteer Month Appreciation Paddle, Escribano Point

16<sup>th</sup> – Women in Science Panel Participation, Blackwater River State Park

21<sup>st</sup> – Santa Rosa County Bay Day, Russell Herber Landing

22<sup>nd</sup> – TENTATIVE Orange Beach Earth Day Paddle

23<sup>rd</sup> – Pensacola Earth Day Fest & Paddle | City of Pensacola Parks & Rec

25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> – Gulf of Mexico Alliance Conference

**May:**

7<sup>th</sup> – Autism OdysSea | Navarre Beach Marine Science Station

10<sup>th</sup> – Episcopal School Field Trip, Naval Live Oaks | UF-IFAS, SeaGrant

**Save the Date:**



**CCMP Public Engagements**

May 12<sup>th</sup>, Thursday: Flood Resilience Workshop

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

St. Michael's Brewery, Navarre, FL

Resiliency Goal

Partners: PLACE: SLR, Santa Rosa County, UF-IFAS

May 21<sup>st</sup>, Saturday: Oyster Reef Seining

9:00am – 11:00am

Navy Point, Pensacola

Fish & Wildlife, Habitat Goals

Partners: Escambia County

May 24<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday: Water Quality

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Orange Beach, AL (venue TBD)

Water Quality Goal

Partners: Orange Beach, TBD

May 26<sup>th</sup>, Thursday: Escambia River Documentary & Sediment Panel

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Imogene Theatre, Milton, FL

Sediment Goal

Partners: Blackwater Historical Society, Blackwater SWCD, The Longleaf Alliance, MSSTV

**6. Action Items**

- **Approval of Budget Amendment #1 to USEPA Agreement No. 01D08220 Trash Free Waters**  
Commissioner Bergosh (Escambia County) made a motion to approve the TFW budget amendment. Vice Chair, Woody Speed (City of Orange Beach) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**7. Discussion Items**

- **PPBEP Organizational Structure Update**  
M. Posner updated the board on the status of the Independent Special District creation process. The Interlocal Agreement Renewal was approved in December of 2021. The Board Approval of Interlocal Agreement Revision was completed in March of 2022. The next action item is Board Approval of the Revised Bylaws with the deadline of May 2022.
  - i. **Estimated Administrative Costs**  
Administrative support for the program has been estimated using costs from Tampa Bay Estuary Program and the Indian River Lagoon Council. Estimations on legal, auditing, accounting, and IT services have been compared and proposed. Both HR support and Procurement Services are proposed to be in-house services.

**8. Committee Updates**



- **Technical Committee Update** (*Whitney Scheffel, Senior Scientist*)
  - The Oyster subcommittee shared information on the partner presentations from the February meeting. Matthew Davis (FWC) presented project updates and information on the Florida Trustee Implementation Group Oyster Project. Ronnie Baker (USA/DISL) presented project goals and status for the fish video surveys of remnant and existing oyster reefs in East, Blackwater, and Escambia Bays. Jill Fleiger (FDACS) provided a high-level informational presentation about the water quality and shellfish harvesting area classification in Pensacola Bay.
  - PPBEP and partners applied for a B-WET grant to host teacher professional development and implement an oyster curriculum in Escambia and Santa Rosa County High Schools.
  - PPBEP is working with TNC and partners on the funding and implementation stages of the Oyster Restoration Management Plan. The next step in the process is to create a vision map of priority goals to create site selection decisions.
- **Education Committee Update** (*Chassidy Hobbs, UWF*)

UWF CETES students are working on programs with PPBEP including video support for events and the K-12 Trash Free Waters curriculum for implementation in the upcoming 2022-23 school year, stormwater mural projects for watershed outreach and education on the impacts of storm drain inputs, and a fundraising opportunity through local breweries holding a competition to create a bay-themed local brew and design.
- **Business Partnership Committee Update** (*Matt Posner, Executive Director*)

M. Posner shared the upcoming Business Partnership event in Santa Rosa again.

**9. Policy Board/Agency Updates**

No Policy Board or Agency updates to share.

**10. Public Comment**

No public comments to share.

**11. Adjourn**