



## Policy Board Minutes

April 5, 2023, at 1:30 p.m. CT

Orange Beach Council Chambers

4099 Orange Beach Blvd, Orange Beach, AL 36561

[Audio Recording](#)

### Members Present

Woody Speed, Chair	City of Orange Beach
Colten Wright, Vice Chair	Santa Rosa County
Robert Bender	Escambia County
Ashley Campbell	Baldwin County
Mike Kohler	Escambia County
Kerry Smith	Santa Rosa County
Vernon Compton	City of Milton
Mike Norberg	Okaloosa County
Cherry Fitch, ph	City of Gulf Breeze

### Members Absent

Jared Moore	City of Pensacola
Benjamin Boutwell	Town of Century

### Interested Parties Present

Matt Posner	PPBEP
Whitney Scheffel	PPBEP
Logan McDonald	PPBEP
Haley Gancel	PPBEP
Madi Ross	PPBEP
Molly McDaniel	PPBEP
Barb Buss	SCS
Casey Fulford	AACD
Chips Kirschenfeld	Escambia County
Darryl Boudreau	NFWFMD
Elizabeth Major	LWV
Eric Schneider	ESA
Fritz Buss	SCS
Jeannette Kelson	Wood
Joshua Smith	City of Gulf Breeze
Matthew Kelly	Escambia County
Paul Looney	WRA



**1. Call to Order**

**2. Roll Call**

Matt Posner (Director, PPBEP) called the roll. A quorum was present.

**3. Approval of Board Agenda**

Commissioner Colten Wright (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to approve the agenda. Vernon Compton (City of Milton) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**4. Approval of February 8, 2023, Policy Board Minutes**

Commissioner Colten Wright (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to approve the February 8, 2023, Policy Board minutes. Vernon Compton (City of Milton) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**5. Staff Updates**

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

i. **Legislative Update**

**1. Appropriations**

PPBEP's Appropriation Request sponsored by Senator Broxson and Representative Andrade is in the draft Senate budget in the full amount of \$750,000. Year two of the Northwest Florida Water Quality Improvement Project is also in the draft Senate budget, with \$350,000 to be allocated to PPBEP.

The Legislature is also considering funding the Resilient Florida Grant Program at \$100 million and the Department of Environmental Protection Wastewater Grant Program at \$100 million. If approved, this would provide a substantial funding opportunity to address regional priorities.

**2. Senate Bill Updates**

An overview of draft Senate Bills was given to the board. The Senate Bills include:

Senate Bill 1538 – Implementation of Blue-Green Algae Task Force Recommendations

Senate Bill 1420 – Sanitary Sewer Lateral Inspection Programs

Senate Bill 1632 – Environmental Protection

Senate Bill 724 – Seagrass Restoration Technology Development Initiative

Senate Bill 1170 – Flooding and Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Studies



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

i. **State of the Bays**

PPBEP staff is working on the first State of the Bays report and will launch the digital platform at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual PPBEP Management Conference on May 4, 2023. The report will provide an overview of how conditions have changed over time, the current condition of the bays, and the efforts that are underway to improve the condition of the bays. The four main indicator groups are water quality (dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll-a, total nitrogen, total phosphorus, turbidity), habitat (oysters, seagrass, wetlands, longleaf pine forests), bacteria (beach advisories, sanitary sewer overflows), and wildlife (manatee sightings). The scale for ecosystem health is categorized as improving, stable, declining, critical, and undetermined. Additional indicators and metrics will be added in future State of the Bays Report iterations.

ii. **Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy**

An explanation of the framework and backup for the Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy was provided to the board.

iii. **Project & Planning Updates**

Updates were presented on PPBEP projects and planning initiatives including:

1. Developing visual data summaries of completed projects.
2. Collaborating with oyster farmers to monitor water quality.
3. Planning next steps for the Pensacola Bay Oyster Restoration Initiative.
4. Developing discussion topics for the PPBEP Management Conference breakout sessions.

iv. **Northwest Florida Water Quality Improvement Project** (*Haley Gancel, Environmental Scientist*)

An overview of UF-CCS and SAS's Northwest Florida Water Quality Improvement Project workshop held March 30, 2022, at the UF Milton Campus was presented to the board. UF CSS presented 5 deliverables due at the end of June 2022:

- 1) Analyses and model outputs concerning causes of water quality impairments and potential suggested future locations for infrastructure improvement projects
- 2) Development of a web-based septic to sewer prioritization tool
- 3) Analysis looking at current stormwater capacity for the region
- 4) Development of a web-based land conservation prioritization tool with a focus on water quality and water quantity/storage benefits
- 5) Completion of living shoreline suitability models for the Florida Gulf Coast



c. **Outreach Update** (*Logan McDonald, Community Outreach Coordinator*)

i. **Estuary 101**

Staff launched the Estuary 101 Campaign in early March. The campaign includes information on estuarine habitats and wildlife, how businesses, organizations, and individuals can advocate for the estuaries, and locations for community members to explore. Membership and Sponsorship information was provided.

ii. **Outreach**

1. **Events**

PPBEP hosted a Mardi Gras Bead Cleanup in Downtown Pensacola and engaged over 30 volunteers, collecting over 400 pounds of beads. PPBEP hosted tables at the Orange Beach Seafood Festival to engage children with a hands-on activity focused on local wildlife and adults to promote the launch of the Estuary 101 Campaign.

2. **Oyster Documentary**

The Humble Oyster documentary that explores the past, current, and future conditions of oysters in the Pensacola Bay System was completed. A premiere and panel discussion event will be held with WSRE.

SAVE THE DATE:

May 23, 2023 | 6:00 PM

Jean & Paul Amos Performance Studio  
Kugelman Center for Telecommunications  
1000 College Blvd. Pensacola, FL 32504

3. **Volunteer Programs**

Staff coordinated Bay Ambassador and Critter Collector Volunteer Training Programs in March. Additional training sessions will be scheduled for summer of 2023.

4. **Panhandle Manatee**

Panhandle Manatee is recruiting volunteers to help with outreach and education to community members on boater safety, and seagrass and manatee awareness.

SAVE THE DATE:

Panhandle Manatee Volunteer Training  
Saturday, April 15, 2023 | 10:15 AM – 11:45 AM  
Downtown Pensacola Library, Room B  
239 N Spring St. Pensacola, FL 32502



iii. **Community Grant Update** (*Madi Ross, Community Outreach Assistant*)

1. **Escambia County Coastal Landscaping Native Plant Giveaway**

Starting in April, the Escambia County Community Grant began hosting Native Plant Giveaways in Pensacola and Perdido to provide native plants appropriate for coastal landscaping to community members. The first giveaway was held on April 1<sup>st</sup> and engaged a total of 200 community members, giving away around 600 native plants.

[Escambia County News Article: Escambia County to Host Coastal Landscaping Workshops, Plant Giveaways](#)

Save the Date:

Perdido Key Native Plant Giveaway

April 15, 2023 | 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Perdido Key Community Center

15000 Perdido Key Dr. Pensacola, FL 32507

iv. **Trash Free Waters Lesson Update** (*Madi Ross, Community Outreach Assistant*)

The final lesson of the Trash Free Waters curriculum has been scheduled for three schools in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. The implementation of the Clean Campus High School Case Study at Gulf Breeze High School and West Florida High School has been completed and has moved on to the implementation phase of school pilot projects to address current trends in campus litter. Staff is actively engaging new schools for implementation of the Trash Free Waters Curriculum.

6. **Action Items**

a. **Approval of the First Amended and Restated PPBEP Interlocal Agreement**

PPBEP's legal counsel has recommended establishing PPBEP as a not-for-profit corporation to carry out the purposes of PPBEP. As such, PPBEP would qualify as an "instrumentality of government". This structure resolves the participation and operating challenges between Florida and Alabama posed by the Special District structure.

Discussion was held on the PPBEP Interlocal Agreement in conjunction with the organizational transition and the formation of a non-profit corporation. Steps will be taken to allow for the non-profit formation under Florida State Law to be completed by June 2023. Additional action will be taken for an IRS 501C-3 designation to accommodate a federal non-profit corporation. The board received information on the process of receiving Alabama and Florida sales tax exemption, the inclusion of other entities to the board based on the decision of the current acting board, and details regarding staff benefits and additional services through contracts.

Commissioner Colten Wright (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to approve the First Amended and Restated PPBEP Interlocal Agreement. Commissioner Robert Bender (Escambia County) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.



b. **Approval of Florida Department of Environmental Protection Grant Agreement No. 22PLN35, in the amount of \$687,500, for the Compound Flood Modeling and Adaptation Planning Project**

This project will produce updated precipitation frequency estimates and compound flooding scenarios for the Pensacola and Perdido watersheds to aid local governments in identifying priority resilience projects, policy initiatives, and community outreach opportunities necessary to enhance community resilience. This project will work to ensure all local governments within the region are using the same base dataset for community resilience planning. This action will increase revenue by \$687,500; \$480,000 is included as contractual services, \$148,500 for personnel, and \$59,000 for indirect costs.

Commissioner Robert Bender (Escambia County) made a motion to approve the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Grant Agreement No. 22PLN35, in the amount of \$687,500, for the Compound Flood Modeling and Adaptation Planning Project.

## 7. Discussion Items

a. **Organizational Transition**

A framework of the anticipated organizational transition timeline was presented to the board. Discussions with each participating municipality will be held through the months of April and May to approve the Interlocal Agreement. In the months of May and June, the program will be amending the Articles of Incorporation, bylaws, and policies and procedures for board approval and actively engage in filing for PPBEP to become a non-profit both state and federally. The official transitioning of PPBEP into an independent non-profit corporation will be in action in the months of July through September, with all processes complete by the end of the fiscal year in October.

b. **FY23-24 Preliminary Budget**

An overview of the FY23-24 Preliminary Budget was presented to the board showing estimated changes in the budget regarding personnel, travel, and supplies. A framework for local government contributions was presented to the board adopting a population-based approach for contribution levels.

Commissioner Colten Wright (Santa Rosa County) advised the incorporation of the Town of Jay. Mike Norberg (Okaloosa County) requested clarification on the funding sources for the personnel and travel estimated changes in the budget. Personnel adjustments will be funded through acquired grants and travel adjustments will be funded through local government contributions.

## 8. Committee Updates

a. **Technical Committee (Paul Looney, WRA)**

Nominations and elections were held during the February 28, 2023, Technical Committee



Meeting for Chair and Vice Chair positions. The Committee Chair Paul Looney (WRA) and the Vice Chair Casey Fulford (AACD) will serve another year. A guest presentation on the City of Pensacola's Mayoral Environmental Transition Team Outcomes and Priorities was presented by Christian Wagley (Healthy Gulf) and Kelly Hagen (CNAPP). The committee provided feedback on the State of the Bays.

i. **Oyster Subcommittee** (*Whitney Scheffel, Senior Scientist*)

Nominations and elections were held at the March 30, 2023, Oyster Subcommittee Meeting for chair and Vice Chair positions. The Committee Chair Chris Verlinde (Santa Rosa County) and the Vice Chair Beth Fugate (DEP) will serve another year. Discussion included a summary from the Oyster Round Table Meeting in January and planning for the Pensacola Oyster Restoration.

b. **Education and Outreach Committee** (*Logan McDonald, Community Outreach Coordinator*)

Nominations and elections were held at the February 16, 2023, Education and Outreach Committee Meeting for Chairs. Rick O'Connor (UF|IFAS) is the new Committee Chair. Committee members reviewed the Estuary 101 website before launch and volunteered to review State of the Bays from a broader education scope.

c. **Environmental Justice Committee** (*Matt Posner, Director*)

Nominations and elections were held at the March 14, 2023, Environmental Justice Committee Meeting for Co-Chairs. Kyle Buck (EPA) and Ryan Kirby (Escambia County) are the new Committee Co-Chairs. The next Environmental Justice Committee Meeting will be at the PPBEP Management Conference on May 4, 2023, to discuss the Environmental Justice Committee Strategy and goals.

## 9. Policy Board/Agency Updates

Commissioner Robert Bender (Escambia County) and Commissioner Colten Wright (Santa Rosa County) made suggestions for the Estuary 101 Pledge Cards and requested that pledge cards be dispersed to the parties for increased outreach.

## 10. Public Comment

## 11. Meeting Adjourned