



Policy Board Meeting

July 27, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. CT

Baldwin County Foley Conference Room
201 East Section Avenue, Foley, AL 36535
WEBEX Recording

Members Present

Robert Bender, Chair	Escambia County
Woody Speed, Vice Chair	City of Orange Beach
Mike Norberg	Okaloosa County
David Piech	Santa Rosa County
Bob Cole, ph	Santa Rosa County
Benjamin Boutwell, ph	Town of Century
Ashley Campbell	Baldwin County
Cherry Fitch	City of Gulf Breeze

Members Absent

Shannon Rice	City of Milton
Ann Hill	City of Pensacola
Jeff Bergosh	Escambia County

Interested Parties Present

Matt Posner	PPBEP
Whitney Scheffel	PPBEP
Logan McDonald	PPBEP
Haley Gancel	PPBEP
Madi Ross	PPBEP
Emerson Cheney	PPBEP
Sarah Jacobs	PPBEP
Molly McDaniel	PPBEP
Caitlin Jennings	PPBEP
Tucker Reynolds	PPBEP
Amy Newbold	EPA
Barbara Albrecht	BFA
Beth Fugate	DEP
Carrie Stevenson	UF/IFAS Escambia County
Casey Fulford	AACD
Chassidy Hobbs	UWF
Chips Kirschenfeld	Escambia County
Chris Verlinde	Santa Rosa County Sea Grant



Darryl Boudreau	NFWFMD
Dave Murzin	First Place Partners
Jessica Bibza	NWF
Joshua Smith	City of Gulf Breeze
Marc Wyatt	EPA
Matthew Kelly	Escambia County
Paul Looney	WRA
Shelley Alexander	Santa Rosa County
Tanya Linzy	Santa Rosa County
Tim Day	Escambia County

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

M. Posner called the roll. A quorum was present.

3. Approval of Board Agenda

The agenda was modified to address the Action Items first before Discussion Items and Staff Updates. Commissioner Piech (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to approve the modified agenda. Mayor Fitch (Gulf Breeze) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Approval of May 25, 2022, Policy Board Minutes

Mayor Fitch (Gulf Breeze) made a motion to approve the May 25, 2022, meeting minutes. Commissioner Cole (Santa Rosa County) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Action Items

a. Approval of the FY 2022-2023 PPBEP Operating Budget

Discussion was held regarding the continuation of funding after the EPA grant sunsets in December 2022, including the status of local government contributions the PPBEP has requested.

Commissioner Piech (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to approve the FY 2022-2023 PPBEP Operating Budget. Woody Speed (Orange Beach) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Creating a Finance Manager Position

Discussion was held regarding the hourly commitment and specific responsibilities of the Finance Manager position. PPBEP's goal is to have the position filled in Fall 2022.

Mayor Fitch (Gulf Breeze) made a motion to approve the creation of a full-time Finance Manager position with a \$50,000 annual salary. Commissioner Piech (Santa Rosa County) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.



c. **Approval of Issuing a Solicitation for Accounting Services**

Discussion was held on procuring accounting services. Discussion ensued on obtaining accounting services pro bono.

Commissioner Piech made a motion to authorize staff to proceed with preparing a solicitation for accounting services. Commissioner Bender offered an amendment to the motion to evaluate obtaining pro bono accounting services prior to issuing a solicitation. Commissioner Piech accepted the amendment to the motion. Mayor Fitch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

d. **Approval of Travel for the Executive Director**

Commissioner Bender requested a list of PPBEP staff travel for Policy Board to approve at future meeting. Woody Speed (Orange Beach) made a motion to approve the travel for the Executive Director. Commissioner Cole (Santa Rosa County) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

e. **Approval of Professional Development Reimbursement for the Executive Director**

Discussion was held on including necessary travel involved in the UF Florida Natural Resources Leadership Institute Program.

Commissioner Cole (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to approve the Professional Development Course Reimbursement including up to \$2,500 for associated travel for the Executive Director. Mayor Fitch (Gulf Breeze) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

f. **Approval of a Contractual Agreement for Marketing Services**

Discussion was held regarding the number of interested marketing firms that submitted proposals and the status of contract negotiations.

Commissioner Cole (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to approve the contractual agreement for marketing services with Impact Campaigns. Mayor Fitch (Gulf Breeze) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

g. **Approval of Community Grant Selection Process**

Discussion was held regarding the proposal ranking criteria and options for bucketing the total funds available into technical and outreach categories, if appropriate.

Mike Norberg (Okaloosa County) made a motion to approve the community grant selection process. Commissioner Piech (Santa Rosa County) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Discussion Items

a. **PPBEP Draft CCMP**

W. Scheffel presented highlighted sections from the CCMP draft designed in collaboration with contracted design firm, Background Stories. The draft document will be released for public comment in August with the Policy Board's final approval of the CCMP in September.



7. Staff Updates

a. Director's Update

i. Finance Sub-Committee Report

PPBEP is on schedule in accordance with the budgeted funds. M. Posner stated that he would have a simplified budget summary page available for review at future Policy Board meetings.

ii. Local Government Contributions

Mayor Robinson (City of Pensacola), on behalf of the City of Pensacola, committed a \$30,000 contribution to the Program. PPBEP is waiting on commitments from other local governments.

iii. NEP Designation Legislation

M. Posner will be joining Mayor Robinson in D.C. to meet with representatives to show support for the designation of PPBEP as the 29th National Estuary Program.

iv. Governance Structure Transition Update

1. Request for Florida Attorney General Opinion on Special District

Escambia County BOCC voted last week to request an opinion from the Attorney General and staff are awaiting a response.

v. Northwest Florida Estuary Water Quality Project Partnership with UF

A legislative appropriation was made for the Northwest Florida Estuary Water Quality Project, sponsored by Senator Broxson, to expand data capability in the Northwest Florida area. Staff are working with the UF Team to establish a scope of work and funding will likely be awarded to the PPBEP.

vi. Grant Opportunities Update

1. FDEP Resilient Florida

A compound flood model and adaptation strategy for the Pensacola Bay area was funded with a two-year grant from the Resilient Florida Grant Program. PPBEP will be partnering with FSU to complete this grant.

2. NOAA RESTORE Science Program - Actionable Science

PPBEP will coordinate with partners at UNO and USM to apply for the next round of NOAA Actionable Science Program funding. This grant opportunity will assess genetic diversity and condition of existing seagrass beds across the bays, fill data gaps, and provide a restoration guide for natural resource managers to implement across the Pensacola and Perdido Bay systems.

3. NOAA Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

The proposed projects will focus on both the Pensacola and Perdido Bay watersheds: the implementation of a bay-wide oyster restoration plan for Pensacola Bay system, and a Perdido Bay watershed initiative focusing on seagrass and marsh restoration and the development of a living shoreline cost-share program.



4. FDEP RESTORE 3b

The FDEP RESTORE 3b grant was funded for the Carpenter Creek restoration design proposal and a comprehensive sedimentation study for the creek.

5. NFWF Hurricane Response Marine Debris Removal Fund

The proposed project, led by the City of Orange Beach, will focus on the removal of large marine debris from Hurricane Sally (2020). The project will also include coastal habitat restoration, community outreach, and a volunteer event.

b. Technical Update

i. Oyster Restoration Site Selection Workshop Summary

W. Scheffel shared a summary from the Oyster Restoration Site Selection Workshop that was hosted by PPBEP and partners on June 22nd at the Santa Rosa County Extension office. There were 25 participants that attended to collaboratively identify sites for future restoration efforts in the Pensacola Bay System. Stakeholders identified ideal restoration locations for fisheries enhancement, ecosystem services, and habitat.

c. Outreach Update

i. NOAA B-WET

Pensacola Bay Oyster Restoration, Education, and Engagement Framework (REEF) was recommended for funding by the NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training Program (B-WET). PPBEP will receive \$100,000 over the two-year grant period. The first year will focus on teacher professional development and the second year will be Student Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs).

ii. 2021-2022 Community Grant Update

The 2021-2022 Community Grant Program projects have been completed and staff are working to process final payments.

- Escambia County installed the Perdido Key Coastal Demonstration Garden and held an official ribbon cutting ceremony on World Ocean's Day.
- Santa Rosa County completed their Watershed Awareness project that installed 41 new watershed boundary signs and will coordinating the placement of 160 storm drain markers.
- EscaRosa OysterCorps produced 57.75 tons of recycled shell, harvested 33,000 Smooth Cordgrass plants, and corps members gained 5,186.5 hours of environmental field experience.
- The UWF Historical Ecology project established historical timelines for both the Pensacola and Perdido Bay systems and cataloged and digitized historical records. The project team hosted a seminar in the



Perdido area about Perdido Bay oysters and a seminar in downtown Pensacola about Pensacola's waters. Their findings were also shared with UWF students through a seminar course.

- The University of South Alabama's Oyster Reef Video Monitoring collected over 200 field video samples on fish species found at oyster reef systems.
- IHMC completed their software and deployed cameras for observational data. The outreach and app rollout deliverables were not completed within the grant time span. IHMC was only reimbursed 75% of their total budget due to incomplete deliverables.
- The Pensacola MESS Hall reached over 1700 children through field trips and hosted around 2000 visitors to the Estuary Exhibit.
- The Town of Century's Fischer's Landing project updated the Master Plan, completed a sedimentation study, and installed educational signage. The project team also coordinated with PPBEP staff to offer a field trip to students from St. Paul's Catholic School that highlighted the connection between the upper and lower watershed through visits to Fischer's Landing and Project GreenShores.

iii. 2022-2023 Community Grant Selection Process

The 2022-2034 Community Grant Program Request for Proposals was released in July. Applications will close on August 3rd. The Community Grant selection committee will convene in late August to select a project slate that will be presented to the Policy Board for final approval.

iv. Trash Free Waters Workshop

PPBEP is hosting Trash Free Waters Workshop to discuss the data collected over the past year on August 11th from 2:00-4:00pm at the Bayview Community Center. Volunteers and other organizations involved with reducing trash in our local waterways will convene to explore solutions to reduce litter loading in three creeks.

v. Summer Library Programming

PPBEP participated in summer library programs across Baldwin, Escambia, and Santa Rosa counties with Trash Free Waters-focused story times and touch tanks. A total of 340 children were reached through this programming.

vi. Home School Programming

PPBEP is launching a new home school program, the Estuary Academy. The Estuary Academy will feature fieldtrips to local beaches, bays, and creeks with activities focusing on local critters, trash, and ecology. The first program is on August 5th on Pensacola Beach.

vii. Fall Internships

Staff interviewed applicants for the fall Development and Outreach Internships and expect to make offers next week. New interns will start on August 22nd.

viii. National Estuaries Week



Staff shared initial plans and dates for national estuaries week events. Brews for the Bays, a beer trail proceeds program featuring estuary themed brews, will be occurring in partnership with local throughout the week.

- 9/16 – Gallery Night Tabling and Brew for the Bay launch
- 9/17 – Alabama Coastal Cleanup near the Perdido River
- 9/18 – Escribano/East Bay Kayak Tour
- 9/19 – Lunch & Learn: Manatees & Sea Turtles on the Move
- 9/20 – Estuary Trivia Tuesday, Perfect Plain
- 9/21
 - Morning – Gulf State Park Slow Ride and Wildlife Center
 - Evening – Blackwater River Sunset Walk and Beardless Brewhaus
- 9/22 – PPBEP Community Grant Symposium
- 9/23 - 9/25 – Pensacola Seafood Festival

8. Committee Updates

a. Technical Committee Update

Chair Paul Looney (WRA) updated the board on the latest Technical Committee Meeting. The committee provided positive input on the draft CCMP.

b. Education and Outreach Committee Update

Chair Chassidy Hobbs (UWF) updated the board on the latest Education and Outreach Meeting. The committee is excited to assist with National Estuaries Week events. In reference to earlier discussion on the Community Grant Program selection criteria, Chair Hobbs noted that a potential challenge to funding technical and restoration projects is the amount of funding available.

c. Business Partnership Program Update

The second Business Partnership social is planned for August 30th at the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce from 6:00pm- 7:30pm. Staff have been researching donor development platforms and anticipate moving forward with a selected platform.

9. Policy Board/Agency Updates

- a. Commissioner Piech (Santa Rosa County) reported on his tour of The Nature Conservancy's East Bay Oyster Project. New oysters were found on the first reefs that were constructed.
- b. Amy Newbold (EPA) shared that the EPA plans to releasing a funding opportunity in the future.
- c. Emerson Cheney (PPBEP) announced Community Resilience Internship Cait Jennings' last day and thanked her for her work this summer.

10. Public Comment

11. Adjourn