



Jessica Bibza, Chair
Ken Heck, Vice Chair

PPBEP Technical Committee MINUTES

March 11th, 2020,

9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Gulf Breeze Community Center

800 Shoreline Dr, Gulf Breeze FL 32561

Attendees

Jessica Bibza, Chair	NWF
Matt Posner	PPBEP
Whitney Scheffel	PPBEP
Daniel Broxson	Jacobs
Amy Paulson	ESA
Levy J Morgan	SWCD
Patty Valentine-Darby	Citizen
Doug Heatwole	Citizen
Naisy Dolar	Santa Rosa County
Casey Fulford	AACD
Elizabeth Major	Citizen
Christian Wagley	Healthy Gulf
Chasidy Hobbs	UWF
Kate Dawson	Moffat & Nichol
Matt Deitch	UF
Mollie Taylor	Geosyntec
Kristin Bennet	TetraTech
Jiahua Zhen	UF
Chris Verlinde	UF/ IFAS
Carrie Stevenson	UF/IFAS
Beth Fugate	FDEP
Mike Mozur	ECCWA
Robert Turpin	Escambia County
Shelley Alexander	Santa Rosa County
Barbara Albrecht	BFA/UWF/AIMS
John Singley	Studio 850
Darryl Boudreau (ph)	NWFWMD
Connor Tate (ph)	IHMC
Matt Schwartz (ph)	UWF
Jenn Latusek-Nabholz (ph)	MRD Associates
Mike Lewis (ph)	EPA
Samantha Bolduc	Escambia County

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Introductions**

3. **Approval of the January 16th, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Several committee members submitted edits and revisions to the minutes before the meeting. Chasidy Hobbs (UWF) made a motion to approve the January 16th, 2020 meeting minutes as edited. Doug Heatwole seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Staff Updates**

a. **Welcome PPBEP Senior Scientist Whitney Scheffel**

Matt Posner, Interim Director, wanted to welcome PPBEP's new Senior Scientist Whitney Scheffel, who started earlier that week. Ms. Scheffel looks forward to meeting everyone and getting to work on the CCMP. Ms. Scheffel's bio and C/V is attached.

b. **Staff Positions**

i. **Community Outreach Coordinator**

The Community Outreach Coordinator Position has been re-advertised on the Escambia County website. Following the selection process, an offer was extended to the Selection Committee's top choice, however they declined. After reviewing the position, staff felt the supplemental questions needed to be tweaked to better reflect the positions duties and primary responsibilities. The position will remain open until March 24th and previous applicants may apply again. Staff will provide the position link for committee members to send out.

ii. **Executive Director**

The Executive Director position is currently with Escambia County HR and staff hopes it will be advertised within the next week.

c. **Legislative Appropriations Request**

The Florida Legislature is currently in budget negotiations and will run past the scheduled end of Session on March 13th. As of Monday, March 9th, the appropriations request for all northwest Florida estuary programs were still on the table, however negotiations continue as to the amounts. The request is now with the House and Senate Appropriations Committee for final deliberation.

d. **EPA Trash Free Waters Grant Award**

Mr. Posner announced that the program's proposal for the EPA Trash Free Waters funding opportunity had been selected, for the full amount of nearly \$300,000. He thanked Ms. Bolduc for her work on the proposal and the partners and committee members who assisted with the proposal development.

e. **Upcoming Education & Outreach Events**

PPBEP staff and volunteers from the Community Engagement through the Environmental Science Class at UWF participated in Santa Rosa County's 20th Annual Seagrass Awareness Festival the previous week. Pensacola Bay Oyster Hatchery provided live oysters for demonstrations and students participated in an oyster relay race to learn how oysters help filter our water and the importance of sustainable harvesting.

The joint Escambia County Bay Day- Gulf Coast Science Festival event scheduled for March 27th and 28th was postponed due to COVID-19 precautions. Staff will work with event organizers as the situation develops.

Staff also plan to participate in EPA's Earth Day Festival on April 25th, held at the Gulf Ecology Division Laboratory in Gulf Breeze.

f. Business Partnership Committee

Staff is working with Jeff Helms (Moffat & Nichol) to set up the first meeting of the Business Partnership Committee for late April. Staff and partners will look to invite key members of the business community, but like with all committees, it remains free and open to the public.

g. Florida Restore Act Centers of Excellence Project (FLRACEP) Update

Chair Bibza invited Dr. Matt Deitch (UF/IFAS) to give a brief update on the FLRACEP project. Dr. Deitch stated they are hoping to have the contract signed and staff in place in April and are continuing to work on the timeline and scope of work for the project. Mr. Posner mentioned the Florida Oceanographic Institute (grantee) received final approval from Treasury. Dr. Deitch does anticipate having to hold to the same project end date despite the delayed start.

h. Panhandle Estuarine Restoration Team (PERT) 2nd Annual Meeting

Chair Bibza, invited Kent Smith (FWC) to talk about the recent PERT meeting at Camp Helen State park. There were 45 attendees, including several PPBEP committee members. The annual meeting serves as a forum for restoration professionals throughout the panhandle to exchange ideas and information on ongoing projects, permitting processes, and other topics. The PERT Steering Committee provided guidance on action items and objectives for PERT team members, including three main action items:

- Promoting the use of green infrastructure by assessing state and federal barriers within permitting process and suggesting language to remove those barriers
- Promoting financial incentives for green infrastructure
- Assessing changing environmental and climate conditions within project planning process

The PERT Steering Committee will have near-term Action Plan out in April and aim to develop a webinar series as well. Chair Bibza mentioned it would be beneficial to have all three panhandle estuary programs attend the next PERT meeting to provide a place and time for cross-pollination of ideas.

i. Living Shoreline Contractors Training Course (Postponed)

FWC will be hosting a living shorelines training course for marine contractors April 15th and 16th in Pensacola at the Institute of Human & Machine Cognition in downtown Pensacola. The course fee is \$150 and will include lunch both days and all course materials, as well as two field trips. Organizers are hoping to invite Alabama contractors as well and Chair Bibza encouraged committee members to share with interested parties. For more information or to register, please visit: <https://www.evensi.us/living-shorelines-training-marine-contractors-pensacola-fl-south-alcaniz-street-40/382560359>

4. Progress Update

a. Community Engagement through Environmental Science (CEES) Class Progress
Chasidy Hobbs (UWF)

Chasidy Hobbs has six undergraduates enrolled in the CEES class and has partnered with PPBEP to provide them hands-on experience with community engagement activities and strategies. As a class, they are developing a storm-drain marking tool kit to highlight the drains connectivity to the bay. Their toolkit will include all the supplies and procedures required for the marking, priority locations and costs for future/expanded marking efforts. As a class they hope to be able to mark at least one storm drain in each represented municipality before the end of the semester.

Each student is also responsible for an individual project designed to help meet the outreach and education priorities of the program:

- Social Media Strategy for the remainder of 2020, with a focus on highlighting GOMA's Embrace the Gulf 2020 and National Estuaries Week
- Development of public facing content for use on a website & a newsletter template
- Development of a photo gallery for use on social media
- Creating and collecting relevant lesson plans and activities for outreach events
- Embrace the Gulf event

Students are also reaching out to National Estuary programs (NEPs) to interview staff and gather information and insights on other NEP community outreach and education efforts. General discussion followed. Chair Bibza inquired about the potential to continue the course into summer. Ms. Hobbs stated the class would end in April, but several of the students were interested in remaining involved and internships were a possibility.

Covid-19 Update: Despite the class being taught remotely, Ms. Hobbs is confident the class can make significant progress on most items. The actual Storm Drain marking activities may be delayed and the Embrace the Gulf event scheduled for Earth Day has been moved to the fall.

5. Discussion Items

a. National Aquatic Resource Survey (NARS)-National Coastal Conditions Assessment (NCCA)

Following Chris McArthur's presentation back in December and committee consensus to move forward with the NCCA survey this year, staff is continuing discussions with EPA Region 4 staff. The NCCA currently samples 7 stations within the Pensacola and Perdido bay systems. Discussions with EPA analytical staff concluded that 30 stations would be needed to accurately capture a snapshot of the bays. EPA Region 4 has offered to include an additional 10 water quality sampling sites in support of PPBEP's CCMP developmental effort. Discussions are continuing with the Escambia County Water Quality lab and the EPA Ecology Resource lab to fund the remaining 13 stations.

Mr. Posner stated it was his intent to use the data derived from this year's NCCA to develop a preliminary State of the Bays Report Card. Many of the standard parameters are included within the EPA's analysis, but staff would like to begin collecting stakeholder input as to other parameters they would like to see collected and tracked. Committee members supplied and prioritized additional parameters through a brief exercise. The results are attached.

Chair Bibza reiterated that this was the first of several stakeholder input exercises with more to follow. Mr. Posner and staff hope to have a preliminary State of the Bays report published by early 2021.

6. CCMP Developmental Workplan Implementation

a. CCMP Developmental Workplan

Mr. Posner stated the CCMP workplan is a living document and will continue to evolve. Ms. Scheffel is currently reviewing it, as well as Holly Greening, formerly of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program. Dr. Deitch has provided updated timelines with regards to the CCMP Workplan tasks he and Dr. Caffery plan to collaborate on as part of the FLRACEP project. General discussion followed. Mr. Posner stated a short-term action plan for moving forward will be ready by early April. EPA has reviewed the Workplan and has provided a few comments, but are overall comfortable with the current structure and timeline.

b. Review Monitoring Program & Literature Review Crosswalks

Staff is continuing to collect and process information about monitoring efforts within the area. Mike Lewis, EPA provided 13 boxes of data and Ms. Bolduc and Mr. Cheney collected additional documents from the Dauphin Island Sea Lab earlier in the week. Mr. Cheney is working to sort and organize the provided documents and begin the organization and development of a research library, with assistance from Ms. Scheffel.

Staff wanted to thank Committee members and others who provided information for the both Literature Review & Monitoring Program crosswalk exercises. Staff is continuing to move forward with reviewing and analyzing information provided by the crosswalks and hope to provide summary documents or updates to committee members within the next few weeks.

In similar efforts, NOAA and USGS are heading up a Pot II RESTORE Council Monitoring & Assessment Program (CMAP) project, to inventory existing habitat and water quality monitoring and mapping programs within the Gulf of Mexico. The project is slated to be complete in June 2020 and provides a good opportunity to tease out relevant programs and projects within the PPB watersheds. A project description is attached.

7. Information Items

- Mr. Posner updated attendees about the Carpenter Creek-Bayou Texar Revitalization Plan Kick-off Meeting held earlier in the month. The meeting was well-attended, and staff and contractors are continuing to compile meeting notes and action items moving forward. For update and future engagement opportunities visit Restorethewatershed.org.
- The National Fish & Wildlife Federation (NFWF) recently announced they're accepting proposals for the 2020 Coastal Resiliency Fund Award. Pre-proposals are due April 8th. Santa Rosa County anticipates submitting a proposal and plans to collaborate with PPBEP.
- In support of NEP designation, staff is continuing to work with federal representatives to help move HR 4044 (NEP Re-authorization) through Congress. At the National Association of Counties 2020 Legislative Conference, the resolution approved by Policy Board members at the November meeting was heard and supported by the Energy, Environment and Land Use Committee.
- Santa Rosa County has approved reinstating their contributions and will contribute \$7,500 for the remainder of FY2020.

8. Around the Room/Public Comment

- Naisy Dolar (Santa Rosa County) announced the Santa Rosa RESTORE Council would be meeting to watch presentations on potential Pot 1 projects as part of the MYIP Amendment process. The meeting will be March 24th at 2:30 p.m. at the Santa Rosa County Administrative Complex in Milton. The meeting will also be live-streamed on the Santa Rosa County web page.
- Robert Turpin (Escambia County) announced a Seafood Safety Symposium would be taking place at the next Marine Advisory Council meeting on April 13th, 2020, at the Escambia County Central office Complex at 6:00 p.m. (*postponed*).
- Beth Fugate(FDEP) stated the Ft. Pickens Aquatic Preserve Management Plan is scheduled to be approved April 10th in Tallahassee.
- Christian Wagley (Healthy Gulf) had several items. Ciclovía, an event celebrating cycling and other alternative forms of transportation will take place on March 28th (*postponed*) in downtown Pensacola. The CiviCon presentation on March 30th (*postponed*) at the Rex Theater would feature Melissa Hall, a famed arborist, and discuss the city's new tree ordinance. The May CiviCon will feature estuaries and estuary programs, with Matt Posner and Bill Fisher of EPA presenting. He also announced International Paper had formally petitioned FDEP for site-specific alternative criteria for the Cantonment Mill in late February, in support of their NPDES permit renewal. It is currently under review by FDEP, who must provide a 30 day public comment period before a permit can be issued or denied. It is unknown whether this process will be delayed due to Covid-19. More information can be found at:
<https://floridadep.gov/northwest/nw-compliance-assurance/content/international-paper-npdes-wastewater-permit>.
- Darryl Boudreau (NFWFMD) announced that Paddle Florida would be hosting a Perdido River paddling trip in mid-April in support of GOMA's Embrace the Gulf campaign.

9. Next Meeting

Due to Covid-19, the in-person meeting on April 8th has been canceled. Staff is pursuing alternative options for hosting a meeting.

10. Adjourn