



Technical Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 12th, 2024

10:00 – 12:00 CST

[Virtual Meeting Recording](#)

1. Attendees

Whitney Scheffel	PPBEP
Matt Posner	PPBEP
Logan McDonald	PPBEP
Bailey Walkinshaw	PPBEP
Chloe Ray	PPBEP
Zach Schang	PPBEP
Paige Lansky	PPBEP
Barbara Albrecht	BFA/PWA
Gina Alvarez	FWC
Justin Bousquin	EPA
Kyle Buck	EPA
Kate Dawson	Moffatt & Nichol
Matt Deavenport	Jacobs
Tanya Gallagher	Jacobs
Charley Golden	Jacobs
Heather Griffin	ADEM
Tyler Jacobs	Moffatt & Nichol
Matthew Kelly	Escambia County
Jackie Lane	Friends of Perdido Bay
Paul Looney	WRA
Shannon McGlynn	ADEM
Genevieve Patrick	Moffatt & Nichol
Justin Rahn	UWF
Eric Schneider	ESA
Chris Verlinde	Santa Rosa County
Michelle Wagner	TNC
Brent Wipf	Escambia County
Brandi Woolery	Dewberry

2. Call to Order

- a. Paul Looney (WRA) called the meeting to order at 10:05 on November 12th, 2024.

3. Approval of November 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes

- a. Barbara Albrecht (BFA/PWA) made a motion to approve the November 28th, 2023, meeting minutes. Chris Verlinde (UF/IFAS Sea Grant) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.



4. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Whitney Scheffel (Senior Scientist) introduced the new staff members that have joined since the last Technical Committee meeting, Zach Schang (Project Coordinator), Paige Lansky (Assistant Project Coordinator), and Chloe Ray (Environmental Technician). They introduced themselves and provided a brief overview of their background, experience, and their current role with the Program.

5. Co-Chair Elections

- a. Ahead of elections, W. Scheffel took a moment to remember and honor Casey Fulford, highlighting her significant contributions to the Technical Committee and the impactful work she accomplished across the watershed throughout her career. Committee members shared their condolences and discussed avenues for honoring Casey's legacy to ensure her dedication is remembered.
- b. Kate Dawson (Moffatt & Nichol) and Paul Looney (WRA) self-nominated for the co-chair positions prior to the meeting. W. Scheffel asked if there were any other nominations; hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the nominations. Chris Verlinde (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to elect K. Dawson and P. Looney as co-chairs. Barbara Albrecht (BFA/PWA) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Staff Updates

a. Comprehensive Monitoring Workshop Debrief

On February 29th, PPBEP hosted a workshop at the Bayview Community Center in Pensacola, FL that brought together over 50 participants representing 30 organizations that conduct monitoring across Alabama and Florida. The workshop focused on determining priority monitoring parameters, reviewing current monitoring locations, identifying potential future monitoring locations, addressing data comparability, building capacity, and developing a strategy for long-term funding support. For a more detailed workshop summary, please visit our [website](#).

b. Monitoring Proposals Pending

W. Scheffel provided an overview of two grant opportunities that the Program and partners have recently developed proposals for in response to feedback received at the workshop, specifically focused on filling data gaps in fisheries and water quality monitoring.

- NOAA RESTORE Science Program's Long-Term Trends in the Gulf of Mexico funding opportunity, proposal entitled "Casting a Wider Net – Establishing a Long-term Fisheries Independent Monitoring Program to Inform Fisheries Management Data Gaps in NWFL Estuaries" with the goal of expanding fisheries, water quality, and wetlands monitoring across the Pensacola, St. Andrew, and St. Joseph Bays to evaluate status and trends and to ultimately inform management actions.
- EPA Gulf of Mexico Program's Understanding Water Quality Through Monitoring Activities grant opportunity, proposal entitled "Establishing a Water Quality Monitoring Collaborative for Pensacola and Perdido Bays" with the goal of establishing a sentinel site network across the watersheds to assess status and trends over time and to support partners conducting monitoring.



c. Monitoring Efforts, Events, and Upcoming Projects

- W. Scheffel updated the Committee on monitoring activities, Seagrass monitoring was completed by partners at the Gulf Coast Research Lab at over 100 stations across the Pensacola and Perdido Bay systems. Researchers from the Dauphin Island Sea Lab and PPBEP staff conducted the juvenile fish trawl survey at 12 sites across lower Perdido Bay, Big Lagoon, Pensacola Bay, and Santa Rosa Sound in October, providing valuable data on species abundance and distribution.
- Living Shoreline Monitoring is ongoing and occurs quarterly at 10 sites, with efforts scheduled to continue through 2025.
- The Evening for the Estuaries Gala successfully raised over \$28,000 to support education, restoration, and monitoring programs. The date for next year's event has been scheduled for **October 16, 2025**.

7. Oyster Sub-Committee Meeting Debrief

C. Verlinde (Santa Rosa County) and T. Derbes (UF/IFAS Sea Grant) were re-elected as co-chairs of the Committee. The meeting minutes and virtual recording from the October 31st meeting are available on our website [here](#).

8. Oyster Shell Recycling and Living Shoreline Assistance Program Presentation

Paige Lansky (PPBEP) presented an overview and progress update for our Oyster Shell Recycling and Living Shoreline Assistance Programs. She reviewed the purpose and status of both programs and future goals moving into 2025.

9. Wrap Up and Future Planning

- PPBEP's annual planning meeting and celebration is scheduled for December 10-12, where staff will discuss the Program's priorities for 2025 and the development of the Program's annual report.
- PPBEP will be coordinating with staff from Gulf of Mexico Alliance's (GOMA) Data and Monitoring team to develop data dashboards as part of a Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL 2) funded project. The goal is to expand the utility of their existing open data platform (Gulf of Mexico Open Data Platform GOMOD) to include customized dashboard for the National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERR) and Estuary Programs throughout the Gulf of Mexico to assist with data communication and connection. Staff will be attending an in-person workshop in March 2025 to assist with the design and development of the dashboard for Perdido and Pensacola estuaries.
- PPBEP has begun development of the 2025 State of the Bays report update which has included the compilation of new datasets, working with the design staff from Background Stories to develop the website framework, visuals, and archiving the 2023 report.
- Looking forward to 2025, research and annual monitoring efforts will continue throughout the watersheds including living shoreline monitoring (C-STARS), juvenile fish trawling, and seagrass monitoring. The NRDA funded Microbial Source Tracking project for 9-sub watersheds in Pensacola and Perdido is expected to kick start in Spring 2025.



10. Around the Room/Announcements

- a. K. Dawson presented an update on the Perdido Watershed Initiative, which is a large-scale project with several restoration components including living shoreline implementation and habitat restoration across Perdido Bay.
- b. Brent Wipf (Escambia County) announced that Escambia County has received their state and US Army Corps of Engineers permits for their large-scale living shoreline project located along NAS Pensacola. The Sherman Inlet and Magazine Point projects are out for bid, with the White Island project set to be open for bid in December. The projects are expected to move into the construction phase in 2025.

11. Adjourned