



AGENCY ON BAY MANAGEMENT

4000 Gateway Centre Boulevard #100 · Pinellas Park, FL 33782

727.570.5151 Ext. 40

<http://www.tbrpc.org/abm>

MEETING MINUTES

Full Agency

Thursday, December 8, 2022

9:00 AM

Ms. Barbara Sheen Todd, Chair

Mayor Woody Brown, Vice-Chair

In-person location & virtual option via Zoom

4000 Gateway Centre Blvd., STE 100 Pinellas Park, Florida 33782

[Link to Meeting Recording](#)

1. Call To Order/Welcome

Vice-Chair Woody Brown called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

2. Attendance

Audubon Florida – Mark Rachal

Sierra Club – Nancy Stevens

Tampa Bay Conservancy – Sally
Thompson

WSP (environmental consulting) –
Kevin Shelton

Tampa Bay Pilots Association – Terry
Fluke

Tampa Electric Company – Nick
Fletcher

USF College of Marine

Science/PORTS – Mark Luther

Hillsborough County Staff – David
Glicksberg

Pinellas County Staff – Melanie
Weed

Port Tampa Bay – Chris Cooley

Seaport Manatee – Dan Fitz-Patrick

City of Tampa – Heather Maggio

City of Temple Terrace – James
Chambers

ABM Vice-Chair – Woody Brown

US Army Corps of Engineers –

Aubree Hershorin

NOAA National Marine Fisheries

Service – Mark Sramek

Florida Department of
Environmental Protection – Melissa
Madden

Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission – Amelia
Missavage

Florida Fish and Wildlife Research
Institute – Brad Furman

Florida Department of
Transportation – Allison Conner
Southwest FL Water Management

District – Tara Schiro

Hillsborough County at Large – Ann
Paul

Pinellas County at Large – George
Henderson

Hillsborough County Planning
Commission – Shawn College

Tampa Bay Estuary Program –
Marcus Beck

US Fish and Wildlife Service – Tiffany
Lane

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MacDill Air Force Base – Andy
Lykens

Tampa Bay Water – Bob McConnell

Others in attendance:

Mark Walton, SWFWMD; Jessica Lewis, TBEP; Brendan Meyers, USFWS; Michael Hetrick, Pinellas County PW; Vicki Parsons, Bay Soundings; Michelle Sempstrott, FWC; Rob Milliard, Lewis Env.; Floy Graves, Lewis Env.; Steven Meyers, USF; Ed Turanchik; Chris Claus, City of St. Pete; Alex Manos; Mary Keith; Corinn Beem, Kimley-Horn; Alexis Cardas, FWC; Cynthia Grizzle, PSG; Kotryna Klizentyte, FWC; Rachael Kangas, USF; Oleg P. Martens; Sean Sullivan, TBRPC; McLane Evans, City of Tampa; Ross Dickerson, Hillsborough County; Travis Grout, ERT Inc.; Kris Kaufman, NOAA; Jason Kirkpatrick, MacDill AFB; Tony; Dawn Dodge, Kimley-Horn; Anna Laws, FWC; Troy Green, Hillsborough County; Sarah Johnson, Kimley-Horn; Martha Gruber, PSG; Kerry Flaherty-Walia, TBEP; Diego Guerra, Hillsborough Planning Commission; Wren Krahl, TBRPC; Sarah Vitale, TBRPC.

Members not in attendance:

Friends of the Hillsborough River, Tampa Bay Waterkeeper, Tampa Bay Watch, Joe Island Clams (Commercial Fishing), Gulfstream Natural Gas, Mosaic Company, Tampa Electric Company, UF IFAS/FL Sea Grant, Eckerd College, University of Tampa, Egmont Key Alliance, Hillsborough County Elected, Manatee County staff, Pasco County Elected, Pasco County Staff, Pinellas County Elected, Port of St. Petersburg, City of St. Petersburg, City of Clearwater, Agency on Bay Management Chair, USGS, EPC of Hillsborough County.

3. Public Comment

No public comment.

4. Announcements

- The TBRPC will be hosting the annual Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Leadership conference May 4th-5th in Clearwater. The Future of the Region Luncheon will take place on May 5th. Early bird registration ends on January 31st. The TBRPC is currently seeking sponsors for this event. More details can be found here: <https://tbrpc.org/summit2023/>.

5. Approval of [September 8, 2022 Full Agency Meeting Minutes](#)

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the September 8, 2022 Full Agency meeting were unanimously approved.

6. ABM Committee meeting updates

Chair Todd appointed Shawn College, Hillsborough Planning Commission, as the new Chair of the Natural Resources and Environmental Impact Review Committee

7. SWIM Restoration Project Dashboard and Geodatabase – *Mark Walton and Tara Schiro, Southwest Florida Water Management District*

SWFWMD's SWIM Program has been undertaking and funding restoration work since 1987. They recently embarked on an effort to compile project data, descriptions, and metrics for some 230 restoration projects covering over 15,000 acres and make this



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information accessible through an online dashboard. This is complemented by site condition assessments of completed projects to determine if project goals and maintenance requirements are being met. [Link to presentation.](#)

The online restoration Geodatabase is an information tool that has consolidated and standardized restoration project information and metrics, including project mapping, funding, and restored habitat polygons. The database can be queried to pull information requests or reports for SWFWMD's governing board management or core operators all in an easy and consistent format. The database houses the history of how, why, and what was done on restoration projects, while the assessments identify the current condition of the site and whether the project has been successful in meeting its goals and expectations. Site assessments began in 2020 covering 81 sites, and 42 site assessments are planned for 2023. Through the assessments SWIM staff use visual indicators to evaluate both ecological and hydrological functioning of the site, adapted from the FDEP Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM). The assessment is comprised of three different categories, including the water environment (looks at indicators such as desirable water quality, water level flow and conductivity), vegetation community (assemblage of native and invasive species vegetation, health, and native plant succession), and the landscape and location support (pressures from surrounding land use and edge effects and connection to other larger natural areas). Results are recorded in a field template through Survey 123, a score is determined using the relevant indicators, which are then uploaded to the SWIM ArcGIS Online and integrated into the Geodatabase.

Higher scoring sites had regular maintenance, like Cortez and Robinson Preserves. Upland sites need more maintenance compared to wetland and estuarine sites. Some of the small private sites often have poor access, they're less visible and maintenance may not be as frequent, and projects in urban areas tended to have more improper use such as homelessness and trash. Additionally, sites that were next to larger natural areas or open water had reduced edge effects and less pressures from invasive species. Some narrow shoreline projects did not score highly due to impacts from the upland edge effect impacting the establishment of native communities and coastline pressures such as erosion from wave energy. Climate change may intensify these pressures.

The Geodatabase is not currently available to the public, but that is a possibility for the future. If someone is interested in site-specific data, then they need to contact the SWIM program.

Dr. Mark Luther asked about the opportunity for selling carbon credits from restoration projects to help fund additional restoration, as he has seen with similar programs in Southeast Asia for Mangrove forests. This isn't currently an initiative of SWIM, but it is an interesting idea.

Ms. Mary Keith stated that Tampa Audubon has been providing bird survey data for the Schultz Preserve as well as rock ponds and tracks down along the Manatee County border, asking whether those data are being incorporated into the Geodatabase. SWIM has included other monitoring efforts in their evaluations, and they have survey questions that address the site uses by different species.

Dr. Steve Meyers noted the relevance of public access to the Geodatabase to capture data from ongoing, current projects. He asked whether there are efforts to archive the data and ensure long-term preservation, accessibility and viability, as this is a growing issue in science. The sustainability of data is a primary goal of the Geodatabase, and it is now part of the SWIM data archiving and management process. Dr. Meyers encouraged them to consider a third-party archive as well, such as the USF Digital Collections for Environmental and Natural History.

Dr. Marcus Beck asked about data collection and ease of integration in the dashboard. The data does go through a quality assurance process before being integrated into the dashboard.

Dr. Mark Sramek asked whether other water management districts have similar tools, tracking, and metrics. He added that UMAM includes much of the criteria used by federal agencies for evaluating project success, and that this tool could be used as a cross reference for candidate mitigation sites that may or may not reach success criteria.

8. Cross Bay Ferry— *Ed Turanchik, HMS Ferries and South Swell Development Group*

Ed Turanchik provided an overview and update on the Tampa Bay Ferry Public Private Partnership project as well as the current intercity ferry service between Tampa and St. Petersburg. [Link to presentation.](#)

The current ferry plan is to have intercity service on evenings and weekends from Downtown St. Pete to Downtown Tampa (current Cross Bay service) and future service will include the South Hillsborough County Ferry Terminal on the Mosaic site (“home base” for ferry system). Commuter service will be offered during the day between the South County terminal and MacDill AFB. The boats will carry 149-350 passengers, are designed to run on our low water conditions. The South County Ferry Terminal on the Mosaic industrial complex site will feature a parking lot for 1,200 cars and a building, all built on existing dredge spoils. The commuter service can take a substantial number of cars off the road, and the Intercity Ferry Plan increases passenger carrying capacity ten fold (130,000 to 1.3 million passengers). The service will result in a reduction of non-point NOx and greenhouse gas emissions. The MAFB terminal is located in the boat basin, which would likely only require maintenance dredging. The main routes use the major shipping channels and there are no known wetland or seagrass impacts. The United States Air Force will assume lead responsibilities as lead federal agency on the environmental rules under NEPA. Construction of the South County terminal is expected in spring 2025, and construction of the MAFB terminal by the end of summer 2025.

The ferries will feature bicycle racks and will be accessible to wheelchairs.

The ferry service to MacDill will be for employees since it requires access to the Base.



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The South County terminal will not directly lead to residential growth, but there is growth and development on the Big Bend Rd. The terminal will help reroute local traffic and improve congestion points in that area.

Mr. Brendan Myers stated that the south terminal is in a warm water aggregation area, and the most important area for manatees. He asked about the design components being considered to avoid impacts to manatees. Ms. Sarah Johnson, Kimley-Horn, responded that they are still in the design and permitting phase, and still in the last third of the NEPA process, and beginning coordination with USFWS through MacDill. They are investigating mitigation and implementation strategies for construction and daily routes.

Mr. Mark Rachal raised concerns about the Fishhook dredge spoil island west of the terminal, which has erosion problems. Audubon is looking at options for erosion control through reef balls or marsh plantings, and the high traffic from the ferry was not originally considered. The island is a nesting area for several bird species, so Mr. Rachal expressed concern about additional erosion and other impacts to the island and wildlife. Mr. Turanchik replied that the ferries are shallow catamarans, so their wake is reduced relative to other watercraft. Mr. Rachal will be contacting them when designing their project to understand the anticipated routes and wakes.

Dr. Mark Luther offered to share their USF/PORTS studies of ship wakes and collaborate on quantifying the estimated ship wakes of the vessels.

Since the routes out of the South County terminal will include St. Pete, MacDill and Tampa, Mr. Brendan Myers urged the Ferry team to incorporate all transit routes (bay-wide) in their proposals for review/permitting, and not just the route to MacDill.

Mr. Nick Fletcher mentioned that although the aggregation area is the south side of Big Bend, there is no seagrass in the discharge canal, so the manatees will need to be going in and out periodically to eat. Even though their aggregation point is not directly adjacent to the planned terminal, there will be significant manatee traffic during the cold-water season.

Ms. Ann Paul asked about maintenance of the boats. The boats are going to be kept at the South County terminal. There will be sanitary water and sewer that they will be needing to remove. There'll be no fuel kept on site. Other than cleaning, major maintenance will be done off site.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service highly recommends that the applicant reach out to the USACE for a pre-application meeting to discuss this project and identify any potential issues prior to a submittal of an application.

Further comments and questions can be directed to Sarah Johnson at Sarah.Johnson@kimley-horn.com.

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9. Economic Valuation of Tampa Bay – Randy Deshazo, Alana Todd, Jamie Neville, Harry Walsh, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council

The Tampa Bay watershed contains a rich and diverse stock of natural resources that support the region's economy and quality of life. This presentation highlighted the preliminary results of the TBRPC's economic valuation of Tampa Bay, including its economic impacts to the regional economy, value provided to nearshore properties, and value of regulating ecosystem services.

The purpose of the study is to provide an economic valuation of the natural resources in the Tampa Bay estuary and its surrounding watershed. The objectives included demonstrating Tampa Bay's value as an economic, social, and environmental driver by identifying the contributions of the bay to the regional economy and well-being, as well as establishing a replicable process for performing a valuation of Tampa Bay using the best available data.

Dr. Luther questioned the discrepancy between Port Tampa Bay's reported economic impact and the results of this study. This is due to the port's use of survey data, whereas the bay valuation uses national sources of reported data.

Dr. Steve Meyers asked about the inclusion of red tide events in the valuation. Although that was not part of the scope for this study, the TBRPC has looked at this issue in the past. An economic analysis of the 2018 red tide event revealed a shift in spending patterns away from the bay area to elsewhere in the state.

Dr. Beck asked about the reproducibility of the methods with updated numbers and anticipated frequency of updates. The study can be completed again in the future at the desired frequency. The analysis was designed to use publicly available data, which can be easily updated.

10. Roundtable Discussion on Current Issues and Initiatives – Entire ABM

This will be a discussion among ABM members about their respective organization's current issues of concern and initiatives to identify needs and opportunities for collaboration.

Ms. Paul stated that fish line impacts continue to be an issue for waterbirds, especially pelicans. FWC is working on this issue through the Hooked Pelican Working Group.

In addition, anticoagulant rodenticides affect birds of prey, and could be a source of stormwater pollution. Also, birds are being affected by striking buildings during migration. The community should consider working on dark skies during migration periods when birds are coming down the Atlantic flyway area.

The TBEP Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan update is in the works, so TBEP will be reaching out to its partners for information and engagement during that process. The Tampa Bay Environmental Restoration Fund application period opens in January, and this round will focus more on restoration projects than research studies. Jessica Lewis and Maya Burke are available to assist with applications.

11. Other Items



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a. Bay Soundings article ideas

- Stories on the bird issues highlighted by Ms. Paul would be appropriate.
- The upcoming Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council meeting will be honoring the 20th anniversary of Bay Soundings and the hard work of Vicki Parsons, including the release of a coffee table-style book that highlights articles over the previous 20 years.

b. Topic ideas for the next meeting

- Mr. Brendan Meyers suggested a presentation about coral restoration efforts by the Florida Aquarium.

c. 2023 meeting dates

- March 9, 2023
 1. The Legislative Session begins on March 7th, and there will be a legislative watchlist compiled by the ABM's Legislative Review Committee for approval at the March 9th meeting.
- June 8, 2023
- September 14, 2023
- December 14, 2023

***Committees will meet as necessary**

12. Adjourn