



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, June 9, 2022

9:00 AM

Ms. Barbara Sheen Todd, Chair

Mayor Woody Brown, Co-Chair

In-Person & Virtual Meeting

[Link to Meeting Recording](#)

1. Call To Order/Welcome

Chair Todd called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. Chair Todd noted that the Agency will not be taking votes as the was not officially noticed as a hybrid meeting.

2. Attendance

Friends of the Hillsborough River –
Sid Flannery

Sierra Club – Nancy Stevens

Tampa Bay Conservancy – Sally
Thompson

Tampa Bay Watch – Peter Clark

Tampa Bay Pilots Association – Terry
Fluke

Tampa Electric Company – Nick
Fletcher

Hillsborough County (Elected) –
Megan Nixon

Hillsborough County (Staff) – David
Glicksberg

Pasco County (Elected) – Jack
Mariano

Pasco County (Staff) – Melissa
Charbonneau

Pinellas County (Elected) – Charlie
Justice

Pinellas County (Staff) – Stacey Day

Port Tampa Bay – Chris Cooley

Manatee Port Authority – Dan Fitz-
Patrick

City of St. Petersburg – Kelly Thomas

City of Tampa – Heather Maggio

City of Gulfport – Michael Fridovich

Chair – Barbara Todd

Vice-Chair – Woody Brown

US Army Corps of Engineers –
Aubree Hershoin

NOAA National Marine Fisheries
Service – Mark Sramek

Florida Department of
Environmental Protection – Melissa
Madden

Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission – Tyson
Dallas

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this meeting, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council at (727) 570-5151 Ext. 10 within three working days of the meeting.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Research
Institute – Brad Furman

Southwest FL Water Management
District – Chris Anastasiou

Hillsborough County at Large – Ann
Paul

EPC of Hillsborough County – Chris
Pratt

Hillsborough County Planning
Commission – Shawn College

Tampa Bay Estuary Program – Maya
Burke

US Fish and Wildlife Service –
Brendan Myers

MacDill Air Force Base – Andy
Lykens

Others in attendance:

Alana Todd – TBRPC; Vicki Parsons – Bay Soundings; Carrie Moore; James Chambers – Temple Terrace; Coleen Weaver – Pasco County; Courtney Vandenberg – Pinellas County; Nancy Murrah – Raptor Center of Tampa Bay; Tom Ries – Ecosphere Restoration; Jesse Wood – City of St. Pete; Tom Pride – KCA; Sarah Vitale – TBRPC; Gaby Placido – Pinellas County; Lauren Geiss – UF/IFAS Extension; Coleen Weaver – Pasco County; Brad Loar – Brad G. Loar CFM, and Associates, LLC; Dave Karlen – EPCHC; Serra Herndon – Tampa Bay Watch; Sarah Caper – Hillsborough County; Michael Neves – USACE; Kelli Hammer Levy – Pinellas County; Rachael Kangas – FL Public Archaeology Network; Nathaniel Martin – Pasco County; Samuel Elliot; Zack Sampson – Tampa Bay Times; Juliana Matiz; Mike Ornella – USACE; Bryan Merrill – USACE; Haley Busch – 1000 Friends of Florida; Anna Laws – FWC; Patrick Blair – Port Tampa Bay; Sonya Walling – Pasco County; Steve Swanson – Audubon Society; MA; Bill Fehring – Friends of Weedon Island; MA Neff; Diego Guerra – Hillsborough County Planning Commission; Laurel Reichold – USACE; Martha Gruber – PSG; Collin Ries – USACE; Jon Simon Suarez – USACE; Barbara Nist – USACE

3. Public Comment

No public comment.

4. Announcements

SWFWMD completed image acquisition for the 2022 seagrass mapping, and they are wrapping up quality control for the imagery. Photo interpreters have begun mapping the seagrasses starting in Tampa Bay working south to Charlotte Harbor. Field crews are conducting field verifications. Preliminary numbers are expected for early fall with draft maps by end of the calendar year. They will likely have an update for ABM in the Fall.

Sarah Caper, Hillsborough County Community Infrastructure and Planning Dept., notified the ABM of Hillsborough's efforts to update their 1995 Greenways Master Plan, which is in the early stages. Sarah and Colleagues will be presenting to the Natural Resources/Environmental Impact Review Committee in August. Sally Thompson chairs the Hillsborough Greenways Committee.

5. Approval of March 10, 2022 Full Agency Meeting Minutes

The March 10, 2022 meeting minutes will be approved at the September 8, 2022 meeting.

6. ABM Committee meeting updates

- a. Legislative Review Committee – *Alana Todd, TBRPC*

The ABM's Legislative Review Committee reviewed the status of Tampa Bay-related bills from the 2022 Legislative Session. They compiled specific actions to build member recruitment, strengthening their knowledge of the legislative process, tracking bills, and community outreach and education.

7. Saltern Restoration Activities at MacDill Air Force Base – Tom Ries, Ecosphere Restoration Institute

Coastal restoration projects at MacDill Air Force Base (MAFB), located in the Tampa Bay estuary system, have been implemented for several decades and range from the manipulation of current hydrology to reflect historic patterns to the removal of mosquito ditch spoil mounds and ditches. This update informed the group of ongoing efforts to restore imperiled saltern communities and restore a historic hydrologic flow to Tampa Bay. [Link to presentation.](#)

Comments:

The target elevation of the mounds is 2.4' NAVD, and the saltwater acts as a natural herbicide for exotic plants as it reaches at least 2.5' in high tide every month.

The size of the pumps used vary by contractor, but they are small. They aren't meant for saltwater, thus they need to be replaced monthly. The standard mound is 4' -5' high and 30' wide, and one contractor crew can level one mound per day. They have 2-3 crews hydroblasting 2-3 mounds per day. This method, especially using small pumps, is most sensitive to surrounding habitat, but it is expensive and slow. Bigger, heavy pumps could hydroblast multiple mounds in a day, but would need to be carried in via boat and would cause habitat damage.

Each mound costs approximately \$1,000. Labor costs are the most expensive part of these efforts.

The ditch blocks were vegetated to prevent erosion during high tide. The mangroves vegetated the blocks 2-3 times more than the planted vegetation, and they will help keep the blocks in place.

Brazilian pepper is removed during hydroblasting as they remove all the roots. Mr. Ries has not seen the pepper grow back. Sea level rise will eventually help keep the nonnative vegetation out of the site.

You can learn more about Ecosphere Restoration Institute, Inc., by visiting [their website](#) or contacting Mr. Tom Ries at tries@ecosphererestoration.org.

8. Raptor Center of Tampa Bay Location– Nancy Murrah, Raptor Center of Tampa Bay

The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay has rescued more than 5,000 birds over the last five years, including 12 bald eagles already this year. A donor purchased land for a center in Riverview in 2020, but it was not correctly platted and is currently tied up in court. In the meantime, Nancy Murrah has a swallowtail kite in her shower stall, a caracara in her living room and screech owls in her family room. She already is forced to turn down birds because she doesn't have space. When that happens, the closest raptor rehab centers are two hours away and accept birds from Tampa Bay only on a space-available basis. Nancy brainstormed with ABM members to help find two to seven acres in Hillsborough County that could be used as a world-class wildlife rescue with a focus on birds of prey. She has corporate support for building the facility and cages but finding the land has been more challenging. [Link to presentation.](#)

Ms. Murrah can be contacted via email: nmurrahfirefly@gmail.com

Comments:

Some properties Ms. Murrah should consider include old golf courses that have gone defunct, including three in Hillsborough County – Sun City Center, Apollo Beach, and New Tampa. Members advise caution due to pesticides traditionally used on golf courses.

Pasco County has some land available with the new Moffitt Pasco County life sciences park (775 acres).

Ms. Murrah has received a few birds with avian influenza but has not seen any in the last two weeks. They use Busch Gardens as their vet and surgery center, but have not been able to take their birds there since February because they need to be avian flu-free for 30 days.

9. Quick Update: Collaboration on Beneficial Uses for Dredged Material from Tampa Harbor – Aubree Hershorin, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

As a follow up to the last meeting, USACE provided an update about their new 3-year study to consider navigation improvements in Tampa Harbor and the beneficial use of dredged material for restoration opportunities around Tampa Bay. [Link to Presentation](#)

Dr. Hershorin will be taking this initiative to the virtual Natural Resources/Environmental Impact Review Committee meeting in August.

Comments:

The Tampa Bay Estuary Program has been working with the Nature Conservancy and the City of Tampa at Picnic Island. With some of their design concepts, the City of Tampa has expressed interest in being a placement site for the beneficial use of dredged material. Ms. Maya Burke suggested Dr. Hershorin reach out to Whit Remer with the city of Tampa.

USACE worked with FDEP on a previously permitted site for hardbottom creation, but they have not yet worked with anyone on other sites throughout Tampa Bay. They are looking for contacts.

Prior to placement elsewhere, the beneficial material is not typically tested for chemicals since it is in-situ material that has never come into contact with human or marine activities (it is pristine material). They do test for silt and composition.

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

To kick off our return to in-person meetings, this will be a discussion among ABM members about their respective organization's current issues of concern and initiatives in order to identify needs and opportunities for collaboration.

Comments:

Ms. Nancy Stevens, Sierra Club, expressed concerns about the City of Tampa's Pure Project and the need for more research to understand the effects of discharging wastewater to Tampa Bay and the other alternatives being proposed.

- Mayor Woody Brown added that this challenge is not unique to Tampa— every city, including the City of Largo, is looking for solutions considering the new state mandated timeline.

Ms. Burke mentioned the need for the TBEP to take a new, more holistic look at freshwater inflows to Tampa Bay, but they have done preliminary assessments on salinity trends with ambient water quality monitoring data. Old Tampa Bay and Hillsborough Bay are slightly fresher than before, so they don't necessarily need more freshwater inflows, but these trends have also coincided with periods of average and above average rainfall conditions. This issue is of concern, especially when considering climate change

Introduced by Ms. Nancy Stevens, Mr. Sid Flannery (Friends of the Hillsborough River), expressed concerns about minimum flow rates and failure to meet the freshwater equivalent factor for the Lower Hillsborough River. The minimum flows need to be reevaluated.

Ms. Ann Paul mentioned tax referenda in Pasco and Polk Counties to purchase environmental lands. These will be presentations at the July ABM Legislative Review Committee meeting.

Dr. Anastasiou identified Old Tampa Bay as a priority area for SWFWMD, and they are currently updating their SWIM Plan with public meetings scheduled for later this year.

Mr. Tom Ries, Ecosphere Restoration Institute, announced that Hillsborough County recently changed their rules to make it cheaper and easier for living shoreline installations in freshwater jurisdiction. Port Tampa Bay owns and controls the

estuarine portions of Tampa Bay, so they are working with the Port to mirror the County rules so the EPC can apply their new, streamlined living shoreline permitting to the estuarine areas.

Ms. Burke announced that the TBEP is hiring a restoration ecologist and administrative specialist (visit tbep.org to learn more). At the last Policy Board meeting, the City of Tampa raised concerns about increasing popularity of artificial turf in redevelopment approaches. They have questions about the tradeoffs between artificial turf and traditional landscaping, especially about drainage and chemical (e.g. PFAS) contamination of water. TBEP is looking for research on this subject and other examples of municipalities that have dealt with this issue in land development regulations.

- The Sierra Club has done research with University of Maryland on the environmental impacts of turf for big football fields. One issue is the need for replacement every few years which produces a lot of waste.

Ms. Paul brought up the recent issue of rat poisons affecting birds, like a family of owls in Phillipe Park. There is a problem with anticoagulant rodenticide, where rodents consume the poison and then birds consume the rodents. Many municipalities in the area give out rodenticides to residents for free. Municipalities need to reexamine their policies and determine if an alternative approach to managing rat populations in urban centers.

Dr. Anastasiou encouraged the ABM to keep looking at the TBEP Habitat Master Plan for restoration opportunities, which may now be further in the watershed (distal from Tampa Bay). For example, there are opportunities for habitat restoration of old Mosaic mining lands. One agency alone is not sufficient, but the ABM members can collectively investigate these opportunities further. There is also a need to re-examine old restoration projects (from ~20-30 years ago) to determine success and continued maintenance. SWFWMD has built a geodatabase to assess their old projects.

The Florida Ornithological Society is working on a breeding bird survey, where 50+ biologists are writing species accounts about nesting birds in FL, which will be released in October.

[Florida Birding and Nature Festival](#) will be October 20-23 at the Wildlife Commission's Youth Conservation Center in Apollo Beach.

Tampa Audubon Society has created [another video](#) about the damaging effects of filleted fish bones and carcasses to wildlife.

11. Other Items

- a. Bay Soundings article ideas
- b. Topic ideas for the next meeting
- c. Next meeting dates



AGENCY ON BAY MANAGEMENT

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

727.570.5151 Ext. 40

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

- July 14, 2022, 2pm– Legislative Review Committee
- August 10, 2022, 1pm – Natural Resources/Environmental Impact Review Committee
- September 8, 2022, 9am – Full Agency
- December 8, 2022, 9am – Full Agency

12. Adjourn

Chair Todd adjourned the meeting at 11:05 AM