



AGENCY ON BAY MANAGEMENT

4000 Gateway Centre Boulevard #100 · Pinellas Park, FL
33782
727.570.5151 Ext. 40
<http://www.tbrpc.org/abm>

MEETING AGENDA

June 10, 2021

9:00 AM

Virtual Meeting via

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85151411480?pwd=NTNSU09oUVF2RkswWXY5MzIDVTUyZz09>

Meeting ID: 851 5141 1480

Passcode: 1234

Call in number: +1 (786) 635-1003

Full Agency

Ms. Barbara Sheen Todd, Chair

Mayor Woody Brown, Co-Chair

1. **Call To Order / Welcome**
2. **Public Comment**
3. **Announcements**
4. **Approval Of March 11, 2021 Full Agency Meeting Minutes**
5. **ABM update – Alana Todd, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council**

This short presentation will summarize updates related to the ABM, including results of the activity prioritization survey and progress made on issues presented in the last meeting. In regards to the diamondback terrapin, TBRPC Staff have drafted a resolution (attached) in support of Bycatch Reduction Zones and the use of bycatch reduction devices on commercial and recreational crab pots. In addition, TBRPC convened the first regional meeting with County staff and other stakeholders to commence coordination efforts for red tide response.

6. **2020 Tampa Bay Seagrass Mapping Results – Chris Anastasiou, Southwest Florida Water Management District**

The Southwest Florida Water Management District will present the results from the 2020 seagrass maps. The District has been mapping seagrass habitat in the estuaries of west-central Florida, including Tampa Bay, for more than 30 years. Maps are created every two years using aerial imagery collected specifically for the purpose of mapping seagrass acreage. These maps have been a useful resource management tool for gaging overall estuarine health

7. **Piney Point Monitoring Efforts – Ed Sherwood, Tampa Bay Estuary Program**

The Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP), and its long-term monitoring partners that have tracked the Bay's condition consistently since at least the 1970s, quickly and comprehensively responded to an unmitigated discharge from the Piney Point facility in Manatee County, FL during March-May 2021. An estimated 215 million gallons of legacy

phosphate mining process and seawater was directly discharged into lower Tampa Bay over an initial 10-day period. The resulting large nutrient loads (~205 tons TN) were anticipated to have adverse impacts to sensitive shallow water habitats that have sustained clear waters, live bottom habitats, and persistently dense seagrass beds. A coordinated ecosystem monitoring effort was deployed to ascertain any interim and long-term impacts to the ecology of the Bay due to the initial discharge event. This integrated monitoring effort has continued in anticipation of additional discharges that may be needed from the site as the region approaches its Summer rainy season. This presentation will provide an overview of the ecological results to date (water quality, macroalgae, seagrass, and nekton), as observed and reported from the various monitoring agencies responding to the event. A Q+A session with Mr. Sherwood and other responders will follow the presentation.

8. Weedon Island Wetland Restoration Pilot Project – Bruce Hasbrouck, Faller Davis & Associates

An update will be provided on the 42.4-acre pilot project to remove spoil mounds and mosquito ditches within Pinellas County's Weedon Island preserve. The presentation will include the data collection process, preliminary design concepts, and the results of a virtual charrette. The charrette was an interactive process with several stakeholders that focused on whether to fill, excavate, or de-silt the more than 40 mosquito ditches in the project limits.

9. Other Items

- a. Bay Soundings article ideas
- b. Topic ideas for the next meeting
- c. Next meeting dates (Full Agency)
 - September 9, 2021
 - December 9, 2021

10. Adjourn



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DRAFT RESOLUTION 06-2021: A RESOLUTION OF THE TAMPA BAY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF THE CONSERVATION OF AN IMPERILED COASTAL TURTLE, THE DIAMONDBACK TERRAPIN.

WHEREAS, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's (TBRPC/Council) six-county geographical area is comprised of Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco and Pinellas counties and 23 municipalities contained therein, with over 3.6 million residents; and

WHEREAS, the Council has for over five decades addressed environmental challenges and concerns from a regional perspective as Florida's only multipurpose regional entity to coordinate intergovernmental solutions to multijurisdictional issues; and

WHEREAS, the Diamondback Terrapin is the only turtle in the world that is entirely restricted to brackish water and can be found in Florida's extensive estuarine, mangrove and salt marsh habitats; and

WHEREAS, seven recognized subspecies occur in 16 states from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to Southern Texas; and

WHEREAS, the importance of Florida to the diamondback terrapin species is that the coastline represents 20% of the species entire range, home to five of the seven recognized subspecies making Florida habitats critical to the entire species; and

WHEREAS, one of the major threats to the species is crab pot mortality which first appeared in scientific literature in 1942 in which terrapins are a bycatch species in the crab pots which do not allow the terrapins to rise to the surface to breathe causing death by drowning; and

WHEREAS, research in Florida has shown that the use of a 4.5 x 12-centimeter bycatch reduction device (BRD) on crab pots can reduce terrapin mortality by 73.2%; and

WHEREAS, the BRD is obtainable for under \$2.00 per crab pot and/or free from certain environmental agencies and has little to no impact on the sex, size, or number of legal-sized crabs captured; and

WHEREAS, the TBRPC supports the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) regarding their efforts to require BRDs on all recreational crab pots and implement Terrapin Bycatch Reduction Zones which would require the use of BRDs on commercial crab pots along portions of the region's coastline; and

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WHEREAS, the TBRPC encourages the FWC to research future inclusion of those terrapin habitats which do not fall in the current proposed zones, such as the Western Coasts of Pinellas and Pasco County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TAMPA BAY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL:

The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council supports the conservation efforts on behalf of the diamondback terrapin species by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to implement Terrapin Bycatch Reduction Zones and the use of Bycatch Reduction Devices for commercial and recreational crab pots.



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MEETING MINUTES

March 11, 2021

9:00 AM

Virtual Meeting via

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89405272425?pwd=TIZCSC9QzJEd1dtbWNxbHFDWjc5UT09>

Meeting ID: 894 0527 2425

Passcode: 1234

Call in number: +1 646 558 8656

Full Agency

Ms. Barbara Sheen Todd, Chair

Mayor Woody Brown, Co-Chair

1. CALL TO ORDER / WELCOME

Attendees: Barbara Sheen Todd - TBRPC, Brian Ellis - TBRPC, Wren Krahl - TBRPC, Alana Todd - TBRPC, Sean Sullivan - TBRPC, Maya Burke – Tampa Bay Estuary Program (alternate), Randy Runnels – Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserves, Allison Conner, Amy Butler - TECO, Ann Paul, Bradley Furman – FWC-FWRI, Brie Ochoa, Bruce Hasbrouck, Chris Anastasiou - SWFWMD, Chris Cooley – Port Tampa Bay, Coleen Weaver – Pasco County, Dan Savercool – Tampa Bay Conservancy (alternate), Dave Howard, David Glicksberg – Hillsborough County, Doug DeNeve, Ed Sherwood – Tampa Bay Estuary Program, George Isiminger – Port Manatee, George L. Heinrich – Florida Turtle Conservation Trust, Haley Busch - 1000 Friends of Florida, Heather Hopkins - Strong Coasts at USF, Heather Maggio - City of Tampa, Jason Wagman - FWC, Jennifer Shafer – Science and Environment Council, John Ovink - Friends of the River, Karen Mullins, Kelly O’Connor – FWC, Kevin Grimsley – USGS, Kevin Shelton – Wood, Kristi Martinez – EPC, Libby Carnahan – UF/IFAS Extension FL Sea Grant, Mark Luther – USF Marine Science, Mark Rachal - Audubon Florida, Mark Sramek - NOAA, Melanie Weed – Pinellas County, Melinda Spall – City of St. Petersburg, Nancy Sheridan - FWC, Nancy Stevens, Oleg P. Martens, Rob Brown – Manatee County, Ryan Riordan – Hillsborough County, Sally Thompson - Tampa Bay Conservancy, Sarah Kessler – City of Clearwater, Serra Herndon, Shawn College – Hillsborough Planning Commission, Stacy White, Steve Swanson – St. Pete Audubon, Tony Sadiku – Fox 13, Tracy Muzyczka – Florida Park Service, Vicki Parsons, Warren Hogg – Tampa Bay Water, William Fehring, George Henderson, Joan McGowan, Tom Ash - Environmental Protection Commission

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

- No Public Comment

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- No Announcements

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4. APPROVAL OF December 10, 2020 FULL AGENCY MEETING SUMMARY

- Approved by majority

5. ABM Operating Procedures & Activities – Alana Todd, TBRPC

Alana Todd of TBRPC reviewed the operating procedures for ABM, including its mission, duties, and membership. Members were asked to prioritize activities designated to ABM in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Tampa Bay.

Comments:

- Libby Carnahan: the City of St Pete is proposing a 5-year private lease of the municipal marina that eliminates slip rates for any boat under 30 feet. I am not sure if I can have a stance professionally but I can share the proposal w/ Alana to share with the Agency. the proposal would decrease public access to those residents with less money. They argue they are not competitive with private marina pricing and offerings. Do we think this is something ABM would normally respond to? Or is it not our place?
- Hayley Busch: FYI: Legislation filed this year to require DEP to administer a septic tank inspection program (SB 1522/ HB 1225)
- Maya Burke: Support land acquisition and funding
- Karen Mullins: BBC News: Hundreds of sewage leaks detected thanks to AI; <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-56351501>; Please support, Senator Brandis' SB 150 Bill; Please support SB 1058: Sanitary Sewer Lateral Inspection Programs
- Maya Burke: The West Central Florida Area Contingency Plan is available for review/comment at: <https://homeport.uscg.mil/Lists/Content/DispForm.aspx?ID=65790&Source=/Lists/Content/DispForm.aspx?ID=65790>

6. Regional Red Tide Response – Jennifer Shafer, PhD, Science and Environment Council

The severity and extended duration of the sixteen-month 2017–2019 red tide event in Southwest Florida was unprecedented in recent years and required coordinated emergency response. This study summarizes the Regional Red Tide Response of the five counties of the Tampa Bay and Sarasota Bay region, highlights some of the notable actions and innovations inspired by necessity, identifies gaps and challenges, lists recommendations for future red tide response, and provides a template for a Red Tide Response Operations Plan. It is intended to help identify opportunities to coordinate response efforts, recognize successes, and share lessons learned. Together with the recommendations of the companion Regional Red Tide Impact Assessment that summarizes red tide impacts across eighteen measures of community health, these insights can lead to stronger protections for our estuaries.

Comments:

- Randy Runnels: I've been interested in closed vessel composting and it might be nice to create better networks of closed vessel composting for marinas and local seafood



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industry that is used routinely, and then have that capacity around the bay. Odor free vessel systems could be developed to generate fertilizer from day-to-day fish waste, as well as capacity to handle these events. Is anyone looking into that?

- Jennifer Shafer was not aware of it. The researcher at Mote – Cindy Heil from Mote is leading the project with Florida Gulf Coast University, I'll check with her. Libby is probably more aware of the state of fish composting vessels.
- Libby Carnahan will research whether boats are being used at marinas for fish composting. I greatly appreciate your analysis. If we can formalize regional cooperation and response to red tide, that would be great. I would disagree as well. Snapping shrimp sounds would I think be associated with hardbottom communities.
- Randy Runnels: The "closed vessel composting" uses closed tanks for low-odor or odor-free composting of fish waste. I know that there has been much research on it in recent years.
- Libby Carnahan: Thanks Randy. I am copying your comment and will ask around Sea Grant if anyone knows of it being utilized in Florida.
- Randy Runnels: Reduction in Snapping shrimp sounds – we have been interested in using acoustic mapping of snapping shrimp to map the low profile hard bottom. Are you aware of anyone doing acoustic monitoring (quantitative)?
 - Jennifer: PALS – Passive Acoustic Listening Station – is a program that is a collaboration with Randy Wells (Sarasota Dolphin Research Project) with the Chicago Zoological Society. There is a network of 15 stations around Sarasota bay, and they are looking to expand that network.
 - Maya Burke: There are no active stations in Tampa Bay; I spoke with them at Randy's recommendation and they would benefit from additional talking with Randy. They thought the question was interesting, but they thought the sounds of snapping shrimp would be too ubiquitous to be informative in locating hard bottom. I disagree, but It's worth a talk.
- Barbara Todd: I think one of the primary responsibilities of ABM is to encourage coordination and I see from your recommendations that there is an opportunity for us to bring together these different entities and share your recommendations, and then identify a way to reach out to policy makers. To whom have you shared your recommendations and what has been the response?
 - Jennifer Shafer: ABM has the first

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- Barbara asked Alana to set up a response/input situation where members of this group can formally send in their ideas or suggestions on this topic because it is an economic and environmental issue that we have an opportunity to address in a significant way. I want staff to work with me to summarize the recommendations for the Regional Planning Council.
- Ed Sherwood: I wanted to concur with forwarding this to the Subcommittee, and I want to applaud Jennifer and crew for their work on this project. The end result in identifying gaps and key issues that the region can collaboratively work on is of prime importance and there are things that TBEP will Tap Jennifer to present at our Policy Board. There are things we will support funding, especially the open data tools.
- Barbara: How close are we to Eliminating Red Tide? Is that possible?
 - Jennifer: A recent State of the Science Symposium on Red Tide resulted in a report that identifies what we do and don't know. It is a short 6-8 page report that summarizes where we are on "solving" red tide, and now we are focused on mitigating and reducing the severity, rather than eliminating.
- Libby Carnahan: <https://www.flseagrant.org/redtideplan/>; Sea Grant has developed a Red Tide Communications Plan that also offers resources; Accurate and effective communication is essential for ensuring public safety and protection of the local economy.
- Jennifer Shafer: Here is the link to the report on State of the Science for *Karenia brevis* that discusses what we know and what we don't know. https://www.flseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/HABs-Red-Tide-11Feb2021_FINAL.pdf

7. Conservation Status of Diamondback Terrapins in Tampa Bay – *George L. Heinrich, Heinrich Ecological Services & Florida Turtle Conservation Trust*

This presentation provided an overview on the conservation of an imperiled estuarine turtle, the diamondback terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*). Although this species occurs in 16 states along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, the coastline of Florida represents approximately 20% of their entire range. Five of the seven recognized subspecies occur in the state's extensive salt marsh, mangrove, and estuarine habitats, including three endemics (one of which occurs in Tampa Bay where a survey is being planned to determine their distribution and identify nesting areas). Bycatch mortality in blue crab pots, impacts of climate change and expected sea level rise, and several other threats are of concern.

Comments:

- Barbara Todd asked whether George has been able to sort out the types of initiatives that could be taken by governments and state agencies?
 - George: The center for Biological Diversity has been working with different agencies along the distribution of terrapins about possession of terrapins, as well as getting BRD regulations to prevent drowning in crab pots. We have also

been working with different land managers, Bay managers - particularly in the northern states – to address bay related issues, like invasive species that are shading out nest sites. We have also been coordinating with transportation departments - South Carolina, New Jersey, Georgia, in particular - Terrapins are getting up on causeways as the females go to nest and they end up getting hit by cars. So signage can go in. We need to identify their true distribution, Florida in particular because we have no idea about what their distribution is in Tampa Bay.

- Barbara asked whether the state agencies are able to initiate regulations that would be helpful, or is it going to take federal legislation?
 - George replied that we don't have the support or evidence that they need to be federally listed, but in some states they should be listed. They are only listed as an imperiled species in Florida. We are hoping for protection range-wide. It is up to the state wildlife agency whether or not bycatch reduction devices will be required on crab pot traps in Florida waters. This is the big push currently to get as much conservation benefits out of bycatch reduction devices, and better understand their distribution.
 - Randy Runnels: Environmental DNA has become important in some of these species that may be hard to establish a presence of, and I was wondering if the genome, or environmental DNA, is necessary to add to a genetic library? There are efforts to monitor horse-shoe crabs, and it seems like those individuals, if educated, might be able to look for burrows and the presence of Terrapins?
 - George: To my knowledge, there has been no DNA work done with Terrapins in regards to develop a detection technique. This is a topic that a number of terrapin researchers have been discussing. Survey techniques that work best are coastal surveys- head counts. Surveying slowly by boat and searching land for raided nests work best.
- Ed Sherwood: Have you looked at Mining any of the fisheries independent monitoring data? They have been starting to collect information on terrapin catches.
 - George: We have been doing some of that – compile as many records as we can from different monitoring groups - FWC trawling studies and so on. We have been able to add a number of dots on the map in different areas of the state because of that.

8. OTHER ITEMS

- Bay Soundings Article Ideas

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- Next Meeting Dates (Full Agency)

- June 10, 2021
- September 9, 2021
- December 9, 2021

9. **ADJOURN @ 11:00 AM**