



# AGENCY ON BAY MANAGEMENT

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## MEETING MINUTES

Full Agency  
Thursday, June 10, 2021, 9:00 AM  
Meeting location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom  
[Meeting Recording Available Online](#)  
Ms. Barbara Sheen Todd, Chair  
Mayor Woody Brown, Co-Chair

### 1. Call To Order / Attendance

Chair Barbara Todd called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

#### Present:

Mark Rachal – Audubon Florida

Nancy Stevens – Sierra Club

Sally Thompson – Tampa Bay  
Conservancy

Serra Herndon – Tampa Bay Watch

DJ Strott – Joe Island Clams  
(commercial fishing)

Kevin Shelton – Wood  
(environmental consulting)

Keith Nadasky – Mosaic Company

Amy Butler – Tampa Electric  
Company

Libby Carnahan – UF IFAS/FL Sea  
Grant

Mark E. Luther – USF College of  
Marine Sciences

Aaron Brown – University of Tampa

Amy Siuda – Eckerd College

Megan Nixon – Hillsborough  
(elected)

David Glicksberg – Hillsborough  
(staff)

Rob Brown – Manatee (staff)

Rene Brown – Pasco (staff)

Charlie Justice – Pinellas (elected)

David Wirth – Port of St. Petersburg

George Isiminger – Manatee Port  
Authority

Michael Perry – St. Petersburg

Heather Maggio – Tampa

Sarah Kessler – Clearwater

Barbara Sheen Todd – Chair (TBRPC)

Woody Brown – Vice-Chair (TBRPC)

Kevin Grimsley – US Geological  
Survey

Mark Sramek – NOAA

Shannon Herbon – FDEP

Michelle Sempsrott – FWC

Brad Furman – FWRI

Allison Conner – FL Department of  
Transportation

Chris Anastasiou – SWFWMD

George Henderson – Pinellas at Large

Chris Pratt – EPC of Hillsborough County

Shawn College – Hillsborough Planning Commission

Ed Sherwood – Tampa Bay Estuary Program

Tiffany Lane – US Fish and Wildlife Service

Andy Lykens – MacDill Air Force Base

Warren Hogg – Tampa Bay Water

Others in Attendance:

Alana Todd – Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council; Randy Runnels – Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserves; David Karlen – EPC; Jessica Lewis – TBEP; Mark Rains – FDEP; Courtney Vandenberg – Pinellas; Kira Barrera – Sierra Club; Kirsti Martinez – EPC Hillsborough County; Sam Szatyari – Faller, Davis & Assoc.; Bill Fehring – Friends of Weedon Island; Ann Paul – Tampa Audubon Society; Steve Swanson – St. Petersburg Audubon; Julie Christian – EPC Tampa Bay; Greg Blanchard – Manatee County; Bruce Hasbrouck – Faller, Davis & Assoc.; Kelly Thomas – St. Petersburg; Melanie Grillone -Tampa Bay Watch; Peter Clark – Tampa Bay Watch; Vicki Parsons – Bay Soundings; Missy Hurley – B2 Communications; Diego Guerra – Hillsborough Planning Commission; Maya Burke – TBEP; Tracy Muzyczka; Pam Leasure; Hannah Hart; Zach Sampson

**2. Public Comment**

No public comments were made.

**3. Announcements**

No announcements were made.

**4. Approval Of March 11, 2021 Full Agency Meeting Minutes**

Motioned by Vice Chair Brown and seconded by Mr. David Glicksberg; the previous meeting minutes were approved unanimously

**5. ABM update – Alana Todd, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council**

Alana Todd summarized updates related to the ABM, including results of the activity prioritization survey, a draft resolution to support conservation efforts for diamondback terrapins, and the first regional meeting, convened by the TBRPC, 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**

Dr. Chris Anastasiou presented the results from the SWFWMD 2020 seagrass maps for Tampa Bay. Maps are created every two years using aerial imagery, and these maps have been a useful resource management tool for gaging overall estuarine health. Between 2018 and 2020, Tampa Bay lost 16% (6,355 acres) of its seagrass habitat; 2020 mapped seagrass acreage dropped to a 10-year low (34,297 acres). Old Tampa Bay reported the greatest acreage loss with an 38% decline (4,041, acres); Minor losses in Boca Ciega Bay (4%), Terra Ceia Bay (5%), and Lower Tampa Bay (1%).

Comments:

Ms. Ann Paul asked about the management recommendations that would result from the new data. Dr. Anastasiou stated that the maps convey something is going on in the bay which is being explored through the estuary programs and technical working groups (e.g. Old Tampa Bay Working Group). Exactly what to do about it is still unclear, but SWFWMD is working with resource managers and the scientific community here in Tampa Bay and on the East Coast of Florida (lessons learned from Indian River Lagoon and Biscayne Bay). Ms. Maya Burke stated that the Nitrogen Management Consortium has seen periodic non-attainment water quality standards in Old Tampa Bay, and the seagrass map results are evidence reflecting the poor water quality conditions. It might be connected to summertime blooms of *Pyrodinium Bahamense*. The Old Tampa Bay Working Group is considering management options, including modifications to improve circulation in Old Tampa Bay, large flood control structures delivering fresh water with high nutrient concentrations during wet weather seasons, and the potential for restoration aquaculture with FWC. Now, consideration needs to be given to which options should be pursued for investment. There is a need for renewed commitments to protect the bay and manage nutrient loads across all sources.

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

Mr. Ed Sherwood presented on the recent observations made at Piney Point and the ongoing monitoring efforts. Mr. Sherwood began the presentation highlighting the history of restoration in the Tampa Bay Estuary, which has focused on reducing the amount of nutrients entering the bay (>\$2.5 billion invested between 1992-2017). 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; Piney Point is allocated 0.9 tons/year TN load) were anticipated to have adverse impacts to sensitive shallow water habitats, including stimulating the production of algal biomass. 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. TBEP with partners built a [monitoring dashboard \(tutorial\)](#) for Piney Point to visualize data. The presentation provided an overview of the lessons learned from the Piney Point discharge event, including the necessity of proactive measures to prevent lingering facility closures,

the necessity for real-time monitoring (which are lacking for Tampa Bay), and the likelihood of persistent harmful algal blooms. Mr. Sherwood was joined by Dr. Mark Rains (FDEP) and Mr. Rob Brown (Manatee County) to answer questions about Piney Point. Mr. Brown reminded ABM of the presentation given in 2001 following the first Piney Point discharge event following Hurricane Gabriel, which released ~18 million gallons into Bishop Harbor.

Comments:

Chair Todd asked Mr. Brown what Manatee County policymakers would like to see happen to the Piney Point facility. Mr. Brown responded that the county has wanted the facility closed since 2001, and over \$170 million was invested in that first closure attempt. Mr. Brown and others are meeting to explore opportunities to extract macroalgae. Ms. Paul asked whether the ABM would be able to see a plan for permanent closure, and who is the lead. Dr. Rains responded that Governor DeSantis and Secretary Shawn Hamilton would like to move towards full closure, which would entail all the water drained, reservoirs filled in, the site recontoured and restored, and then the site managed for stormwater perpetuity. The injection well on site is the leading candidate for this, which involves treating the water on-site and injecting it 3,500 feet into the aquifer (exploration drilling was already done during previous closure attempts). There are challenges to drilling, including current site ownership by HRK and difficulty securing a capable drill. The state has set up two treatment companies that are treating and circulating the water on-site (230 mg/L TN and 160 mg/L TP). The NGS south reservoir breach has been repaired, but not certified for refilling the reservoir; treated water may need to be discharged again. Mr. Sherwood asked whether HRK would need state approval for further discharges since they have resumed management. Dr. Rains responded that the emergency order lapsed recently and now HRK is required to manage the site under guidance put in place by the FDEP. There have been discussions of a receivership so a receiver could manage it. Ms. Burke commented that the ABM has been a vocal and active advocate in rallying elected officials and the public, and it could be helpful in educating the community about the injection well being the best option available, as the alternative is releasing the water into Tampa Bay. Chair Todd asked that Ms. Alana Todd coordinate a task force to explore strategies to support closure of the facility. Mr. Steve Swanson and Ms. Rene Brown asked whether there are similar facilities that pose a risk of breach, and how to proactively manage them. Mr. Brown stated that the ABM formed a Piney Point Task Force in 2001 and sent a memo to legislators that included insight, input, and conditions, and concerns with Piney Point raised by the ABM and partners. This Task Force, if active again, could provide something similar regarding other facilities in the region. Ms. Paul asked whether off-shore water discharge has been considered, and Dr. Rains replied yes but there are logistical problems. Ms. Shannon Herbon stated that Piney Point is the only facility not managed by an active phosphate company in Florida, so it is unique.

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

Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck provided an update 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. The design will be completed by October 2021; permitting is currently underway; bidding will take place between December 2021 and June 2022; and construction will likely take place between June 2022 to September 2023.

Comments:

Chair Todd asked who created the mosquito ditches. Mr. Hasbrouck stated that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contracted with firms that did the dredging around the state of Florida. There are few areas unimpacted black mangrove habitats in Florida, but a few unimpacted areas in Charlotte Harbor are providing reference for this project to mimic.

**9. Other Items**

**a. Bay Soundings article ideas**

Comments:

Mr. Aaron Brown suggested the State Road 56 extension through the Lower Green Swamp Preserve. Ms. Burke suggested pairing the SR 56 story with other instances of seemingly protected sites now under threat of development, like the USF property and Douglas Hackworth Property. Ms. Paul noted that the ABM could write in a recommendation encouraging efforts to prevent bisecting large preserved areas with infrastructure. Ms. Tiffany Lane stated that the Bok Tower Gardens' Rare Plant Conservation program is reintroducing endangered plant species throughout Hillsborough and Pinellas County. Dr. Mark Luther stated that USF is about to install a wave gauge array at Phillippe Park as part of the living shoreline project to measure how well living shorelines attenuate wave energy.

**b. Topic ideas for the next meeting**

No comments were given.

**c. Next meeting dates (Full Agency)**

- September 9, 2021
- December 9, 2021

Comments:

Ms. Burke stated that the next Bay Area Scientific Information Symposium is scheduled for October 18-22<sup>nd</sup>; [abstracts are being accepted](#) by TBEP until June 17<sup>th</sup>.

**10. Adjourn**

Chair Barbara Todd adjourned the meeting at 11:23 a.m.