



# STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PUBLIC EDUCATION & TRAINING COMMITTEE

4000 Gateway Centre Boulevard #100 · Pinellas Park, FL 33782  
727.570.5151 Ext. 40

<https://www.tbrpc.org/stormwater-management-committee/>

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## MEETING MINUTES

March 15, 2022

9:30 AM

**Online Meeting via Zoom**

### 1. Welcome, Introductions & Public Comment

#### a. Attendees

- Alana Todd – TBRPC
- Jarvis Sheeler – City of Clearwater
- Doris Heitzmann – UF/FFL
- Brett Warner – City of St. Pete Beach
- Stephanie Ellington – Keep Pinellas Beautiful
- Vicki Parsons – Bay Soundings
- Sandra Pope – City of Lakeland
- Mike Clarke – City of St. Pete Beach
- Christine Joyner – Pinellas County
- Heather Maggio – City of Tampa
- Scott Stevens – FDOT
- Debbie Evenson – Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful
- Maya Trotz – St. Pete Beach
- Kathryn Ecsedy – MOSI
- Ali Mauer – Pinellas County
- Timothy Kelly – Wood PLC
- John McGee – Plant City
- Joey Thames – Pinellas County
- Juanita Bernal Leon – Pasco County
- Katie MacMillen – Pasco County

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.

**2. The Blue Green Action Platform to bridge communities upstream and downstream: Approaches to equity in managing nitrogen:** Maya Trotz, University of South Florida

BlueGAP connects community organizations and champions across big and small watersheds to address economic and health problems caused by nitrogen pollution. Scientists, engineers, and community organizers are currently co-designing BlueGAP to empower people to reach well-informed decisions for a better living through storytelling and reliable information about water quality. Funded by the National Science Foundation's Blue Economy Accelerator Program, the BlueGAP team is building a prototype that is informed by end-user interviews conducted in St. Croix, USVI, Tampa Bay, and Iowa City. In particular, end-users include those whose voices have been absent or ignored in decision making around things like stormwater management. The genesis from this work comes from nearly two decades of community engaged engineering work with members of the East Tampa community. A history of this work around stormwater will be presented, and the value of the community engaged approach was discussed in terms of the evolving BlueGAP project.

- a. The group discussed challenges and opportunities to engaging frontline communities, including building relationships and turnover,
- b. Two Resources Shared:
  - a. Pinellas County program called FAST (Faith and Action for Strength Together), which is a collaboration of 52 congregations fighting for justice and equity on the frontlines in Pinellas County. This year they are focusing on water quality, nutrients in Tampa Bay, and Red Tide.
  - b. HOPE – Hillsborough Organization for Progress and Equity – made of 25 congregations doing similar work as FAST.
- c. Tampa has a new graphic art program for community inlet paintings, which has been piloted in South Seminole Heights. In addition, a local school painted their own inlets with student-designed stencil (decided via contest). This is a program that is starting to launch. They include a placard with the art that says, “Drains to River. No Dumping.” Art must be approved by the City art department.
- d. Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful will be hosting a tree planting event at Highland Pines Park in April. They also have funds for storm drain art, which they suggested could be included with the tree planting event to get the community involved in selecting the art. They are also hosting a tree planting event in Capaz Park.
- e. MOSI’s Water Days are coming up on March 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> for educational outreach on water conservation and other issues.
- f. Dr. Trotz asked the group whether anyone is considering green infrastructure improvements on residential property as something that would give residents credit.
  - a. The City of St. Pete Beach offers a stormwater credit for private property owners that have permeable stormwater retentive yard.
  - b. Pinellas has a FLIP program – Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program.
- g. Dr. Trotz suggested pop-up events in the targeted outreach communities rather than events detached from the community.



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### 3. St. Pete Beach Baffle Boxes: Mike Clarke and Brett Warner, City of St. Pete Beach

As part of the stormwater system improvements element of our recent complete streets rehabilitation project on Pass-a-Grille Way, St. Pete Beach installed Baffle Boxes to improve water quality at every stormwater outfall structure. Several years later we have an ongoing maintenance program to remove sediment and debris. The lesson learned is to ensure your stormwater maintenance department is prepared up front for the increase in resources necessary to maintain the baffle boxes.

- a. City of Tampa has 44 baffle boxes, some of which have retrofitted gates for maintenance. The gates are similar to garage doors that slide down on the pipes for easy maintenance when submerged with water.
- b. St. Pete Beach finds trash in their baffle box screens in addition to a lot of organic matter like leaves, grass clippings, and other debris that falls into the storm drains. Their street sweeper collects sand,
- c. St. Pete Beach determines their nutrient load reductions from the baffle boxes according to manufacturing specs. The City of Tampa is currently completing a two-year study on the actual nutrient load reductions, determined by regular sampling on three sites.
- d. Considering future sea level rise and flooding from king and high tides, the City of St. Pete Beach estimates 20–30-year horizon on the current baffle boxes' effectiveness. The baffle boxes are designed with a certain static water level in mind, so as sea levels rise there will be periods of high water (high tide) when water surpasses the height of the baffle box and does not get filtered. The more water that goes around the baffles, the less sediment that drops out since it is not running through the baffle. More data is needed to understand the impacts.
- e. Water goats have not been considered as an addition to the baffle boxes. The City of Tampa does not use water goats either, as they are often overlooked and considered more of a community project.
- f. Maintenance of the baffle boxes is contracted out for both St. Pete Beach and Tampa. The contractors for St. Pete Beach use a pumper truck, which can suck below the water level to remove debris from the bottom of the tank, and they also bring a vac truck to help remove sediment and trash collected in the screens.
- g. Pasco is considering baffle boxes for their beaches.
- h. City of Tampa is beginning to count trash in all their baffle boxes as part of the Trash Free Waters Program, as it has not been counted in the past. The Trash Free Waters program is part education and part research to better understand what kind of trash is collected, from where, and what community profiles are. They will be extending this inventory program to their street sweeping as well. A future step will be quantifying microplastics.

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- i. The baffle boxes in St. Pete Beach take flow from 4-6 inlets, thus they are small, localized basins.

**4. FY2023 Stormwater Outreach and Education Funding:** Alana Todd, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council

The FY23 stormwater outreach and education funding cycle is quickly approaching. The TBRPC would like the Committee's input on new target audiences and objectives for the funding.

- a. A new target audience for FY23 funding will be frontline communities.
- b. Funding still can be applied to children and school groups.
- c. Tourism and hospitality are still good target audiences for funding (spring breakers and tourists are large sources of marine debris), but they are difficult to educate.
- d. Another target audience to consider is apartment complexes.
- e. Sport groups and advertisements on jumbotrons are creative ideas for stormwater education.
- f. Influencers on social media is another creative education avenue.

**5. Topic Ideas for Future Meetings**

**6. Other Items/Announcements**

- a. Michelle Monteclaro is no longer with Pinellas County. Christine Joyner announced that Pinellas County is airing their Don't Feed the Beast movie theatre ads March 11-April 17.
- b. MOSI Water days – March 25-26
- c. The TBRPC Resilience Summit is April 5-6<sup>th</sup>.
- d. The FY23 Stormwater Education and Outreach Funding application solicitation will begin in April, closing in July. <https://www.tbrpc.org/stormwaterfunding/>

**7. Next Meeting dates:**

- a. July 19, 2022
- b. September 20, 2022

**Meeting Coordinator:** Alana Todd, [alana@tbrpc.org](mailto:alana@tbrpc.org)