

Estero Bay Agency on Bay Management

The regular meeting of the Estero Bay Agency on Bay Management met on Monday, July 13, 2020 at the 9:30 AM at the SWFRPC offices.

The minutes are as follows:

MINUTES ESTERO BAY AGENCY ON BAY MANAGEMENT

Monday, July 13, 2020 – 9:30 AM.

SWFRPC Offices
1400 Colonial Boulevard, Suite 1
Fort Myers, Florida 33907

Call to Order – Ms. Whitehead called the meeting to order at 9:37 AM.

Attendance- As usual attendance was taken from the sign in sheet:

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Dr. Nora Demers	RGMC
Brenda Brooks	CREW Trust
Patty Whitehead	Bonita Lions Club
Kelly McNab	Conservancy
Stephanie Erickson	EBAP
Win Everham	FGCU
Laura Miller	LWV
Benjamin Marics	FGCU Student
Louise Kowitch	Educator (Individual)
Jennifer Hecker	CHNEP

Staff in Attendance: Mackenzie Moorhouse

Motion to Approve the Minutes of the June 8, 2020 meeting was made by Ms. Brooks and seconded by Ms. Kowitch. Approved unanimously.

Note: Last-minute changes were made to the order of the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. The following minutes appear in the order presented on the original agenda.

Membership Updates. Ms. Moorhouse alerted members to changes in current membership. Capt. Jon Hall of Pelican Landing will be replacing Capt. Roger Jacobsen as the primary member representing the association.

Member Activity Updates – Brenda Brooks (CREW Trust), Stephanie Erickson (EBAP). Ms. Brooks was unable to give an update today due to technical difficulties, but will give an update sometime in the near future. Ms. Erickson updated the membership on several projects that the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve is working on. These projects include the No Internal Combustion Motor Zone Project, Water Quality, Habitat and Wildlife Monitoring projects, and a Statewide Ecosystem Assessment of Coastal and Aquatic Resources (SEACAR). The EBAP also participates in a monthly volunteer water quality monitoring network (CHEVWQMN). Ms. Erickson noted that there may be gaps in monitoring data this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A detailed explanation of each project will be made available at <https://www.swfrpc.org/programs/abm/>

Dr. Demers inquired whether the data collected by EBAP was included in this year's State of the Bay Report. Ms. Erickson responded that most data were included, save for the oyster data which is still a fairly new program and does not yet have substantial data.

Mr. Everham inquired whether the SEACAR developers could present at a future EBABM meeting so that members could provide insight on what might be the best nature of that interface. Ms. Erickson responded that she was sure that scheduling a future presentation would be possible.

Mr. Everham requested that any members who have developed organizational guidelines for the science community to navigate COVID-19 while continuing programs, engaging citizen scientists, and working with a crew in the field, to please share them with him.

Mr. Everham also noted that he hopes in the light of the pandemic when data gaps are inevitable, members (and the science community as a whole) will soon assess the region and recognize what data still needs to be collected and what still needs to be done, and that a coordinated effort will be formed to close those data gaps so that future scientists will have this information to look at. Ms. Hecker responded that the CHNEP hopes that the [Water Atlas](#) will do that, and noted that it already was working towards that by assessing data needs and coordinating with all regional agencies that can provide data.

Ms. Kowitch requested that members please send updates to her to include in the monthly newsletter.

Biological Opinions. Three PDF documents were provided to members that included biological opinions written by the USFWS to assess three Cameratta Company property developments on Corkscrew Road. Ms. McNab noted that the Conservancy wrote comments responding to the USFWS and these developments. It was clear to members after reading the biological opinions that the information referenced in each study was not up-to-date and does not support current local data. It was determined that the EBABM

would write a letter to the USFWS outlining the agency's concerns with each biological opinion. Ms. McNab, Mr. Everham, and Ms. Miller volunteered to assist Ms. Whitehead in drafting this letter. A second letter would be drafted and sent to County Commissioners regarding the DRGR, but only after a meeting involving local experts was held to formulate a clear and well-backed argument on the topic.

Planning an Estero Bay Watershed Public Symposium. Dr. Demers suggested that the EBABM begin planning an Estero Bay Watershed Symposium. It was agreed that 2022 would be the best year to hold this event. Potential themes include threats/opportunities in the DRGR, and increasing citizen involvement. Mr. Everham noted that we would need to pinpoint a target audience, and added that the science community needs to help citizens to understand modelling, especially the fact that models are never written in stone.

Old Business. Ms. Moorhouse is currently contacting members on the membership list that have not been able to attend in recent months.

New Business. No new business was discussed.

Emerging Issues. Ms. Hecker will share information with the membership regarding the most recent SFWMD stakeholder meeting.

Announcements. Ms. Kowitch announced that on August 4, 2020 at 10 AM, a Zoom meeting will be held for the Estero Bay Educators Working Group. All EBABM are invited to attend. An invitation will be provided in a follow-up email to members.

Ms. Hecker announced that \$3,000 conservation grants were currently available through CHNEP. The deadline to apply is August 1. More information provided [here](#).

Mr. Everham announced that FGCU is participating in a continent-wide effort to monitor wildlife during the "Anthropause". The FGCU effort is Campus Without People (CWP). More information can be found [here](#).

Ms. Moorhouse announced that the RPC had field equipment to give away if any members would like to claim it. Dr. Demers and Ms. Erickson volunteered.

The next Meeting Time and Place, for EBABM is August 10, 2020. 9:30 A.M., via GoToMeeting virtual meeting platform.

Adjournment was at 11:30 A.M.