

CCS3: ADVANCING COASTAL MONITORING THROUGH COLLABORATION: A PANEL DISCUSSION OF LESSONS FROM PINEY POINT

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Panelists: Ed Sherwood², David Tomasko³, Mark Rains,⁴ Duane De Freese⁵

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The restoration and maintenance of coastal habitats (e.g. seagrass, mangrove, oysters) in Florida estuaries has been a primary ecosystem recovery goal for local, regional, and state resource managers since the 1980s. Significant water quality improvements stemming from several decades of enhanced nutrient load management led to peak seagrass coverage gains in 2016 within many Southwest Florida estuaries, for example. However, acute and chronic nutrient discharges are suspected in recent declines of water quality and coastal habitat spatial extent and health within several Florida systems. This session will include an introductory presentation by Ed Sherwood, the Director of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, and an ensuing panel discussion that will focus on: 1) the monitoring collaborations necessary to initially develop goals and document coastal habitat recovery in Florida estuaries; 2) contemporary triggers and conditions that have led to additional coastal eutrophication concerns for maintaining coastal habitats and natural resources within Florida's urbanizing coast; and 3) a vision for ecosystem monitoring collaborations and needs within Florida's estuaries of national significance that will help ascertain whether recovery and positive restoration trajectories are maintained into the future. Specific case studies from Florida's estuaries, such as Tampa Bay and the Indian River Lagoon, will be discussed.

ORGANIZER BIOS:

Dr. Morrison is an assistant professor in the Engineering School of Sustainable Infrastructure and Environment at the University of Florida whose research focuses on the biogeochemistry and microbial ecology of wetlands and estuaries. She holds a Ph.D. from the UF's Soil and Water Sciences Department and a B.S. from the University of California, Davis.

Dr. Ed Sherwood has served as Tampa Bay Estuary Program's Executive Director since 2018 after serving as the Program Scientist since 2008. He directs TBEP's technical and public outreach initiatives and serves as the primary policy liaison between its many public and private partners. He holds a B.S. degree in Marine Biology from the University of West Florida, and a M.S. degree in Marine Fisheries and Ecology from the University of Florida.

Dr. David Tomasko is the Executive Director of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and has more than 30 years of experience in water quality assessments and the development of science-based natural resource plans in the Gulf of Mexico and international locations. He holds a Ph.D. in biology from the University of South Florida, a Master of Science in marine biology from the Florida Institute of Technology, and a Bachelor of Science in biology from Old Dominion University.