

Mobile Bay NEP Bumper Sticker Contest

December 16, 2004

Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
4172 Commander's Drive
Mobile, AL 36615

Dear 9th Grade Teachers:

Would you like to help your class win \$200 towards new equipment or supplies while teaching them about important issues affecting the Mobile Bay Estuary? The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) is sponsoring a bumper sticker contest among 9th students in the Estuary area. The purpose of the contest is to increase community awareness of natural resource issues affecting the Estuary, promote understanding and participation in conservation and stewardship activities, and to share information about the goals, purposes, and activities of the NEP. The winning design will be converted into a bumper sticker and distributed widely throughout our area. This is a great opportunity to have fun, be creative, and learn. We hope you and your students will participate.

What is the MBNEP?

The MBNEP is a community-based, federally-supported program to improve management of resources in the Mobile Bay estuary area. The MBNEP supports cooperative efforts among federal, state, and local agencies, as well as grassroots organizations and individual citizens to take actions to benefit the estuary. For example, the MBNEP sponsors "supports" the Alabama Coastal Clean-up, Bay Area Earth Day, the Clean Marinas Program, the Coastal Alabama Bird Fest, the Dog River Dog Paddle, the Derelict Crab Trap Recovery, and Oyster Gardening just to name a few. Additional information about the MBNEP and our projects is provided in the attachments.

Rules:

Who: We are seeking submissions from 9th grade students within the geographic scope of the MBNEP (in either Baldwin or Mobile County). Please let us know which classroom is sponsoring the student's submission because the prize will be awarded to the classroom. (For example, is the submission from the homeroom class, an art class, an ecology class, an English class, etc?)

What: The student should read the attached background materials, and submit an idea for a bumper sticker that would increase understanding of the MBNEP and the issues affecting our estuary, and encourage community involvement in projects to protect the estuary. The design may include text and/or art. Text must be limited to no more than 10 words. The design can be a traditional rectangle, square, or circle.

When and Where: The deadline for submissions is March 15, 2005. The winner will be announced in April at the Bay Area Earth Day celebration. Please mail or deliver submissions to: Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, 4172 Commander's Drive, Mobile, AL 36615, (ph) 431-6409.

Prize: The winner of the bumper sticker contest will win for his/her class, a \$200 award to buy supplies or equipment for the classroom in his or her name, and a pizza party for the class.

Where to get more information:

Attachments: There are two attachments to this letter that provide: (1) Background on the NEP and the MBNEP, and (2) an overview of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan.

Website: Additional information is available on the MBNEP website at www.mobilebaynep.com

Contacts: For questions, contact: cac@mobilebaynep.com
Marian Macpherson at home 928-2442 or cac@mobilebaynep.com
Megan Anderton at Fairhope High School 928-8309 or manderton@bcbe.org
Lee Yokel Mobile Bay NEP at 431-6409 or lyokel@mobilebaynep.com

We look forward to the creativity of your students.

Background Information

I. The National Estuary Program. In 1987, Congress established the National Estuary Program (NEP) to:

- C Identify nationally significant estuaries that are threatened by pollution, development, or overuse;
- C promote comprehensive planning for, and conservation of, nationally significant estuaries; and
- C enhance the coordination of estuarine research

For estuaries that are identified as “nationally significant,” a special program applies to: encourage better understanding of the estuary through data collection and research; promote communication and cooperation among the various local, state, and federal agencies that oversee activities in the estuary; and support development and implementation of a community-based plan to restore and conserve key estuary features. The program is supported by the Environmental Protection Agency, but relies on the local community for implementation and decision-making.

II. The Mobile Bay NEP (MBNEP). Mobile Bay was designated a “nationally significant estuary” in 1995, and is now home to one of 28 National Estuary Programs. One of the first tasks the MBNEP undertook was the development of a plan to protect and restore the estuary. Through a series of public meetings, members of our community worked together to develop the “Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan” (CCMP). The CCMP was approved in April 22, 2002. Now, in partnership with local groups and individuals, the MBNEP works to promote the plan’s implementation and review federal agency actions for consistency with the plan.

No single entity runs the MBNEP. The decisions are made collectively by the Management Conference, which includes representatives from government agencies, citizens, business leaders, environmental groups, educators, and scientists. In addition, meetings of the Management Committee are open to the public. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides grants and technical assistance. The grant money helps to fund some of the work that is necessary to the restoration of Mobile Bay.

III. MBNEP Accomplishments. The MBNEP sponsors and conducts many important programs that are helping our estuary, such as:

- C Alabama Coastal Clean-up.
- C Alabama-Mississippi Rapid Assessment Team. This team conducts on-the-ground sampling to determine the presence of non-native species in our area.

- C Bay Area Earth Day.
- C Clean Marinas Program
- C Coastal Alabama Bird Fest
- C Dog River Dog Paddle
- C Data Information Management System (DIMS)
- C Derelict Crab Trap Recovery
- C Estuary Live
- C Healthy Coastal Communities Initiative/Smart Growth
- C Helen W. Wood Park
- C Oyster Gardening -Now in its fourth successful year!
- C Stewardship Awards
- C Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Gardening
- C Workshops and Conferences, including the Mercury Forum, and Smart Growth Conference, Green-building, and Stream Bank Restoration.
- C Mini-grants

You can find out more information about these projects on our website at www.mobilebaynep.com

IV. Get Involved: The Community Advisory Committee (CAC). There are many ways you can help our community achieve our stewardship goals for the Estuary. The local community has two voting seats on the Management Committee: one from Baldwin County, one from Mobile. All interested members of the public are invited to share their concerns through the CAC. The CAC meets once per month. In addition, there are a variety of on-going projects and volunteer opportunities. For more information, log on to our website, e-mail the CAC at cac@mobilebaynep.com, or call the MBNEP at 431-6409.

Overview of MBNEP's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP)

GOAL: The overall goal of the MBNEP is “To promote wise stewardship of the water quality characteristics and living resource base of the Mobile Bay Estuarine System.”

OBJECTIVES: The CCMP identifies objectives in 5 key issue areas for achieving the goal. The issue areas are water quality, living resources, habitat, human uses, and education/public involvement. Each objective includes more specific “sub-objectives” to focus on key problems.

1. **Water Quality:** Attain/maintain water quality sufficient to support healthy aquatic communities and designated human uses by 2010.
 - a. Calculate “total maximum daily loads” (i.e., allowable pollution levels) and incorporate these into management strategies.
 - b. Reduce nutrient loads in problem sub basins by 2006 with increased management of point and nonpoint source pollution.
 - c. Minimize introduction of pathogens sufficient to protect public health from in-port ship ballast exchange, marine waste from vessels, sewage system failures, point source discharges, and septic systems by 2010.
 - d. Evaluate sources and loads of toxics and reduce to standards by 2010.

2. **Living Resources:** Maintain native populations within historical ranges and natural habitat, and restore populations that have declined.
 - a. Gather information necessary to conserve important species by analyzing data.
 - b. Prevent where possible, and manage where necessary exotic and nuisance species.
 - c. Maintain and/or increase, if feasible, within natural variability, present catch levels of fisheries resources.

3. **Habitat Management:** Provide optimum fish and wildlife habitat in the Mobile Bay system by effectively preserving, restoring, and managing resources to maintain adequate extent, diversity, distribution, connectivity, and natural functions of all habitat types.
 - a. Protect, enhance, restore, and manage public lands, cooperate with owners of important private properties, acquire 15 priority sites.
 - b. Maintain and protect coastal wetlands (quality, function, and value, and increase acreage by 5% of those types that have declined.
 - c. Maintain and protect nesting habitat for colonial and migratory birds, reduce declines

In nesting habitat due to human disturbance an alteration.

4. Human Uses: Provide consistent, enforceable, regional land and water use management that ensures smart growth for sustainable development and decreases the negative impacts of growth-related activities on human health and safety, public access, and quality of life by developing and implementing plans consistent with the CCMP.

a. Sustainable land use planning: enhance quality of life by improved planned and managed development.

b. **Hydrologic** modification: reduce negative effects of past poor planning by: maintain/adjust stream flows to address flooding, erosion, salinity, etc; protect/manage/restore 1,000 acres of floodplain; protect/manage/restore 5 miles of streambanks; reduce locally generated sediment loads by 10%.

c. Public access: increase public access to water resources/encourage ecotourism.

5. Education and Public Involvement: Increase awareness of natural resource issues and promote understanding and participation in conservation and stewardship activities.

a. Increase public awareness among leaders, agencies, and citizens through Coastal Environmental Education Campaigns.

b. Implement a citizen-based monitoring program.