

Mobile Bay NEP CAC Meeting

1/10/14

5 Rivers

**In attendance:** Leslie Gahagan, Wolf Bay Watershed Watch; Casi Callaway, Mobile Baykeeper; Christian Miller, MBNEP; Walter Ernest, Pelican Coast Conservancy; Lloyd Culp, Friends of Bon Secour; Ray Mayhall, MBK/FRACA; Harold White, FRACA; Mark Berte, ACF; Joe McEnerny, ACF; Stefanie Christensen, Mobile Baykeeper; Ben Raines, Weeks Bay Foundation; Sam St John, Mobile Baykeeper/ACF; Elana Carson, MBKFA; Brian Carson, MBKFA; Kim Sweet, DRCR

The meeting was called to order at 11:30 AM, after group introductions Casi explained that the objective for today's meeting was to review the Goals/Strategies/Tactics developed at previous meeting to:

1. Make sure they are appropriate
2. That the strategies and tactics will lead to achieving the desired goals
3. Fill in any gaps/missing pieces

Leslie went over the goals as described in the handout and stated that the group would work through each goal and associated strategies/tactics.

**Goal 1 Increase awareness of coastal resources that support what people value most about living in Coastal Alabama.**

The group is fine with Goal 1 as is. Under strategy A, Walter asked who would be hosting the workshops and should it be stated who would be hosting. Mark stated that it should be understood that it is not the NEP hosting the workshops, but rather participating groups which fall under the umbrella. Ben suggested that it would be helpful to have a resource/repository for workshop materials (eg. Powerpoints, handouts, etc). There should be a resource for keeping track of workshop attendance, a central point for accessing information (eg. MBNEP or Create a Clean Water Future Website). It was mentioned that the Homebuilders Association would be a good group to coordinate with. Leslie said there will be a follow up within the group to get a count/description of workshops planned for 2014, and that these items would be more of the focus of Goal 2.

It was recommended to create more opportunities that expose more people to coastal Alabama's water resources. Efforts should be made to target low income communities and provide funding to increase access for these communities.

The group also expressed interest in creating a State-wide awareness of the environmental connection to the coast. Casi said that it was likely outside the purview of the MBNEP to work beyond the immediate Mobile Bay estuary.

**Goal 2 Improve community ability to participate in ecosystem based management actions through collaboration, education, and citizen reporting.**

The group recommended striking everything after “actions”, so that the goal now reads “**Improve community ability to participate in ecosystem based management actions**”. It was stated that the group must educate non-environmental groups/public of programs and volunteer opportunities.

Group recommends:

- A central calendar/repository with access for members
- Create a central website (Casi mentioned that this was the intent of the Create a Clean Water Future effort)
- Create a listserv/google group for sharing information
- Groups should be able to share the information on the central repository through their own outlets (newsletters, web, facebook, etc).

**Goal 3. Encourage citizens and community members to support and be more engaged in restoration and conservation of critical habitats.**

There was discussion about the importance of restoration vs. conservation. The group felt that there should be focus in these areas:

- Increase the properties under various landowner conservation tools (eg. Through the use of conservation easements) and encouraging turnout and participation in public hearings/meetings that promote these tools.
- Participate with the PIC in restoration efforts (living shorelines, wetland plantings, etc)
- Promote living shorelines/greenways/blueways
- Share permits/notices via listserv/website

**Goal 4. Increase citizen actions to mitigate impact of humans on the environment.**

Kim mentioned making sure that existing programs are enhanced/utilized. Mark mentioned the Bay Buddies and Estuary Corps programs through ACF. Keep Mobile Beautiful and Alabama PALs were also mentioned. A concerted effort should be made to promote existing regulations/ordinances that may change citizen’s littering habits. The group agreed that an Anti-littering campaign should be a focus, Casi expressed that this was the intent of the Create a Clean Water Future campaign.

### **Goal 5. Build Capacity of Grassroots Groups**

This is a new goal submitted by the group. The focus of this goal will be to increase capacity of grassroots groups through regular trainings in the following key areas:

1. Succession training (training new/incoming officers/board members)
2. Technology transfer for
  - a. Volunteer training
  - b. Fundraising
  - c. Non-profit governance
  - d. Board member development
  - e. Leadership

There should be at least one training per year in the area of technology transfer (fundraising, volunteer recruitment, non-profit governance) for coastal grassroots groups.

### **Goal 6. Support needed changes to Federal, State, and Local regulations to improve management of coastal resources and promote enforcement of existing regulations.**

The group suggested amending this goal to include “Federal” to State and local regulations and to keep members informed through the central listserv/website. It was also mentioned that it would be important for groups to provide comments to regulations as they are developed and to work with/be aware of the efforts of the Government Networks Committee.

The group is happy with the **Goals/Strategies/Tactics** as stated and the following:

#### **Next Steps**

1. Casi will send out a draft of **Goals/Strategies/Tactics** for one more review.
2. Coastal grassroots groups will provide feedback and provide details on upcoming workshops/programs (Leslie will initiate).
3. The CAC will meet at a date/time to be determined for a final blessing of **Goals/Strategies/Tactics** and assignment of actionable items.