



**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Community Action Committee Meeting**
Wednesday, January 25, 2017 - 10:00am at Five Rivers
Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Approval of Minutes
 - No minutes from last CAC meeting, fowl river monitoring focus (planning meeting)
3. Chair Report
 - No Update - Executive Committee minutes waiting to be approved
4. Old Business
 - Update on Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring in coastal Alabama -Jason
 - Summarized water monitoring program efforts current and moving forward and asked for a status report from each group in attendance.
 - Round robin review of active CAC groups and targets to recruit.
5. New Business
 - Share
 - “how-to monitoring” manual
 - policy for receiving funds from MBNEP to supply WQM chemicals
 - Brainstorm
 - How can we put data to work in your watershed?

6. Other

- Announcements
- Set remaining 2017 meeting dates and locations? Will follow up with an email to decide.

7. Adjourn

Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Community Action Committee Meeting
January 25, 2017
Five Rivers Delta Resource Center

In attendance: Harold White, Dennis Hatfield, Mikel Corporaal, Paige Felts, Leslie Gahagan, Jenni Zimlich, Barry Nowlin, Eric Holladay, Cade Kistler, Melanie Moore, Mimi Fearn, Debi Foster

MBNEP Staff: Jason Kudulis and Kelley Barfoot

Takeaways:

- Coastal Alabama volunteer water quality monitoring will remain a CAC focus.
- We need to continue to focus on watersheds where grassroots or monitoring programs are nonexistent and continue to build and support existing programs.
 - Use the experience and wisdom of well-established programs to assist new programs.
- We inventoried volunteer monitoring in several watersheds and know where we are in good shape and where we can improve.
- The data needs to be put to action. Grassroots groups must “tell the story.”

Leslie Gahagan called the meeting to order at 10:08am.

The first portion of the meeting was an update on volunteer water quality monitoring (WQM) in coastal Alabama. Jason discussed the CAC’s interest in re-establishing volunteer monitoring as a focus. A monitoring component is required in every Watershed Management Plan (WMP) being produced. Citizen monitoring meets this need in addition to positively impacting a watershed in other ways. WQM programs both new and well established were in attendance. It was noted that each WQM group serves the interest of their local watershed, the CAC will serve as a hub for synergizing, strengthening and raising awareness of all groups. A map of priority watersheds in Mobile and Baldwin Counties (see attached) was used to update everyone on the current state of WQM. Information concerning active monitors, sites, and testing methods for each group in attendance was collected.

- **Dog River** - 18 monitors testing water chemistry, half doing bacteria - testing 15 sites. Multiple turbidity monitors using secchi disks on Halls Mill Creek. WMP near final draft.
- **Fish River/Magnolia** – CAC members will meet with Mike Shelton at Weeks Bay for an update. Program is active, but in a slump. Will get Barry Nowlin trained to start monitoring. WMP near completion.
- **Three Mile Creek** – WMP complete. Cade working with Laflore High School, SWAMP program. Trained 16 students, currently monitoring three sites will expand to four. Water chemistry and one replicate of bacteria. Baykeeper is hoping to purchase an idexx system to test enterococci.
 - Funding for SWAMP program is for one-year currently in both schools. Read more about the program [here](#). Cost do go down after year one, but still contingent on staffing/funding.

- **Cedar Creek/Escatawpa** – Citronelle High School one site in Cedar Creek, monitoring four in Escatawpa with the SWAMP program. No date set for Cedar Creek WMP.
- **Fowl River** – WMP complete. eight active monitors and sites. New program, still trying to determine where additional sites may be valuable. Spoke with Theodore High School science department in hope of recruiting students who live in the upper watershed to pick up those locations. It's a slow start but moving forward. Two bacteria monitors.
- Bayou-West Fowl-Dauphin Island- no active monitoring currently. Baykeeper was awarded an EPA grant for SWAMP at Alma Bryant, funds have yet to be distributed.
- **Tensaw Apalachee** – WMP start in 2017. No active monitors in this area. North Baldwin Utilities, City of Bay Minette, and Bay Minette High School reached out to Baykeeper about SWAMP. No final word as of today on that moving forward.
- **D'Olive** – WMP complete. City of Daphne in partnership with the MBNEP have five data sondes collecting 15-min data. This is part of a larger monitoring framework project looking for improvements in water quality post stream restoration. Three year project now in year two. Thus far, the data has been beneficial in finding new erosion areas and sources. The City of Daphne have three AWW kits available for monitors if any are interested, none active currently.
 - Mimi - all WMP have some sort of restoration projects. AWW data collected helps to show a baseline for the area and then data after the projects are complete to show if restoration is working and how it is working.
- **Bon Secour, Skunk Bayou, Oyster Bay** – WMP 99% complete. Will be establishing programs in each watershed. Bon Secour has City of Foley, Gulf Shores and other municipal partners committed to assist with monitoring. Recruitment for Skunk Bayou and Oyster Bay to commence soon. Leslie- Foley High School students wants training that will take over site in the center of Foley at the headwaters. Outreach during the WMP process indicate these watersheds don't really have anyone that is excited to help or to be involved.
- **Little Lagoon** – Eight monitors. Same five sites have 10 years of data. Currently use handheld YSI and go out every two weeks for sampling. Test for pathogens, phytoplankton, identify and quantify them. Turbidity monitoring. Working with the city on septic tank conversion. LLPS data has been loaded into Water Rangers. More sites on water rangers that are active working with UWA to start doing survey on lake Shelby and middle lake. Nutrient, and phytoplankton data will soon be available on water rangers. 19 oyster gardening sites set up in Gulf Shores. Graduate students growing non-edible mussels at 2-3 sites. Shore line restoration. Converted 300 feet of water front for restoration. Group still trains new monitors with AWW protocols to learn basics and gain confidence.
- **Wolf Bay** - 20 sites active, eight monitors. Collecting data for 19 years. Tried several techniques such as YSI and it was not worth the trouble for their monitors. Equipment requires a lot of calibration. City is also doing turbidity monitoring at six sites after rain events and once a month without rain looking to find trends. The creeks are terrible from runoff like you would expect, seeing instream turbidity including foreign substance that they are not sure where it's coming from. Need to walk streams to find those sources. Issues because of amount of development. Wolf Bay is an Outstanding Alabama Waterway. WMP to begin 2017.

- Eastern shore has an obvious gap of monitors and areas with frequent high fecal count.
- **Fly Creek** – three active monitors that are entering information into AWW, unsure of who they are or if affiliated with a watershed group. Will contact AWW to learn more.

Jason noted that we can get monitors now before the plans are complete and establish baseline data or implement monitoring as the first management sure post WMP completion.

Next Jason gave a brief introduction to the “WQM how-to guide” the MBNEP created. This public document will be a reference guide to anyone looking to establish or with an established WQM program. Narrative is complete, need quality photos for the booklet to be finished.

Finally, the group had an open discussion on tactics and strategies to put volunteer WQM data to work. The main topics discussed were: getting data products (papers, graphs, analysis results) in the hands of decision makers, CAC assistance synthesizing and support outreach for grassroots watershed advocacy, distributing a “who to contact” list for CAC members to quickly communicate problems or ask questions, monitoring with a focused intent when a major issue impacting a watershed is found or known, videos/social media, adding Swim Guide sites for locations tested by volunteers, tactics to communicate with older non-tech crowd, and fully utilizing Water Rangers to have stakeholders report and communicate identified issues. The summary of this discussion was we need to “**tell the story!**”

12:00 adjourn