

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What are the Dog River / Garrow's Bend Watersheds?**

A river's watershed includes all of the land that, when it rains, the stormwater flows into channels or streams that make their way to the river. Activities in a watershed are closely linked to the health of local streams, rivers, and bays. This watershed plan will include the Upper Dog River Watershed, Lower Dog River Watershed, Halls Mill Watershed and Garrow's Bend Watershed. These areas combined encompass nearly 64,000 acres.

### **What is a watershed management plan (WMP)?**

A WMP is an essential first step in improving water quality in a watershed and mitigating the impacts of future development pressures. It provides documentation of existing environmental conditions and challenges while offering a vision and strategy for protecting the physical, chemical, and biological integrity for wildlife and human uses.

### **Why is this being done?**

The Dog River watershed has experienced significant development in the past half century. This trend toward urbanization is likely to continue in the future and can impact water quality in a number of ways, including increasing the levels of pollutants, nutrients, and sediments in the river. These changes to the river's water quality may threaten recreational opportunities such as fishing, boating, kayaking, bird watching, and swimming. They can impact the river's natural environment and scenic beauty. The WMP will help us to understand the condition of the watershed, to promote opportunities to ensure its long-term health, and to ensure that the public will be able to enjoy it for generations to come.

### **What is the role of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP)?**

The mission of the MBNEP is to promote wise stewardship of the water quality characteristics and living resource base of the Mobile Bay estuarine system. In this capacity, MBNEP will provide oversight and basic coordination support for the WMP.

### **Who is in charge of the process? Who is on the steering committee?**

The process is community-driven and led by a steering committee. This group is a cross-section of the community and includes representatives from businesses, civic groups, environmental organizations, government agencies, residents, and others. It also includes representation from different geographic locations within the watershed.

### **What will the steering committee do?**

The steering committee will guide the planning process from start to finish, including preparing recommendations based on community input and technical analysis.

**What is the role of the consultant team?**

The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program has awarded the WMP contract to a consultant, Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood, who will work with planning NEXT on the public participation activities. The consultant team has extensive experience throughout the region and the United States developing WMPs and similar plans. The consultant team will facilitate the process, conduct technical research for the WMP, and draft materials for review by MBNEP, the steering committee, and the public, that will form the basis of the WMP.

**How long will it take?**

The planning process is expected to last 10 months. Implementation of the WMP will be ongoing.

**What is the most important thing I can do to help?**

The most important thing you can do is get involved in the planning process. Share your thoughts and suggestions for Dog River / Garrow's Bend now and in the future. Attend the **community meetings in October** and help spread the word to others.

**What can I do to learn more about this effort?**

More information can be found at [www.MakingWatershedsWork.org](http://www.MakingWatershedsWork.org) Questions may be addressed to Christian Miller via email at [clm0021@auburn.edu](mailto:clm0021@auburn.edu) or phone at (251) 438-5690.