Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Fowl River Watershed?
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. The Fowl River Watershed encompasses 52,782 acres, drains much of southern Mobile County, and is a direct contributor to Mobile Bay. Its headwaters are located near the Mobile suburb of Theodore, AL. The river splits just south of Bellingrath Gardens into East Fowl River, which flows northeasterly into Mobile Bay, and West Fowl River, which flows south into Mississippi Sound. Land cover in the Fowl River Watershed is varied and characterized as urban (21%), crop or pasture land (15%), and forested (63%).

What is a watershed management plan (WMP)?
A WMP is an essential first step in maintaining or 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 Fowl River watershed is special resource and serves many important functions for its surrounding communities. It is livelihood for some, a recreation amenity to others, and of regional economic importance to many. There is a need to better understand the condition and value of the watershed and to identify opportunities to ensure its long-term health. Concerns include loss of wetlands and shoreline due to recreational boat use and continuing erosion and sedimentation due to certain development activities.

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.

How can I get involved?
We need your input! Several community meetings will be held to gather information from those who live in the watershed or have an interest in Fowl River. Observations, concerns, and suggestions that are shared at these meetings will help inform the WMP. In preparing for these meetings a number of volunteers will be required for outreach and publicity. If you would like to become involved, please contact Lee Walters via email at lee.walters@gmcnetwork.com or phone at 251-460-4006. Please attend the community meetings and invite your friends.

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 and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System 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 12 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 Fowl River now and in the future. Attend the community meetings and help spread the word to others. Questions may be addressed to Lee Walters via email at lee.walters@gmcnetwork.com or phone at 251-460-4006.