

**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Government Networks Committee Meeting
Original Oyster House, Mobile AL
May 18, 2018**



The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Government Networks Committee was established to bring State agencies and regional government administrators together with local officials of Mobile and Baldwin counties to more effectively communicate local needs/understand State agency functions and priorities. The goal of this committee is to articulate innovative ways to improve communications and management of our coastal environment.

In attendance:

David Baker, City of Semmes; Scott Bannon, ADCNR- Marine Resources; Chris Blankenship, ADCNR; Nicole Taylor for Diane Burnett, SARPC; Guy Busby, Baldwin County Legislative Delegation; Marlon Cook; Keri Coumanis, City of Mobile; Vivian Davis-Figures, Alabama State Senate; Terry Downey, City of Bayou La Batre; Charles 'Skip' Gruber, Baldwin County Commission; Scott Hughes, ADEM; Merceria Ludgood, Mobile County Commission; Eliska Morgan, Alabama Gulf Coast Restore Council; Chris Plymale, EPA Region 4; Patti Powell, ADCNR- State Lands; Dennis Sullivan, City of Chickasaw; Chris Thomas, EPA Region 4; Margie Wilcox, Alabama House of Representatives; Tom Williams, City of Satsuma; Kim Burmeister for Karin Wilson, City of Fairhope

MBNEP Staff: Roberta Swann, Christian Miller, Bethany Dickey, and Jackie Wilson

Takeaways

- The NRDA Draft Restoration Plan 2 includes 22 projects for a total of \$35 million.
- Governor Ivey is hosting a restoration summit October 11th for coastal Alabama.
- Management Conference committees are voting to re-prioritize the remaining watersheds for Watershed Management Plans.
- The MBNEP is updating its Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan this year and we will be reviewing and updating the GNC goals and objectives as a part of this process.

Commissioner Skip Gruber welcomed members and each gave a quick introduction. The meeting was called to order at 7:51 a.m. Commissioner Ludgood moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, the motion was seconded by Mayor Tom Williams, and the minutes were approved.

Eliska Morgan gave an update on NFWF funding and RESTORE activities. They are in the sixth round of putting proposals into NFWF and the board votes in November. Alabama RESTORE released its draft Multi-Year Implementation Plan in April for a 45-day public comment period, with a public meeting on May 23rd to take comments. Comments can also be submitted online at <http://restorealabama.org>. The State expenditure plan (Bucket 3) is under development and anticipate its release in mid-summer and will undergo the same process as the MIP before it is finalized. Bucket 1 MIP activities will be entered into the system for individual grants, with the funding for those projects going out the first quarter of 2019.

Next Patti Powell gave an update on the Federal RESTORE Council. MBNEP's Watershed Management Planning grant funding will be awarded soon. The NRDA Draft Restoration Plan 2 includes 22 projects for a total of \$35 million. The comment period recently closed (May 7th). Once comments are reviewed

the Plan will be finalized. Merceria asked about the schedule for submitting project proposals to NFWF and Eliska said projects are generally selected in February for full proposals and review to be voted on at the November board meeting. Patti also said that projects can be entered into the portal at any time and you are encouraged to enter projects as early as possible to help the State better plan for which projects to put forward.

Commissioner Blankenship announced that Governor Ivey is hosting a restoration summit on October 11th (location has been tentatively set for Spanish Fort City Hall) for coastal Alabama. There will be a “Restoration 101” session aimed at those who are new to the process along with a more technical session for those who have been actively participating in this process. There will also be a larger public format meeting in the evening to provide information on the types of projects being funded and implemented through Alabama & Federal RESTORE, NRDA, NFWF. Please go to www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org to sign up for e-mail updates. Deadlines, release of a plan, meetings, and information on funding are all on the website.

Next, Justin McDonald with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers presented on the Alabama Coastal Comprehensive Plan (ACCP). The State of Alabama is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop a constituent informed, science-based coastal comprehensive plan to strengthen the economic, environmental, and social resilience of coastal Alabama for current and future generations. <http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Missions/Program-and-Project-Management/Alabama-Coastal-Comprehensive-Plan/>

The scope of this process was to:

- develop a high-level planning tool for the State that identifies the vision (environmental, economic, social, etc.) of the citizens of Mobile and Baldwin counties.
- Determines if a plan already exists to address that vision
- Identifies future vulnerabilities to achieving that vision
- Highlights potential future planning considerations to increase resiliency

During the current phase of the ACCP, a coast-wide vulnerability assessment is being conducted to identify future risks due to sea level rise. During the first phase in the development of the ACCP, visioning exercises with various sectors of our coastal communities and the public were conducted. USACE is currently working on two versions of a GIS viewer. One version will be for the general public and another, with more technical features, for elected/municipal officials and resource managers.

Then, Christian Miller took us through the process of re-prioritizing the remaining watersheds. Members did clicker voting to rate from 1 to 5 the priority of the remaining watersheds for completion of Watershed Management Plans. Each watershed was represented by a map with evaluation criteria – whether it has protected lands, impaired waters, and the percent of urbanization, etc. We hope to finish all the remaining plans within the next three years.

