Habitat Restoration, Conservation, and Protection Plan for Coastal Alabama

Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Science Advisory Committee Meeting May 24, 2017

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Overview

- **Background:** Previous habitat planning efforts

- **Prioritizing Habitat Restoration Goals:** *The Clickers*

- **Connecting Habitats and Community Values:** *The Clickers*

- **Next Steps:** *The Watershed Comparison Tool, Prioritization Criteria, Plan Development*
Background: 2005 Plan

Partners
• MBNEP
• TNC
• EPA-GOMP

Need
• To coordinate and maximize the scarce resources available for habitat conservation activities

Process
• Two Efroymson “Conservation by Design” workshops
• Over 35 federal, state, local, and private interests participated
The Original Habitat Conservation Goals

- **Maintain adequate**
  - **Extent**
  - **Diversity**
  - **Distribution**
  - **Connectivity**
  - **Natural functions**

- **Restore, Enhance, or protect essential coastal and marine habitats for**
  - **Recreational fisheries**
  - **Commercial fisheries**
  - **Control of invasive species**
The Original Habitat Types

- Pine forest ecosystems
- Maritime forests
- Freshwater, coastal and emergent wetlands
- Coastal marshes, beaches, and dunes
- Streams and lagoons
- Open-water estuarine systems
- Wildlife species of concern, that are threatened, or are otherwise endangered
The Priority Habitat Atlas, 2006

- 17 priority acquisition PARCELS for preservation
- 31 priority restoration areas
Background: 2009 Habitats Tool

**Identified HABITAT PATCHES most vulnerable to changes in landscape using...**

- Land use/Land cover- C-CAP
- Restoration projects completed, underway or currently planned (the MS-AL Habitats Database)
- Habitat Priority Planner Analysis
- Ongoing Input from stakeholders through the MBNEP Coastal Habitats Coordinating Team
Conserve, Protect, and Restore...

1. Freshwater Wetlands
2. Beach and Dune Habitat
3. Intertidal Marsh and Flats
4. Existing and Potential Longleaf Pine Habitat
5. Submerged Aquatic Vegetation/Sea Grasses
6. Oyster Reefs
7. Streams and Rivers
8. Riparian Forest
9. Pine Savanna Forest
10. Maritime Forest
Prioritizing Habitat Restoration Goals for the Future

How important is restoring the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the estuarine waters to support an abundance of fish, shellfish, wildlife and recreation?

1. High Priority
2. Medium Priority
3. Low Priority
4. Not a Priority
Prioritizing Habitat Restoration Goals for the Future

How important is maintaining adequate extent, diversity, distribution, connectivity, and natural functions of coastal habitats?

1. High Priority
2. Medium Priority
3. Low Priority
4. Not a Priority
Prioritizing Habitat Restoration Goals for the Future

How important is it to protect uplands adjacent to coastal habitats to accommodate landward migration resulting from projected sea level rise?

1. High Priority
2. Medium Priority
3. Low Priority
4. Not a Priority
Prioritizing Habitat Restoration Goals for the Future

How important is it to ensure adequate open space through habitat protection and restoration for storm protection/flood prevention?

1. High Priority
2. Medium Priority
3. Low Priority
4. Not a Priority
Prioritizing Habitat Restoration Goals for the Future

How important is it to ensure adequate open space through habitat protection and restoration for greater access and recreation?

1. High Priority
2. Medium Priority
3. Low Priority
4. Not a Priority
Prioritizing Habitat Restoration Goals for the Future

How important is it to restore and protect habitats which play a key role in coastal Alabama’s heritage and culture?

1. High Priority
2. Medium Priority
3. Low Priority
4. Not a Priority
Prioritizing Habitat Restoration Goals for the Future

*How important is it to restore, conserve, or enhance critical ecosystem functions of coastal habitats?*

1. High Priority
2. Medium Priority
3. Low Priority
4. Not a Priority
Prioritizing Habitat Restoration Goals for the Future

How important is it to restore, conserve, or enhance habitats in the headwaters of tidally-influenced watersheds or drainage basins?

1. High Priority
2. Medium Priority
3. Low Priority
4. Not a Priority
Connecting Habitats and Community Values
Longleaf Pine Habitats

Which one of the values listed below depends most on Longleaf Pine Habitats?

1. Access
2. Shorelines
3. Fish & Wildlife
4. Heritage & Culture
5. Environmental Resilience
6. Water Quality
Pine Savanna Forest

Which one of the values listed below depends most on Pine Savanna Forest?

1. Access
2. Shorelines
3. Fish & Wildlife
4. Heritage & Culture
5. Environmental Resilience
6. Water Quality
Which one of the values listed below depends most on Riparian Buffers?

1. Access
2. Shorelines
3. Fish & Wildlife
4. Heritage & Culture
5. Environmental Resilience
6. Water Quality
Which one of the values listed below depends most on Streams and Rivers?

1. Access
2. Shorelines
3. Fish & Wildlife
4. Heritage & Culture
5. Environmental Resilience
6. Water Quality
Which one of the values listed below depends most on Freshwater Wetlands?

1. Access
2. Shorelines
3. Fish & Wildlife
4. Heritage & Culture
5. Environmental Resilience
6. Water Quality
Maritime Forest

Which one of the values listed below depends most on Maritime Forest?

1. Access
2. Shorelines
3. Fish & Wildlife
4. Heritage & Culture
5. Environmental Resilience
6. Water Quality
Which one of the values listed below depends most on Beaches and Dunes?

1. Access
2. Shorelines
3. Fish & Wildlife
4. Heritage & Culture
5. Environmental Resilience
6. Water Quality
Intertidal Marshes and Flats

Which one of the values listed below depends most on Intertidal Marshes and Flats?

1. Access
2. Shorelines
3. Fish & Wildlife
4. Heritage & Culture
5. Environmental Resilience
6. Water Quality

0% 0% 0% 0% 0% 0%
Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

Which one of the values listed below depends most on Submerged Aquatic Vegetation?

1. Access
2. Shorelines
3. Fish & Wildlife
4. Heritage & Culture
5. Environmental Resilience
6. Water Quality
Subtidal Habitats

Which one of the values listed below depends most on Subtidal Habitats?

1. Access
2. Shorelines
3. Fish & Wildlife
4. Heritage & Culture
5. Environmental Resilience
6. Water Quality
Oyster Reefs

Which one of the values listed below depends most on Oyster Reefs?

1. Access
2. Shorelines
3. Fish & Wildlife
4. Heritage & Culture
5. Environmental Resilience
6. Water Quality
Next Steps

Build the Coastal Alabama Restoration Tool

- Identify Habitat Prioritization/Project Selection Criteria
- Run Preliminary Watershed Analyses
- Perform “Gut Check” for Modifications to Selection Criteria
- Develop online Interface

Develop Draft Habitat Restoration Plan

- Use CART to build out Conservation/Restoration Priorities

Management Conference Review

Public Comment Period

Final Plan December 31, 2017
The nation behaves well if it treats its natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased and not impaired in value

Theodore Roosevelt

Thank you.