

Mobile Bay NEP Community Resources Committee
Meeting Minutes



Five Rivers Delta Center, Blakeley Hall Classroom
February 20, 2018 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

In attendance:

Mark Berte, Alabama Coastal Foundation
Tammy Herrington, Conservation Alabama Foundation
Carol Adams-Davis, Alabama Chapter of the Sierra Club
Hank Caddell, Alabama Coastal Heritage Trust
Yael Girad, Weeks Bay Foundation
Casi Callaway, Mobile Baykeeper
Mike Magnoli, South Mobile County Community Development Corporation
Kara Lankford, The National Audubon Society

Staff: Kelley Barfoot, Tom Herder

Takeaways

1. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 10:17 a.m. CRC Co-Chair Mark Berte asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Approval of Minutes

After reviewing the minutes from the November meeting, Ms. Carol Adams Davis made a motion to approve the minutes as written, and Mr. Hank Caddell second. Everyone voted in favor of the motion.

3. CCMP Update

Ms. Kelley Barfoot gave a brief description of the CCMP Update exercise. She stated the spreadsheet the group would be working on was a compiled list of the goals/objectives/activities that were approved during the November 29, 2017 CRC meeting. A status, barriers, untapped resources, emerging/evolving issues, goals, staff lead and support columns were added. The added columns were completed internally by the staff of the MBNEP at their staff retreat that was held in early January 2018. She went on to state the purpose of this exercise is to provide some guidance for updating the CCMP and each management conference committee is conducting the same exercise. This exercise provides the CRC the opportunity to make any changes or updates to their strategy. The group conducted the exercise by reviewing each strategy and providing comments or edits for each goal/objective/activity.

EPI-1:

1.1: Host at least 50 presentations annually to raise community awareness on what people value most about living in coastal Alabama.

Response:

1. The CRC members stated that presentations given should meet one of the six values addressed in the CCMP. The group decided to keep the target goal for each year at 50 presentations.
2. Ms. Casi Callaway suggested the group use the Community Action Committee's survey format for measuring accomplishments; the group agreed. Ms. Barfoot will revise the survey to reflect CRC strategies and send out to the group quarterly for status updates. This survey will help the CRC to track their accomplishments and respond to areas that need improvement or implementation.

1.2: Host at least 15 workshops annually to educate citizens and property owners on how to protect and restore what people value most.

Response:

1. The members suggested to collect data from the CRC members through the survey to determine if 15 workshops is still a good target number. Once survey results are compiled, members will revisit this activity and determine if the target number should be revised.

1.3: Encourage and coordinate 15 festivals and other events in the watershed to celebrate the cultural/natural connection.

Response:

1. The members briefly named various annual festivals and collectively thought that 15 remains a good target number. The members suggested to collect data from CRC organizations through the survey to determine if 15 festivals is still a good target number. Members requested changing the activity to include the term "multi-partner" festivals to help define "festival" vs. "event."

1.4: Create and support programs that expose more people to local waterways.

Response:

1. It was suggested by MBNEP staff to merge Objectives 1.3 and 1.4 because certain annual festivals are on or are close to the water, which would expose the attendees to the local waterways. The members suggested the two activities to remain separate because a program that exposes peoples to the local waterways is different from a festival. It was decided to keep the two activities separate on the survey, collect the responses and present the responses to the group and then decide if the responses can determine if the two should remain separate or be merged.

EPI-2:

2.3: Educate various non-environmental organizations and the public on programs and volunteers opportunities available.

Response:

1. The members thought this section would best be measured by including the number of audience reached through publications (e-newsletters, subscribers, social media platforms) that advertises volunteer opportunities to the public.
2. Change the activity to “Educate various non-environmental organizations and the public on programs, volunteers opportunities, educational opportunities, advocacy and environmental issues and successes through publications and social media platforms.”

EPI-3:

3.1: Support one social marketing campaign to increase participation in conservation activities.

Response:

1. The members suggested this activity to be included in the CRC’s annual workplan and list out which marketing campaign the group will focus on each year.
2. Restore America’s Estuaries-Estuaries Week was a recommendation. Mr. Mark Berte volunteered to collect campaign ideas from each member and will disseminate that information to the group. The group will decide which campaigns to focus on for the year by mid-March.

3.3: Support Government Networks Committee (GNC) and Business Resources Committee (BRC) in developing programs to reduce the amount of trash in coastal waterways by 20%.

Response:

1. Mobile Baykeeper is working on an Urban Rapid Trash Assessment (URTA) project that is a monitoring strategy for measuring trash reduction. The group suggested to focus on smaller areas such as One Mile Creek when trying to measure reduction. The group thought it was unnecessary to wait on the GNC and BRC to implement this activity.
2. The group stated there are existing efforts and programs that aim to reduce trash and the CRC should support those.
3. Help the GNC and BRC to establish parameters for measuring trash reduction.
4. Group suggestion was to change Objective to state “develop a plan or program to reduce and measure impacts of trash and to take out the target number of “20%.”

EPI-4:

4.2: Support needed changes in federal, state, and local regulations to improve management of coastal resources and promote enforcement of existing regulations.

Response:

1. The group thought this activity could be an ongoing implementation effort.

EPI-5:

5.1: Publicly support the development of Watershed Management Plans and their implementation in guiding coastal restoration and community resilience.

Response:

1. The group thought this activity could be an ongoing implementation effort.

5.2: Publicly support state process to establish regulations to more strongly identify and clarify best management practices for living shorelines. Publicly support the state to support living shorelines and/or ahead of bulkheads. Publicly support the establishment of alternative shoreline management practices as the preferred practice to bulkheads.

Response:

1. The group thought this activity could be an ongoing implementation effort.

5.3: Publicly support regulatory changes to provide local governments with authority needed to protect natural resources.

Response:

1. The group thought this activity could be an ongoing implementation effort.
2. It was suggested by Tammy Herrington for the group to reconvene after the survey results are compiled and pick one issue and work together as a group to develop a strategy to resolve that issue.

5.4: Publicly support the establishment and implementation controls and standards at state and local level to protect waterways and wetlands.

Response:

1. The group thought this activity could be an ongoing implementation effort.

4. SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- Diversity of groups on the committee
- Groups are working in both counties
- Sharing ownership of common goals
- The groups are passionate and have the same focus
- Group has a lot of historical data and information about the areas of focus
- Intelligence of the members
- Strong reputations
- Safety in numbers (if we need to support a certain position)
- Sharing of information and of communication
- Networking
- Increases capacity
- Statewide relationships
- Group is a universal connector

Weaknesses:

- Capacity
- Time
- Missing K-12 educators/education focused people
- Logistics
- Basic understanding of what we have the capacity to fix

Definition of how much an advocacy group and an education group can do (perception)
What direction we're all trying to go
Coalition priorities are conflicting with organizational priorities
Lack of consensus

Opportunities:

K-12 educators
Science coordinators for Mobile and Baldwin County school systems
Leveraging collective power of the group to do more than you could do individually
Invite someone from Gulf Quest
Invite Chandra Wright
Invite Scott Tindle, Marketing Director for Fort Conde
Funding opportunities as a group
Help individual organizations to broaden their reach
To clarify focus in terms of what direction to go to move forward
Stronger together with an agreed upon goal
To bring new people to our work who have been complacent in the past
Implementation of a solution

Threats:

Budgets presented by the federal government/White House
Political climate (federal, state and local leaders)
Public perception
Burn-out
Stretched too thin
Capacity
Working within the constraints of some organizations By-Laws are limiting
Lack of leadership development
Group focus and agreement
Agreeing on the issue, but not the strategy (assuming all strategies should be the same)
Personalization of issues instead of as a group
Lack of efficiency/strategy
Prioritization of accomplishments
Turning words and discussions into actions
Hidden agendas

5. Next Steps

- a. Update survey and send out to members to capture education and advocacy accomplishments
- b. Send minutes out quickly and encourage CRC members who could not attend to comment on strategy and SWOT

- c. Social Marketing campaign ideas should be sent to Mark Berte. He and Tom Herder will tally the top three and send out to the members for voting. Deadline for nominations is COB March 2, 2018.
- d. Follow-up with individuals that should be invited to join the CRC
- e. Mark and Tammy will reach out to non-attending CRC members and work with them on a solution for how they can be more involved
- f. Send out a poll to members for meeting logistics (location, time, lunch sponsorship)
- g. Set up a yearly meeting calendar
- h. Sponsorships for lunch, contact Mark Berte

6. Announcements/Updates

Tammy Herrington, Conservation Alabama: Conservation Alabama (CA) is currently in legislation and following a series of bills. If you are interested in following environmental issues that is going through legislation you can sign up on the CA website (www.conservationalabama.org) for the newsletter, and the hot list that details all the environmental bills that CA is tracking. Currently CA is working on an anti-Forever Wild Bill that will require the program to pay property taxes. CA encourages you to visit their website and follow the action items and continue to write letters to your local representatives.

Carol Adams Davis, Sierra Club: Encourages participation in the Army Corps of Engineers meetings regarding the Mobile Channel that are currently being held.

Hank Caddell, Alabama Coastal Heritage Trust: Working on a litter campaign, "It's in the Bag" along with Shorecombers. They are in the process of order 3,000 litter bags. Groups who join the campaign will receive 10 bags. Phase II of the program will be requesting ordinances for Styrofoam and plastic. They are continuing to try to acquire parcels in Fort Morgan within the Bon Secour Refuge using the funds they receive from the beach mouse initiative.

Blakely Ellis, CCA Alabama Chapter: Working with the Dauphin Island Sea Lab on a recreational angler tagging program that will collect better data on fish that are being caught and the habits of fishermen.

Yael Girad, Weeks Bay Foundation: Wrapped up their second annual floating cleanup on Weeks Bay that collected 1200 pounds of trash (does not include glass, plastic, or recyclables that were collected). The cleanup had 35 volunteers. Weeks Bay Foundation received a grant to do habitat restoration and public access on two of their protected lands. They have three potential acquisitions that have been put into the NRDA portal and are hoping will make the Draft Funded Priorities List which should be released shortly. Bald Eagle bash is going to be on April 21, 2018.

Casi Callaway, Mobile Baykeeper: A motion was granted that allows Mobile Baykeeper (MBK) to intervene in the Daphne sewer lawsuit. MBK is working on coal ash and are beginning to do presentations on the subject. Researching sewer issues across the whole

region and are working on a program called “swim where it’s monitored” (SWIM) where they will get sponsors to help fund monitoring of more beaches to inform the public of swimming safety and add those beaches to the swim guide app.

Kara Lankford, National Audubon Society: Working on a gulf priorities list of projects across the gulf. Nesting season is ramping up and they are asking for volunteers to help collect data. There will be workshops hosted to teach volunteers how to collect the data.

Tom Herder, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program: The NEP is in the process of finalizing the scope and contract with Ecology & Environment for the development of the Wolf Bay Watershed Management Plan. The State is in the process of submitting the application to Federal RESTORE that will be funding the remaining Watershed Management Plans. We expect that funding to be available soon after which we will begin the process of selecting contractors for those plans.

The RFQ for the Twelve Mile Creek stream restoration project resulted in the submittal of statements of qualifications from nine engineering teams. The MBNEP selection committee is reviewing the statements and will call three of the teams for interviews by the end of February. After selection of the winning team is made, the design process will begin and will include an opportunity for public involvement.

All engineering teams that submitted statements of qualifications for the Twelve Mile Creek Invasive Species Control Plan RFQ will be brought back for interviews. Winning contractor will be selected on Tuesday February 27, 2018.

Roberta Swann submitted a letter of comment to the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the proposed filling of wetlands in the Dog River Watershed. (see attached comment letter)

Senator Randy Davis has proposed legislation to promote living shorelines, but also included a provision to allow people to dredge and harvest material from their own riparian areas which would create wave attenuation and help to stabilize the shoreline. If approved this included provision would be damaging to the properties north of the living shoreline. The MBNEP recommended the promotion of the living shorelines, but could not recommend the dredging provision.

Mark Berte, Alabama Coastal Foundation: This year is ACF’s 25th anniversary. Annual reports are available for the 2017 year. Share the Beach program is now officially an ACF program. The Crepe Myrtle Trail Ride is April 7, 2018. The Good Life Ride is May 12, 2018. Water Festival is coming up soon and ACF is asking for volunteers. To date, the Alabama Oyster Shell Recycling Program has collected over 5.4 million oyster shells.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.