

**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program  
Project Implementation Committee Meeting  
Thursday, June 8, 2017  
5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, Tensaw Theater**

**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Bert Eichold (Mobile County Health Department)  
Wade Burcham (Integrated Sciences and Engineering)  
Mary Kate Brown (The Nature Conservancy)  
Melissa Mehaffey (Goodwyn Mills Cawood)  
Evan Davis (ALDOT, Southwest Region)  
Walter C. Ernest IV (Pelican Coast Conservancy)  
Paige Felts (Volkert, Inc.)  
Carl Ferraro (ADCNR, Coastal Section)  
Judy Haner (The Nature Conservancy)  
Courtney Harkness (Thompson Engineering)  
Patric Harper (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Coastal Programs)  
Cade Kistler (Mobile Baykeeper)  
Dina Knight (The Nature Conservancy)  
Shannon McGlynn (ADEM)  
Jaime Miller (ADCNR, Marine Resources Division)  
Larry Parson (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)  
Mark Berte (Alabama Coastal Foundation)  
Chris Plymale (U.S. EPA Region 4)  
Casey Rains (City of Spanish Fort)  
L.G. Adams (ADCNR, Lands Division/ Weeks Bay Reserve)

Celena Boykin (Baldwin County)  
Chris Warn (Environmental Science Associates)  
Jessica Blackband (U.S. Geological Survey)  
Sinead Borchert (U.S. Geological Survey)  
Mike Burton (Stantec)  
Melissa Ruiz (Stantec)  
Renee Collini (Northern Gulf of Mexico Sentinel Site Cooperation)  
Mike Eubanks (Thompson Engineering)  
David Armstrong (ADCNR, Fisheries)  
Jeff DeQuattro (The Nature Conservancy)  
Chris Shepard (The Nature Conservancy)  
Tracey J.N. Hall (Mobile County Conservation)  
Amy Newbold (EPA)  
Lacey Genard (ADEM)  
Bob Harris (Alabama State Port Authority)  
Sherry Allison (Allen Engineering & Science)  
Scott Jackson (Ecology & Environment, Inc.)  
Randy Shaneyfelt (ADEM, Mobile)  
Jason Throneberry (The Nature Conservancy)  
Hank Hodde (Smart Home America)  
Marie-Blanche Roudaut (University of Arizona / U.S. Geological Survey)

**MBNEP Staff:** Roberta Swann, Tom Herder, Christian Miller, Rick Frederick, Jason Kudulis, Paul Lammers, Bethany Dickey, and Ben Brenner (Cobia Digital)

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:12 pm by Patric Harper. Attendees went through a round of self-introductions.

**2. Approval of the Minutes**

Mr. Harper asked for any deletions, additions, changes to the minutes from February 15, 2017. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the minutes. Bert Eichold made the motion, which Walter Ernest seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

### 3. Old Business

#### A. PIC Watershed Management Planning Update – Christian Miller – MBNEP

- **Fowl River:** SAC (Science Advisory Committee) is currently working on a Marsh Health Study and a Hydrological Study.
- **Bon Secour:** WMP is complete and has been closed for public comment and is on the NEP website. City of Foley has passed a resolution in support of the plan. Watershed identification signs have been put up in Bon Secour and Oyster Bay.
- **Mississippi Sound Complex:** the draft version of the Bayou WMP will be out for public comment by September. MBNEP is working to get pathogen source assessment for West Fowl River watershed.
- **Dog River:** Draft Watershed Management Plan should be available for public comment by September.
- **Weeks Bay:** Draft Watershed Management Plan should be available for public comment by September.

#### B. Project Implementation Reports

##### 1) Marsh Island, Shell Belt/Coden Belt Road, and Point Aux Pines Living Shorelines projects – Carl Ferraro, ADCNR-SLD

Carl Ferraro provided an update on Marsh Island. The dredging is 100% completed and is in the settlement phase. Check out Sam St. John's pictures of the progress that's been made. The Coden Belt Road project will be decided by the TIG, but the money won't go somewhere else. The Point Aux Pines project (with Tetra Tech as the consultant) report is almost done. The field work should be done by the end of June.

##### 2) Swift Tract Living Shoreline – Dan Van Nostrand, NOAA

Carl Ferraro gave the update for Swift Tract. The construction is complete and the monitoring will begin soon.

##### 3) Northern Mon Louis Island – Paul Lammers, MBNEP

The final excavation and grading and vegetation planting is going on at the Mon Louis Island project. The Conservation Corps helped in vegetation planting.

##### 4) D'Olive Creek Watershed Stream Restorations – Paul Lammers, MBNEP

Paul Lammers showed us pictures and footage of the progress of the D'Olive Watershed.

- **DAE:** Construction just started on this 90-day stream stabilization project.
- **D4-D6:** Project is warranty/maintenance period. Bank erosion from the recent storms was recently patched by the contractor and replanted with riparian vegetation.
- **JB Transition:** Project is also in the warranty/maintenance period. Paul showed a video of the step pools where sediment is streaming downstream and one of the step pools had blown out from the recent storms. The contractor has repaired the situation.

##### 5) Conservation Corps– Tom Herder, MBNEP

The Conservation Corps is looking for ideas for local implementation projects. The Corps members have gone around to schools and given presentations on conservation related themes. They have performed invasive species control work, litter pick-up, marshland vegetation planting and other conservation stewardship projects.

#### 4. New Business

##### **A. Assessment of habitats and values by PIC members to inform development of the TNC Watershed Comparison Tool and Habitat Restoration Plan** – Roberta Swann, MBNEP and Judy Haner, The Nature Conservancy

Roberta Swann discussed a Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan for Alabama. Funding was received from NFWF. The first plan was completed in 2005 and evaluated projects to identify priority habitats and what value they provide in terms of ecosystem services. The Habitats Tool (MS-AL Habitats Database) created in 2009 displays all restoration projects that are completed, underway, or planned. The habitat conservation goals classified 10 coastal priority habitats, identified in the MBNEP Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (freshwater wetlands, beaches & dunes, intertidal marshes & flats, longleaf pine habitats, submerged aquatic vegetation, oyster reefs, streams & rivers, riparian forests, pine savanna forests, and maritime forests). Attendees participated in a clicker survey on prioritizing habitat restoration goals for the future using CCMP community values (access, shorelines, fish & wildlife, heritage & culture, environmental resilience, and water quality).

##### **B. Development of a scope for the Mobile-Tensaw Delta complex Watershed Management Plan and pushing collaboration, planning, and conservation initiatives further upstream** – Roberta Swann, MBNEP

Technical difficulties – members did not participate in this survey

##### **C. TNC Open Space Mini-Workshop** – Dr. Christine Shepard, The Nature Conservancy and Sinead Borchert, U. S. Geological Survey

Dr. Christine Shepard gave us an overview of the Open Space Study that was done by The Nature Conservancy Gulf of Mexico Program in partnership with Texas A&M University. Together they identified 421 watersheds that are the best targets for strategic land conservation to both reduce flood risk and conserve biodiversity. Different techniques were used to predict the probability of future flood claims and identify watersheds in which open space protection is likely to reduce future flood risk. The best model included the following variables:

- Soil conductivity
- Precipitation
- Percent of watershed in floodplains
- Mean slope
- Mean distance to coast
- Spatial coordinates
- Developed land cover

The final model had an overall accuracy of 85% and this model was used to identify watersheds with a high probability of flood damage. 730 (nearly one third of the watersheds) were classified as high flooding potential, meaning the model predicts a 70 % or higher chance of flood claims in the future. In 2014, ‘A Land Conservation Vision for the Gulf of Mexico Region’ series of maps was released. Created by partner organizations, the maps identify high-value geographic areas for land conservation. 20% or more of these identified watershed areas is undeveloped, unprotected and within the PGCLC conservation vision footprint.

To further explore the 421 priority watersheds and the findings in this report, please visit [maps.coastalresilience.org/gulfmex](https://maps.coastalresilience.org/gulfmex). A full technical appendix is also available at [coastalresilience.org](https://coastalresilience.org).

Next, Sinead Borchert gave an overview of the USGS Tidal Saline Wetland Migration Study. 39% of the U.S. population lives in coastal shoreline counties and there is an expected increase from 2010-2020. She provided maps and model depictions of projected sea-level rise.

## **5. Adjourn**

Mr. Harper asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:25 pm. Randy Shaneyfelt made the motion, which was seconded by Larry Parson.