



**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Science Advisory Committee Meeting
10 am – 12:00 pm May 24th, 2017
Killian Room, International Trade Center
250 N. Water Street Mobile, AL 36602**

Agenda

Welcome - review and approval of minutes from previous meeting

Updates and Presentations

Fowl River Marsh Health and Recovery Study

Jason Kudulis, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program

TNC Freshwater Network Tool

Mary Kate Brown, The Nature Conservancy

Utilizing NASA Earth Observations to Monitor Salinity in Coastal Alabama Waters

Dashiell Cruz, NASA DEVELOP - Marshall Space Flight Center & Tyler Lynn, NASA DEVELOP - Mobile County Health Department

Tensaw/Apalachee Watershed Management Plan

Dr. Don Blancher, Moffatt and Nichol

Other Business

Next SAC meeting – August 23, 2017.

Adjourn



**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Science Advisory Committee Meeting
Killian Room, International Trade Center, Mobile AL
May 24th, 2017**



The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Science Advisory Committee was established to bring area experts together to provide advice, guidance, and recommendations to ensure that the MBNEP activities will be conducted in a scientifically relevant and rigorous manner.

In attendance:

SAC Voting Members Present: Steve Ashby, Don Blancher, Kevin Calci, Just Cebrian, Renee Collini, Marlon Cook, Mike Dardeau, Stephen Jones, John Lehrter, Fred Leslie, John Mareska, Randy Shaneyfelt, Tim Thibaut, Bret Webb

Phone-in Voting Members: none

Proxy Voting Members: Dottie Byron for Ken Heck, Elizabeth Hieb for Ruth Carmichael

Other Attendees: Amy Hunter, Stephanie Smallegan, Scott Jackson, Mark Ornelas, Joseph Spruce, Michael Smith, Mary Kate Brown, Judy Haner, Jon Porthouse, John Curry, Dina Knight, Jeff Luvall, Scott Phipps, Meg Goecker, Chris Warn, Judy Stout, Gillian Palino, Andrew Lucore, Dashiell Cruz, Tyler Lynn, Charles JT Thomas, Eric Sparks, Steve O’Hearn, Behzad Mortazavi

MBENP Staff: Jason Kudulis, Roberta Swann, Christian Miller, Bethany Dickey

Takeaways

- Fowl River Marsh Health and Recovery Study is moving forward. Core group is developing key study elements for characterization. SAC will have an opportunity to review before getting finalized.
- Management Conference Committees are participating in a survey to prioritize habitat restoration goals for the future using CCMP community values.
- Scoping process for the Tensaw-Apalachee WMP is underway. A final report will be presented to the SAC and PIC.
- ADEM Coastal Program 2012 Mobile Bay Report is out and the Fowl River Report will be out later this summer. ADEM is open to suggestions to improve the reports.
- Next SAC meeting will be August 23.

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Fred Leslie called the meeting to order at 10:01 CDT.

The meeting started with quick introductions. Minutes from January 17, 2017 were distributed prior to the meeting. A motion was made by Renee and seconded by Tim to approve the minutes. No objections to the motion.

The first item on the agenda was an update on the Fowl River Marsh Health and Recovery Study presented by Jason Kudulis. Copies of the study were emailed to members prior to the meeting. An invitation was again extended to all SAC members interested in participating in the study. The core group of SAC members

are meeting to flesh out the scope. Currently the condition assessment has five main elements: elevation, topography, sediment, hydrology, and vegetation. There were several comments on having the investigators present their methods for each element to the SAC for peer review and sign-off.

Next, 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). Judy Haner had attendees participate 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).

Next on the agenda, Dashiell Cruz and Tyler Lynn from NASA DEVELOP shared utilizing NASA earth observations to monitor salinity in Coastal Alabama waters. The DEVELOP program addresses environmental and public policy issues through collaborative projects with NASA Earth observations to address community concerns around the globe. DEVELOP is made up of participants, advisors, and decision makers. The program is a 10-week paid program, not an internship. Water is typically involved in projects as well as remote sensing techniques. Tyler gave an overview of their project to determine the best way to detect salinity, turbidity, and temperatures for Mobile Bay and the Mississippi Sound. The project timeline is June 5th-August 11th. There are ways that SAC members can collaborate on this project: relevant datasets, specialized science advising, and field work opportunities if anyone is interested.

Lastly, Meg Goecker and Dr. Don Blancher with Moffatt and Nichol shared an update on the scoping process for the Tensaw-Apalachee Watershed Management Plan. First, background surveys were conducted to develop an inventory of the various government agencies and others that are involved with planning and restoration efforts in the watershed. A gap and cost analysis will be conducted, and then a base project scope will be developed. The final report will be presented to the SAC and the PIC. The entire watershed was broken down into proposed watershed groupings. The presentation showed the percentages of ownerships between state, government, and wetland groups or agencies. Studies and testing have been done and have identified some of the following issues: long term monitoring, legacy pollutants, access, land use, and hydrology. More studies, testing, and obtaining information from other agencies are necessary to finalize a task list of solving/mitigating these issues. Using clickers to collect data, Meg had SAC members provide feedback by priority of stakeholders, issues, data gaps, and restoration activities for the Tensaw-Apalachee Watershed.

Before calling a motion to adjourn, Fred shared that the ADEM Coastal Program 2012 Mobile Bay Report is out and that the Fowl River Report would be out later this summer. ADEM is open to suggestions to improve the reports.

At 11:42 Fred asked for a motion to adjourn. Renee Collini made the motion and Dr. Blancher seconded it.

The next SAC meeting will be August 23rd, 2017.