



Stormwater Perspectives Meeting Summary

Prepared by the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program

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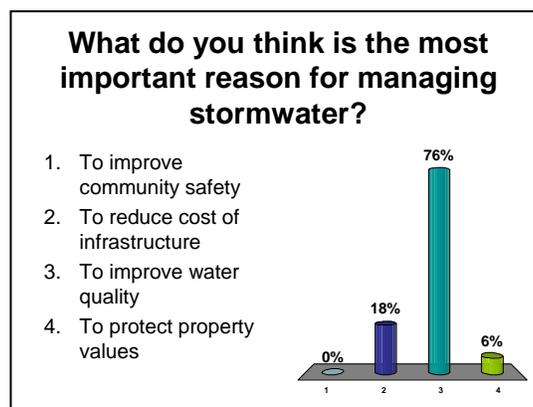
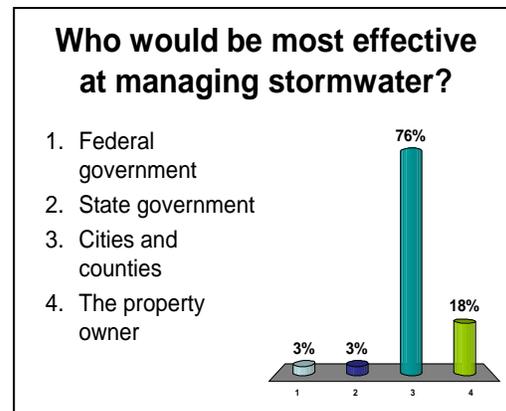
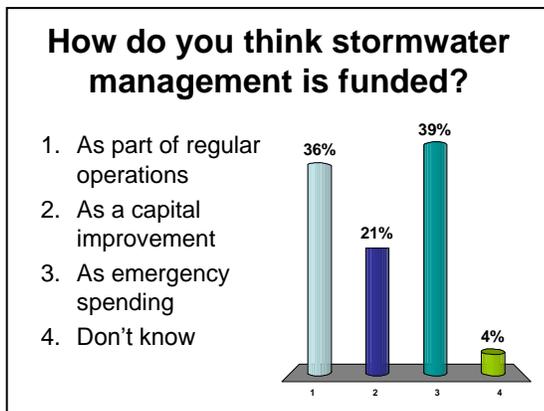
The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) hosted a Stormwater Perspectives meeting on June 7, 2012 at 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, Spanish Fort. The meeting was held to discuss and explore how best to manage stormwater in Mobile and Baldwin counties. Forty-one representatives from area business and government agencies participated in the half-day workshop.

The meeting began with a five minute video, Stormwater Perspectives, highlighting problems caused by stormwater runoff, the problems facing area government agencies in dealing with runoff, and current planning measures to mitigate runoff in the future. The video features Ashley Campbell, City of Daphne; Byron Pittman, Mayor of Chickasaw; Cal Market, Baldwin County; and Nick Amberger, City of Mobile, discussing stormwater issues and possible resolutions. The video can be viewed online at:

http://www.mobilebaynep.com/videos/stormwater_perspectives

The first of two keypad polls was then taken to gauge the opinions of participants.

Keypad Poll Results:



Lance LeFleur, Director of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), welcomed the group, stressing the value of the Delta as second to none in this hemisphere and the tremendous positive impacts imparted to the area by the resources of the Bay – both recreational and economic. Mr. LeFleur noted that

although the quality of the Bay has improved dramatically over the past decades (as sewage discharge, ship discharge, and industrial point solution have been controlled), the assets of the Bay are threatened by stormwater runoff – what the EPA considers the top threat to the nation’s water quality. The area’s extreme rainfall, averaging 66 inches per year, makes stormwater management a priority and a huge challenge for area businesses, residents and government agencies. Additional factors adding to the challenge include a growth rate of nearly 30 percent in Baldwin County between 2000 and 2010 leading to the creation of more impervious surfaces.

Mr. LeFleur said one of ADEM’s major priorities is stormwater control and that solving the will require a cooperative effort between the private and public sectors. ADEM’s hope is that efforts to improve management of stormwater on the coast will provide a case study that can be duplicated around the state.

Chip Crockett, ADEM Chief of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Enforcement Branch, provided an overview of the State’s Stormwater Program. Indicating that two-thirds of stormwater problems result from normal human activity, he noted that since 2005, Baldwin County has led the state in permits; with Mobile County ranking third. In fact, stormwater accounts for one-half of the water quality impacts in Mobile and Baldwin counties. Under the Clean Water Act, ADEM regulates industrial use, construction and urban stormwater. He explained the MS4 program’s phases, with Phase I covering urban areas with populations of more than 100,000 and Phase II covering urban areas with populations of less than 100,000. Mobile and Baldwin counties break into these categories:

- Phase I: The cities of Mobile, Saraland, Chickasaw, Prichard, and Mobile County.
- Phase II: The cities of Daphne, Spanish Fort, Fairhope, Bayou La Batre, and Baldwin County.
- Special Areas of Concern: Tiawasee Creek, D’Olive Creek and Weeks Bay

MS4 is currently not required in rural areas, but the EPA is currently considering future changes to the regulations that would expand the MS4 program outside of urbanized areas and add a numerical standard for onsite retention and detention, as well as a numeric limit for turbidity.

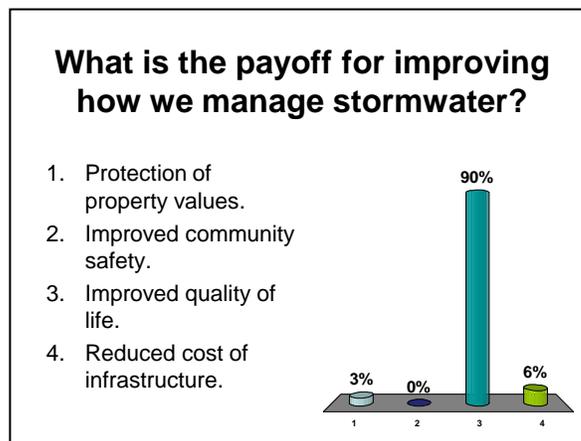
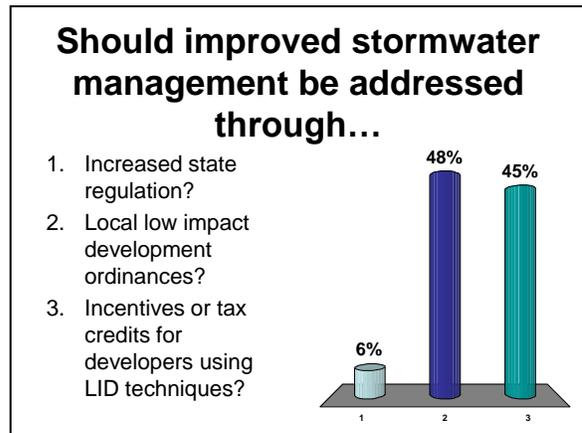
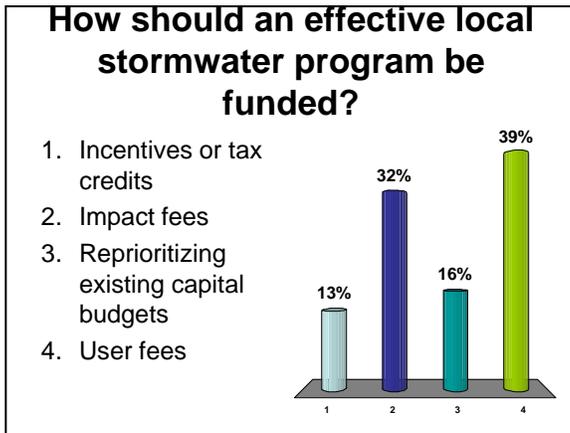
Scott Hughes, ADEM Chief, Office of External Affairs, then spoke about taking a holistic approach to stormwater through the development of collaborative efforts. He provided several examples of demonstration projects that had been undertaken by ADEM with the use of EPA Section 319 funding and stated that one of the more innovative efforts was now being undertaken in Spanish Fort, namely the Joe’s Branch restoration. ADEM’s hope was that the application of Step Pool Conveyance technology to a severely degraded tributary would demonstrate to those around the state how improved stormwater management can be coupled with environmental protection and ecosystem enhancements- a win-win for local communities.

Attendees spent the next part of the meeting in three breakout groups to brainstorm how and what kinds of incentives could be developed, how regulations needed to be modified or expanded and what financing options were available to improve stormwater management in Mobile and Baldwin Counties. These ideas were then ranked by participants to indicate which ideas should be developed into implementable strategies with green as highest priority, followed by yellow second highest and red, third highest. The cumulative results are included in the Excel file at the end of this report. The top recommendation in each category is:

Incentives	Education- Raise awareness, make sure regulations and permittees are aware of impacts and why it’s important, make sure permittees understand cost savings for low impact development, educate kids
Local Regulations	Regionalization of regulations (management of stormwater by watershed)
Financing	Stormwater fee/recognize stormwater as a utility

A second keypad poll was then taken.

Keypad Poll Results:



The meeting wrapped up with a discussion of next steps which included putting together a meeting of local government officials to discuss the concept of regionalizing regulations. This will be done through the MBNEP’s “Government Networks Committee” and will take place this summer. Also being considered is a meeting to be held this fall that will showcase best practices from across the United States for each of the three areas- Incentives, Financing, and Regulation. Participants were enthusiastic about their participation in the meeting and asked organizers to keep the dialogue going. MBNEP, Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Coastal Alabama Clean Water Partnership agreed to continue keeping the issue of Improved Stormwater Management on the front burner.