



For immediate release:

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Mobile Bay National Estuary Program

www.mobilebaynep.com

The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) is seeking public input to help develop the Weeks Bay Watershed Management Plan. The MBNEP contracted with Thompson Engineering to oversee development of the plan, and identify projects to be considered for funding to improve the quality of the watershed in the face of increased population and business growth in Baldwin County.

This watershed is extremely large: approximately 12 miles wide and 27 miles long. Its headwaters begins in the Golden Triangle area north of I-10 and concludes where Weeks Bay empties into Mobile Bay. It includes the planning jurisdictions of nine municipalities and is home to countless subdivisions and businesses.

The good news is that the Weeks Bay Watershed – and especially Fish River – has been studied by scientists for numerous years. There are even computer simulation models of the watershed that will accurately predict outcomes if a new subdivision is added or changes occur in the way a property is farmed.

An important first step in planning is to gather public input and ask these questions: What's good and should be preserved? What are the threats or negative trends that the plan should address? What are some opportunities for improvement?

85 concerned stakeholders attended a workshop on March 2nd to help answer these questions. The workshop divided individuals into small groups with similar interests: farmers, environmental group leaders, developers, businesses, elected officials, homeowners, scientists, engineers, and city/county staff members. After much discussion and working through these questions, each group shared their thoughts with the entire workshop.

The conclusion of the workshop helped individuals discover that many of the concerns and possible solutions were very similar in each of the groups, just viewed from different perspectives. (All of the notes from each of the groups are listed on the [Mobile Bay NEP](http://www.mobilebaynep.com) website. [This link](#) will take you directly to them.)

The next step in the process is to obtain broader public input. [This link](#) will connect you to a short 3 minute survey to collect your input on the ideas presented at the workshop – and a chance to add a few thoughts of your own.

For more information on our watersheds, go to www.mobilebaynep.com.

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