

Mobile Bay NEP Community Resources Committee Meeting Minutes

5 Rivers Delta Resource Center – Blakeley Classrooms
Wednesday, January 8, 2020

In Attendance

Casi Callaway, Mobile Baykeeper
Tina Miller-Way, DISL Discovery Hall
Carol Adams-Davis, Mobile Sierra Club,

Kara Fox, National Audubon
Nicole Love, Alabama Audubon

Attending online:

Mark Berte, Alabama Coastal Foundation

Blakeley Ellis, Coastal Conservation Association

1. Welcome and Introductions Attendees were welcomed as the meeting opened at 3:15 (late due to technical issues). It was noted the Mercury is in retrograde. Tom Herder was unable to attend due to illness: Bethany Dickey agreed to attend and assist the committee on his behalf. As an agenda was not circulated prior to the meeting, an agenda was written on the board and agreed to by those present.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved with the following corrections:

Blakeley Ellis attended the meeting via Zoom, Christian Wagley did not attend,
Kara Fox represents National Audubon, not Alabama Audubon.

3. Discussion of survey results / development of a workplan

Casi presented the results of the most recent programmatic survey focused on the CRC's aquatic debris. The survey attempted to determine what individual CRC organizations were doing already with respect to this problem. There were 10 respondents, and while there was not time prior to the meeting to adequately synthesize responses, Casi quoted and summarized some of the responses.

Members were encouraged to respond to the survey if they had not already. The survey will remain open and an email will be sent from the MBNEP office to committee members to encourage them to respond. Given a bit more time, the committee co-chairs will summarize the responses in a short document and distribute via email prior to the next meeting. Regardless, the group chose to begin development of a workplan by discussing survey responses that address CRC (and not individual organizational) outcomes. It was noted that organizations may feel more or less comfortable with some areas of activity than others and following previous discussion suggested that these fall into four major categories - action, policy/legislation, education, enforcement - or other. Organizations were asked (via the survey) in what area their organization would like to be involved.

Possible outcomes of an aquatic debris CRC-wide focus included those from survey responses (Q6). Considerable discussion focused on distinctions among call to action, education (broad vs defined with respect to audience), and awareness. Participants felt that some of these were a part of the specific outcomes and that each outcome may include a call to action and a need to identify needs and gaps among current CRC programs. Thus, the group settled on the following outcomes - educational activities (a more knowledgeable population), actions (specific events), awareness (a greater awareness and sensitivity of litter and resulting problems), legislative and policy actions (that address litter / debris issues), reduction in trash and (relatedly) increased recycling.

Discussion then proceeded the possible metrics associated with these outcomes – ways that the committee can document program ‘success’. Possible metrics for each of the 3 outcomes discussed are delineated below.

Reduction in trash – Quantitative information (data) is needed for baseline conditions. Some data is available by weight, some by number of items. The committee discussed whether it is better to try to document reduction at specific litter ‘hotspots’ in the area or address with data from a broader area? The development of a universal form that could be adopted by a number of municipalities / agencies was brought up, but discussion noted that this might be premature. It was noted that the City of Mobile gathers data on trash collection by area: Casi agreed to check into this and determine the nature (units, time range, geographic scope) of the data. It was noted that data resulting from the OSPREY project and the ETAP data might also be used. It was mentioned that Orange Beach is collecting some form of these data. It was also noted that much data is available through the Coastal Cleanup program, but with the limitation that this is only once per year.

Actions – Possible metrics include the number of clean up events, number of enforcement actions, number of restaurants adopting green practices (skip the straw, reduction/elimination of Styrofoam, etc.), number of outreach efforts to legislators, number of people participating, number of municipalities adopting green guidelines, and the number of events that are a part of the green events campaign.

Recycling – Possible metrics included changes in the number of items (materials) that can be recycled, the availability of recycling centers or receptacles in communities and the weight of recycled materials.

Policy / Legislative actions – number of bills introduced in state legislature.

The discussion of outcomes was unfinished by the end of meeting, as we did not address education or awareness activities but will be continued at the next committee meeting. Decisions about specific metrics for all outcomes that will be used by the CRC campaign is dependent on obtaining additional information and so will be tabled until the next meeting.

4. Announcements

Mark Berte announced the upcoming Green Drinks events in Fairhope and Mobile (1/8 Fairhope, 1/15 Mobile).

Casi announced the upcoming MLK Day Eslava Creek Cleanup event hosted by Mobile United and supported by a number of committee organizations (and individuals) and urged support and participation (1/18).

Mark also announced the upcoming Sustainability Summit at USA.

Tina announced the upcoming Mobile area pilot workshop for the COAST version of the watershed game. The registration flyer will be circulated to the committee.

5. Date / time / location of next meeting:

The next meeting will be held March 11, 2020 at 3 pm; 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, Blakely Classrooms.