

Project Updates June 30, 2010: The Draft Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan is now open for public comment until July 29, 2010. Comments should be submitted via mail or e-mail to:

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Hard copies of the plan are also available at the Daphne Public Library, Daphne City Hall, Spanish Fort City Hall, and Lake Forest Property Owners Association office.

June 15, 2010: A public meeting will be held on Tuesday June 29, 2010 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center Theater, 30945 5 Rivers Blvd., Spanish Fort, AL, 36527 to present the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the watersheds of D'Olive Creek, Tiawasse Creek, and Joe's Branch in Baldwin County. The meeting will review identified watershed problems and highlight recommended solutions for restoring this watershed. Thompson Engineering, authors of the plan, and Mobile Bay National Estuary Program will be available to answer questions and record comments. For more information about this meeting, contact Sara Shields by calling 251-431-6409 or emailing sshields@mobilebaynep.com.

May 18, 2010: Since the March 15 meeting of the DWWG, Thompson Engineering and their team have been busy assembling the preliminary draft of the D'Olive Watershed Management Plan. This draft will be mailed to DWWG members on May 24 for comment. The timeline for the remainder of the plan development period is as follows:

Submit Draft to DWWG for Review – May 24
DWWG Comment Period Ends – June 14
Public Meeting on Draft WMP – June 29
Public Comment Period Ends – July 20
Submit Final WMP – July 26

March 15, 2010: The final meeting of the D'Olive Watershed Working Group was held March 15 at the 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center in Spanish Fort, AL. The objectives of the meeting were to present conceptual corrective measures related to engineering and land management in order to manage stormwater in the D'Olive watershed. Measures that will be proposed in the Draft CWMP will

include: restoration of natural hydrology; stabilization of priority stream segments; restoration of impacted waters, wetlands, and floodplains; and establishment of better standards and criteria for runoff retention, erosion control, and resource protection to minimize the impacts of future development.

The draft CWMP is scheduled to be completed May 3 and a one month public comment period will follow.

December 12, 2009: Glen Coffee, project manager for the D'Olive CWMP at Thompson Engineering, presented the priority problems within the watershed based on field work recently undertaken to assess watershed conditions. According to Mr. Coffee, the four factors affecting surface runoff and sediment erosion, the watershed's primary problems, are 1) rainfall, 2) topography, 3) surface soil and geology, and 4) land use and land cover. He pointed out that of these four factors, the only one "under our control" is land use, noting that others were natural and unchangeable. He used an MBNEP-funded NASA study to illustrate land use changes in the watershed since 1974. The most obvious and significant change was a 56% loss in forests in the watershed with a corresponding 36% increase in urbanized land.

Mr. Coffee described problem areas within the watershed and listed the most significant and common problems as channel incision, channel head-cutting, mass wasting (slumping of large, steep areas of streambank), woody debris jams, excessive sedimentation, damage to wetland resources, and water quality issues. He described specific problems at various identified "hot spots," each labeled and mapped, along with reasons, where understood, for their occurrence. With watershed problems identified, Thompson Engineering will now move forward to develop conceptual solutions and rough cost estimates for those solutions.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on March 15.

The powerpoint presentation from yesterday's meeting can be downloaded here: [DWWG Slideshow 12-10-09](#) or in PDF format here. The minutes from this meeting are available here.

November 11, 2009: The Thompson team is continuing to add data and GIS datalayers to the GIS that has been prepared for use in the CWMP, including stream layers, topographic information, and aerial photography. In addition, the Vittor and Associates Wetlands Condition Evaluation has been completed and is being reviewed. Funding options continue to be explored by DWWG members for the implementation of the CWMP. Finally, a public outreach plan is being written by the MBNEP and will be incorporated into the final CWMP.

The next DWWG meeting will be December 9th to identify and rank watershed problems.

October 20, 2009: The contract to draft the D'Olive Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (CWMP) was awarded to Thompson Engineering, Inc. on July 29, 2009. The existing D'Olive Watershed Working Group (DWWG) is serving as an Advisory Committee for Thompson Engineering in its work on the CWMP. A kick-off meeting was held August 27 with DWWG members to get input from their members, learn their concerns, and to get additional information on potential problem areas in the watershed.

Initial work during August and early September concentrated on data gathering. Field visits have also been conducted to characterize existing known problems areas and identify possible new areas of concern within the watershed's streams caused by accelerated surface runoff and sedimentation resulting from land use changes. This information will be used to evaluate the type and extent of projects that could be pursued to restore and improve the watershed's streams.

The Draft CWMP is scheduled to be presented to the public in the late spring of 2010. The CWMP will include an estimate of the costs that could be required to implement the corrective measures. The CWMP will also include an evaluation of funding strategies to pay for these measures. A public meeting will be held for that purpose to solicit comments and suggestions from the watershed's stakeholders.

The next D'Olive Watershed Working Group meeting is scheduled for December 9th to identify and rank watershed problems, which will guide the direction of the remaining work to be done on the CWMP.

Project Timeline:

Major Milestones in D'Olive Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

September 2009: Data Compilation

October 2009: Watershed Characterization

December 2009: Watershed Problem Identification

January 2010: Analyze Regulatory Framework

February 2010: Identify Funding Sources

March 2010: Develop Conceptual Measures

May 2010: Draft CWMP

July 2010: Final CWMP