

Minutes of the organizational meeting of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) Community Action Committee (CAC)

January 18, 2007

In Attendance: David Yeager (MBNEP), Roberta Swann (MBNEP), Kara Lankford (MBNEP), Tom Herder (MBNEP), Friends of Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, Portersville Bay Revival Group, Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Little Lagoon Preservation Society, Wolf Bay Watershed Watch, South Bay Communities Alliance, Lake Forest Civic Association, and Fowl River Area Community Association

The CAC convened on January 18, 2007 at the 5 Rivers Delta Center on the causeway at 5:30 pm. David Yeager, Director of the MBNEP, gave an introductory Power Point presentation to the members of the eight grassroots organizations represented at the meeting. It explained the roles of the Mobile Bay NEP, the Management Conference and its sub-committees, and the CAC.

A primary order of business was selection of two CAC members to serve on the Executive Committee. Two CAC members, Stan Mahoney of the Wolf Bay Watershed Watch and Edward Struthers of the Fowl River Area Community Association volunteered to serve, and the CAC unanimously agreed to appoint them to sit on the Executive Committee for one year.

Committee members were asked to consider their individual organizations' strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities they foresaw as part of the CAC and the threats they envisioned as impediments to successful outcomes. Members were asked to take a few minutes to discuss and list their responses on several boards set up around the room.

Roberta Swann stated that the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats would be compiled and used to develop a draft action plan CAC membership review, comment and adoption. This plan and other information would be communicated to the group via email so that by the next meeting, the group can establish a program for the coming year. The next meeting of the CAC will be held some time in April. The meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.

Minutes of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) Community Action Committee (CAC)

Date: April 5, 2007

Place: 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center

In Attendance: Roberta Swann (MBNEP), Kara Lankford (MBNEP), Walter Ernest- Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation, Ralph Gilges- Friends of Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, Betsy Eagar- Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Barney Gass- Little Lagoon Preservation Society, Stan Mahoney- Wolf Bay Watershed Watch, John Peterson- Lake Forest Civic Association, and Edward Struthers- Fowl River Area Community Association, Dennis Hatfield- Little Lagoon Preservation Society, Leslie Lassiter- B.C.E.A.B., Ann Stein- Dog River Clear Water Revival.

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m. Kara Lankford opened the meeting with a power point presentation that provided an overview of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

forms that were completed by 9 of the 13 groups sitting on the committee. The ten themes that were derived (by clustering responses) were: 10- Common Goals (3); 9- Wastewater Treatment (4), 8- Planning (7), 7- Land Conservation (8), 6- Partnerships (9), 5- Development Pressures (9), 4- Funding (11), 3- Water Quality- (12), 2- Communication (14), and 1- Organizational Development (20).

An initial recommendation was made by MBNEP to put water quality to the side in considering the top three themes (given that Alabama Water Watch trains testers and the CACWP is available to work with individual groups.) However, after some discussion about lack of funding for water testing kits, the group reconsidered engaging in some type of water monitoring activity.

There was considerable support for conducting a grant writing workshop to teach the groups how to find/apply for funding for projects.

The final decision was to engage in a multi-staged or comprehensive Water Testing Project that would involve a coordinated effort to engage the groups of the CAC in conducting water testing in there target areas. Partners would include Alabama Water Watch, ADEM, CACWP, and possibly others. The concept would be that the “beginner” groups would be trained and learn from those groups that are already doing water testing; the groups that are more advanced could identify what needs to be done next; and all could benefit from data gathered.

First step: The groups agreed that the first step is to conduct an assessment of each of the tributaries/waterbodies. MBNEP will develop a brief outline to help standardize the assessments that are submitted. These completed assessments will be sent to Kara Lankford (klankford@mobilebaynep.com).

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Minutes of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) Community Action Committee (CAC)

Date: May 17, 2007

Place: 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center

In Attendance: David Yeager (MBNEP), Roberta Swann (MBNEP), Kara Lankford (MBNEP), Dennis Hatfield – Little Lagoon Preservation Society, Monica Kieffer – Dog River Clear Water Revival, Ann Stein- Dog River Clear Water Revival, Jeff Davies – ADEM, Chester McConnell – Audubon Society.

The meeting began at 6:05 p.m. Guest Speaker Commander Kevin Calci, FDA, opened the meeting with a power point presentation that provided an overview of sampling techniques, microbial biology, indicators and sampling strategies. After the presentation, Commander Calci answered questions asked by committee members.

The Little Lagoon Preservation Society added that they will be monitoring four sites every two weeks in the near future. Hugh McIntire, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, is working with them to place a weather station in the lagoon.

David Yeager, Director MBNEP, explained that a similar non-profit group in Florida created a comprehensive monitoring plan to research the problems that were affecting their waterway. The group determined that they were the cause of the nutrients and pathogens. Yeager offered to send a few members from the Little Lagoon Preservation Society to Florida to learn about this project.

Since only two groups were represented at the meeting it was suggested that the tasks for the night be emailed to members in order to include everyone.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Minutes of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) Community Action Committee (CAC)

Date: July 19, 2007

Place: 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center

In Attendance: Roberta Swann (MBNEP), Kara Lankford (MBNEP), Walter Ernest- Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation, Barney Gass- Friends of Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, Stan Mahoney- Wolf Bay Watershed Watch, Edward Struthers- Fowl River Area Community Association, Dennis Hatfield- Little Lagoon Preservation Society, Ann Stein- Dog River Clear Water Revival, Valerie Blankenship- Dog River Clear Water Revival, Monika Kieffer- Dog River Clear Water Revival, Ken MacRae- Dog River Clear Water Revival, Chester McConnell- Sierra Club, Dorothy McConnell- Audubon Society, Michael Shelton-Weeks Bay Reserve, Michael Douglas- Fly Creek Preservation Association, Barbara Reid- Portersville Bay Revival Group, Edwina Bates- South Bay Community Alliance.

The meeting began at 6:05 p.m. Kara Lankford (MBNEP) called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce him/herself and tell what group they represent.

Dennis Hatfield, Little Lagoon Preservation Society (LLPS), was introduced as the first guest speaker. He outlined the two water sampling programs currently organized by the LLPS. Their volunteer base is relatively stable but Mr. Hatfield noted that more volunteers are needed. The Dauphin Island Sea Lab is a major partner of the LLPS. They provide most all supplies needed for sampling efforts and therefore LLPS does not need supplies at this time. LLPS has determined trends through their water monitoring and are beginning to identify potential sources. Mr. Hatfield then outlined their plan of action for future success.

After a brief discussion Ken MacRae, Dog River Clear Water Revival (DRCR), was introduced as the next guest speaker. Mr. MacRae presented each committee member with a copy of the Water Quality Monitoring document for Dog River. He noted a map of the monitoring locations in Dog River and pointed out that they have nine years of data. However, they currently only have two full time monitors. He brought an AWW testing kit to show the committee how the monitoring is performed. Mr. MacRae explained that one of the problems in the Dog River watershed is stream channelization. The DRCR is involved in many different projects and events. Mr. MacRae point out The Dog Paddle, which is a kayak race held annually to raise funds for DRCR. He also mentioned a trash curtain project which is nearing completion. The curtain will be placed in one of the tributaries to capture trash coming from upstream.

Kara Lankford gave a brief review of the last CAC meetings. She then outlined the Purpose, goals and objectives of the water monitoring program and asked the committee for approval of the verbiage. The MBNEP has been investigating grant opportunities to fund the monitoring program but in order to apply for a grant more information was needed from each group. Each group was asked if they have a sampling plan, if their volunteer base is stable, how many AWW test kits are needed, if they have enough data to identify trends, and if they have a sampling plan. The next meeting will be held in two months. The committee was asked to comment on what they would like to discuss at that meeting. They responded positively to more group presentations at upcoming meetings but decided the next meeting should be a grant writing workshop. September 13 was chosen as the date for the next meeting. The MBNEP staff will organize the grant writing workshop.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 8:15.

Minutes of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) Community Action Committee (CAC)

Date: December 6, 2007

Place: 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center

In Attendance: Kara Lankford (MBNEP), Barney Gass- Friends of Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, Stan Mahoney- Wolf Bay Watershed Watch, Edward Struthers- Fowl River Area Community Association, Dennis Hatfield- Little Lagoon Preservation Society, Ann Stein-Dog River Clear Water Revival, Chester McConnell- Sierra Club, Dorothy McConnell- Audubon Society,

The meeting began at 6:05 p.m. Kara Lankford (MBNEP) called the meeting to order and outlined the agenda for the meeting. She gave a power point presentation that described the purpose, goals and objectives of the Mobile Bay NEP Mini Grant Program. The Mini Grant Program is funding for grassroots/community organizations. Those receiving mini grants will be asked to join the CAC if they are not already a member and they will be required to give oral quarterly reports at each CAC meeting. Each CAC member received three handouts for their review: A program overview and proposal guidelines handout, a mini grant pre-proposal form and a document outlining the grant conditions of the mini grant program.

Ms. Lankford informed the CAC that the MBNEP mini grant budget is \$20,000 for the 2008 program. She asked the committee if they would recommend putting a cap on the budget. Discussion ensued and the committee decided to leave the budget open for all dollar amount. The committee agreed that the proposal reviewers would be discretionary while reviewing the grants and would evenly distribute the funds to all deserving proposals.

Ms. Lankford pointed out that the CAC would be peer reviewing each other's proposals. They would have to grade each proposal, including there own, in an objective and fair manner. The CAC felt confident that they could perform this duty.

Ms. Lankford asked the CAC if they thought one proposal submission per year was adequate or if they would like two rounds per year. They decided one proposal submission per year was the best option.

Ms. Lankford asked the CAC if the grant money should be used for travel. The committee thought the funds should not be used for general travel but wanted to be able to pay speaker fees and travel for educational workshops the groups may hold.

Lastly, the CAC decided the mini grants should not be themed based. The committee thought this might be limiting to the different groups that will be applying for the mini grants. Stan Mahoney, Wolf Bay Watershed Watch, pointed out the importance of showing measurable environmental results through the funded projects.

The dates for the 2008 CAC meetings are as follows:

March 6

June 5

September 4

December 4

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 7:15.

Minutes of the organizational meeting of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) Community Action Committee (CAC)

Date: 03.06.08

Place: 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center

In Attendance: Kara Lankford (MBNEP), Stan Mahoney- Wolf Bay Watershed Watch, Dennis Hatfield - Little Lagoon Preservation Society, Ann Stein - Dog River Clear Water Revival, Rick Odess - Magnolia Springs, Walter Ernest IV - Weeks Bay Foundation.

Kara Lankford (MBNEP) called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and outlined its agenda. All attendees were given copies of the mini-grant submissions and a proposal evaluation form. Each CAC member evaluated each grant based on five criteria and graded the proposals. The committee ranked the proposals and agreed all should be funded.

- Little Lagoon Preservation Society
 - Signage, educational speaker, lab equipment
- Wolf Bay Watershed Watch
 - Automated Water Monitoring Instrument
- Dog River Clear Water Revival
 - Dog River Park Restoration

A discussion ensued about the effectiveness of the evaluation criteria. The committee agreed that criteria were adequate.

Ms. Lankford asked the committee if they wished to submit another round of proposals this spring, since \$10, 993.00 remains in the mini grant budget. Several members had project ideas. Ms. Lankford pointed out the benefits of focusing on themes as was discussed last year. Water quality was the focus area chosen by the CAC members at the onset of 2007. Everyone agreed that a theme would allow the members to set goals, and the theme could be changed on a yearly basis. The group agreed to refocus on water quality. Stan Mahoney requested the leftover funds

be used to purchase several YSI meters for water testing. Ms. Lankford agreed to ask MBNEP Deputy Director Roberta Swann if this would be possible. Mr. Mahoney also suggested grading the YSI on ease of use and accuracy and possibly holding a training session for new users.

Dennis Hatfield informed the committee of a Fish Kill seminar provided by Dr. Hugh McIntire to be held on Thursday, March 13, at 1 p.m. at the Weeks Bay Reserve.

Ms. Lankford pointed out that several of the mini-grant proposals involve signage. It was suggested that a model be developed by the CAC to make all watershed signs in coastal Alabama uniform.

The committee then discussed the importance and challenge of sustaining a volunteer base and recruiting new volunteers. Ms. Lankford pointed out that events such as tree plantings, river cleanups, and the like are great ways to educate the public and recruit new volunteers. Mr. Mahoney pointed out the critical need for community outreach and education. He suggested appealing to the average individual, possibly fishermen, by bringing in a fishing expert that is also a conservationist to educate them about the importance of water quality. The Mobile Bay Kayak Fishing association was suggested as a good potential partner. Ann Stein noted that DRCR mails a monthly newsletter out to over 4,000 residents in the Dog River watershed (not just their members). This is an effective way to reach many people. They pay for postage with their annual membership dues. Other CAC members plan to try to accomplish a similar goal by mailing their newsletter out to non-members.

Ms. Lankford asked the committee if it would be helpful for the MBNEP to develop a partnership with the CAC organizations and scientists from local universities. The committee thought this would be very effective.

In committee discussions over the agenda for the next meeting, arranging a guest speaker was suggested. Some suggested speakers were as follows:

- Jeff Tick, a hydrogeologist from the University of Alabama.
- Invite an environmental leader from ThyssenKrupp or EADS to talk to the CAC and public about their policies regarding environmental protection.
- Someone from the University of West Florida to talk about Bacterial Source Tracking

Ms. Lankford asked the committee where they would like the next meeting to be held. The committee asked her to research locations in Fairhope, AL.

The dates for the 2008 CAC meetings are as follows:

June 5

September 4

December 4

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.