



**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program  
Science Advisory Committee Meeting  
10 am – 12:00 pm May 22, 2020  
Zoom Meeting**

**Agenda**

**Welcome - review and approval of minutes from previous meeting**

Dr. Amy Hunter, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

**Updates and Presentations**

**Alabama Center of Excellence: Coastal Monitoring Program**

Dottie Byron, Dauphin Island Sea Lab

**Stressor Matrix – Update and Continued Discussion and Walkthrough Exercise**

Dr. John Lehrter, University of South Alabama/Dauphin Island Sea Lab

**Other Business**

**Adjourn**



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*The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Science Advisory Committee was established to bring area experts together to provide advice, guidance, and recommendations to ensure that MBNEP activities will be conducted in a scientifically relevant and rigorous manner.*

In attendance:

Chris Anderson, Katie Baltzer, Alex Beebe, Don Blancher, Dottie Byron, Renee Collini, Marlon Cook, Newton Cromer, John Curry, Dennis DeVries, Brian Dzwonkowski, Patric Harper, Amy Hunter, Steve Jones, Latif Kalin, Cade Kistler, John Lehrter, Fred Leslie, Matt Love, Autumn Nitz, Missy Partyka, Tim Thibaut, Chris Warn, Bill Walton, Bret Webb

MBENP Staff: Jason Kudulis, Roberta Swann, Christian Miller

*This meeting was held remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Dr. Amy Hunter called the meeting to order at 10:05 CST. Minutes from the January 24th meeting were shared via email. Dr. John Lehrter made a motion to accept the minutes. Dr. Dennis DeVries seconded.

After an overview of the meeting agenda, Dr. Hunter invited Ms. Dottie Byron to begin her presentation, **Alabama Center of Excellence: Coastal Monitoring Program.**

Key take-aways from the presentation include:

- The Alabama Center of Excellence (ALCoe), housed at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab will be implementing a competitive grant program and focus research in eligible areas 1, 2, 4, and 5 of the RESTORE Act
- ALCoe is interested in building on Alabama Real-Time Coastal Observing System (ARCOS) coastal monitoring network. There are still large coastal Alabama data gaps and a lack of baseline data to fully understand the current condition of local waters and the systems they support.
- Will improve three ARCOS stations at Meaher Park, Katrina Cut, and Perdido Pass.
- ALCoe is joining the MarineGEO network (<https://marinegeo.si.edu>). An international network of long-term observatories. Standardized protocol will allow comparison worldwide. ALCoe inclusion would fill a NGOM data gap. All data will be publicly available.
- ALCoe proposing two sites, one each in Mobile and Baldwin, to conduct monthly sampling of priority inshore habitat – salt marsh, oyster, and seagrass. **They want feedback on where those two locations should be.**
- Also seeking input on what parameters will be monitored. **Please let Dottie know what measurements would best serve your needs beyond basic water quality.**

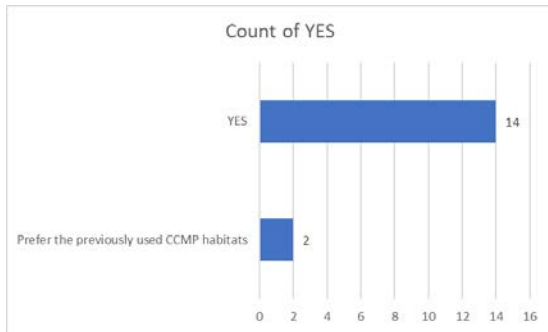
Next, Dr. John Lehrter was invited to lead a walkthrough exercise of the latest Stressor Matrix. Before Dr. Lehrter's presentation, Mr. Jason Kudulis quickly reviewed broader matrix goals and objectives and provided a subcommittee update including the different document iterations since the topic was first discussed with

the SAC in September 2019.

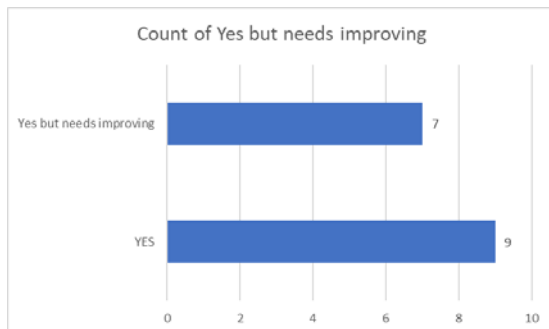
Key take-aways from the matrix discussion and walkthrough include:

- The Stressor Matrix Subcommittee has met twice since organizing in January 2020.
- Matrix updates since we last met include:
  - Human ecosystem services from Harte’s Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem Services Valuation Database were incorporated.
  - The six CCMP values have been incorporated into the matrix.
  - Habitats were reduced to four broader categories (Terrestrial, Coastal, Estuarine, Lacustrine/Palustrine).
  - Scoring has been modified to a -3 to 3 scale.
- Today’s walkthrough is intended to gather feedback regarding utility of the draft matrix layout, scoring, habitats, etc., and to have participants trial stressor/ecosystem services scenarios to gather impressions regarding document efficiency and effectiveness. Additionally, this version of the matrix is envisioned as a first-sweep screening tool for emerging issues. A more robust conceptual model for structured decision making would be a next-step approach.
  - Responses to matrix example scenarios revealed general agreement among participants though some scenarios and the remote setting caused complications. One weakness was Zoom polling requires an answer to every question. We encourage not to answer if an individual is not confident with subject matter, so many respondents scored “0” in that case, skewing averages.
  - Spatial and temporal scale, linkages, and impacts with regards to stressors, habitats, CCMP values, and ecosystem services can be challenging. A matrix key with descriptions, definitions, and other pertinent information will be developed to assist completing the matrix.

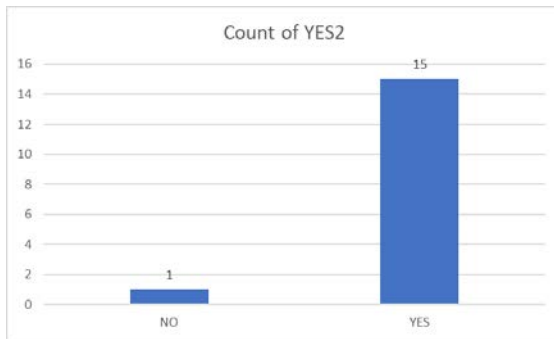
Are the four habitats comprehensive?



Is the layout functional and logical?



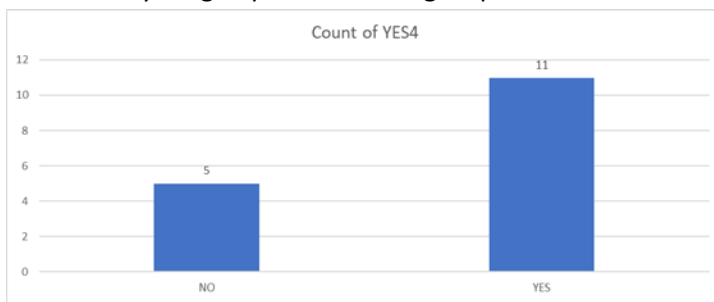
Are the ecosystem services comprehensive?



Is the scoring range appropriate? (-3 to 3)

100% Yes

Would a day-long in-person meeting be preferred to undertake this full exercise?



Other Business

The SAC is planning a summer off-cycle meeting around coastal Alabama modeling initiatives.

At 12:00 pm, Dr. Hunter made the motion to adjourn. Dr. Dennis DeVries seconded.