



# Program Evaluation

Review Period July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2014

## Mobile Bay National Estuary Program

June 5, 2015

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds  
Coastal Management Branch

## Program Evaluation Team

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## Purpose of National Estuary Program Evaluation

- ▶ To ensure adequate progress is being made in CCMP implementation and that continued EPA support is warranted.
- ▶ To highlight environmental results.
- ▶ To highlight strengths and challenges in program management.
- ▶ To demonstrate continued stakeholder commitment.
- ▶ To share the achievements and lessons learned between the NEPs as well as other coastal watershed programs.

## NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM LOCATIONS



## 2015 Program Evaluation Topics

### ▶ **Program Management Core Elements Response**

- Financial Management
- Program Planning and Administration
- Outreach and Public Involvement
- Research
- Assessment and Monitoring
- Reporting

## 2015 Program Evaluation Topics (Continued)

### ▶ **NEP Workplan Narrative Summary**

- Ecosystem Restoration and Protection Projects (e.g., habitat, water quality, living resources, and healthy communities)
- Technical Assistance and Capacity Building (e.g., tools, trainings, and direct assistance)
- Support to CWA Core Programs
- External Factors (e.g., institutional barriers, emerging issues)
- Progress made Addressing Previously-Identified Challenges

## 2015 Program Evaluation Topics (Continued)

- ▶ **Habitat Restored or Protected**
- ▶ **Budget Summary**
- ▶ **On-site Visit**

## Program Evaluation Letter

- ▶ **Final Rating**
  - Pass, Conditional Pass, Fail
- ▶ **Support of CWA Core Programs**
- ▶ **Progress in Areas Highlighted in Previous Review**
- ▶ **Program Strengths and Challenges**
- ▶ **Recommendations**

## Mobile Bay Program Evaluation 2010 Program Evaluation Recommendation

- ▶ **Management Conference:** EPA recommended the Program look at the structure of its Management Conference to promote a broader, more collaborative stakeholder process as it updated the CCMP
- ▶ **Finance Plan Update:** EPA recommended the Program update its finance plan to identify diversify funding sources.

## Mobile Bay Program Strengths

- ▶ Program Implementation and Reporting

Excellent approach and presentation for the new Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP.)

Commitment and promotion of watershed management planning and implementation.

Strong relationship with the State of Alabama agencies (ADCNR, ADEM, GSA, ALDOT) resulting in excellent collaboration and leverage.

Ability to match and aggregate a variety of funding sources to achieve on the ground projects and results.

## Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Program Strengths

- ▶ Habitat Preservation and Restoration Efforts
- ▶ Outreach and Public Involvement

## Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Challenges

- ▶ Monitoring
  - ▶ Provide leadership for a coordinated approach to monitoring water quality and ecosystem status and trends within the NEP service area
- ▶ Enhanced Engagement of Local Governments
  - ▶ Engaging local governments through greater investment and implementation of watershed management plans
- ▶ Coordination of Restoration for Greatest Benefit
  - ▶ Engaging and building the capacity of management conference partners in providing the science based approach through the CCMP to restore and protect coastal resources.

## Mobile Bay Program Evaluation Preliminary Findings

- ▶ Mobile Bay has shown real leadership in marrying the CCMP update process to the watershed approach.
- ▶ The Program has grown tremendously in its capacity to apply and manage available funding to implement the CCMP and watershed management plans
- ▶ The Program appears poised to continue and enhance estuarine protection and management.
- ▶ The PE Team will recommend a “Pass” to OCPD management.