

**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Project Implementation Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 15, 2017
5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, Tensaw Theater**

Minutes

Attendees:

Steven Acreman (Highland Technical Services)
Richard Allen (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
Don Bates (Thompson Engineering)
Emery Baya (Thompson Engineering)
Don Blancher (Moffat & Nichol)
Jacob Blandford (The Nature Conservancy)
Leah Bray (Anchor QEA LLC)
Denise Brown (City of Mobile)
Mary Kate Brown (The Nature Conservancy)
Scott Brown (ADEM)
Michael Burton (Stantec)
Evan Davis (ALDOT, Southwest Region)
Susan Dingman (ADEM)
Walter C. Ernest IV (Pelican Coast Conservancy)
Paige Felts (Volkert, Inc.)
Carl Ferraro (ADCNR, State Lands Division)
Josh Gilman (Stantec)
Elizabeth Godsey (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
Judy Haner (The Nature Conservancy)
Courtney Harkness (Thompson Engineering)
Patric Harper (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Coastal Programs)
Bob Harris (Alabama State Port Authority)
Rob Howell (Anchor QEA LLC)
Zeke Hudson (Rowe Engineering)
Eric Jackson (Rowe Engineering)
Laura Jackson (Mobile Baykeeper)
Webb Jackson (Parsons Engineering)

Andrew James (Volkert, Inc.)
Cade Kistler (Mobile Baykeeper)
Dina Knight (The Nature Conservancy)
Ryan Mains (Alabama Coastal Foundation)
Brad Marler (Allen Engineering & Science)
Shannon McGlynn (ADEM)
Jaime Miller (AL Marine Resources Division)
Cameron Morris (Dewberry, Inc.)
Steve O'Hearn (Thompson Engineering)
Larry Parson (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
Barry Tierce (Stantec)
Chris Plymale (U.S. EPA Region 4)
Melissa Pringle (Allen Engineering & Science)
Casey Rains (City of Spanish Fort)
Josh Running (Stantec)
Kari Servold (Dewberry, Inc.)
Michael Sharp (NFWF Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund)
Barbara Shaw (MAWSS)
Mike Shelton (Weeks Bay NERR)
Sam St. John (Fowl River Area Civic Association)
Mary Beth Sullivan (City of Mobile)
Drew Taylor (ALDOT)
Will Underwood (ADCNR, State Lands Division)
Dan Van Nostrand (NOAA)
Lee Walters (Goodwyn Mills Cawood)
Chris Warn (Environmental Science Associates)
Bret Webb (University of South Alabama)

MBNEP Staff: Roberta Swann, Tom Herder, Christian Miller, Rick Frederick, Paul Lammers, and Bethany Dickey

Takeaways

- Four NFWF GEBF-funded D'Olive Watershed restoration projects are as yet not substantially completed. DAE is out for bid, and DAF projects are in design, anticipating late 2017 implementation.
- Moffat and Nichol have been contracted by MBNEP to develop a scope for the Mobile-Tensaw Complex WMP.
- The data collected from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Mobile Harbor will hopefully be made available for use.
- Stantec engineers explained cost benefits of stream restoration to reduce sediment loads in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, where nutrient trading is used to meet TMDL-imposed load reductions.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:39 pm by Patric Harper. Attendees went through a round of self-introductions.

2. Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Harper asked for any deletions, additions, changes to the minutes from August 18, 2016. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the minutes. Carl Ferraro made the motion, which Sam St. John seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Old Business (we went out of order from the agenda)

1) Marsh Island, Shell Belt/Coden Belt Road, and Point Aux Pines Living Shorelines projects – Carl Ferraro, ADCNR-SLD

Carl Ferraro began with his update on Marsh Island. The dredging is at least 50% completed. The Coden Belt Road project has been shelved for the time being. Mr. Ferraro shared no details. The Point Aux Pines project, with Tetra Tech as the consultant, will hopefully be starting on April 1, 2017.

2) Swift Tract Living Shoreline – Dan Van Nostrand, NOAA

Dan Van Nostrand updated the committee on the Swift Tract Living Shoreline project. The final construction survey will begin next week.

A. Progress Reports/Updates on Watershed Management Planning – Christian Miller, MBNEP

Christian Miller reported on the current watershed management planning efforts.

- **Fowl River** WMP was completed last year and the implementation is getting underway. The SAC (Science Advisory Committee) is currently working on a scope for a Marsh Health Study for transitional zone wetlands in Fowl River and have met once to discuss the next steps.
- **Bon Secour** Comment period has closed and the final draft of the WMP is on the NEP website.
- For the **Mississippi Sound Complex**, Dewberry is putting together a technical team to investigate pathogen issues.
- **Dog River** Watershed is nearing completion. A draft will be released for comment soon.
- **Weeks Bay**, The Weeks Bay Complex WMP is being drafted in sections, and the final product should be done in June, 2017.
- **Mobile-Tensaw Delta Complex** is awaiting release of RESTORE funds as Dr. Don Blancher's Moffat and Nichol team develop a scope for that WMP.

Christian Miller and Roberta Swann met with Amy Newbold and NRDA Trustees at the NEP office to discuss potential opportunities to leverage \$5M in nutrient reduction measures recommended in coastal WMPs.

B. Project Implementation Reports – Paul Lammers, MBNEP

D'Olive Creek Watershed Stream Restorations

WMP-recommended and NFWF Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund-funded stream restoration work continues in the D'Olive Watershed. Mr. Lammers provided excellent drone footage (thanks to Ben Brenner with Cobia Digital) of the progress of the DA3 restoration.

- **Comprehensive Joe's Branch Restoration:** Substantially complete

- **Tiawasee Creek:** substantially complete
- **D'Olive Tributary D4-D6:** (Malbis Plantation property) Substantially complete (planting is almost done)
- **D'Olive Tributary DA3:** (Malbis Plantation property) – started last month and was substantially completed in 35 days.
- **D'Olive Tributary DAE:** Design is complete and the project is out for bid
- **D'Olive Tributary DAF & DAF1:** In design.
- **North Mon Louis Island:** Phase 1 and 2 of rock breakwater and marsh creation complete. With marsh fill having consolidated, plans for Phase 3, earthwork, tidal marsh creation, and planting, are underway and expected to begin soon.

4. New Business

A. Development of a scope for the Mobile-Tensaw Delta complex Watershed Management Plan and pushing collaboration, planning, and conservation initiatives further upstream – Dr. Don Blancher, Moffatt and Nichol

Dr. Blancher explains that looking at differing maps can show different areas of concern. Their goals are: to conduct preliminary data review and resource, stakeholder, and cost benefit analyses to guide the development of a watershed plan scope focused on components providing the greatest return on investment; and to assess opportunities to connect watershed planning efforts downstream with water management efforts upstream. The objectives are:

- Conduct background surveys throughout the basin to develop an inventory of governmental agencies and others involved with the numerous planning and restoration efforts.
- Conduct a gap analysis to ascertain potential synergies or conflicts with ongoing and planned upstream efforts.
- Conduct a watershed planning cost analysis to determine levels of investment for each component of a comprehensive watershed plan
- Develop a base project scope for the Tensaw-Apalachee comprehensive WMP, including a schedule of scope additions, their costs, potential funding sources, and funding availability.
- Prepare Final Report and present to SAC and PIC.

Initial tasks include:

- Meetings with state agencies (and others) to determine major systems approach to the upper watershed
 - Bound the System
 - Define Major System Drivers important to watershed planning
 - Determine inputs
 - Determine outputs
- Gather Existing Knowledge on Key Watershed Aspects and Perform a Gap Analysis on Elements needed to develop an overall WMP

A. Report from USACOE on Mobile Harbor General Reevaluation Report/Supplemental Environmental Impacts Statement on the Mobile Tensaw Delta – Elizabeth Godsey and Richard Allen, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District

Richard Allen provided a presentation of USACOE data collection in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta related to the Mobile Harbor General Reevaluation Report and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. Much of this data will be valuable in informing efforts to develop a WMP for the Mobile Tensaw Delta.

A. A cost/benefit comparison of nutrient removal through stream restoration with traditional stormwater techniques – Joshua Running, Stantec

Mr. Running gave a presentation on Cost/Benefit Analysis of Stream Restoration as a Nutrient and Sediment Offset in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, where nutrient trading has emerged as a promising strategy for meeting TMDL-imposed load limits cost effectively. Degraded and eroding urban streams can be a significant source of sediments and nutrients. Variables that affect return on investment on nutrient stream restoration projects include bulk density, soil nutrient concentrations, and bank recession rates. Their case studies and monitoring show that the most cost effective way to reduce pollution is stream restoration on a dollar/pound basis.

5. New Business

- Derelict Crab Trap Recovery on March 25 from 8am-1pm at Meaher State Park.
- ALDOT/City of Mobile Cleanup on April 1.
- Conservation Corps is done with training and will begin invasive species control on Monday, February 20.

6. Adjourn

Mr. Harper adjourned the meeting at 3:29 pm.