

MEMORANDUM
Weeks Bay Watershed Management Plan

TO: File

FROM: Mike Eubanks

DATE: November 16, 2016

SUBJECT: Stakeholders Working Group Meeting #7

DISTRIBUTION: MBNEP, BCSWCD, Thompson Team, Stakeholders Working Group

1. The meeting was conducted on November 16, 2016, at the Baldwin County Central Annex (on Palmer Street) between 8:30 and 10:30 AM. Copies of the agenda and attendees present are attached. Bob Higgins initiated the meeting with opening remarks and had everyone introduce themselves. He asked if there were any comments or changes to the last meeting minutes. There were no responses so the previous minutes were approved.
2. Bob Higgins introduced Jason Kudulis with Mobile Bay National Estuary Program. Jason gave a short overview about the citizen monitoring programs. The program is conducted through the Alabama Water Watch. Volunteers are needed to collect samples once a month. The test kits are provided at no cost to the volunteers. Mike Shelton added that he has trained and utilized a number of volunteers in this program since the mid 1990's in the watershed, which at one time had about 25 locations being monitored, but currently only about 5 volunteers continue to participate. The intent is to start the program before the completion of the Weeks Bay Watershed Management Plan (WMP).
 - a. John Carlton asked about the success of recruiting volunteers to continually monitor an issue? Mike Shelton and Jason Kudulis both answered by stating how difficult it has been based on convenience, so they try to focus on people who are interested and do not live just along the river.
 - b. Mike Eubanks pointed out that bacterial pathogens are one of the parameters being monitored in accordance with the Alabama Water Watch protocol. Also, there is a section in the WMP that will discuss monitoring. The Thompson Team will be working with Jason Kudulis.
 - c. Jason concluded by asking everyone to consider groups for monitor training. The goal is to look recruit at least 10 volunteers. For more information, visit alabamawaterwatch.org. More information will be included in our upcoming issue of the Weeks Bay WMP Newsletter as well.

Additional information Alabama Water Watch is available at: <http://www.alabamawaterwatch.org/>

3. Mike Eubanks reported the overall project status. We have about 3 ½ months remaining to complete our evaluations and wrap-up the WMP. An overview of the remaining schedule includes:
 - Identification of implementation measures (Nov 2016-Jan 2017)
 - Draft Watershed Management Plan (Feb 2017)
 - Final Watershed Management Plan (Mar 2017)

He summarized a number of tasks that have been completed, several that are underway, and a few that remain to be completed. Drafts of several sections of the plan have been written, e.g.,

history/heritage of the watershed, LID technology, water quality conditions, ecological conditions, shoreline conditions, etc. Baseline SWAT models with 2011 and 1992 land cover, performed by Latif Kalin, have been received. John Carlton is analyzing the model runs based on model outputs, to identify potential hotspots for sediment and nutrients. Information based on the model will be presented at the next meeting, along with actual field data collected this year by Marlon Cook on the Fish River (Magnolia River field sampling conducted in 2008 and 2009). Information has been obtained from the Choctawhatchee-Pea-Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority regarding their formation, operation, and funding.

4. John Carlton provided a status of the Regulatory Matrix.
 - a. The matrix and questionnaire were sent to the 9 municipalities and the County in August. Since then, there have been 8 responses. The TE staff has been filling in the gaps while following up to get confirmation.
 - b. From the Matrix, we see that overall: all local jurisdiction address both Construction Phase BMPs and Post Construction Stormwater Management in some form; half have some form of wetland and/or stream protection requirements; 4 of the 10 have some reference to LID regulations; and 4 have current NPDES MS4 permit coverage.
 - c. The Matrix confirms what we heard from the Workshop – there is a need for consistency in the regulatory requirements, especially setting some minimum baseline; however, “one size” does not “fit all” and some variations may be necessary to better address geographical location within the watershed and downstream impacts and water quality.
 - d. This information is also intended to help figure out where various management measures may be beneficial, and that is where we will be seeking input on specific items related to stormwater management regulations and options. For example, convening regular meetings of the various jurisdictions to further consistency and improvement in regulatory requirements (already started this effort with a municipality/county planner meeting hosted Nov 10th by the City of Foley – thank you Miriam Boutwell); assisting municipalities with inventory of stormwater structures; surveying the functional status of existing structures; and prioritizing a list for repair/maintenance or retrofitting..
 - e. Mike Shelton noted that the common denominator is the Home Owners Associations (HOA). HOA is a big sector to educate /train regarding stormwater management facilities, has always been a challenge, and is an underserved group.
 - f. Gerry McManus suggested the use of a model similar to subdivision roads, for municipalities to take over maintenance for stormwater ponds.
 - g. Neil Johnson is currently working on a summary of the Federal regulations for inclusion in the WMP.
5. Bob Higgins then transitioned into the population growth forecast update. He and several of the TE team met on Nov 10th, as mentioned by John above, with several city and county planners to discuss our needs for population forecasting in the Watershed.
 - a. The Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) completed their Long Range Transportation Plan in 2015. They utilized a process that required population projection which then allocated growth to subareas (277 Traffic Analysis Zones) in the MPO boundaries (covers most of Weeks Bay Watershed except for the southern portion).

- b. Mike Eubanks stated that the MPO methodology for population growth projections will be used for estimating the 2040 LULC data, which will be utilized for running the SWAT model for 2040 water quality conditions.
6. An update on the shoreline trend analysis and sea level rise effects was given by Scott Jackson, Ecology and Environment. His powerpoint presentation highlighted some interesting findings regarding observed widening of many small tidal tributaries of Fish and Magnolia Rivers, reduction in size of small islands/spits within these rivers, and model projections for sea level rise in the tidal areas. Historic tidal gage data at Dauphin Island since 1966 shows a mean relative sea level rise of 6.5 inches. Several agencies have future projections of sea level rise in 2100 ranging from 1.1 to 7.1 feet. Rick Wallace commented that this presentation does a good job providing the answers to the question of “Why” preserve the vulnerable lowland “edges” within the Watershed. The presentation will be posted on the MBNEP website in our Weeks Bay WMP area.
7. Tim Thibaut, with Vittor and Associates, gave a brief presentation about the wetlands, riparian buffer, and ecosystem status. He summarized the methodology for updating the wetland mapping for the Watershed based on 2015 aerial photography, 1-foot LiDAR elevation contour data, soil data, and verified wetland delineations at several locations within the Watershed. Next he summarized the status condition (red-yellow-green) for wetlands and riparian buffers for the almost 200 USGS subwatershed catchments in the Watershed (identifies good candidate areas for restoration, e.g., Picard Branch and Schoolhouse Branch). Regarding threatened, endangered, and candidate species located within the watershed, he stated the recorded include the gopher tortoise, manatee, red-bellied turtle, and wood stork. The presentation will be posted on the MBNEP website in our Weeks Bay WMP area.
8. Once the presentations were finished, Bob Higgins asked for any final comments.
 - a. Rick Wallace asked if there was any known mechanism to move the project forward once the WMP is completed. Bob stated that an implementation version of this Stakeholders Working Group is being considered as the WMP is completed and the implementation phase begins.
 - b. Since a number of new elected officials have been recently seated, we need to reach out to them and inform them of the WMP development.
9. The next meeting of the SWG is scheduled for January 18th, 2017 in the Baldwin County Central Annex (on Palmer Street), Robertsdale, AL, from 8:30 to 10:30 AM. The frequency of the meetings will occur monthly thereafter, and breakout focus group meetings will be convened as we prepare the WMP.

Prepared by
Courtney Harkness and Mike Eubanks

Attachments:

- a. Meeting Agenda/Recommendations for Action and Funding Development
- b. List of Attendees



Weeks Bay Stakeholder Work Group

Baldwin County Central Annex

8:30 – 10:00 am November 16, 2016

AGENDA

1. Welcome/Opening Remarks/Approval of Minutes
2. Volunteer Monitoring – Jason Kudulis, MBNEP
3. Overall project status – Mike Eubanks
 - a. Regulations comparison – John Carlton
 - b. Shoreline trends – Scott Jackson, Ecology and Environment
 - c. Wetlands and ecosystem status – Tim Thibaut, Vittor and Associates
4. Growth forecast update – Bob Higgins
5. Roundtable discussion
6. Next steps

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 18th, 8:30 – 10 am,
Baldwin County Central Annex, Robertsdale

Draft recommendations for action and funding development

Develop a baseline scenario:

Projected water quality and flooding if we continue the current trends for the next 25 - 50 years. This would represent our baseline projection if no new corrective actions or rulemaking.

Data needed:

1. County and municipal growth projections including likely geographic locations.
2. Is the county willing to rerun the flood study with updated growth projections & alternatives?

Develop potential action plans

At this stage, recommendations for action and funding should:

1. Describe what could be done & expected benefit.
2. Identify data or research needed to run model or models.
3. Implementation costs or funding sources do not need to be identified.

Potential action plans (evaluate impact using simulation modelling):

1. Joint county/municipal flood management plans and associated rulemaking
 - a. How to organize for this?
 - b. Model ordinances?
 - c. Use the baseline growth forecast for guidance?
 - d. Is this an organizational model: Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority. MBNEP: Discussion on 9/16
2. Consistent implementation of certain LID practices:
 - a. Which ones are most effective sensitive locations? In high growth locations?
3. Strategic land acquisition:
 - a. Where is this most beneficial?
 - b. Where is it planned?
4. Agriculture:
 - a. Livestock exclusion from wetlands/streams
 - b. Other best practices? Which ones are most effective?
5. Repair failed septic systems or replace with sewers
 - a. Impact of 100% repair?
6. Repair HOA managed stormwater detention ponds
 - a. How many and where are they? How many need repair?
 - b. How to incentivize maintenance?
7. Mitigate current sources of pollution; minimize future sources.
8. Continue public outreach and education

Weeks Bay Watershed Management Plan, Stakeholders Working Group

Meeting, November 16, 2016, List of Attendees

1. Larry Morris, Baldwin County Soil and Water Conservation District
2. Seth Peterson, Baldwin County Highway Department
3. Jason Kudulis, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
4. Mike Shelton, Weeks Bay Reserve
5. Kenny Pfeiffer, DR Horton
6. Jennifer Fidler, Fairhope Department of Public Works
7. Teddy King, Homeowner Interest, Magnolia River
8. Rick Wallace, Weeks Bay Foundation
9. Steve Heath, Homeowner Interest, Fish River
10. Ronnie Northcutt, Baldwin County Soil and Water Conservation District
11. Gerry McManus, Baldwin County Sewer Service
12. Mike Eubanks, Thompson Engineering
13. Courtney Harkness, Thompson Engineering
14. John Carlton, Thompson Engineering
15. Christopher Grant, Thompson Engineering
16. Bob Higgins, Higgins and Associates
17. Scott Jackson, Ecology and Environment
18. Tim Thibaut, Vittor and Associates
19. Neil Johnston, Hand Arendall LLC