

Weeks Bay Stakeholder Workshop

Baldwin County Central Annex II

8:30 – noon March 2, 2016

AGENDA

- 8:30 Welcome & Introductions
- 8:45 Overview & background data
- 9:00 Small Group Discussions: Constituent Groups
- 10:30 Small Group Discussions: Mixed Groups
- 11:00 Entire Group: Key issues & action plans
- 12:00 End

Constituent Group Assignment

Strengths: What's right and should be preserved/strengthened?

- List all, highlight your top 3

Weaknesses & Threats: What's not right? What negative trends do you see?

- List all, highlight your top 3

Opportunities: Look at your top 3 lists – what could be done to address them?

- List all, highlight your top 3
- Pick one to develop an action plan

Action Plan:

- What: Describe the initiative
- Who: Who needs to be involved to make this happen
- How: List the steps to make this happen
- Roadblocks: What would prevent it from happening
- What help do you need from the Thompson team?

Weeks Bay Watershed Workshop

March 2, 2016

Top Issues:

- **Flooding**
- Water quality
- Non point sedimentation, mud
- Erosion
- Loss of habitat, wetland loss
- Shoreline hardening

Top Causes:

- **Development, population growth**
- **Lack of a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional storm water management plan**
- **Lack of consistency in regulations between jurisdictions**
- Lack of a process in which stakeholders and regulators meet regularly to address issues
- Lack of money to implement changes, both in public and private sectors
- Education on low impact development and agriculture not reaching everyone
- Septic tank discharge
- Fertilizer
- Livestock in wetlands/streams
- Lack of riparian buffers

Top Action Plans:

- **Develop a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional storm water management plan**
- **Develop ways to continue discussions between stakeholders to address issues where multiple regulatory groups (cities, county, state, federal) are involved**
- Educate agricultural producers about incentives available to help offset cost associated with exclusion fencing and alternative water sources
- Form a developer organization that meets at least semi-annually to discuss experiences, challenges and strategies
- Develop more effective ways to encourage Low Impact Development practices
- Strategic land acquisition
- Reduce pathogens from septic tanks

Weeks Bay Stakeholder Workshop

Baldwin County Central Annex II

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Agriculture/Forestry Group

Attendees: Ray Bertolla, JC Bishop, Art Dyas, Jimmie Fidler, Joey Koptis, Larry Morris, Michael Mullek, Joel Sirmon

Strengths: What's right and should be preserved/strengthened?

- Increase use of cover crops
- Increase use of precision Ag technology (smart boom, variable rate fertilizer app.)
- Most timber operations following BMP's (SMZ's etc...)
- Overall trend towards conservation tillage/no-till is increasing
- Within "Horizon 2015" Document, numerous opportunities exist to address watershed impairments

Weakness & Threats: What's not right? What negative trends do you see?

- Livestock still in wetlands/streams
- Lack of riparian buffers/not wide enough
- Lack of education about conservation efforts already being made in Ag and Timber Industry
- No current "vehicle" exist to acquire conservation easements from landowners
- Failing septic systems
- Rapid development- increased impervious surfaces and conversion of Ag land to urban
- Effluent water discharge into Fish River
- Dirt roads
- Flooding

Action Plan:

- Identify livestock operations that have animals with access to stream/wetlands
- Encourage reduced and no-tillage production systems
- Promote usage of Agriculture cover crops to increase water infiltration rates and reduce runoff
- Promote variable rate fertilizer application technologies
- Farmers in watershed area need to be involved and educated to benefits of reduced tillage/beneficial usage of cover crops and increase soil quality
- Create sprinkler/irrigation system to divert effluent water discharge into Fish River watershed
- Initiative:
 - educate producers about incentives available to help offset cost associated with exclusion fencing and alternative water sources
- Who:
 - Any producers (livestock) located in watershed
 - Stakeholders involved in Watershed Management Plan
 - NRCS/ADEM

- Town of Loxley
- County Commission needs to be involved
- Steps:
 - Identify producers/operations
 - Meet with to develop a conservation plan
 - Convey/construct program information
 - Identify disposal field area for effluent disposal (Loxley Work Camp, pastureland)
 - Design system to divert/apply water
 - Obtain proper permits
- Roadblocks:
 - Money
- What help do you need from the Thompson team?
 - Help with I.D. of locations with livestock in sensitive areas
 - Location of matching funds and make sure resource concern is included in Watershed Management Plan
 - Need to help secure funding to subsidize/plant cover crops
 - Need to help secure funding for variable rate fertilizer applications in watershed areas
 - Site identification and design assistance

Developers

Attendees: Pat Achee, Joel Coleman, Tom Poulos, Sands Stimpson

Strengths: What's right and should be preserved/strengthened?

- Preserve watershed quality through "common sense" regulations
- Watershed is an assessment that creates a desirable place to live
- Developers have a financial interest in preservation of quality of life in Baldwin County
- Growth is good when properly managed

Weakness & Threats: What's not right? What negative trends do you see?

- Impractical and ineffective regulations
 - Decrease property values
 - Can actually have a negative impact on water quality
- Inconsistency of rules/regulations among municipalities
- Non-point sources of sedimentation that are "off the radar" and unregulated by ADEM
 - Un-stabilized ditches
 - Unpaved county and private roads
 - Non-functioning legacy developments

Action Plan:

- Organize a committee
- Who:
 - Developers
 - Engineers
 - Municipal representatives
 - County representative

- Contractors
- Home builders
- ADEM
- How:
 - Organize semi-annual meeting for open communications between constituencies
 - Form developer organization to meet at least semi-annually to discuss experiences, challenges and strategies
- Roadblocks:
 - Time
 - Ownership

Mayors & Elected Officials

Attendees: Katherine Breeden, Jack Burrell, Tucker Dorsey, Dane Haygood, Scott Jackson, Nicole Jeter, Lee Turner, Ken Underwood

Strengths: What's right and should be preserved/strengthened?

- Tap into knowledge of developers
- Need: Regional retention/detention ponds
 - Stream line storm water management and regulations between municipalities
 - Make sure they work together
 - Know where problem areas exist and address biggest issues now
 - Loxley- water doesn't move out of retentions ponds
 - Analyze the entire system to make sure water moves through watershed at manageable rates
 - Metered release- so that not all water released at same time
 - Stop water higher in watershed and wait, clear out water fast downstream
 - Turn regional retention/detention pond into a real park- make it an amenity for the community
 - Everyone needs to communicate to make sure all on same page
 - Design works for everyone
 - Make sure drainage requirements fit the model
 - Make sure we have the data we need
 - In-stream structures to manage water flow
 - Public-Private partnerships to manage multiple ponds that function the same (need to hold large capacity)
 - Lake development

Action Plan:

- Promote Low Impact Development (LID)
 - Incentivize, require, educate
 - Educate on cost benefits
 - Many are simple/cheap and are easily implemented
 - Underground pipes for retention can increase land surface area for development
 - Start early with education
 - Engage stakeholder and incentive programs
 - Require percentage of techniques to get approved

- Implementation
 - Rain gardens-use techniques that work within subdivision codes
 - Make holding/retention ponds usable
- Retention ponds
 - Set up funds on front end of development to cover maintenance
 - Push back attributed to costs
 - Have to look at practicality of associate dues for homeowners
 - There are opportunities for funding to go in and retrofit and repair to set up maintenance funds that wouldn't burden homeowners or developers
 - Incremental funding
 - Concerns for developers
- Vertical drains from ditches
 - Drains water through sand into superficial water table
- Partnerships with landowners and County
 - Regulations that work for everyone
- New regulations that address detention pond maintenance
- Public-Private partnerships
- Country-wide, holistic storm water management
- Make a laundry list of issues that should be priority
- Regional retention or detention pond with large capacity-use as park/amenity
- Multiple, connected ponds with same function as above
- Public-Private lake development
- In-stream structures to manage flow
- Vertical drains within ditches
- Roadblocks:
 - Regulations make it difficult to dig lakes in wetlands
 - Excavate in uplands instead
 - Need to show public benefits to USACE
 - USACE not supportive of lake development in wetlands
 - Could use uplands
 - Point out public benefits to USACE (watershed management)
 - Make the lake a public amenity and not just for private landowners (design and structure it right)
 - Location of lake where there's sufficient land and where it provides the greatest watershed benefits (make a cooperative with in County)
- Enforcement:
 - Retention/detention ponds neglected
 - Who follows up after implementation?
 - Need someone to check 10 years later
 - Encourage techniques that can last
 - Documented obligation to maintenance
- Problem:
 - Looking at symptoms instead of problems
 - Upstream impacts- need comprehensive plans and techniques

City & County Staff

Attendees: Brandon Allen, Kim Burmeister, Ashley Campbell, Jennifer Fidler, Leslie Gahagan, Vince Jackson, Joey Nunnally, Seth Peterson, Jonathon Smith

Strengths: What's right and should be preserved/strengthened?

- Strict limitations on effluent discharges
- Recreational opportunities, public access, and protection of environmental resources
- Preservation of large parcels for corridors
- MS4 action within watershed
- Regional detention areas (restore hydrology)
- Fairhope requires drainage studies (critical area)
- Water quality for seafood industry
- Active caring community in watershed
- Watershed studies and available data
- MBNEP funding
- County support and data for cities (GIS)
- Weeks Bay NEER (education and outreach)
- Partial County zoning (County regulations need strengthening)

Weakness & Threats: What's not right? What negative trends do you see?

- Development pressures- erosion issues, water quality threats, pesticide usage, lack of BMP, small lot developments, suburban sprawl, flood prone lots
- Lack of zoning in critical areas
- Farmland incentives and farmer outreach
- Not enough public access
- Smaller watershed studies (drainage, impervious)
- Continual flooding issues
- Water quality (seafood consumption)
- Educate builders/developers/engineers on flood potential lands (based on history not just FEMA)
- Maintenance of storm water facilities
- Comprehensive Watershed Regulation (currently inconsistent)
- Lack of enforcement of existing regulations
- Funding of watershed study groups (MBNEP)
- Lack of FEMA mapping (need local updates)
- Preservation of land for regional storm water facilities
- Funding for issues with drainage
- County master plan

Opportunities: Look at your top 3 lists- what could be done to address them?

- Partnerships and funding for HOA's for storm water facilities maintenance
- Consistent watershed regulations across jurisdictional boundaries-MOA
- County authority for zoning
- County/Municipal coordination for zoning and regulations
- Research with universities for studies
- County task force for environmental critical area evaluation

- Develop management plans for localized watersheds that City/County can adopt with recommended practices
- Ensure deeds have low lying area defined or soils
- Comprehensive Plan- storm water watershed plan
- Enforcement of regulations
- Find funding

Action Plan:

- Initiative:
 - Consistent comprehensive watershed based storm water management plan
- Who:
 - City/County staff and elected officials
 - Thompson Engineering and Partners
 - State/Federal agencies involved
 - Business/Developer community
 - Landowners
- Steps:
 - Make part of plan developed
 - Political Commitment
 - Funding
 - City/County/Stakeholder Coordination
 - Adoption of plan and commitment
- Roadblocks:
 - Costs (implementation of plan)
 - Buy in from stakeholders
 - Change in political administration
- What help do you need from the Thompson team?
 - Draft resolutions for City/County support and participation in plan
 - Public education and outreach for plan through “Create a Clean Water Future” efforts

Engineers

Attendees: Emery Baya, Brett Gaar, Jake Gibbs, Courtney Harkness, Trey Jinright, Phil McIntosh, Kathryn Parker, Richard Peterson, Lee Walters

Strengths: What’s right and should be preserved/strengthened?

- Largely undeveloped
- Outstanding water quality
- Weeks Bay reserve
- Quality of life/recreational values/aesthetics
- Engaged citizens

Weaknesses and Threats: What’s not right? What negative trends do you see?

- Uneducated engineering community
- Uneducated public – lack of understanding of impacts
- Future development – more impervious areas, more point source discharge

- Inconsistent regulations
- Heavy sediment loading during heavy rains
- Bacteria in Fish River (ADEM)
- Loss of Habitat
- Political push-back – against regulations that hinder development
- Lack of enforcement/oversight
- Lack of incentives, regulations act as a disincentive
- No New Taxes – public doesn't want to spend the money/pay to fix

Opportunities: Look at your top 3 lists- what could be done to address them?

- Watershed Storm Water Management Authority/Entity
- Preserve/Create upland wetlands
- Educating Approving/Regulatory Agencies and Authorities
- Educating Engineering Community
- Educating Public/User
- Regional Restorations – retention, treatment, etc.
- Money is coming/available

Action Plan:

- Education
- What:
 - Education engineering communities, approving authorities, and public
- Who:
 - Professionals, engineering communities, organizations, universities/colleges
- How:
 - Reach out to non-profit organizations, engage universities, engage engineering communities
- Roadblocks
 - Incentives to attend
 - Costs of solutions, relative to existing regulations/requirements

Environmental Organization Leaders

Attendees: John Borom, Mary Kate Brown, Casi Callaway, Tom Damson, Walter Ernest, Yael Girard, Gary Gover, Neil Johnston, Cade Kistler, Nick Lees, Christian Miller, Shannon Oldenburg, John Peterson, Tony Prichett, Yael

Strengths: What's right and should be preserved/strengthened?

- Natural flowing habitats and rivers
- Appreciation of natural environment and its preservation with money
- National Estuarine Research Facility with management plan and partners
- Established farming
- Available Model Tools
- Money

- Public Access to facilities
- Researchers work with landowners/residents
- Preserve land trust (existing)
- Wealthy and active community committed to protection and preservation of land and watershed
- OALU Magnolia River
- ONRW Weeks Bay
- Local governments- MPO
- Little industries
- Unique features-environments (such as carnivores plants)

Weakness & Threats: What's not right? What negative trends do you see?

- Lack of land use control with resistance
- Land use change to lack of and resistance to effective land management
- Pollution pressure and communitive impacts of land use on Weeks Bay estuary capacity and
- Disparate interest
- Organization/mobilization of interests
- Lack of communication
- Lack of public awareness
- Cost of planning and need for commitment
- Lack of understanding and appreciation
- Fish River is 303D
- Agricultural impacts
- Urbanization

Opportunities: Look at your top 3 lists- what could be done to address them?

- Sustaining structure
- Buy land for preservation to protect watershed
- Land protection/conservancy
- Restoration partnerships
- Continues education and awareness
- Public participation
- Public education and awareness
- Weeks Bay Management plan structure to bring stakeholders together
- Publicity
- Public information
- Ecotourism
- Jobs

Action Plan:

- What:
 - Land acquisition
 - Use land for restoration and/or education
- Who:
 - Landowners and municipalities
 - Willing sellers and advocacy groups and citizens

- How:
 - Determine why you're buying the land
 - Determine locations/priorities for acquisition
 - Environment/other permitting challenges
 - Determine restoration opportunities
 - Sustainable management plan
 - Establish education opportunities
 - Create public access
- Roadblocks:
 - Willing seller versus available funds
 - Money for third party oversight and management
- What help do you need from the Thompson Team?
 - GIS assistance/parcel I.D.
 - Current soil analysis-need to fit the need to the land
 - Is there a restoration need?
 - Where are high impacted areas that need benefits?
 - I.D. regions/areas in need of protection
 - I.D. the land value

Environmental Science

Attendees: Scott Brown, Tim Connole, Greg Dunn, Camilla English, Shannon McGlynn, Christian Miller, Mike Shelton, Lynn Sisk, Tim Thibaut, Rick Wallace, Tad Zebryk

Strengths: What's right and should be preserved/strengthened?

- Cities/County storm water management
- Living shoreline concept
- Public access
- Estuary/NERR
- TMCL for pathogens
- Lots of existing information
- Continued monitoring
- ADPH regulations
- Protected lands/easements
- Available/potential funding

Weakness & Threats: What's not right? What negative trends do you see?

- Development
- Population growth
- Traditional construction practices (clearcutting/excavation)
- Continued wetland loss
- Inadequate regulatory oversight and too few personnel
- Lack of public awareness
- Riparian buffer loss
- Loss of shoreline/shallow water due to armoring/fill
- Sedimentation
- Erodible soils, high rainfall

Opportunities: Look at your top 3 lists- what could be done to address them?

- Training/professional development
- Citizen education
- Incentive processes
- Public outreach
- Public/private partnerships to leverage funding
- Protect more environmentally sensitive lands
- Low Impact Development
- Need for fine-scale LULC
- Need for watershed health data
- Synthesis of data sources
- More study on storm water management
- Information gap analysis

Action Plan:

- Reducing pathogens from septic tanks
- Who:
 - ADEM
 - ADPH
 - Universities
 - Private engineers
 - Citizens
 - Installers
- How:
 - Funding; administer funds through an agency; contract engineers
 - Complete septic tank mapping in Weeks Bay watershed
 - GIS; overlay sensitive habitats, soils, wetlands, flood zones
 - Identify priority areas
 - Reach out to homeowners in priority areas
 - Upgrade system/fix others through a cost share program
 - Maintenance agreements and post-work monitoring
 - Continue public outreach
- Roadblocks:
 - Public cooperation
 - Volume of data needing analysis
 - Burden of continues maintenance
- What help do you need from the Thompson team?
 - Expertise
 - Technology/GIS mapping
 - People power
 - Ties to construction/installers

Homeowners

Attendees: John Carlton, Sam Covert, Shawn Ericson, Michael Eubanks, Rick Frederick, Aubrey Fuller, Clay Hare, Steve Heath, Teddy King, Amy Newbold, Dick Sute

Strengths: What's right and should be preserved/strengthened?

- Interest/concern of citizens
- Special designation- ONRW, OAW
- Increased Fish and Wildlife (Bald Eagle, etc.)
- NERR
- Undeveloped area
- Baldwin County flood model
- Requirement for retention/detention

Weakness & Threats: What's not right? What negative trends do you see?

- Lack of zoning
- Shoreline hardening (impervious surface)
- Increased flooding
- Sewer and polluted runoff/discharges
- Lack of regulatory enforcement (COE, ADEM)
- Lack of effective BMP's
- Development of headwaters
- NERR
- Decline in water quality-Fisheries
- Sedimentation
- Mud from rain event flooding
- Sizing of culverts is increasing flooding
- Unintended consequences of development and road "improvement" drainage
- Lack of consistency in requirements
- Lack of holistic view

Opportunities: Look at your top 3 lists- what could be done to address them?

- Review approached of other area that have solved similar problems
- More forward thinking/collaboration
- Incentives for LID
- Coordination with cities and county
- Education-stewardship ("Think-Downstream")
- Share good ideas and BMP's
- Retrofit existing storm water management structures to be more effective
- Use road x-drains for storm water management
- Revisit Baldwin County flood management plan for Fish River (more "environmentally friendly")
- Improve retention/detention requirements and maintenance
- Purchase/preserve flood plain for habitat and storm water management

Action Plan:

- More holistic storm water management in watershed

- What:
 - Revive discussions on Baldwin County flood management tool and plan
- Who:
 - County
 - Weeks Bay Foundation
 - WBNERR
 - Homeowners
 - ALDOT and Baldwin County Highway
 - FEMA
 - Regulators (ADEM)
 - Environmental Organizations (NGO)
 - Developers
 - Farmers
 - Engineers
 - Business
- How:
 - Identify facilitator
 - Time frame
 - Education plan
- Roadblocks:
 - Unwillingness of all stakeholders to participate in reaching a holistic solution
 - Money
 - Cost of long term maintenance
- What help do you need from the Thomson team?
 - Facilitate process
 - Share information and data
 - Identify funding opportunities

Businesses

Attendees: Jacob Cunningham, Heiko Enfield, Tom Hutchings, Gerry McManus, Rick Miller

Strengths: What's right and should be preserved/strengthened?

- People care/residence treasure it
- Good access (people use it)
- Education-Weeks Bay Reserve
- LID requirements (NCW Development)

Weakness & Threats: What's not right? What negative trends do you see?

- Lack of awareness (peoples impact on entire watershed)
- Development/growth
- Lack of cold weather
- Ineffective zoning/planning-County
- Lack of political will

Opportunities: Look at your top 3 lists- What could be done to address them?

- Develop regional storm runoff system
- Expansion of centralized waste water treatment
- Outside geo-technical firms to introduce BMP's
- Remote monitoring system for septic tanks

Action Plan:

- Regional storm water grid system
- Develop a watershed wide system to ensure long term storm water management
- Educate public on benefits of developing a storm water system- lifetime benefits
- Who:
 - Elected officials
 - Planners
 - Homeowners
 - Developers
 - Environmentalist
 - Utility companies
- How:
 - Educate public on risk if not done
 - Develop political will and support
 - Design the system
 - Construct the system
 - Design and implement expansion procedures and regulations
- Roadblocks
 - Political will – rural versus urban
 - Archaic engineering standards
- What help do you need from the Thompson team?
 - Educate, design, and implement