

Weeks Bay Stakeholder Work Group

Baldwin County Central Annex 3rd Floor CR

8:30 – 10:00 am March 16, 2016

AGENDA

1. Summary of learnings from the March 2nd Workshop
2. Review group action plans
 - a. Agriculture/Forestry Group
 - b. Developers
 - c. Mayors & Elected Officials
 - d. City & County Staff
 - e. Engineers
 - f. Environmental Organization Leaders
 - g. Environmental Science
 - h. Homeowners
3. Next steps
 - a. Future Stakeholder Work Group meeting schedule
 - b. Subgroup meeting schedules re action plans

MEMORANDUM
Weeks Bay Watershed Management Plan

TO: File
FROM: Mike Eubanks
DATE: March 16, 2016
SUBJECT: Stakeholders Working Group Meeting #3
DISTRIBUTION: MBNEP, BCSWCD, Thompson Team, Stakeholders Working Group

1. The meeting was conducted on March 16, 2016, at the Baldwin County Central Annex (on Highway 59) 3rd Floor Conference Room between 8:30 and 10:00 AM. Copies of the agenda and attendees present are attached.
2. Bob Higgins kicked off the meeting with the opening remarks. He thanked everyone for being present at this meeting and for their influence to encouraging the good attendance at the Focus Group Workshop on March 2nd. Bob gave a brief summary of the Weeks Bay Watershed Stakeholders Workshop, as described in the workshop top issues, top causes, and top action plans developed by the nine constituent focus groups, and the transcribed summaries from each group's poster notes.
3. Following his workshop summary Bob asked SWG members from each constituency group to review if the workshop notes adequately and accurately captured the focus group breakout discussions (no members of the Developers, Businesses, or Engineers groups were present at today's meeting).
 - a. Joey Koptis stated that the notes provided a good summary of the Agriculture/Forestry discussion. He discussed several specific action items that the agriculture and forestry community can pursue as part of this watershed plan development, such as precision agricultural applications, livestock in streams/wetlands, funding opportunities. Dick Sute questioned whether cattle issues were a problem in the watershed and mentioned that issues related to increased runoff from sod farms needs to be addressed. Joey added that Art Dyas, consulting forester, referenced the "Horizon 2025" report (particularly Chapter 4) prepared by Baldwin County several years ago as a good document to guide planning and development in this area, although the study has been set aside by the current county commission.
 - b. Jennifer Fidler discussed the key action item of the City/County Staff group – development of a consistent comprehensive watershed-based storm water management plan. She noted the need for better coordination between various municipalities and the county regarding regulations and zoning. She added that assessment to the "microwatershed" level may be needed to better address storm water problems. Miriam Boutwell added that a venue is needed for cities and the county to meet/discuss flooding and storm water management, particularly in light of upcoming revised FEMA flood insurance mapping that will show much expanded flood zones, hence higher flood insurance rates. She also mentioned the new LID Handbook published by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System/Auburn University/ADEM and how Foley is encouraging

- LID practices on a voluntary basis now, with hopes of future regulations to require LID practices.
- c. Ken Underwood summarized the Mayors and Elected Officials discussion. He reiterated the need for more dialogue between municipalities and the county regarding issues such as storm water management and planning and zoning regulations, while recognizing that “one size does not fit all” for the various municipalities that have differing topography, soils, populations, level of development, etc.
 - d. Sam Covert and Dick Sute addressed the Homeowners discussion. The group identified more holistic storm water management in the watershed, particularly as it relates to increased flooding experienced in recent years. Sam stressed the need for involvement of all stakeholders in moving forward with the more holistic storm water management topic.
 - e. Rick Wallace summarized the Environmental Organization discussion. Land acquisition was a high priority for this group and Rick discussed the complicated logistics and decision-making process for organizations like Weeks Bay Foundation to identify high priority preservation lands that might be available from willing sellers at a reasonable price (less than assessed value). Others mentioned acquisition other than fee simple title should be explored such as conservation easements and purchase of development rights. Also it is important to identify some key areas of degraded habitat within the watershed that could be restored with anticipated various funding options.
 - f. Tim Thibaut and Camilla English summarized the Environmental Science discussion. That group identified reducing bacterial pathogens introduced into the watershed from failing septic tanks, since that source was identified in the ADEM TMDL report for Fish River. A science-based approach could be taken to identify potential failing septic tank hot spots within the watershed (e.g., GIS mapping), leverage funding to cost share solutions for homeowners with failing septic systems, and establishment of maintenance agreements and post-work monitoring. Tim also mentioned that as part of the watershed management plan development, more detailed mapping of wetlands and riparian corridors, including vulnerability and areas for potential restoration/acquisition (wetland quantity and quality). Doug Heatwole mentioned the availability of the Resource Investment Optimization System (RIOS) model that has been developed by The Nature Conservancy to identify vulnerable lands for acquisition.
4. Bob Higgins discussed setting up a meeting with mayors and elected officials regarding an appropriate path forward for discussion of regional detention ponds as proposed by the Baldwin County modeling study by Hydro Engineering Solutions in 2011. This approach would allow the flooding concerns of many watershed residents to proceed in parallel with the science-based assessment of other watershed issues related to water quality.
 5. Mike Eubanks reported that the Thompson Team is evaluating the data and reports that have been collected to date and will identify data gaps and scheduling of a watershed site inspection in the next few months. He will also check with Dr. Latif Kalin who is preparing SWAT models for the Fish and Magnolia River watersheds and determine when a presentation to the SWG would be appropriate.
 6. Jennifer Fidler mentioned that she would like to see opportunity for more open public involvement as the study moves forward. Bob discussed the opportunities for many meeting opportunities for local organization or community meetings, as well as publication of information that is being posted on the MBNEP website, and linking with other municipal, county, agency and organization websites, with an opportunity for the public to submit

comments and suggestions. Rick Wallace also offered the Foundation website and newsletter as tools to assist in public outreach and involvement.

7. The next meeting of the SWG is scheduled for **May 18, 2016** in the Baldwin County Central Annex, on Highway 59, 3rd Floor Conference Room, from 8:30 to 10:00 AM. The frequency of meetings after that will probably be once every two months on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

Prepared by
Courtney Harkness and Mike Eubanks

Attachments:

- a. Meeting Agenda
- b. List of Attendees



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Weeks Bay Watershed Management Plan, Stakeholders Working Group

Meeting, March 16, 2016, List of Attendees

1. Larry Morris, Baldwin County Soil and Water Conservation District
2. Ronnie Northcutt, Baldwin County Soil and Water Conservation District
3. Joey Koptis, USDA-NRCS, District Conservationist
4. Joel Sirmon, Agriculture
5. Sam Covert, Homeowner Interest, Fish River
6. Joey Nunnally, Baldwin County Highway Department
7. Jennifer Fidler, Fairhope Department of Public Works
8. Brandon Allen, Loxley Public Utilities Department
9. Dick Sute, Homeowner Interest, Fish River
10. Teddy King, Homeowner Interest, Magnolia River
11. Camilla English, Baldwin County Health Department
12. Rick Wallace, Weeks Bay Foundation
13. Steve Heath, Homeowner Interest, Fish River
14. Shannon McGlynn, Alabama Department of Environmental Management
15. Randy Shaneyfelt, Alabama Department of Environmental Management
16. Miriam Boutwell, Foley Community Development Director
17. Ken Underwood, Mayor of Magnolia Springs, Homeowner, Magnolia River
18. Mike Eubanks, Thompson Engineering
19. Steve O'Hearn, Thompson Engineering
20. John Carlton, Thompson Engineering
21. Bob Higgins, Higgins and Associates
22. Doug Heatwole, Ecology and Environment
23. Nicole Jeter, Ecology and Environment
24. Tim Thibaut, Vittor and Associates