

**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program**  
**Outreach Strategy**  
**2019-2023**



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## Preface

In 1972, the Clean Water Act was created to restore and maintain the chemical and biological integrity of the nation's waters, that support the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, wildlife, and recreation in and on the water.

In 1987, the National Estuary Program (NEP) was created by the U.S. Congress via amendments to this act to identify, restore, and protect the water quality and resources of estuaries, designated by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator as "Estuaries of National Significance," and associated watersheds. NEPs work to implement estuarine ecosystem-based management by characterizing the priority problems in their estuaries and surrounding watersheds, developing Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (CCMPs) that list and describe actions to address those problems, and identifying partners, including lead entities, to implement the actions.

The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) was recognized as a program in 1995 at the request of then-Governor Fob James. It is one of 28 federally authorized National Estuary Programs administered and funded by the EPA. The purpose of the MBNEP is to bring together an engaged and diverse community committed to developing consensus on what our ecosystem priorities are, how to achieve them, and how to facilitate/promote their implementation. This is accomplished through the creation and support of a Management Conference, comprising stakeholder committees, who develop and implement the strategies contained within a CCMP. The MBNEP serves as a catalyst for activities of the Management Conference, helping build community-based organizational capacity for sound resource management and leveraging commitment and investment ensuring the sustainability of Alabama's estuaries and coast.

## Overview, Purpose, Goals and Objectives

The mission of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) is to promote the wise stewardship of the water quality and living resources of Alabama's estuaries and coasts. The **purpose** of the MBNEP is to engage the diverse communities of Alabama's two coastal counties, as well as key stakeholders, in developing consensus on how to integrate environmental protection into community and economic development to improve the management of Alabama's natural resources.

The overarching **goal** of this outreach plan is to increase awareness of the MBNEP throughout the Mobile Bay community. This goal will be accomplished by the following **objectives**:

- Defining target areas
- MBNEP branding message
- Developing outreach materials
- Identifying outreach/speaking engagement opportunities
- Engaging media outlets
- Tracking progress and success

Many efforts have been made to increase awareness of the MBNEP throughout Mobile and Baldwin counties. Through an internal exercise, what is perceived to be the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the MBNEP is listed below.

### Strengths

- Contacts and networking
- Knowledge of watersheds
- Respect within the community
- Ability to execute
- Neutral partner
- Collaborators
- Positive community engagement

### Weaknesses

- Lack of weekend commitment
- Lack of promotion of good work
- Lack of MBNEP speaking engagements
- Lack of media/social media presence
- Lack of clear messaging

## Opportunities

- Various public speaking engagements and event opportunities
- Consistent field tours
- Semi-permanent campaign advertisement
- USA resources
- Creation of a “green culture”
- Utilization of local media
- Expansion of existing campaigns
- Engaging underserved communities

## Threats

- Community push-back
- Community doesn't value natural resources
- Communities resistant to change
- Follow through of plans
- MBNEP is not a household name

From Create A Clean Water Future to Trash Blows, many campaigns have been implemented to increase the awareness of the MBNEP and the importance of protecting our natural resources. Watershed communities throughout Mobile and Baldwin counties have learned about the MBNEP through various outreach efforts.

All future outreach efforts of this plan will continue to capitalize on the knowledge of the residents and community members who live, work, and play within the two coastal counties, building on what we have learned to educate citizens and create awareness of the MBNEP and its success.

## Guiding Principles

Community outreach activities are guided by the following principles:

- ***Community engagement will build on what has been learned*** and provide citizens with the information they need to be educated and engaged in a meaningful way.
- ***Community engagement will be responsive, transparent, and forward-thinking*** and will recognize and communicate the concerns, ideas, and interests of all citizens.
- ***Community engagement will be collaborative*** providing citizens with a comprehensive understanding of community challenges and status.

## Outreach Strategy Goals

**Learn:** Educate citizens to increase public awareness of the MBNEP and solicit input about the area.

**Listen:** Listen to citizens to understand the desires and concerns of the community.

**Share:** Share community events, projects, and plans with citizens to generate excitement and engagement.

**Shape:** Shape the citizens perception of the MBNEP through success stories and local media presence.

**Love:** Celebrate success of outreach efforts.

Recognizing the importance of citizen engagement in shaping the community's perception of the MBNEP, the outreach strategy will be designed around this framework to provide a backbone for continued community engagement.

## MBNEP Community Engagement Framework

	Learn	Listen	Share	Shape
<b>Community Engagement Phase</b>	Evaluate current community perception, past outreach efforts, participation, awareness, and identify community champions.	Learn about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to areas and potential projects.	Promote community events, projects, and plans.	Follow-up with community's post events, projects and plans.
<b>What do we need?</b>	Identify gaps and areas of interest for speaking engagements, events, and tours.	Schedule speaking engagements, events, and tours in targeted areas.	Solicit community participation and validation.	Share success stories.
<b>Outreach Tools</b>	Brochures CWF Information Card Case Statements Videos Presentations Photos Website Maps Information Packet Branding Message	Community assessments Social Media Website Media Presentation Videos Photos Maps Branding Message	Presentation Media Social Media Maps Designs Information Packets Branding Message	FAQ Social Media Media Videos Articles Photos Talking-Points Branding Message
<b>Outreach Events</b>	Speaking engagements, other	Events, tours, speaking engagements, media presence	Events, tours, speaking engagements, media presence	Events, tours, speaking engagements, media presence
<b>What are we communicating?</b>	Educating citizens about who we are and what we do	The importance of citizen engagement and participation	How citizens can be involved and why it's important	Success stories and what to expect in the future

# Community Engagement Framework Objectives and Actions

## **Learn**

### **Goal 1: Identifying gaps and messaging**

#### ***Objective 1: Conduct gap analysis and define target areas***

Define target areas by conducting a gap analysis of past outreach efforts by means of speaking engagements, presentations, sponsorships, events, and meeting attendance. (Appendix I)

*Actions:*

1. Compile a list of past speaking engagements and presentations.
2. Analyze current list and identify gaps and areas of interest.
3. Set target areas and audiences in coordination with watershed management planning.

#### ***Objective 2: Implementation of consistent messaging***

Develop standard operating procedure for messaging that disseminates who we are and what we do to increase and maintain recognition, credibility, and support within the community and to build capacity. (Appendix II)

*Actions:*

1. Develop standard operating procedure for MBNEP's branded messaging to be used on all outreach materials.

#### ***Objective 3: Design of outreach materials***

Design outreach materials that can be used in a variety of communication efforts.

*Actions:*

1. Develop outreach materials:
  - a. Brochure(s)
  - b. Case Statements
  - c. Videos
  - d. Presentations
  - e. Photos
  - f. Website
  - g. Maps
  - h. Information Packet

## **Listen**

### **Goal 2 : Focus outreach efforts in areas where planning or projects will be occurring**

#### ***Objective 1: Schedule outreach and speaking opportunities***

Identify potential outreach and speaking engagement opportunities within the defined target areas in coordination with watershed management planning phases (planning, in progress, complete). (Appendix III)

*Actions:*

1. Contact local grassroots groups, community action groups, MBNEP partners, municipalities, etc. to schedule speaking engagements.
2. Develop timeline of identified speaking engagements.
3. Develop timeline of identified events.



## **Share**

### **Goal 3: Engaging citizens**

#### ***Objective 1: Promotion of MBNEP activities***

Increase awareness of the MBNEP by engaging citizens and media outlets.

##### *Actions:*

1. Submit press releases, and articles for feature stories to key media outlets (TV, radio, web, print).
2. Develop distribution list for Current Connection Newsletter.
3. Utilize social media platforms to highlight projects and partners.
4. Host community meetings to update citizens on upcoming projects or progress.
5. Utilize management conference members for dissemination of information.
6. Share images of projects through newsletter and/or social media.
7. Develop community-based newsletter for project updates.

## **Shape**

### **Goal 4: Tracking progress**

#### ***Objective 1: Develop tracking mechanism for presentations, events, tours, etc.***

Track all speaking engagements, events, tours, and participation in presentation and events log that can be used to track progress and success.

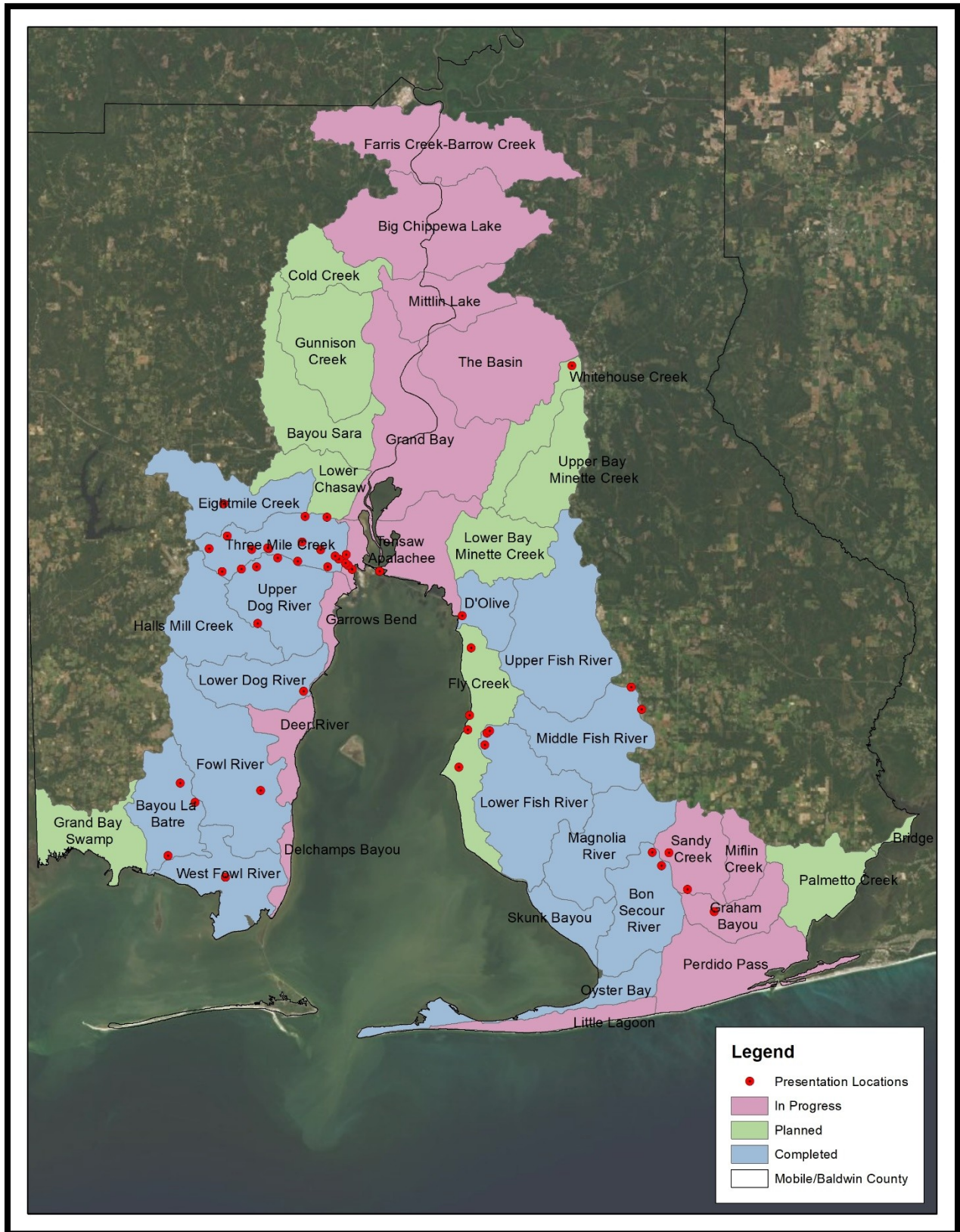
##### *Actions:*

1. Develop a presentations and events log that will catalog all speaking engagements, events, and tours to tell the success story of the MBNEP outreach efforts at year end.

## Past Speaking Engagements

Group	Meeting Location
Alabama League of Municipalities	Montgomery
Bay Minette Area Chamber of Commerce	Bay Minette
Bishop State Community College Adult Education Program	Mobile
City of Bayou La Batre	Bayou La Batre
Central Baldwin Business Chamber	Robertsdale
Crichton Optimist Club	Mobile
Daphne/Spanish Fort Kiwanis Club	Daphne
Daphne/Spanish Fort Rotary Club	Daphne
Dog River Clearwater Revival	Mobile
Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce	Fairhope
Fairhope Chamber of Commerce	Fairhope
Fairhope Kiwanis Club	Fairhope
Fairhope Sunset Rotary Club	Fairhope
Foley Optimist Club	Foley
Fowl River Area Civic Association	Theodore
Green Coast Council	Spanish Fort
Leadership Baldwin County	Fairhope
Manufacture Alabama Environmental Meeting	Montgomery
Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce	Mobile
Mobile Area Water & Sewer System	Mobile
Mobile Bay Green Drinks	Fairhope
Mobile Chamber Senior Leadership	Mobile
Mobile Lions Club	Mobile
Mobile Municipalities Association	Montgomery
North Baldwin County Business Chamber	Bay Minette
Point Clear Rotary Club	Fairhope
Robertsdale Chamber of Commerce	Robertsdale
Robertsdale Rotary Club	Robertsdale
Rotary Club of Mobile	Mobile
South AL Regional Planning Commission	Mobile
Three Mile Creek Watershed Planning	Mobile, Prichard
Wolf Bay Watershed Watch Annual Meeting	Foley

# Map of Past Speaking Engagements



## Appendix I

Based on the results of a gap analysis using a mapping exercise in coordination with upcoming watershed management **planning**, the target areas for 2019-2023 are:

- Little Lagoon/Perdido Pass
- Garrows Bend
- Delchamps Bayou/Deer River
- Fly Creek
- Mobile Tensaw Delta

The focus for these areas will be educating citizens on what is a watershed management plan, what to expect, and how they can be involved, and why it is important.

Watershed Management Plans **in progress**:

- Wolf Bay (Sandy, Mifflin Creek, Graham Bayou)

The focus for this area will be updating citizens on watershed management plan progress and what to expect upon final completion.

Watershed Management Plans **complete**:

- Bayou La Batre
- Bon Secour (Bon Secour, Magnolia River, Oyster Bay)
- D'Olive
- Dog River (Upper, Lower Dog River, Halls Mill Creek)
- Fowl River
- Three Mile Creek
- Weeks Bay (Upper, Middle, Lower Fish River)
- West Fowl River

The focus for these areas will be updating citizens on project implementation.

## Appendix II

MBNEP's current branded messages are:

- Clean Water Future
- Don't Be Trashy
- Trash Blows

The following communications standard operating procedure was developed to ensure messaging is consistent through-out all forms of communication.

1. MBNEP and Create A Clean Water Future logo is to be placed on all forms of communication and outreach materials (i.e. brochures, presentations, etc.).
2. MBNEP tagline, *Promoting the Wise Stewardship of Alabama's Estuaries and Coast*, should be included on all forms of communications and appropriate outreach materials.
3. The MBNEP mission should be included on all appropriate communications (i.e. press releases, formal letters/emails, presentations, etc.).

## Appendix III

### Potential Speaking Engagements & Tours

Watershed	Topic	Month (T-tour, P-presentation)											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Garrows Bend	Who is the MBNEP? What is a WMP?				P			P			P		
Delchamps Bayou/Deer River	Who is the MBNEP? What is a WMP?				P			P			P		
Little Lagoon/Perdido Pass	Who is the MBNEP? What is a WMP?					T				P			
Fly Creek	Who is the MBNEP? What is a WMP?						P		T			P	
Tensaw Delta	Who is the MBNEP? What is a WMP?						P		T			P	
West Fowl River	Project Status					P				P			
Wolf Bay	WMP Progress to date	P					T			P			
Bayou La Batre	Project Status						P				T		
Fowl River	Project Status				P				T			P	
Dog River	Project Status								T			P	
Three Mile Creek	Project Status		P	T			T		P			P	
D'Olive Creek	Project Status							T					
Weeks Bay	Project Status						T			P			
Bon Secour	Project Status							T				P	

## Timeline of Events

Event Name	Materials	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Sustainability Summit	Sponsor	x											
MLK Day of Service	Clean up materials		x										
I Heart Estuaries	Social media campaign		x										
Water Rally	Booth/tour			x									
World Water Day	Social media campaign			x									
Discovery Day	Booth/SWAG				x								
Battleship Clean Up	Clean up materials				x								
Earth Day	Social media campaign/SWAG				x								
Coastal Kids Quiz	Sponsor/volunteer				x								
Cocktails with the Critters	Sponsor/auction item					x							
Creek Fest	Sponsor/booth/SWAG					x							
ADSFR	Booth/SWAG/social media campaign							x					
Coastal Clean Up	Sponsor/volunteer/social media campaign									x			
Estuaries Week	Social media campaign									x			
Stan Mahoney Fishing	Sponsor										x		
Arts Festival	Sponsor										x		
Reverse Trade Show	Booth/SWAG										x		