



**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Community Action Committee
Tuesday, July 13, 2021
Virtual Meeting - Platform: Google Meets
10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Review and Approval of Minutes
3. Presenters
 - a. **Madison Blanchard**, MBNEP
 - The Importance of Community Involvement throughout Three Mile Creek Watershed Planning and Restoration
 - Q&A
4. Announcements/Updates
5. Adjourn



Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Community Action Committee
July 13, 2021, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Google Meet Virtual Meeting



Minutes

Attendance:

Mimi Fearn, Dog River ClearWater Revival
Leslie Gahagan, Wolf Bay Watershed Watch
Vaughn Millner, Alabama Sierra Club
Mike Shelton, Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Ron Phelps, Little Lagoon Preservation Society
Ted Henken, Fowl River Area Civic Association
Sam St. John, Fowl River Area Civic Association
Jenni Zimlich, Fowl River Area Civic Association

MBNEP Staff:

Madison Blanchard
Kelley Barfoot

Meeting Recap:

- Citizen involvement in the watershed planning process allows community ideas to be brought to life, ensures community expectations are met, and gives citizens the opportunity to take ownership of their watershed.
- MBNEP is looking to share monitoring stories and other interesting findings related to monitoring via social media. Submissions can be made to mblanchard@mobilebaynep.com

1. Welcome and Introductions

Madison Blanchard opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and requesting each participant to sign-in through the chat box on the Google Meet platform. She reviewed the agenda for the meeting and introduced the co-chairs.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes

Ms. Blanchard requested a motion to approve the minutes from the CAC's virtual meeting on April 13, 2021. Ted Henken made a motion to approve and Mimi Fearn second.

3. Presenter, Madison Blanchard

Ms. Blanchard gave a presentation on the importance of community involvement throughout the Three Mile Creek (TMC) Watershed Planning and Restoration Process- a great topic for the CAC as many members live in watersheds that currently have watershed management plans (WMP) under development.

Anyone who lives, works, or plays within the watershed has a stake in the watershed planning process. While the watershed planning team provides professional input and guidance, community members provide local insight related to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within the watershed. Because no one knows the watershed better than those who live there, the importance

of community engagement within watershed planning cannot be overstated.

As the Watershed Planning Team begins documenting the current condition of the watershed, MBNEP begins engaging the community through public meetings, neighborhood meetings, and nature tours to inform them of the watershed planning effort and document their wants, expectations, and concerns. Because watersheds can contain mixed demographics, the outcomes from engaging different communities within the same watershed are often contrasting. These efforts are continued across the watershed until the plan is complete to ensure community expectations are met. Ms. Blanchard provided a list of community suggested projects published within the Three Mile Creek WMP; of the seven projects listed, six have begun being implemented including: creation of the Three Mile Creek Greenway Trail; restoration of Langan Park; implementation of LID infrastructure; creation of a new kayak launch; creation of the 3Mile Creek Partnership, and implementation of in-stream trash collection devices.

By being involved in the watershed planning process, citizens can have their concerns and expectations heard, have their ideas brought to life, learn about their natural environment and what it has to offer, learn how ongoing projects are improving the watershed, and take ownership of their watershed.

4. Discussion

Mr. Henken requested to discuss the development of an E.Coli reporting protocol 1-pager for volunteer monitors in the Fowl River area due to consistent high E.Coli levels. Mr. Shelton suggested making a complaint through ADEM's website and provided the link to the ADEM Complaint Form (<http://app.adem.alabama.gov/complaints/submission.aspx>). While the ADEM Complaint Form is the correct platform to submit a water quality complaint for Fowl River monitors, Ms. Blanchard will develop a E.Coli reporting protocol 1-pager to make the reporting process easier for volunteers. FRACA members suggested that the Fowl River WMP be updated and are interested to know who is responsible for pushing WMPs forward once MBNEP has stepped away. Currently, there are no plans to update the Fowl River WMP. Once a WMP is complete, grassroots organizations should step up, or a Watershed Implementation Task Force should be created, to ensure implementation of the plan. With some grassroots groups being limited in capacity and resources, MBNEP can provide assistance in limited capacity.

5. Announcements and Updates

The next Community Action Committee Meeting will be conducted virtually using Google Meets on October 12, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. The topic for the next meeting will be the Restoration of Mon Louis Island with a focus on outcomes and monitoring.

Ms. Blanchard reminded Monitoring Coordinators to check if volunteers need to be recertified and to schedule a recertification session through AWW to keep all volunteers up to date on monitoring protocols. FRACAs recertification session will be held in October.

MBNEP is looking to share monitoring stories and other interesting findings related to monitoring via social media. The goal of this effort is to communicate volunteer and other environmental monitoring to the public. Monitoring stories or findings can be related to restoration, water quality, litter, habitat, shorelines, etc. Monitoring story submissions can be submitted to mblanchard@mobilebaynep.com

Watershed Planning status update-

- The Western Shore WMP will be available for public comment in upcoming weeks
- The first final draft of the Gulf Frontal WMP is undergoing review
- Implementation strategies for the Mobile-Tensaw Delta WMP are currently under development
- The first draft of the D'Olive WMP Update will be complete by July 31
- The Dauphin Island WMP is in early stages of development
- The Eastern Shore is in early stages of development

Ms. Blanchard reminded attendees to inform her of any other topics they're interested in learning about through the CAC. Topics suggestions can be submitted to mblanchard@mobilebaynep.com

6. Adjourn

Ms. Blanchard thanked the meeting attendees for their time and the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. A motion was made by Mike Shelton to adjourn and a second motion was made by Ted Henken.