



Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Business Resources Committee
June 6, 2023, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
5 Rivers Delta Resource Center and Zoom



Agenda

Meeting Objectives:

1. Welcome and Introductions

BRC Co-Chairs:

Eliska Morgan, Thompson Engineering

Frank Smith, Bank Plus

2. Review and Approval of Minutes

3. Old Business

- a) Coastal Alabama Fisheries Fund Update
- b) Tours

4. New Business

- a) Clean Water Future
- b) Private Sector Environmental Collaboration Analysis
- c) Perdido Queen
- d) Chair Terms Ending

5. Adjourn

Minutes

In Attendance

Eliska Morgan, Thompson Engineering
Beth Thomas, Alabama Power
Renie Kennemer, Thompson Engineering
Casey Gay Williams, Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce
John Barton, TC Boiler
Liz Freeman, Long's Human Resources
Ernie Williams, Alabama Power
Remote
Jennifer Denson, Partners for Environmental Progress
Rusty Grice, Auburn University Shellfish Lab
John T. Bender
Chandra Wright

Staff

Roberta Swann
Henry Perkins
Marti Messick

Takeaways

Old Business

Coastal Alabama Fisheries Fund Update

Henry updated the BRC on CAFF. The year pilot is wrapping up, having given \$41,000 to 5 borrowers. One borrower has fully paid off their loan, one borrower has defaulted, and the rest continue to make payments. Most borrowers have reported benefiting from the fund, able to spend more time on the water and make more money in the process. The future of the program is to be determined by the steering committee.

Tours

The BRC visited the Admiral Shellfish Company in March and learned more about the aquaculture industry, the needs and challenges of oyster farmers, and the potential of the blue economy.

As a result of this tour, Casey Williams has coordinated with Admiral Shellfish and the Alabama Governor's Conference on Tourism to bring the oysters to that event.

The BRC was invited to an oyster hatchery tour, scheduled for June 14 at the Auburn Shellfish Laboratory with the Community Action Committee.

New Business

Clean Water Future

Henry introduced the Clean Water Future campaign and Jennifer Denson spoke about its history.

The campaign was expanded in a CCMP process as a way to create an umbrella branding for local governments and businesses to use for environmentally minded projects. There was an attempt made to solicit membership, but no formal process was ever implemented. The group as a whole saw value in continuing the campaign and branding.

Beth Thomas mentioned it was a useful brand for Growing the Gulf Coast. Consistent use of a brand and mission is valuable.

Roberta said the MBNEP is recommitting to Clean Water Future in the next CCMP, putting \$30,000 towards the brand with recommendations to increase the budget and develop performance metrics.

Henry will organize a CCWF subcommittee to develop this brand in for the new CCMP.

Clean-Ups

PEP, MBNEP and Osprey held a successful clean-up at Montlimar, picking up more than 500lbs of trash and working with a dozen local businesses and companies.

More clean-ups will be held, potentially on a quarterly basis, focused on the target audience of businesses. A small group within the BRC works to develop these clean ups.

Private Sector Collaboration Analysis

This was created to clarify the BRC's purpose and mission. It walks through the value propositions the MBNEP has to offer and identifies regional industries that could be cultivated in the BRC. Liz Freeman suggested an oyster trail for restaurants and hospitality could be a BRC project, which Casey Williams identified as a needed group. Casey also recommended Chambers be tapped for inroads and access to members of certain industries.

John Barton suggested focusing on people who are already invested in the mission and bringing them in for different projects.

Perdido Queen

The MBNEP has prepaid for a cruise on the Perdido Queen, which could be used for an NEP event. Roberta Swann presented on the opportunity, saying we've discussed bringing Aimee Christensen, who spoke at the Bays and Bayous Symposium, down to speak. The idea would be to target leaders in the Delta and bring some of Aimee's value to them. The details are to be worked out by a subcommittee.

Chairs

Current co-chair terms end in September. By-laws are being drafted and they will provide more details about how elections will be managed.

Meeting adjourned at 3:04