



**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program  
Community Action Committee  
Wednesday, March 22, 2023  
Five Rivers Delta Center  
Blakeley Hall  
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm**

**AGENDA**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Review and Approval of Minutes
3. Presenter
  - a. **Shemika Brown, MBNEP**
    - The Importance of Community Involvement throughout the Mobile Bay Watershed
    - Goals and Objectives - Has the goal changed?
4. The Future of the CAC - What Needs to Happen to Move the Committee Forward? (Open Discussion)
5. Q&A
6. Announcements/Updates
7. Adjourn



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March 23, 2023, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

**Attendees:**

Dr. Mimi Fearn, Dog River Clearwater Revival  
Leslie Gahagan, Wolf Bay Watershed Watch  
Eric Holladay, Dog River Clearwater Revival  
Chandler Ogburn, Dog River Clearwater Revival  
Ron Kelifeh, Fowl River Area Civic Association  
Sherry McGowan, Dog River Clearwater Revival  
Andy Lightbourne, Fowl River Area Civic Association  
Wendi Lightbourne, Fowl River Area Civic Association  
Stephanie Chaffe, Dog River Clearwater Revival  
Mike Damoff, Dog River Clearwater Revival  
Shemika Brown, MBNEP

**Welcome and Introductions**

Shemika Brown opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and invited attendees to introduce themselves to the group and give a fun fact.

**Review and Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Brown acknowledged that there were no minutes from the CAC's meeting on May 10, 2022. Co-chairs Dr. Mimi Fern and Leslie Gahagan confirmed that no minutes were available.

**Presentation and Discussion**

Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) CAC Liaison, Shemika Brown, facilitated the discussion which focused on the Importance of Community Involvement Throughout the Mobile Bay Estuary as well as the Goals and Objectives of the CAC.

**“What Does Community Involvement Mean to You?”**

Dr. Mimi Fearn stated that the committee has been involved in monitoring for the last 6-7 years and expressed the importance of watershed management and how important it is to spread knowledge. She would like to see the committee broadened beyond water monitoring and other topics like community events or involvement. It needs to focus on groups who have not been traditionally involved

(watersheds like Three Mile Creek that don't have an established group). Dr. Fearn noted that the committee is in a rut.

Ms. Brown asked what types of things could be done to help that is meaningful to the group?

Dr. Fearn commented that the group should not rehash the same topic during each meeting. She encouraged a group trip and more meaningful or engaging presentations.

Leslie Gahagan spoke about recently doing a story on water quality training in Wolf Bay on the news. She stated that thirty-five people came to the training. Leslie stated that the struggle is finding and keeping dedicated monitors. People care after the latest disaster, but not for the long term. Need to make sure that people understand what the data means. Describe baselines and note any changes. Are there trend lines?

Proposed comparisons for Fowl River vs Dog River (Mimi)

Mimi: proposed someone from NEP to attend WPMs to tell citizens how to create groups.

Leslie Gahagan spoke about a community cleanup one year ago (75 people). She said that there was a diverse audience. Additionally, she proposed to reach out to those people who aren't normally engaged to invite them to come to the committee.

Eric Holladay wants to be involved because of his connection to the area and for his family. He spoke about previous projects that the CAC was involved in and about Madison and the silverware project with the restaurant on DIP.

Shemika Brown spoke about the importance of reaching people in communities who have not typically been involved in watershed planning and activities. She stated that those individuals who have not been involved may not be familiar with MBNEP and what the organization does. Those in underserved communities may not realize the benefits due to other obligations and everyday life.

Chandler Ogburn spoke about having a clear understanding of the MBNEP, the CAC, and visiting the website.

**Goals and Objectives-** Has the goal of the CAC changed? The members agreed that the goal has not changed. However, there are some things that they would like to see implemented. For example:

1. Getting involved with other/newly established groups. Leslie Gahagan spoke of newly established groups that should be part of the CAC \*Lillian (Perdido Bay watershed). She will provide contact information of those members so that they can attend future meetings.
2. Having more meaningful topics and presentations during meetings.
3. Having established group leaders or representatives.

Shemika Brown asked the committee questions on behalf of Blair Morrison (Science and Monitoring Lead, MBNEP).

1. What areas do you perceive as needing more data in and outside of your watershed?  
The committee commented that new areas need to be established.

2. Is there a need or desire to collaborate with other committees (specifically the SAC)? If so, what does that look like to the committee?

Committee members said that there is a need to recruit a monitor from the SAC to assist and provide information from a scientific perspective.

3. What are the science outreach needs (if any) in your communities?  
Committee members stated that the SAC should be addressing the needs of the community as well as going out to troubled areas.

#### **Q&A:**

1. Dr. Fern asked if it is possible for MBNEP to get a flow meter to measure water in troubled areas? SB stated that she would look into it and provide an answer at a later date.
2. Can a watershed be amended? SB stated that she would look into it and provide an answer at a later date.
3. Is there a septic system or grinder pump maintenance public information guide? If not, can one be created?
4. Apple Snails: what is the status?

#### **Announcements and Updates**

Shemika updated the committee about the following items:

**Bays and Bayous.** She informed the group that there were around 470 attendees for this year's symposium.

**Oyster Festival in Ft. Morgan.** She talked about set up, attendance, and our presence at the event. She also encouraged the committee to visit the [oystersalabama.com](http://oystersalabama.com) website, created by Henry Perkins, MBNEP's Business Relations Lead.

**Watershed planning.** Shemika gave the committee updates on the Eastern and Western watershed management planning.

**Social media.** Shemika encouraged the committee members to follow the MBNEP's social media pages and to share information amongst their networks.

Shemika updated on Executive Director, Roberta Swann, traveling to Washington, D.C. for the National Estuary Program Convening along with staff members Jason Kudulis and Herdon Graddick. They were meeting with elected officials from Alabama to keep them abreast on the work being done at MBNEP.

Other:

Leslie Gahagan proposed that the committee visit Graham Creek Nature Preserve for a tour. The committee agree and set the date as April 19, 2023.

The meeting was adjourned. Next meeting date TBA