



**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program  
Community Action Committee  
Thursday, September 14, 2023  
International Trade Center  
10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**AGENDA**

- 1. Welcome and Introductions**
- 2. Review and Approval of Minutes**
- 3. Presentations**
  1. *“Mobile County Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program Update”* - **Jes Gearing, Mobile Baykeeper**
  2. *“Improving Community Health through Microbial Source Tracking in Alabama Waters.”* - **Dr. Ruth H. Carmichael, PhD Dauphin Island Sea Lab**
4. Mary Mullins, Mullins Public Affairs Consulting
5. **Q&A**
6. **Announcements/Updates**

Western Delta Watershed Plan & Survey

Eastern Delta Watershed Public Meeting, Spanish Fort City Hall, October 14, 2023 (Time TBD)
7. **Adjourn**



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**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  
Dr. Ruth Carmichael, Dauphin Island Sea Lab  
Ted Henken, Fowl River Area Civic Association  
Andy Lightbourne, Fowl River Area Civic Association (virtual)  
Jes Gearing, Mobile Baykeeper  
Johanna Gertsch, Weeks Bay Reserve (virtual)  
Vaughn Millner, Mobile-Tensaw Delta, Mobile Bay Sierra Club (virtual)  
Lani Cameron, Western Perdido Bay Watershed Action Committee (virtual)  
Mary Mullins Redditt, MPACT  
Shemika Brown, MBNEP  
Bethany Hudson, MBNEP  
Vanessa Romero, MBNEP

**Welcome and Introductions**

Shemika Brown opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and invited attendees to introduce themselves and tell with which organization each member is affiliated.

**Review and Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Brown acknowledged that there were no minutes from the CAC's meeting on June 14, 2023 due to the group visiting the Dauphin Island Sea Lab's Oyster hatchery. Co-chairs Dr. Mimi Fern and Leslie Gahagan confirmed that no minutes were available.

**Presentations**

Ms. Brown introduced Jes Gearing, Project Manager, Mobile Baykeeper, to give a presentation on Alabama Water Watch (AWW) and its Volunteer Monitoring Program. Ms. Gearing provided background on the Monitoring program and its goals of facilitating monitor training, assisting monitors, and providing sampling kits. She spoke about current monitoring active sites and needing volunteers for areas that do not have adequate coverage. Ms. Gearing spoke about upcoming trainings listed on the AWW website on October 24<sup>th</sup> and November 11<sup>th</sup> and encouraged CAC members to spread the word

about the trainings to their networks via word of mouth, newsletters, and websites. She then opened the floor for questions.

Lani Cameron asked if she could use slides for the meeting in Lillian on October 20. Ms. Gearing agreed to provide her with information.

Ted Henken stated that they (FRACA) can't seem to find anyone interested in what they're doing (as it relates to water testing). "If people don't see testing being used in any way, they quit testing," he stated. He also stated that figuring out what to do with information to support people in the area is an issue.

Jes agreed. "From Mobile Bay Keeper's point of view, it is knowing what we do with the data and how is it going to be used," she stated. Her hope is that by the end of the year a small report will be coming out.

The discussion with Ms. Gearing was closed.

Ms. Brown invited Dr. Ruth Carmichael to speak to the committee about Improving Community Health through Microbial Source Tracking in Alabama Waters.

Dr. Carmichael gave an overview and spoke about human activities affecting water quality, wastewater sources. Microbial Source Tracking overview indicated implications for public, economic and ecological health. Current water quality metrics rely on indicators such as: fecal pollution, non-specific indicators, cannot discriminate among sources.

Dr. Carmichael stated that the objectives of the project are to specifically define microbial sources in AL waters with the goal to distinguish at least wastewater treatments plant, septic wildlife, livestock, and other non-human outputs. She encouraged members to visit the website to learn about what they have been doing and instructed committee members how to become involved. She then ended her presentation and opened the floor for questions.

Ted Henken asked questions about E Coli samples:

1. Is the information working. He noted that his group created protocol for complaints to have someone in charge recognize them.
2. Who should be notified?

He expressed frustrations about the local health department and government agencies not wanting the samples.

Dr. Carmichael stated that she can share protocol with other people on the Clearinghouse.

Ms. Brown then introduced Mary Mullins Redditt, who spoke to the committee about the Management Conference survey. Mrs. Mullins spoke about the Live polling at the Executive Committee meeting and wanting all committees to take it then push it out to constituents (organizations and people who aren't traditionally involved in the MC).

Live polling was not conducted during the meeting due to the lack of time and a small group. The poll will go out via email to group later.

Mimi Fearn asked Mary who the group should be targeting.

Mary stated targeted groups are those who are involved then those who are not.

Shemika asked if there was anyone on the committee who is NOT a water monitor? She then asked members to send those individuals and organizations to her so that she can make contact.

Mary spoke about incentives to get people to respond to the survey. The consensus of the group was that incentives would only work for a short period of time but may not retain members.

Lani suggested CCMP be typed out on the survey for those who are new or unfamiliar with the acronym.

Mary agreed to do so moving forward.

Vanessa Romero (MBNEP) spoke about her work collecting information on other NEP management conferences throughout the country.

Shemika thanked Mary for her presentation and opened the floor to questions. She also gave updates on the Western Delta Watershed Management Plan and survey and Eastern Delta Watershed public meeting. She spoke about the opening for a new co-chair and let the committee know that individuals are free to throw their hat in for the position, as Dr. Fearn will be stepping down.

Ms. Brown thanked the group for their time and adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

The committee did not set a date for the next meeting.