



# Meeting Minutes

## DATE / LOCATION

December 6, 2021 / Oak Hollow Farm, Fairhope, Alabama

## IN ATTENDANCE

Cathy Alba-Saucier, TripleNetLease

Mike Saucier, Gulf States RE

Nigel Temple, WSP/Fairhope Environmental Advisory Board

Schuyler Huff, Coastal Alabama Community College

Kim Burmeister, City of Fairhope

Ashley Campbell, Baldwin County Planning and Zoning

Mike Shelton, Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR)

### *Project Team*

Henry Perkins, MBNEP

Suzanne Sweetser, Thompson Engineering

Nicole Love, Thompson Engineering

Eliska Morgan, Thompson Engineering

Christopher Warn, Environmental Science Associates (ESA)

Amy Paulson, Environmental Science Associates (ESA)

Randy Davis, M&R Solutions, LLC

## AGENDA

- The Team presented information about Watershed Management Planning process, Eastern Shore WMP watershed characterization, online survey results, and critical issues.
- Participants were then asked to go deeper on one of the critical issue areas. They were asked three questions:
  1. What are the greatest concerns associated with this critical issue?
  2. What are some solutions to those concerns?
  3. What are the challenges to implementing those solutions?

## DISCUSSION

Due to low public attendance, breakout groups were not possible; thus, participants chose to focus the discussion on Water Quality. Participant responses to the three questions were recorded on a flip chart and summarized below:

1. What are the greatest concerns associated with Water Quality as a critical watershed issue?
  - A large portion of the conversation focused on sedimentation. Sedimentation caused by development, habitat loss, erosion, excess of sod, urban runoff, and more frequent and intense storm events.
  - Another cause for concern is stormwater management. A couple of things that are causing these problems are stormwater displacement versus onsite mitigation and inadequate infrastructure. It was noted that is important to distinguish between stormwater and sewage.
  - Groundwater and the presence of open groundwater wells and continued drilling was also of note.
  - The continued loss of wetlands also raised concerns as to how water quality is affected by the loss.
  - Lack of farming best management practices (BMPs) was also noted. One specific example would be lack of enforcement for riparian buffers on agricultural lands.
  - Improper use of fertilizers and pesticides from homeowners.
  - Poorly maintained garbage trucks and personal vehicles leaking oil onto the streets.
  
2. What are some solutions to those concerns?
  - The creation of a stormwater authority to coordinate infrastructure improvements and funding solutions for those improvements.
    - City of Fairhope has a 5-year sewer plan.
      - Improve sewer outfalls – there are a lot of outfall lines that terminate directly into the Bay. Those need to be removed and do more onsite filtration (bioretention).
  - Determine clear list of regulations for developers. Need to give clear guidance on what is the developers responsibility versus the city or county – and ideally the responsibilities are shared and balanced in a fair and economic way.
    - Too many regulations put on the developer cause construction/development costs to rise, and those costs are passed onto the consumer.
    - On the reverse side, if there are no regulations put on the developer the costs to the city rise in response actions
    - Municipalities should provide infrastructure Master Plans for utilities, drainage, transportation, etc. For example, the land use plan that the City of Fairhope is working on will help with some of these issues by identifying areas for conservation (agricultural land, green space, etc.).



thompson  
ENGINEERING

- Need multiple types of housing options; rentals and increased density are options that are needed.
  - Saving/creating greenspace is important and solves a lot of different issues.
  - Protect and build more wetlands. Wetlands can be used for stormwater/sewage storage.
3. What are the challenges to implementing those solutions?
- Willingness to pay. Need to have all involved be willing to pay in some way (i.e., citizens, developers, municipalities, etc.).
    - Sales tax does not work. Property taxes were better, but those require political will and citizen involvement.
  - Multi-jurisdictional communication/coordination; cities coordinating with cities, cities coordinating with counties, counties coordinating cities, etc. Also, public-private partnerships are important.