



Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Project Implementation Committee

March 21, 2024, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Five Rivers Tensaw Theater/Virtual



Agenda

Meeting Objectives:

- a) Review Management Conference structure and PIC charge.
- b) Review CCMP Ecosystem Restoration Protection strategies.

1. Welcome and Introductions

PIC Co-Chairs:

Shannon McGlynn, Alabama Department of Environmental Management

Will Underwood, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division

2. Review and Approval of Minutes

3. Old Business

- a) Management Conference Committee Status Updates

4. New Business

- a) MBNEP Management Conference and Project Implementation Committee refresher
- b) Getting to the Next Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan
 - a. Ecosystem Restoration and Protection Strategy and Implementation Review
 - b. Input Session Summary
- c) Vision for forthcoming CCMP?

- d) Committee Member Updates

- e) MBNEP Restoration Update (if time allows)

- f) Next meeting **TBD**

5. Adjourn

Minutes

In-person Attendees:

1. Will Underwood, ADCNR
2. Shannon McGlynn, ADEM
3. Steve Jones, GSA
4. Nick Williams, City of Foley
5. Casey Fulford, AACD
6. Judy Haner, The Nature Conservancy
7. Kelley Barfoot, Stantec
8. Nicole Love, City of Fairhope
9. Caleb Harper, City of Spanish Fort
10. Jordan Hollinghead,
11. Patric Harper, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
12. Nick Combs, Thompson Engineering
13. Mark Kate Brown, The Nature Conservancy
14. Camilla English, ADPH Baldwin County
15. Tucker English, ADPH Baldwin County
16. Benji Elmore, Alabama Forestry Commission
17. Don Blancher, Moffatt & Nichol
18. Karine Calhoun, Mobile County Environmental Services
19. Jennifer Dimaio, U.S. EPA Region 4
20. Eliska Morgan, Thompson Engineering
21. Jeremiah Kolb, ADCNR
22. Emma Cochran, City of Mobile
23. Sawyer Shotts, ADCNR
24. Jesi Ward, City of Daphne

Virtual Attendees:

1. Katie Baltzer, The Nature Conservancy
2. Ashley Campbell, Baldwin County
3. Woody Speed, City of Orange Beach
4. Annelise Dodd, Volkert
5. Paige Felts, Volkert
6. Jay Este, Allen Engineering
7. Robin Mccall, U.S. EPA
8. Bradley Williams, USDA
9. Lee Yokel, EcoSolutions
10. Lee Walters, Thompson Engineering
11. Autumn Nitz, ADEMCP
12. Suzanne Sweetser, Thompson
13. Dottie Byron, Dauphin Island Sea Lab
14. Ray Richardson, City of Mobile
15. Wayne Pendle, Second Mile Consulting
16. Mary Collier Eastburn, City of Mobile
17. Chris Warn, ESA
18. Tim Thibaut, Thompson Engineering

Total: 42 attendees

MBNEP Staff Present: Christian Miller, Roberta Swann, Bekah Farmer, Blair Morrison, Bethany Hudson, Vanessa Romero, Cody Aloï

Takeaways

- Attendees were briefed by Christian Miller on the accomplishments falling within the goals of the 2018-2023 CCMP Ecosystem Restoration and Protection Strategy as well as suggested recommendations for the next CCMP.
- There is a need to work through the PIC to develop its strategy in the next CCMP.
- The Project Implementation Committee would benefit from an updated map and list of completed projects suggested by Watershed Management Plans as well as the projects that are remaining.

Welcome and Introductions: The meeting was called to order at 1:07 pm. Roberta Arena Swann opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and introduced the new PIC Co-Chairs: Shannon McGlynn and Will Underwood.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Don Blancher moved to approve minutes for the September 28th, 2023 meeting; Dottie Byron seconded the motion.

Old Business:

Management Conference Bylaws

Part of CCMP rewrite was a review of existing bylaws. A committee appointed by the Executive Committee co-chairs was used to amend the bylaws, which were approved at the September 2023 meeting. Some of the language of the committee charges changed because of the bylaw scrub process. The MOWA tribe and Poarch Band of Creek Indians were added to the Executive Committee.

From the newly adopted bylaws, the purpose of the **Project Implementation Committee** is to bring together resource management professionals to undertake environmental projects related to CCMP ecosystem restoration and protection goals and objectives. The PIC is tasked with:

1. Assessing restoration needs and resources, and prioritizing watershed projects, accordingly.
2. Using watershed planning as a basis for conducting restoration activities
3. Identifying projects and planning for their implementation (e.g., habitat conservation, restoration and protection, access, etc.
4. Conducting periodic project status meetings to track progress. The PIC may make recommendations to the EC about the CCMP and associated Work Plans.

Representation: The PIC is open to agencies, organizations, and contractors with an interest in the mission of the Conference.

Governance: One Co-chair of the PIC will be permanently held by a representative of a State of Alabama resource agency, and one Co-chair will be a resource manager elected by the PIC.

Review of CCMP Implementation Report

This report was completed by Shafer Consulting, October 2023. The report will be sent out to all committee members for a 30-day comment period following this meeting. Today's goal is to go over what has been accomplished in the previous CCMP over a five-year period for ecosystem restoration and protection, and look at some of the recommendations that were made as part of the report.

Any comments on the CCMP evaluation of implementation technical report are due to Jason Kudulis by April 19th, 2024.

Quick overview of report for Ecosystem Restoration and Protection:

ERP 1 – Develop comprehensive management plans for all coastal watersheds (at the 12-digit HUC scale).

Accomplishments:

- 12 watershed plans developed (26 HUC 12s)
- Updates completed for D'Olive, underway in Eight Mile Creek
- Completed WMP Synthesis

Recommendations:

- Continue updating WMPs, include new criteria
- Prioritize non-tidally influenced watersheds for planning (Perdido & Escatawpa)

PIC suggestions:

There is a necessity to decide on additional factors to evaluate in non-tidal habitat WMPs.

ERP 2 – Implement comprehensive watershed management plans with a focus on priority habitats.

Accomplishments:

- Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan completed (2019)
- 35,642 linear feet of stream & riparian restorations completed/in progress
- 26,860 linear feet of intertidal marshes & flats restoration complete

Recommendations:

- Restore and Protect critical habitats identified in WMPs
- Implement and Enforce stricter protection of natural habitats

PIC suggestions:

- A concern was voiced that there is more work than there is funding. This resulted in some concluding that a process is necessary to prioritize projects.
- There was a suggestion to seek policy-based changes to protect natural habitats vs. repairing damage.

ERP 3 – Improve ecosystem function and resilience through protection, restoration, and conservation along shorelines of coastal Alabama beaches.

Accomplishments:

- Comprehensive SMP under development (Western Shore/MS Sound)
- Interagency Sediment Management/BU group formed.
- 27,330 linear feet of shoreline protected.
- 369 acres of marsh protected/restored.

Recommendations:

- Encourage use of Nature-Based Solutions for shoreline stabilization
- Coordinate Beneficial Use of dredge material.
- Implement priority shoreline stabilization projects (WMPs/SMP)
- Create a new list with prioritized projects and update the list regularly.

PIC suggestions:

- Previous efforts have been focused on public shorelines. Current efforts in the Western Shore will be on private shorelines.
- There is now an Intergovernmental Agency Taskforce which includes the US Army Corps of Engineers and local governments to coordinate beneficial use of dredge material along Mobile County shorelines which is being facilitated as part of the Mobile County Shoreline Management planning.

PIC suggestions:

- TNC asked to be included on the task force. MBNEP responded that the group will be expanded at some point in the future but currently they had requested to keep it to government agencies while they scope out their plan of action.

ERP 4 – Improve management of invasive species through coastal Alabama watersheds.

Accomplishments:

- TMC Invasive Species Management Plan in implementation in progress
- State aquatic nuisance species management plan adopted (2021)
- 1,580 acres actively managed for invasive species.

Recommendations:

- Prioritize & Map watersheds for invasive species management.
- Support partner efforts to improve invasive species management.

ERP 5 – Restore and expand human connections to nature as a mechanism for improving environmental protection.

Accomplishments:

- 2,470 acres of priority habitat acquired for public benefit (NEPORT 2019-2022)
- 23 access points restored or enhanced (12 Mobile County, 11 Baldwin County)
- 2 ADA-compliant beach mats installed (1 Mobile County, 1 Baldwin County)

Recommendations:

- Continue to protect priority habitat identified in WMPs
- Continue to create/enhance public access points, focusing on areas with sparse access

MBNEP Watershed Planning Update

Perdido	Final draft in review
Western Delta	In Progress
Grand Bay	In Progress
Eight Mile Creek	Update In Progress

The Grand Bay WMP is the last one initiated. People in the area will be recruited into the process. NEP will also be working with Grand Bay National Estuary Research Reserve and the State of Mississippi.

MBNEP Restoration Update

- D'Olive
 - Pine Run out for bid.
- Lower Fish River
 - Marlow – warranty and maintenance
 - Magnolia River Watershed – Magnolia River and Schoolhouse near procurement
- Fowl River
 - Construction begins in June
- Three Mile Creek
 - 12-Mile Warranty – supplemental planting
 - Apple snail treatment continues
- Deer River
 - Phase I 95% complete

PIC Partner Project Updates and Announcements

- TNC
 - Purchased 8,000 acres of bottomland hardwood in Mobile Delta
 - Putting RFQ out for a Perdido project
 - Lightning Point eastern breakwaters have been completed.
 - TNC Swift Tract project monitoring completed.
- Baldwin County: Initial steps have been taken for USACE to conduct a study along the northern shoreline of Fort Morgan
- Eastern Shore Green Drinks beginning at Monkey Bar in Fairhope
- Mississippi Sound Estuary Program is starting operations.
- GOMESA project submittals open through April 23rd.
- ACAMP call for proposals out until April 25th.

Other Points of Discussion

- There is a need to improve PIC engagement and participation to improve feedback to NEP on what needs to be done.
- There is a need to improve PIC meeting structure to continue sharing projects but also plan for the new CCMP.

Next Steps

- Bylaws Update: – MBNEP website
- CCMP Development Status – Subcommittee?
- CCMP Evaluation – return comments to Jason K. by 4/19

6. Adjourn