



Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Community Action Committee
August 11, 2020, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Google Meet Virtual Meeting



Minutes

Attendance:

David Armstrong, AL Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries
Richard Becker, Fowl River Area Civic Association
Joe Berardinelli, Dog River Clear Water Revival
Elizabeth Bryant, citizen
Marbury Buckhaults, Dog River Clearwater Revival
Bob Chappelle, citizen
Dan Coleman, Fowl River Area Civic Association
Mimi Fearn, Dog River Clear Water Revival
Debi Foster, Dog River Clearwater Revival & the Peninsula of Mobile
Leslie Gahagan, Wolf Bay Watershed
Ten Henken, Fowl River Area Civic Association
Patrick Hicks, Fowl River Area Civic Association
Eric Holladay, Dog River Clear Water Revival
Timothy Jensen, Three Mile Creek Partnership
Mary Ann Lasecky, Dog River Clear Water Revival
Nick Matranga, Dog River Clearwater Revival
Melanie Moore, Dog River Clearwater Revival
Chan Ogburn, Dog River Clear Water Revival
Harold White, Fowl River Area Civic Association
Jenni Zimlich, Fowl River Area Civic Association

Program Evaluation Team:

Kathy Hill, Indian River Lagoon NEP
Romell Nandi, US EPA
Chris Plymale, US EPA

Staff:

Kelley Barfoot
Madison Blanchard
Katie Dylewski
Roberta Swann

Meeting Recap:

- Management Conference Committee Status Review
- Identifying and Managing Invasive Plant Species of Coastal Alabama
- Overview of Volunteer Monitoring
- EPA-NEP Program Evaluation Team Q & A

1. Welcome and Introductions

Madison Blanchard opened the meeting requesting each virtual participant to sign-in through the chat box on the google meet platform. She reviewed the agenda for the meeting and introduced the co-chairs and the EPA program evaluation team.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes

Ms. Blanchard requested a motion to approve the minutes from the CAC's May 12, 2020 virtual meeting. Ms. Debi Foster made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Mike Shelton second.

3. Old Business

Ms. Blanchard gave a status report for each MBNEP Management Conference Committee. The status report can be viewed in the [presentation](#).

4. New Business

Ms. Blanchard introduced our guest speaker, Ms. Katie Dylewski, who gave a presentation on invasive plant species found along the gulf coast along with identification and recommended management methods. Prior to the meeting, CAC member were asked to send in photos of any plant species they were concerned about or needing identification. Ms. Dylewski conducted research for each plant species and offered the group in-depth information regarding each that included key factors for identifying the plant, benefits (if any), where the species is typically found, what might contribute to its growth, and any natural predators to help with management. Ms. Dylewski's [presentation can be viewed here](#).

Ms. Blanchard then gave an updated overview of the MBNEP's volunteer monitoring program. She informed the group that during the 2019-year, 27 volunteer monitors were trained, and the program currently has a total of 49 active monitors for Mobile County, and 34 active monitors for Baldwin County. She stated the goal for the 2021 year is for the CAC to develop a comprehensive strategy for volunteer monitoring to expand the program.

Ms. Blanchard opened the floor for the EPA-NEP Program Evaluation Team questions to the committee. Mr. Romell Nandi started by giving the committee members information about the program evaluation and tasks related to it. He stated the program evaluation was technically a pass or fail evaluation, but its purpose is to give each NEP an opportunity to show case their work to the EPA and for the program evaluation team to offer factors for consideration to the program and its management conference. His first question to the committee members was for them to describe how being affiliated with the NEP and a member of the community action committee has directly affected their organizations work. Dr. Mimi Fearn responded by stating the NEP has helped the Dog River Clearwater Revival by enabling them to expand their citizen science program to a larger area to make the program more effective in the community. It has also allowed groups to meet each other and have open dialogue about issues in their communities and how to achieve common goals. Ms. Leslie Gahagan followed up by stating being a part of the CAC has allowed them to learn from other groups and provides an opportunity to take back the information gathered at the CAC meetings to their members. Ms. Debi Foster stated being a member of the CAC and attending meetings helps to drive the Dog River Clearwater Revivals focus with watershed plan implementation.

Mr. Chris Plymale asked in addition to volunteer monitoring and invasive species management, what other environmental concerns seems to be the most common and will these concerns be addressed in the coming years. Ms. Gahagan stated that litter was a major topic among committee members and a presentation regarding trash traps was given at the May CAC meeting. She stated most groups within the committee will be focused on litter and prevention soon. Ms. Foster responded by stating the Dog River Clearwater Revival group will be focused on stormwater management and preservation and the increase of impervious surfaces in the Dog River watershed.

Ms. Kathy Hill stated that at the Indian River Lagoon NEP they also have a community action committee, but not a community resources committee. Her question was, what is the difference between the two committees and how do or can they help each other. Ms. Gahagan addressed this question by stating the CAC and the CRC were together as one committee in the past. However, at the capacity of how the CRC organizations are ran, such as having paid staff, the grassroots groups felt they didn't have a voice at the meetings. They felt overwhelmed by the amount of work the larger non-profit organizations were reporting that they were accomplishing. It was decided that it was best if the two

groups separated so the non-profits could focus on their regional issues and goals and the grassroots groups could focus on their place-based issues and goals. Since this separation, the CRC has provided support to the CAC by conducting trainings such as board development and volunteer recruitment.

Mr. Nandi ask the group how is the data that volunteers are collecting actively being used for proactive preventative management where the volunteers will stay active and engaged. Ms. Gahagan stated the Wolf Bay Watershed Watch has used the past 10 years data trend lines, showing there was a problem with dissolved oxygen in the system, to leverage with the city and with the NEP to gain funding to implement a project. Two years later after project completion, the data collected was showing a trend of stabilization in the system. Since then, volunteers and interested volunteers have seen a positive change in the system and understands the importance of data collection and how it can be used.

The program evaluation team thank the CAC members for their time and response to their questions.

5. Announcements and Updates

The next Community Action Committee Meeting will be held on November 10, 2020 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. The meeting will be conducted virtual using Google Meets. The topic for the next meet will be native plant species and our guest speaker will be Dr. Judy Stout.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m. A motion was made by Ms. Foster and second by Mr. Chan Ogburn.