

Mobile Bay NEP Community Resources Committee Meeting Minutes

Remotely via ZOOM
Wednesday, May 27, 2020

In Attendance

Mark Berte, Alabama Coastal Foundation
Elizabeth Englebretson, Gulf Coast CDS
Debi Foster, The Peninsula
Larissa Graham, SCA/GulfCorps
Martha Hunter, Alabama Rivers Alliance
Connie Whitaker, Weeks Bay Foundation

Casi Callaway, Mobile Baykeeper
Walter Ernest IV, Pelican Coast Conservancy
Kara Fox, National Audubon
Tom Herder, Mobile Bay NEP
Tammy Monistere, Conservation Alabama

1. Welcome to new CRC Co-Chair Walter Ernest. At or about 9 AM, Casi welcomed her new Co-Chair who replaced Dr. Tina Miller-Way, who resigned in March.

2. Welcome and Introductions Attendees were welcomed and self-introduced.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion to accept minutes was made by Debi, seconded by Tammy, and unanimously approved.

4. Workplan development.

Heading into a refinement of the work plan, our charge is do most comprehensively address litter using the various tools under the four broad categories of CRC concern: action, policy/legislation, education (and awareness), and enforcement.

The group took another look at metrics related to trash reduction/prevention and data collection. The obvious metrics were weight or volume, but that is complicated by wet weight or dry weight, loose or compacted material, etc. Coastal Cleanup was suggested as a model and guidance by the State's Angela Underwood in developing metrics for the range of municipalities and communities was suggested. Questions posed included, "Who are we trying to influence? How does the City of Mobile measure their 'harvest'? How do we get everyone do things the same way? How is the EPA looking at it?"

It was noted that the State and EPA have both worked to develop total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for trash with the same challenges as obstacles. Phyllis Wingard of Keep Mobile Beautiful, Caitlin Wessel of NOAA, and the GOMA Priority Issue Team were each suggested as contributors to the effort to find a metric development for trash and litter upon which we can all agree.

With regard to Increasing Recycling, the number of post-consumer recycled products purchased was suggested as a metric. With regard to policy/legislative actions associated with recycling, both 1) encouraging creation of a materials recovery facility (MRF) in coastal Alabama and 2) advocating for funding to support litter removal, abatement, and recycling opportunities were suggested.

In developing Item 4) Policy/Legislative actions, Conservation Alabama's role has included keeping a heads up to keep bad legislation from happening (the failed bill to limit municipal bans on single use items was an example). The work plan was amended to include item, c. Advocate for funding to support litter removal/abatement/recycling opportunities was populated with:

- i. RESTORE
- ii. Agencies to be fully funded

iii. Grands to fund local work.

With the City releasing the latest iteration of the Unified Development Code, an opportunity exists to advocate for policy items like a requirement to install trash cans in parking lots of certain capacities. The Dog River Clearwater Revival has been advocating for this for two years to include this with design standards, and a similar provision was included in the Mayor's initial litter bill, but not with that much specificity. Local State and National legislation are all targets of CRC advocacy efforts. Local grassroots organizations have already commented. It has not been included in the UDC's third iteration. We can advocate for enforcement of the litter bill as an alternative method of "skinning that cat."

With regard to Item 5) Formal Education, of people educated using tests or surveys to determine percent increases in knowledge, shared questions should be included that will continue to inform and provide feedback to our work. Actions taken after education are also useful – "How many people have been activated?" Behavior changed should be tracked over time (e.g., use of reusable water bottles). Some organizations are tracking long-term to ensure behavior changes "stuck."

Under Awareness Activities (Item 6, as opposed to Formal Education), a. was "using brand data to engage consumers and companies to change" was discussed, but metrics were not specified. Examples involved using brands associated with or identified in cleanups. Posts were discussed and classified as "internal"/social media (FB, Twitter, Instagram, E-newsletters, or websites) or "external"/traditional (TV, newspapers, online media).

One CRC member suggested using Community-based Social Marketing (explained in <https://cbsm.com/>) specifically for its value in changing social norms, getting to root causes of poor behaviors, and encouraged long lasting positive impacts and tracking behavior changes. She noted that three issues have been successfully addressed using community-based social marketing: trash reduction, increased recycling, and proper disposal of pet waste. Another member mentioned Marketing For Change, a marketing firm who uses this method to effect positive behavior changes. Behavior change was added to the Work Plan as Item 7), with both of the entities mentioned above listed, along with tracing behavior changes as sub-items.

At this point, the meeting moved to developing a "to-do" list, assigning responsibilities, although we don't have to target accomplishing everything. Any portion of what needs doing is alright. For example, one might expect Tammy Monistere might handle monitoring of policy/legislative action.

Starting with Item 1) Reduction in trash/litter prevention, DRCR is receiving City data, which is routinely provided. Baykeeper will help with City data.

Item 2) Litter removal actions? It was suggested that Angela Underwood would have Coastal Cleanup data, and Tom Herder volunteered to contact her. Osprey Initiative was also suggested, and Herder said he's in possession of Osprey Data, and they have ETAP data beyond what we're ready for. It was suggested adding Ellie Mallon to our committee and having Don let her help us.

Increasing recycling? ACF was volunteered as a lead in

Policy and legislative action, in Tammy's absence, was suggested to have her name on it already.

Formal education? Ilka Porter from the Baykeeper team was volunteered, and Mike Shelton was identified as another who would have a information on formal education. ACF was volunteered to assist in this data collection.

Item 6) Awareness activities? Baykeeper volunteered to track awareness activities using their Communications Director. She may use a monthly survey to track awareness activities. Production branding was mentioned to be missing from ETAP analysis forms. While Osprey includes the branding information in their reporting, it is done anecdotally, and not as a specific line item on the ETAP forms. Osprey reports as “identifying features,” but it’s not a line item in ETAP reporting forms. Maybe it could be formally added...

Item 7) Behavior changes? Groundworks and Gulf Coast Design Studio could develop this further for the other CRC entities, perhaps with a July report out. Funding opportunities will be necessary to do this well, and grant recipients reported luck with an approach that involves behavior marketing.

The to-do list will be further developed by Co-chairs and the MBNEP facilitator.

An addition to the agenda involves ensuring other environmental issues are included in CRC business, with issues that go beyond trash and recycling that we care about. Casi wanted to ensure that each call or meeting should include other issues. The UDC was one such example, even though litter is incorporated in it. Coal Ash was mentioned, along with land acquisition, invasive species control, and “the drone bill” were all mentioned, and she suggested that CRC meetings are good places to direct CRC time and energy. There was some agreement that other issues could be introduced, with one caveat that it be tied back to the CCMP. In response to a question about the depth of these “reports,” she responded that it should be a solicitation for collaboration. This is an opportunity for Committee members to learn about issues not already on their “radar screens.” In response to a question about where, on the agenda, these should appear, it was clarified that, with a Work Plan developed, there will be time to discuss other issues. Some caution was advised, but the Co-Chair felt that there’s no other forum for sharing other issues. She suggested that collaboration opportunities were key to deciding what is discussed at CRC meetings. Natural Resource Task Force Meetings were provided as an example of where issue sharing. She felt this was an opportunity to expand Committee band width, and this opportunity would inspire others to join the CRC.

7. Date / time / location of next meeting: Casi indicated a desire to hold the meeting in July. The second Wednesday in July is July 8. Some conflicts inspired us to select the third Wednesday to host the next CRC meeting. It was agreed it’s better to get another week out from July 4. The meeting was scheduled for July 15 at 1000. We will reevaluate September, making it the third Wednesday in September, the 16th from 1000 until 1130.