

Mobile Bay NEP Community Resources Committee Meeting Minutes

Killian Room, International Trade Center
Wednesday, September 4, 2019

In attendance:

Mark Berte, Alabama Coastal Foundation
Casi Callaway, Mobile Baykeeper
Tammy Herrington, Conservation Alabama
Tom Herder, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Nicole Love, Birmingham Audubon

1. **Welcome and Introductions.** At 1005, Casi Callaway opened the meeting, providing a “preamble” and recommending a more concrete, schedule with more meetings during spring, fall, and winter months of maybe shorter durations. She noted both CRC Chairs were able to commit to the second Wednesday of months for meeting times and hoped that the Committee would accede to this schedule. Mark Berte noted problems with October 9 (which we resolved later in the meeting), but he seemed agreeable to the premise. Tom Herder was assigned to Doodle Poll membership (after the October 9 meeting) to find preferred meeting times for November 13, January 8, March 11, May 13, and September 9.

Tammy Herrington suggested using ZOOM or another technical platform to provide remote access to meetings for folks who could telecommunicate from Birmingham, Montgomery or elsewhere. Tom Herder and Kelley Barfoot of the MBNEP staff will investigate making CRC and CAC telecommunications more effective and available.

2. **Approval of Minutes.** With this meeting following an August 22 planning exercise, no minutes were considered or approved.

3. **Sharing the final CCMP Strategy Matrix and a focus on litter for CRC focus.** Casi moved the discussion to developing a CRC strategy with a focus on trash and litter reduction seeking synergies – “checking boxes” and avoiding redundancies. Tom defended the CCMP strategies, explaining that where specificity is lacking, it represents an improvement for supporting the broad range of activities undertaken by Management Conference partners. With regard to lack of specificity about trash, it addresses and the five issues most pervasive across watersheds – 1) Trash - stormwater-borne trash and litter in our waters, 2) Oysters - diminished and disappearing oyster populations and water quality challenges in harvest areas, 3) Dirt - concerns related to sediment loads (excessive or insufficient), 4) Pathogens (and other bacteria entering waterways), and 5) Stormwater management challenges.

4. **Committee Focus and Planning: Trash Reduction Campaign.** With the Matrix of CRC organization activities completed and shared, we discussed individual organization approaches in terms of CRC charges: Education, Actions, Policy, Regulatory/Enforcement. Even among the four CRC organizations represented at this meeting (ACF, Baykeeper, Birmingham Audubon, Conservation Alabama, there were both overlaps in approaches and particular individual approaches expressed. Both The Nature Conservancy and Alabama Rivers Alliance, like Conservation Alabama, were involved in statewide, regional, and national policy, while Baykeeper’s policy approach was more at local levels. Baykeeper was uniquely poised to approach enforcement. Organizations not in attendance were discussed in terms of approaches and synergies they would bring forth, especially in terms of a CRC trash campaign. Among the missing from the table, participants mentioned Keep Mobile Beautiful, Alabama PALS (People Against a Littered State), and Alabama Water Watch (AWW).

Discussion about Education objectives and activities turned to Tina Miller-Way's charge to CRC partners to "de-silo" both Management Conference committees and CRC organizations. Our current focus as a Committee is to strategize how five to 25 organizations with different but overlapping missions might work to get something done. Concern was expressed that focusing on a single issue might limit input and collaboration among the "regulars," but more narrowly focused organizations like AWW or the National Park Service could be invited to participate or present when appropriate. An example was mentioned: Elizabeth Englebretson of Gulf Coast Community Design who was a guest speaker on Plastics-Free Gulf Coast at the Green Coast Council.

Viewing CRC-specific activities listed under Actions, an events inventory and a guide to greening events were suggested. Mark commented that ACF has already produced a guide to greening events, published on the ACF web site. Questions were posed: Could the CRC develop/coordinate a campaign to drive more sustainable practices at local events? Could the CRC develop a Create a Clean Water Future checklist of good behaviors, from which a hosting municipality or organization could meet a certain number of suggested requirements to qualify for some distinction? A tool kit created collaboratively by CRC organizations to encourage wise stewardship in hosted events could provide measurable results with the potential for performance assay or demonstration by volunteer monitors. A host of actions or measures, including "bans" on single-use materials, are possibilities.

Tammy informed the Committee that she has heard that "the ban on bans" would be discussed when the State legislature returns to session. A success banning some non-sustainable single use product would, therefore, be very timely.

5. **CRC Meeting Schedules moving forward.** Having discussed CRC meeting schedules moving forward early in the meeting, participants agreed to attend meetings on the second Wednesday of October, November, January, March, and May; break for summer months when CRC Chairs are otherwise occupied; then return to schedule the second Wednesday of September 2020. Mark Berte, who was otherwise occupied until 3:30 on Wednesday, October 9, suggested meeting at 3:30 PM at the Fairhope Brewery with an incentive that the ACF would provide participants a first round. The idea was unanimously approved by participants. Thereafter, Tom Herder will provide a Doodle Poll to determine the best time for participants on the second Wednesday of each month. MBNEP staff will investigate teleconference possibilities.

6. **Reports** were forgone due to sparse attendance.

7. **Next Meeting:** Wednesday, October at the Fairhope Brewery at 914 Nichols Avenue, Fairhope, AL 36532 from 3:30-5 PM. ACF will purchase a round of beverages for participants, and the Green Drinks event will follow directly after thereafter.

8. **Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 11:45.