

Mobile Bay NEP Community Resources Committee Meeting Minutes

5 Rivers Delta Resource Center – Blakeley Classrooms
Wednesday, March 11, 2020

In Attendance

Casi Callaway, Mobile Baykeeper
Tom Herder, Mobile Bay NEP
Kara Fox, National Audubon
Tammy Monistere, Conservation Alabama

Elizabeth Englebretson, Gulf Coast Community Design
Studio
Vickii Howell, M.O.V.E.

Attending online:

Mark Berte, Alabama Coastal Foundation

Debi Foster, Dog River Clearwater Revival
The Peninsula

1. Welcome and Introductions Attendees were welcomed as the meeting opened at 3:10 (late due to technical issues).

2. Approval of Minutes

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

3. Review of survey responses – This agenda item was incorporated into Continuing the discussion and selecting achievable outcomes.

4. Discussion of survey results / development of a workplan

Alluding to results of the programmatic survey focused on the CRC's aquatic debris, which was shared electronically with minutes and agenda, Casi sought any critiques from CRC. Debi Foster didn't get the survey, which, she commented, looks a lot like the Dog River Clearwater Revival Gulf of Mexico Program grant. Its purpose, Casi explained, isn't to be definitive or comprehensive, but rather a really good toolbox from which to develop a workplan focused on reductions in trash and aquatic debris.

Some discussion ensued over the Management Conference committee role of the DRRCR and the Peninsula. Debi expressed reservations about a role for DRRCR or the Peninsula in the CRC until they get larger.

It was suggested that a trash focus may provide opportunities for increased crossover between Management Conference committees. Our goal for this meeting was to build out the workplan begun at the CRC meeting on December 13, where two bullets for metrics and outcomes were developed. Others remain to be developed, hopefully some with "whos" included. Members expressed that we should all know what one other is doing, leading to some discussion of disconnects between CRC member organizations. The workplan under development will focus on trash and how CRC organizations are working on this issue across action, education policy, and enforcement. If a nonprofit organization is involved in any of these activities, they should be considered as potential CRC organizations. CRC was characterized as a "hub" to work across the Management Conference structure.

Casi suggested continuing the discussion of developing the workplan from the draft document she created. Possible outcomes were reviewed for possible outcomes under the actions of 1) litter reduction (i.e., keeping it from happening) and 2) litter removal (cleanups).

In discussing actions to **reduce trash/prevent litter** and possible outcomes, we discussed differences between awareness and education. Generally, awareness is what you obtain from reading social media, while education is derived from classes. Some discussion followed. Awareness was suggested to be “education lite, called by one participant “osmosis.” Metrics for awareness included Likes, media reach, or comments. Education metrics includes number of students attending a class or can be captured by pre and post-education surveys.

The discussion turned from litter reduction to **litter removal**, and it was agreed that these are different types of actions with different outcomes. While listed as a metric under Reduction, quantitative collection data is largely collected through Removal efforts and EPA escaped trash assessment protocols (ETAP) of material removed from collection devices, like Litter Gitters. It was suggested that a universal metric would be advantageous, since the city reports removal in terms of cubic yards, while Osprey Initiative reports weight/mass.

The discussion turned to Coastal Cleanup cards, which employ volume vs weight. Other metrics for Litter Removal were discussed, including number of cleanup events, number of people participating in cleanup events, and number of enforcement actions undertaken.

The discussion moved on to a third Action class: **recycling**. When asked about perceptions from the Africatown community, Vickii Howell reported that questions exist about recycling with skepticism about whether material is actually being recycled. This stimulated some policy discussion about advocating for better recycling. Gulf Shores glass recycling efforts were mentioned as an innovation and success. Gulf Shores pulverizes recycled glass and uses the material as a matrix for street maintenance.

Suggestions of possible metrics to measure recycling success included:

- Changes in the numbers of items or materials that can be recycled.
- Availability of recycling centers or receptacles in a community.
- Weight of recycled materials.
- Cost effectiveness of recycling was mentioned, with both savings related to trash reductions and profit from selling recycled material mentioned as metrics.
- Assaying the amounts of material recycled by the City of Mobile.
- Measuring recycled paper use. What are you buying now verses later?
- Metrics could be tied to business and restaurant goals for reduction of single-use plastic items.

The fourth Action class, **Policy**, entails defending against bad bills and supporting good ones at the state level and monitoring and supporting positive/proactive regulatory changes at the local level. The discussion of State bills included Margie Wilcox’s litter bill, which passed in last year’s session, and the proposed bill banning any local bans of plastic bags, which failed to pass.

For a fifth Action class, **Formal Education**, the following metrics were recommended:

- # of people educated.
- % increase in knowledge using pre- and post-education surveys. Development of a standardized survey was suggested in the discussion.
- # of educational tools available for sharing.

For the sixth class, **Awareness Activities**, brand data is being used to influence people. encourage consumers, and engage businesses/companies in reducing use of single-use materials. Suggested metrics included:

- # of social media posts by partner groups
- # of social media likes/tweets/etc.

- # of media hits or news stories.

For the last Action class, **Enforcement**, Debi Foster reported no success in obtaining enforcement numbers, e.g., tickets or enforcement actions, by the City of Mobile.

5. Developing a strategy and tactics. With 4:30 approaching this agenda item was left to be developed.

6. Discussion of replacement of CRC Co-Chair Tina Miller-Way. Some discussion involved replacing Tina, who resigned due to increased responsibilities at the Sea Lab. Kara Lankford was nominated, but did not formally accept the nomination. Mark Berte indicated his interest is the position if no one else came forward to accept a nomination. Without an agenda item to hold an election, we agreed to address this important action directly, and Tom Herder agreed to facilitate an election electronically or at the next meeting.

7. Date / time / location of next meeting: Casi indicated a desire to hold the meeting in two weeks at either the MBNEP or Baykeeper. Larissa Graham indicated a standing obligation on Wednesday afternoons, so she hoped we could conduct the meeting from 10-11:30 AM. Debi, with an obligation early on March 25, hoped we would schedule it from 1030 to noon, which would work for Mark, too. Tammy offered the Container Yard as a potential meeting location.

Then ensuing Novel COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the schedule.