

**MOBILE BAY NATIONAL  
ESTUARY PROGRAM  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
MEETING**



**August 26, 2020**

**Google Meet Virtual**



# AGENDA

- Introductions/Call to Order
- Approval of Minutes: May 29, 2020
- Director's Report
  - Key Accomplishments since last meeting
- Committee Reports
  - Science Advisory
  - Project Implementation
  - Government Networks
  - Community Action
  - Business Resources
  - Community Resources
- Old Business
- New Business
  - EPA Program Evaluation Team Presentation of Findings
- Other/Announcements
- Adjourn



# TOP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

<i>Project/Activities</i>	<b>Beginning Budget 10-1-2020</b>	<b>Cash Balance as of 7-31-2020</b>	<b>Total Committed</b>	<b>Balance Available</b>
Ecosystem Status and Trends	213,582	170,372	77,541	136,041
Ecosystem Restoration and Protection	16,174,343	11,476,629	6,429,844	9,124,750
Technical Assistance and Capacity Building	21,784	14,181	7,603	14,181.07
Education and Public Involvement	310,080	116,304	200,886	109,193
Program Planning and Administration	2,927,800	1,151,144	2,895,229	32,571
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,647,589</b>	<b>12,928,630</b>	<b>9,611,103</b>	<b>9,402,555</b>

LT Fowl River  
Monitoring; Baseline  
Monitoring support

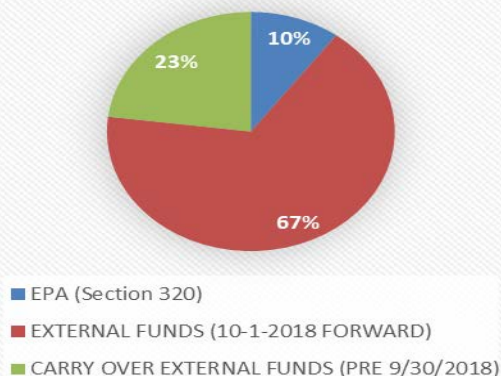
WMPs and D'Olive, 12  
Mile, Fowl River, and  
Lower Fish River  
Restoration initiatives

Citizen Science,  
Volunteer Monitoring

Video Production,  
Clean Water Future, MC  
support, special events

Project Delivery  
support for D'Olive  
Initiative

**Sources of Funding**





# TOP ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## Latest News

August 13, 2020: Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Releases Virtual Boat Tour as a Part of Major Environmental Planning for the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. [Full Press Release](#)

August 10, 2020 - Mobile Tensaw-Delta Watershed Management Plan [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

July 20, 2020 - [CLICK HERE TO TAKE THE SURVEY](#). The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (NEP) is currently developing a Watershed Management Plan for this area, known to many as the "Delta," to best preserve and protect its natural, recreational and economic assets. If you live, work, play, own property, or have other interests in the MTA Watershed, we invite you to visit the [DELTA STORY MAP](#) to learn more.

June 26, 2020 - [Coal Ash Pond FAQ sheet](#) (updated 6/26/2020, 4:40 p.m.)

June 23, 2020 - The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program caps off a year of intensive research with the release of the short film, [The Unintended Consequences of Convenience: A Story of Coal Ash in Alabama](#).



[The Unintended Consequences of Convenience: A Story of Coal Ash in Alabama](#) (22 minutes)

[Coal Ash Facts and Resource Webpage](#)

## Latest Uploads

[Plant Barry Coal Ash Pond Hydrogeologic Conditions Summary](#)  
[Structural Integrity Review for CCR Closure Plan Plant Barry, AL Power Company](#)  
[Mobile Tensaw Delta Watershed Sedimentation and Water Quality Assessment](#)  
[Healthy Watersheds Assessment](#)  
[Preserving the Mobile Bay Estuary Through Headwater Protection](#)

## Mobile-Tensaw Delta Watershed Information

[The Landscape](#)  
[The Community](#)  
[The Planning](#)  
[The Restoration](#)

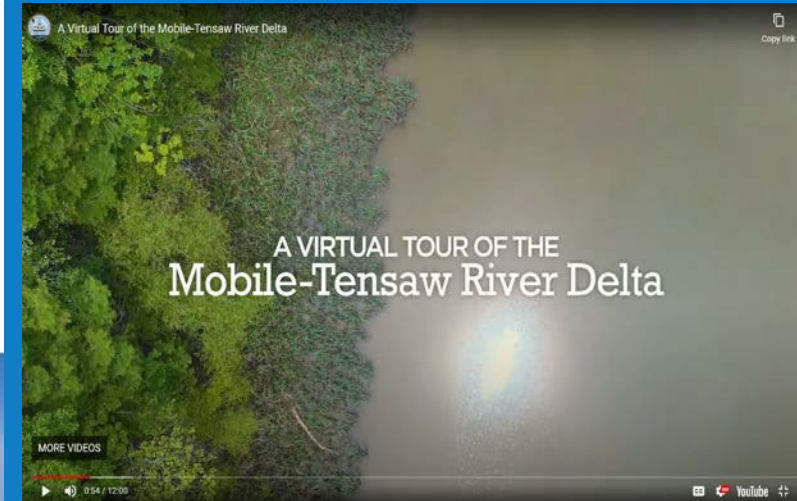


### Mobile Bay National Estuary Program

July 18 · 🌐

We'll be live streaming the weigh ins and other rodeo activities at the Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo today, tune in! Don't forget to stash your trash, the wildlife will appreciate it!

#TrashBlows #DontBeTrashy #CleanWaterFuture #ADSFR  
#MobileAI #MobileBay #GulfCoast #Fishing #SaltLife #DauphinIsland Town of Dauphin Island



## Other Stuff:

- RESTORE Funding for 12 Mile Creek
- 30% Design for Deer River
- Expansion of Fowl River to include Bellingrath Marsh
- Eastern Shore WMP initiated
- RFQ for Engineering Teams for Lower Fish River



# SCIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Met July 24 and August 12

- Hosted a watershed modeling meeting showcasing four different efforts in coastal Alabama.
- The committee is finalizing the rapid-response stressor matrix tool and planning a second robust structured decision-making version.  
Both link pressures to habitats and ecosystem services.

- Finalizing Fowl River Marsh Study Technical Report.

			HYDRO RESTORATION							
HABITATS	CCMP VALUES	GROUPED ES	DAM REMOVAL				ROCK RAMPS			
			SEDIMENTATION		FLOODING		TURBULENCE		EROSION	
ESTUARINE	ACCESS	VARIOUS SERVICES	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
ESTUARINE	WILDLIFE		#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
ESTUARINE	HERITAGE		#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
ESTUARINE	BEACHES		#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
ESTUARINE	RESILIENCE		#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#

Participants: 52 & 48



# PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE



**Met August 13**

## *A Journey Across the Watersheds*

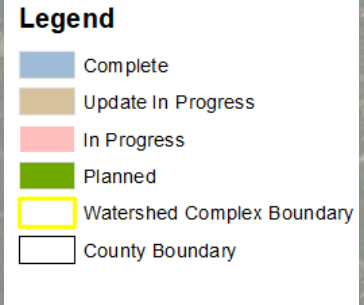
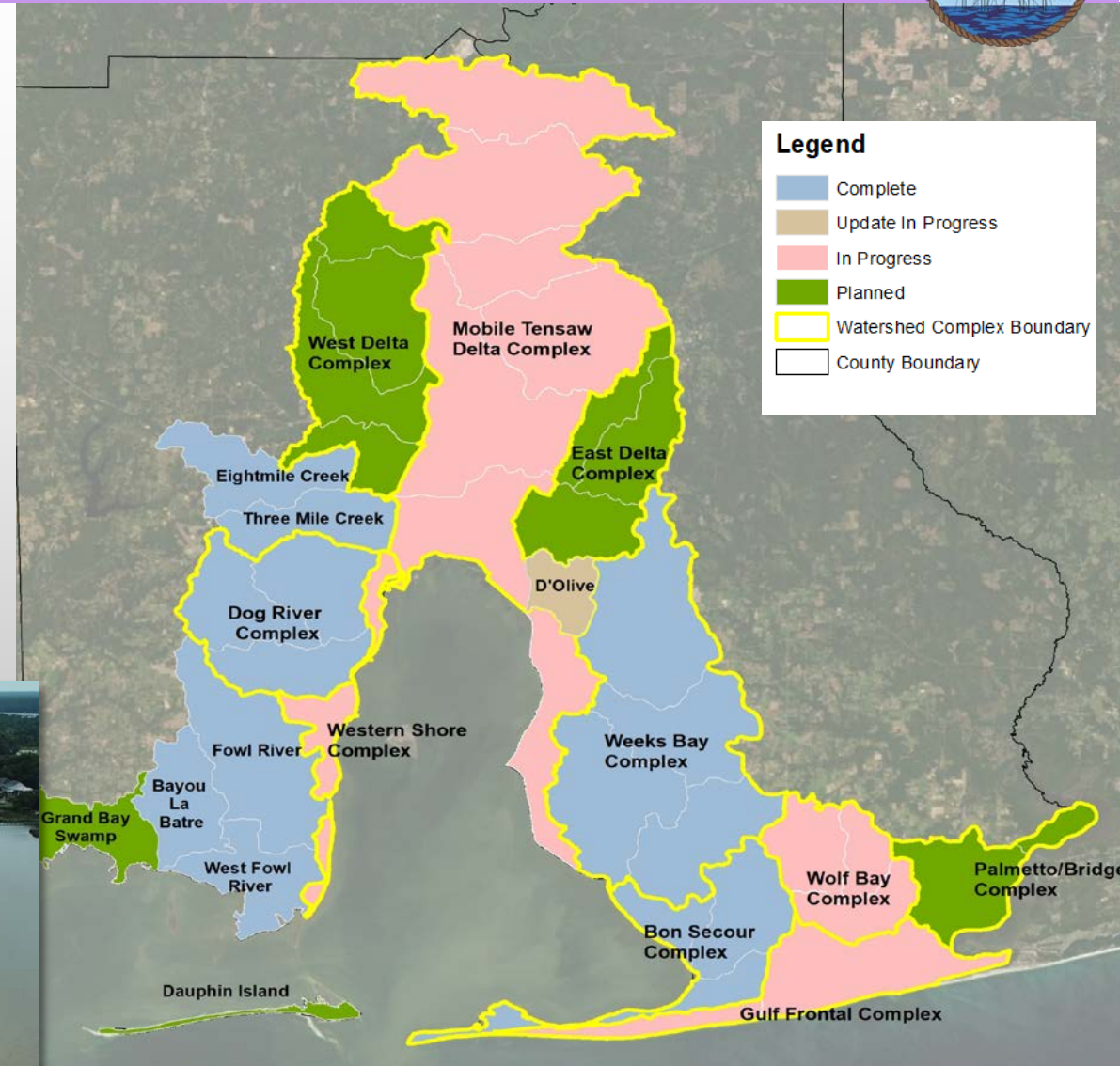
- 13 presentations on status of Watershed Management Plans



**Dog River –  
Schwarz Municipal Park**



**Mon Louis Island**

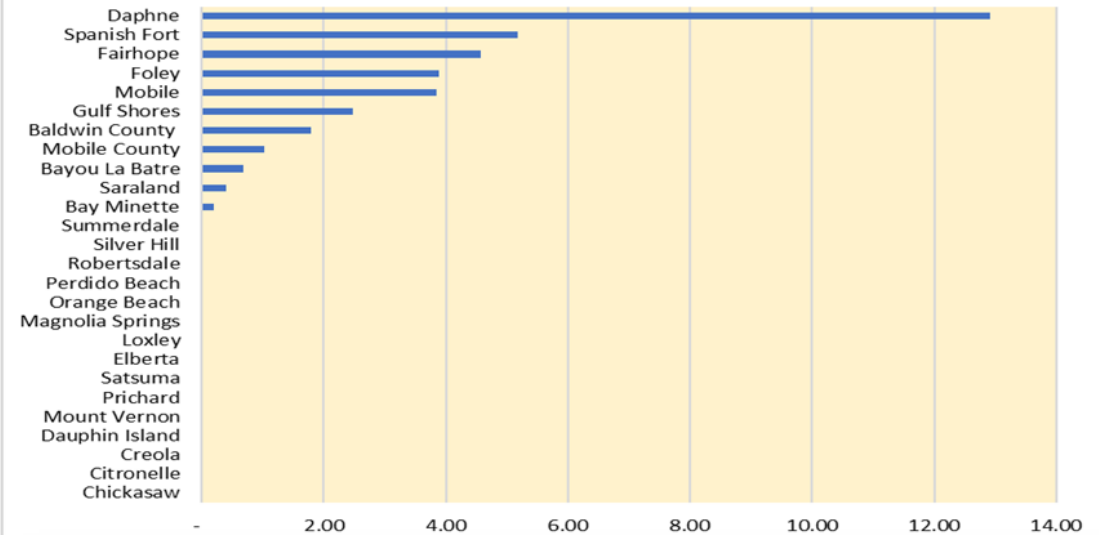


**Participants: 70+**

## Met August 14

- Wrapped-up review of Plant Barry coal ash pond closure
- Reviewed State and local investments in MBNEP
- Heard from local partners about MBNEP's value to their communities
- Updated on the status of watershed plan development and implementation

Total Per Capita Investments 1997-2020  
based on 2010 Population



Total State of Alabama Investments 1997-2020



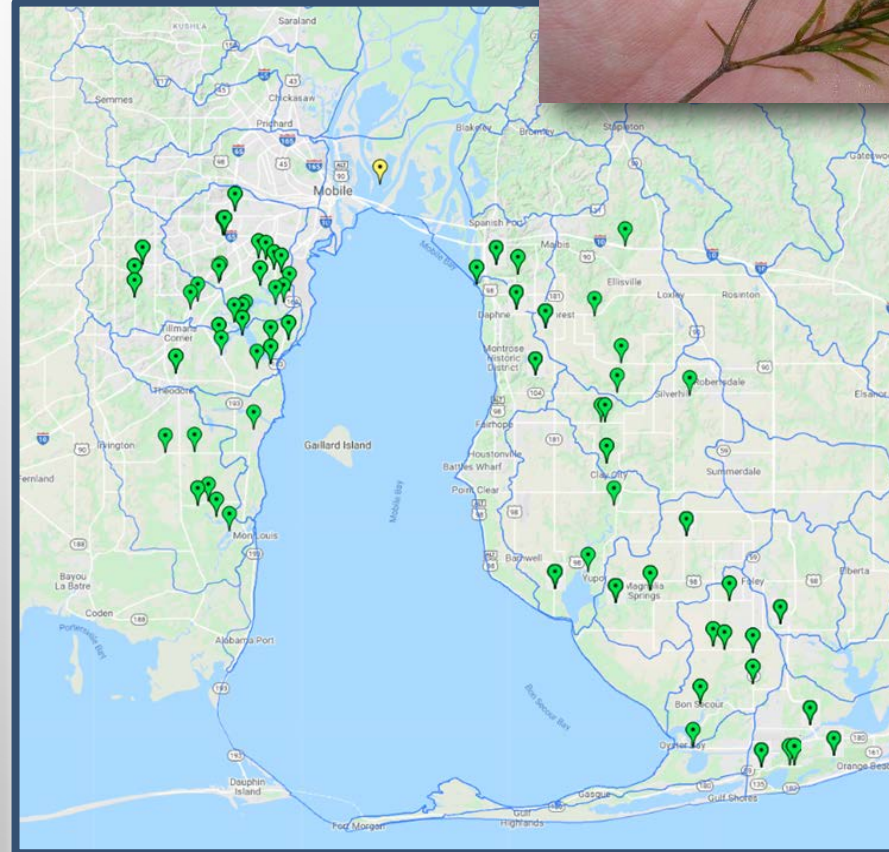


# COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

**Met August 11**

- Guest Speaker: Katie Dylewski
  - Invasive Plant Identification and Management
- Status Report: Volunteer Monitoring Program
- Next Meeting: November 10

**Participants: 30**





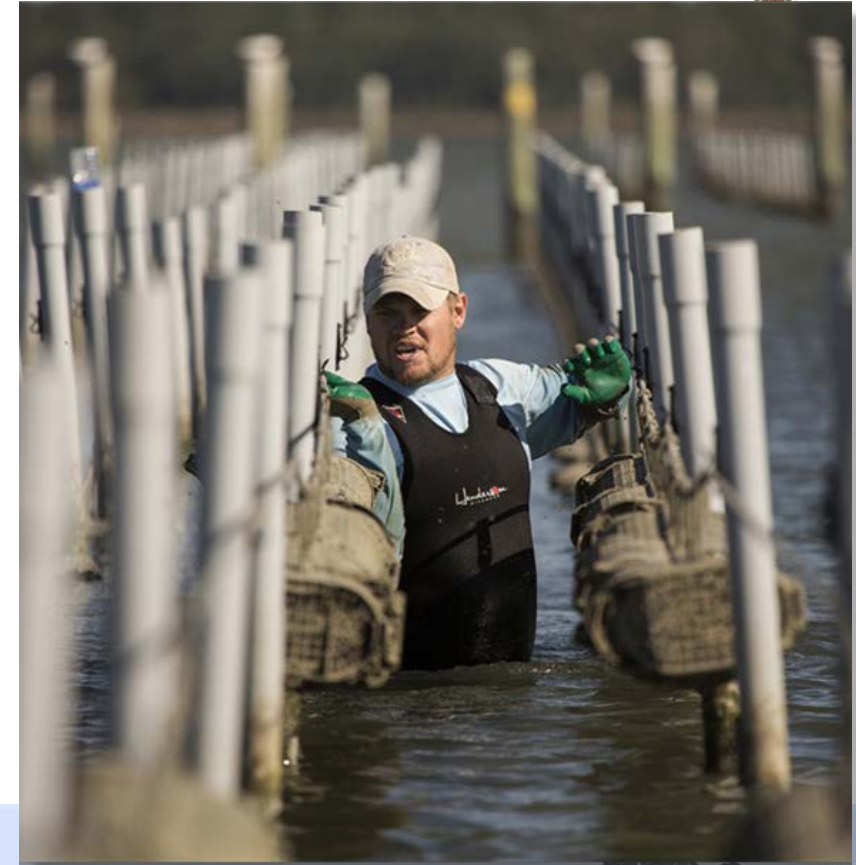
# BUSINESS RESOURCES COMMITTEE



**Met August 12**

Focused on addressing needs of Alabama's oyster farming industry

- Marketing
- Capital
- Available water bottoms
  - DI Oyster Project
    - Aloe Bay Redevelopment
    - Oyster Park



**Participants: 24**



# Community Resources Committee



- Met virtually July 15 and August 13 (with EPA Program Evaluation Team). Next Meeting: September 16.
- Consensus was reached on CRC Work Plan goals and objectives related to Trash Removal.
- Goals and objectives for Work Plan are being finalized around the following subcomponents/topics: Litter reduction and prevention, Litter removal, Recycling, Policy/legislative actions, formal/informal education, Awareness/outreach, and Behavior change.
- MBNEP provided a Powerpoint presentation documenting organization's trash abatement experiences. Other CRC organizations are encouraged to do likewise.
- Ditch the Disposables presentation stimulated conversation about opportunities about NEED for collaboration and co-branding.
- MBNEP will begin maintenance of an online database tracking CRC organization trash abatement-related activities to identify gaps, encourage collaboration, and avoid duplication of efforts.





## MBNEP Finance Strategy Purpose, Goals and Objectives

The purpose of the MBNEP's Finance Strategy is to develop dedicated and diverse sources of funding to implement the CCMP. Over the past five-year period, the MBNEP has built a reputation of capability in expanding the resources, both financial and human, necessary for achieving improved environmental management across Baldwin and Mobile counties. Through leveraging of funding sources, management of complex grants, securing community investment in the Program, and soliciting funding from the private sector to support specific initiatives, MBNEP is now seen as a leader in its field.

The goals of the strategies are:

- 1 Educate local, state, and federal government agencies about the value and accountability of the MBNEP in ensuring responsible investment of public dollars.
- 2 Cultivate engagement of local, state and federal government, and private sector interests in specific project to demonstrate how the MBNEP works to achieve project success and community support.
- 3 Secure long-term investments from local, state, and federal government and private sector interests in overall program operation and fund development for support of CCMP implementation.

Prior-year funding for the implementation of the CCMP and operation of the program has come from the following sources:

- > Federal- Annual EPA funding, competitive grants
- > State of Alabama- State budget line, Memorandum of Understanding with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, competitive grants
- > Counties- Baldwin and Mobile
- > Municipalities- Mobile, Daphne, Fairhope, Spanish Fort, Foley, and Gulf Shores
- > National Groups- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Healthy Watersheds Consortium

In addition, it has solicited funding from local organizations, including, but not limited to, Partners for Environmental Progress, The Nature Conservancy, the engineering community, and the Alabama State Port Authority to support special events.

With successful WMP development and implementation occurring across both counties, the MBNEP is in a position to revisit the above financing mechanisms and further develop a finance strategy that plans for the long-term sustainability of the program and implementation of the CCMP.

Objectives of the finance strategy are as follows:

- 1 Target key stakeholders (private and public) with interests in Mobile and Baldwin counties to educate about the MBNEP and its successes and needs.
- 2 Solicit community investment equivalent to minimum of 10% of project costs in either cash or in-kind resources in support of restoration or community projects.
- 3 Secure annual Program investments for the next five-year period from at least five new communities.
- 4 Increase annual Program investments by 30% from existing communities where WMP implementation is underway.
- 5 Establish a fund for coastal restoration through the Community Foundation of South Alabama as a mechanism for providing the non-federal matching share of grants supporting CCMP implementation with a target of raising \$100,000 within the first three years.
- 6 Solicit contributions to the coastal restoration fund targeting private sector interests.
- 7 Create a revolving loan fund, capitalized with State Revolving Funds, to support private sector investment in best management practices aimed at reducing stormwater runoff or supporting local fishing interests.

Chairs met in July 2020 with plans to re-establish committee and begin financial planning for future.





# EPA Program Evaluation Team Presentation of Findings





# **2020 Program Evaluation**



## **Mobile Bay National Estuary Program**

**August 26, 2020**  
**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**



**Thanks to Roberta, staff, partners, and committee members for a wonderful virtual site visit!**



**Program Evaluation Team**

Romell Nandi, NEP Coordinator, EPA Headquarters

Chris Plymale, Regional Coordinator, EPA Region 4

Kathy Hill, Deputy Director, Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program (for Duane De Freese, Director).



# Purpose of National Estuary Program Evaluation



- Ensure adequate progress is being made in CCMP implementation and that continued EPA support is warranted.
- Highlight each Program's unique environmental results, strengths and challenges.
- Identify areas where EPA can help provide resources to meet needs or enhance performance.
- Identify and share new techniques and approaches that help achieve environmental results.
- **Make recommendations for the program to (hopefully!) be more effective in implementing its CCMP going forward.**

# Program Evaluation Process

Current Evaluation Period: October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2018



- MBNEP submits PE package, including self-assessment and narrative summary of projects.
- PE Team reviews package and asks questions of Director, attends NEP site visit, and if necessary, has post-visit conversation with Director.
- Team recommends Pass/Fail/Conditional Pass to EPA management.
- EPA sends draft PE letter to NEP for comment.
- After any changes are incorporated, final letter signed by Partnership Program Branch Chief and sent to Director.
- MBNEP will work with EPA Region 4 and the Executive Committee to implement recommendations.





**Congratulations! We are recommending you Pass!**

# 2020 Preliminary Findings – Strengths



## **Management Conference**

- The Management Conference is high-performing and involved in all aspects of program management.
- Staff and Committee Chairs perform admirable work in keeping momentum on project implementation.
- The Management Conference has a very wide array of partners from various sectors to bring expertise and energy to bear for the program to effectively implement its CCMP.



# 2020 Preliminary Findings – Strengths



## **Watershed Planning**

- Mobile Bay is a national leader in watershed management and project implementation.
- The program demonstrates significant levels of buy-in from and collaboration with the state, local governments, and NGOs.
- The accomplishments realized in D'Olive, Three Mile Creek, and other coastal watersheds undergoing WMP implementation have brought additional partners to the table and catalyzed successful planning and implementation efforts in other watersheds.
- Working, where appropriate, with watershed complexes has allowed for planning efficiency benefits by reducing duplicative efforts and maximizing the efficacy of stakeholder participation and issue identification.

# 2020 Preliminary Findings – Strengths



## **Monitoring and Data Collection**

- During the period covered by the evaluation, the Science Advisory Committee has:
  - Determined baseline conditions through sediment analyses, hydrologic modeling, and mapping;
  - Developed a restoration monitoring framework;
  - Developed and calibrated a watershed condition index framework for measuring watershed health;
  - Conducted extensive monitoring in the D'Olive Creek, Tiawasee Creek, and Joe's Branch to "test" the framework.



# **2020 Preliminary Findings – Strengths**



## **Science Communication and Data Accessibility**

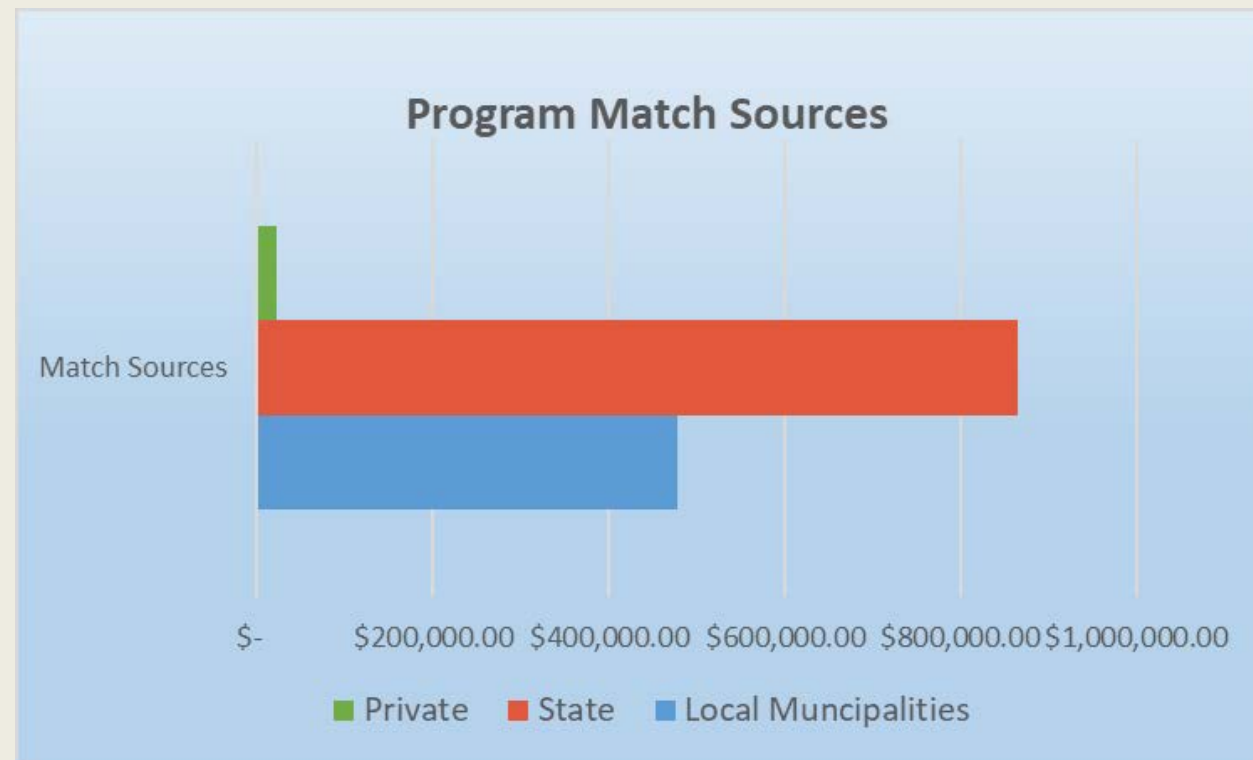
- **Status and trends information has been communicated through:**
  - **Community meetings held as part of watershed planning;**
  - **Annual report videos;**
  - **Articles in *Alabama Current Connections*;**
  - **The updated CCMP section on what was learned over the past five years through monitoring efforts.**
- **Now working on data accessibility through:**
  - **Building a more elaborate data cataloging system on meteorological information, scientific studies, remote sensing, modeling, and other information valuable for developing adaptive management strategies to build a decision support tool for better marine planning.**

# 2020 Preliminary Findings – Strengths



**Strong funding support from Federal, state, and local partners.**

October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2018





## **2020 Preliminary Findings – Opportunities**



### **Evaluate the potential synergies that exist among Management Conference committees and assist them in working jointly on common issues**

- SAC and CAC could determine appropriate parameters, sites, and protocols where volunteer-collected data could help answer specific questions or identify issues.
- CAC and CRC have areas of commonality that may benefit from joint efforts or the development of public-facing products for web, print, or social media that engage potential volunteers and inform the public about progress.
- The BRC has done an excellent work in identifying and utilizing resources to assist the oyster aquaculture industry. Consultation with the PIC, GNC and CRC may reveal other industry sectors that could be engaged to similar effect.

# **2020 Preliminary Findings – Opportunities**



## **Identify and address monitoring gaps**

- Consider an update to the Monitoring Framework as soon as is practical to include incorporating shoreline monitoring protocols and addressing citizen science opportunities.

## **Consider consolidation of branding within the Program's various trash-related initiatives**

- Evaluate the possibility of consolidating the Program's various trash-focused or campaigns (Create a Clean Water Future, Ditch the Disposables, Reduce the Use, Trash Blows) under a common branding umbrella.

## **Engaging non-contributing local governments**

- The Program should engage the expertise available within the variety of committees in the Management Conference in how best to make a case for funding participation from non-contributing local governments.



Thank You for Your Continued  
Commitment & Contributions!





# TRUCK BED TRASH CAN COMPETITION: A GO GREEN INITIATIVE

Pitch your idea that will help reduce the amount of roadside litter blowing out of truck beds!

**Grand Prize \$3,500**

[More information](#)



[Submission form](#)



- OTHER
- ANNOUNCEMENTS- Bays and Bayous Abstracts due September 7, 2020!
- ADJOURN

