



**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Project Implementation Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 12, 2019
Five Rivers Delta Resource Center, Tensaw Theater**



Attendees:

LG Adams (Weeks Bay Reserve)
Mark Anderson (The Nature Conservancy)
Emery Baya (Baya Consulting)
Mark Berte (Alabama Coastal Foundation)
Don Blancher (Moffatt & Nichol)
Jacob Blandford (The Nature Conservancy)
Celena Boykin (Baldwin County Planning & Zoning)
Margaret Brown (The Nature Conservancy)
Wade Burcham (Geosyntec)
Ashley Campbell (City of Daphne)
Walter Ernest (Pelican Coast Conservancy)
Jay Estes (Allen Engineering)
Mike Eubanks (Thompson Engineering)
Paige Felts (Volkert)
Carl Ferraro (Stantec)
Rickey Fields (Alabama Forestry Commission)
Casey Fulford (Baldwin Co. SWCD)
Leslie Gahagan (City of Foley)
Judy Haner (The Nature Conservancy)
Patric Harper (U.S. Fish & Wildlife)
Jordan Hollinghead (Allen ES)
Rob Howell (Anchor QEA)
Marc Wyatt (Anchor QEA)

Webb Jackson (Wood)
Andrew James (Volkert)
Steve Jones (Geological Survey of Alabama)
Cade Kistler (Mobile Baykeeper)
Veronica Klocinski (Payne Environmental)
Jeremiah Kolb (ADCNR, State Lands)
Nicole Love (Birmingham Audubon)
Michelle Melton (City of Mobile)
Eliska Morgan (Thompson)
Don Mroczko (USACE)
Amy Newbold (US EPA)
Joyce Nicholas (USDA NRCS)
Autumn Nitz (ADEM Coastal)
Steve O'Hearn (Thompson)
Mark Ornekas (ADEM – Mobile)
Amy Paulson (Environmental Science Associates)
Greg Pierce (Geological Survey of Alabama)
Chris Plymale (US EPA)
Evan Reid (Volkert)
Justin Rigdon (ADEM Water Quality)
Randy Shaneyfelt (ADEM Coastal)
Woody Speed (City of Orange Beach)
Lee Walters (Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood)

MBNEP Staff: Christian Miller, Jason Kudulis, Madison Blanchard, and Bethany Dickey

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:06 pm by Patric Harper. Attendees went through a round of introductions.

2. Approval of the Minutes

Patric Harper noted that Jason Herrmann was inaudible and suggested that we ask him to write up the minutes for his update. Mr. Harper called for a motion to approve the minutes, Carl Ferraro made the motion, and Randy Shaneyfelt seconded. The motion carried.

3. Update on Coastal Regulations: Living Shorelines

- Mark Berte announced that Jim McClintock from UAB will be presenting on 9/26 at Springhill College, will have collaboration at Bluegill that night, more information available on ACF website. Interagency coastal regulations program has been rebooted. This program's goal is to have open dialog between state and federal entities on coastal regulatory permitting and enforcement policies. Their first meeting was on Living Shorelines. The Shoreline Management Decision Support Tool

from Chris Boyd (Troy University) was presented. An identified concern was that there is not a lot of information for short vs longterm benefits of a living shoreline vs a bulkhead. USACE has a committee working to streamline the permitting process for living shorelines. Emergency Coastal Resilience Fund recently released by NFWF, due in November for Mobile County.

- Jason Kudulis remarked that one of the landowners adjacent to the priority spits on Fowl River MBNEP plans to restore, just has applied for a permit for 160 feet of armoring and it is in the 30 day comment phase. It's an opportunity for education.

4. Presentation:

Mark Anderson with The Nature Conservancy provided an overview of TNC's project that will be completed by the end of September and available online shortly after that. They have been working on this project for about 7 years. This project's goal is to look at coastal resilience site by site to identify sites that will be most resilient to sea level rise (SLR) to focus conservation efforts there. In the last 50 years, Pensacola has risen 5" and Galveston has risen 12.5" – no need to debate SLR because it is happening. But SLR is not consistent although all coastal areas are experiencing it. Posed the question of how do we retain our marshes when they are being inundated by salt water from SLR? If we can predict where marsh will migrate landward, we can prioritize sites to conserve for net gain of new salt marsh and habitat. In the Northeast, there is nowhere for marshes to migrate landward but there are places for marsh to migrate on the Gulf Coast. Looked at existing research, used several models (NOAA, USGS, SLAMM, etc.) and integrated them into a single model. They divided the coastline into individual sites, and each was ranked and measured. Results generate a ranking (or score) of resilient characteristics (above average, below average, etc.). Site resilience is defined as: the capacity of a site to sustain biodiversity and function under a changing climate. Resilience characteristics are broken into two groups: Physical (characteristics of the site, is there somewhere for the coastal habitat to go, to migrate) and Condition (ability to facilitate movement/migration). When something is scored "resilient" it assumes the site has the necessary conditions to facilitate adaptation and habitat migration – no predictions are made about what will actually exist at the site. Perdido River scores above average when you look at the resilience index score, and thus would be a great place to focus conservation efforts. This tool can help predict where land could be acquired for conservation. Potential online products forthcoming include a website, report, web mapping tool, story maps, and data downloads.

Questions/comments:

- Judy Haner: there are opportunities for restoration upstream and this tool can help identify those areas.
- Will this be housed with the Coastal Resilience.org tool? Most likely. Want to have it all housed together with the freshwater tool as well.
- Patric Harper: is this a tool that can be incorporated into WMPs? Yes, and they will send to us once complete so we can disseminate.

4. Updates on Programs and Projects:

- **Jeremiah Kolb, ADCNR, State Lands**
 - Point of Pines out to bid later this year
 - GOMESA Projects – 8 executed agreements
 - Department of Public Health – algal bloom monitoring.
 - Baldwin County Commission – stream gauge at Cty Rd 32 to monitor flooding.
 - AL Forestry Commission – landowner education on managing forests.

- Geological Survey of Alabama – Mobile Bay Delta and MS Sound, sediment quality studies.
 - ADCNR – boat launch improvements.
 - TNC – boat ramp improvements at Lightning Point.
 - Dauphin Island – land acquisition and boat ramp for Aloe Bay.
 - Daphne – D’Olive Bay dredging.
- Wade Burcham commented that the sediment quality studies would be of interest to the group, more information is needed.
- **Mary Kate Brown, TNC**
 - NFWF GEBF funded, 40 acres of marsh and tidal creeks.
 - Permitted in April 2019.
 - Notice of award to contractor.
 - Construction starts end of September 2019.
 - 300 days of construction following NTP.
 - Parking lot shown in conceptual design.
- **Jacob Blandford, TNC**
 - Helen Wood Park shoreline restoration part of larger Perch Creek park projects.
 - Half mile of shoreline protection.
 - Enhance 12 acres of marsh.
 - Intent is to restore habitat and reduce impact of storm surges.
 - Have not started E & D yet.
- Carl Ferraro suggested getting volunteers and community groups involved in marsh planting when the time comes.
- Question: was other restoration work done here? Is this a second phase of a project? In 2011, DISL put out experimental reefs and TNC expanded the project, TNC did some adaptive management out there and built more reefs out there last summer. MBNEP also did some invasive species management on this site.
- **Christian Miller, Mobile Bay NEP**
 - MBNEP is trying to coordinate with contractors to keep our website up to date.
 - Wolf Bay – underway, upcoming steering committee meeting.
 - Western Shore – have meeting next week 9/23, geared toward climate community resilience, using modeling we already have on hand for community engagement, hoping to fine tune this strategy and have consistency in the WMPs.
 - Little Lagoon – Geosyntec under contract, will use a similar approach with climate community resilience, had first steering committee meeting last week, want to include folks from FL in this one.
 - Mobile Tensaw Apalachee Delta – Wood was selected, Don Blancher with Moffatt & Nichol will help with project management, hoping to get them under contract in next few weeks.
 - D’Olive – updating this plan, working with Ashley Campbell to develop SOW, will be putting this RFQ out soon.
 - Fly Creek – will be next RESTORE funded WMP, look for that RFQ in next few months.
 - Marlon Cook is working under Vittor and collecting data, finally under contract.
 - Marlon is working in Deer River, Fly Creek, and MTA Delta, his data will feed into these WMPS as we move forward.
 - Cultural Resource Assessment NFWF report is complete and available online.

- Judy Haner pointed out that this CRA is a huge asset because funding on a piece by piece basis is very expensive. Looking at Little Lagoon and Wolf Bay, is there a consideration to do a CRA on the Eastern Shore? Christian said yes there is opportunity there and NFWF is open to the idea.
 - Jeremiah Kolb: Are there any limitations or restrictions to the data? Pan American did the study for us, SHPO was involved and obviously didn't want them digging everywhere. The report is a good resource with lots of history available online. The data is not available online but can be shared.
 - Patric Harper: Can others use this report for their USACE permit requirements? USACE was hesitant to come right out and confirm this, but the information in the report does meet their requirements.
 - What is the timeline for Marlon Cook's studies? He's probably almost done with Deer River, but typically needs about 4-6 months lead time to complete studies.
- **Madison Blanchard, Mobile Bay NEP**
 - Government Reports and Results Act (GPRA) for habitat and land acquisition projects
 - Purpose: created to establish goals for Gov't agencies, evaluate program performance, and measure effectiveness.
 - All NEPs are required to report on all projects being conducted in their respective areas of focus.
 - If projects align with MBNEP CCMP values and actions, MBNEP must report
 - MBNEP does not take credit, each partner is listed in report.
 - This shows USEPA the distribution of projects across the two coastal counties
 - Annual summaries are reported online through NEPORT.
 - From 2006-2018, 149 projects were reported with a total of 22,831.6 acres protected or restored.
 - Judy Haner: Pointed out that MBNEP rolls this information into State of the Bay. She also needs to report her fire acres to MBNEP.
 - October 1 – September 30 (federal fiscal year) is the timeframe for reporting.
 - Eliska Morgan: asked who MBNEP had emailed about GPRA, Madison said MBNEP contacted all past and current project partners. Eliska noted that we should be sure that we have sent info out to municipalities.
- **Jason Kudulis, Mobile Bay NEP**
 - Montclair Tiawasee: working with Andy James (Volkert) and Ashley Campbell, NRCS funded project (perpendicular to MBNEP's project) construction is complete. Fleximat was used to stabilize the channel and plantings look good. For MBNEP's project – 9 of 10 property owners are on board and the project is currently out for bid.
 - Gulf Corps (through TNC) will be helping with invasive species management on D'Olive projects.
 - D4 – D6: following storms in May, adaptive management was completed in July and seems to be holding up.
 - Greg Jennings will be checking all D'Olive projects next week for his annual inspections.
 - TC1 and TC2: this project in Daphne has suffered from instability and needs to be redesigned and reconstructed. GMC will redesign 360 feet of stream for this project.
 - Ashley Campbell: Two stormwater facilities have not been maintained in headwaters of Tiawasee and City of Daphne is taking them over. Jade is handling E & D. Currently surveying stormwater facilities. ADEM 319 funding is being utilized. E & D plans coming in the next two months. Installed constructed stormwater wetlands in headwaters of Tiawasee and have signage being installed that will talk about all of the D'Olive projects. She also mentioned a video about watershed partnerships.

- **Katie Dylewski, Mobile Bay NEP**

- Deer River: coastal marsh shoreline stabilization/restoration project with Thompson Engineering is under contract. Stabilizing up to a mile of shoreline and wanting to close the breach. Currently meeting with property owners to get access permission to collect field data.
- Fowl River Spits: working to get under contract with ESA.
- Twelve Mile Creek: 1,800 feet of restoration, currently at 60% design and applying for implementation funding through RESTORE. Invasive Species Control Plan is watershed wide and will also be part of the implementation funding through RESTORE.
- USA students and professors will be trained next week to measure Bank Erosion Hazard Index and Near Bank Stress, which will then be used in the Bank Assessment of Nonpoint Source Consequences of Sediment model. This model estimates tons of sediment produced annually due to stream bank erosion.
- Jason Kudulis: A comprehensive litter gitter program in Three Mile is about to wrap up and we have exceeded our goal of 4,800 lbs of trash by 165.9%. This project will be moving on in a similar capacity with Dog River Clearwater Revival group. Also working with Daphne Utilities to get a litter gitter installed on D'Olive creek.
- Patric Harper: Pointed out the Three Mile Creek Invasive Species Control Plan is transferrable across the state. Lower Alabama Sisma group would be a good group to give it to.

5. Announcements

- Jason Kudulis: Announced D'Olive Restoration Workshop for Dec 3-4. Firms wishing to sponsor are more than welcome to donate. Auburn University will be handling registration. John Curry will be speaking on day 2 on how to use hydrologic modeling software.
- Baldwin County Soil & Water Conservation District has hired a new coordinator, Laura Smith, and you can contact her using Rhonda's old email.
- MBNEP Annual Meeting will be December 12.
- Leslie Gahagan: Volkert has been working with City of Foley to do a NFWF restoration project on the Bon Secour River, finalizing plans and getting permitted now. Should be wrapping project up in the next 4 – 5 months. Purchasing about 89 acres in the headwaters.
- Ashley Campbell: Forever Wild application – made offer for D'Olive Bay land (100 acres) and should know if it has been accepted very soon.
- Alabama TIG NRDA just released plan and can go online and comment on it.
- Coastal Clean Up is next weekend, 9/21.
- The next PIC meeting is proposed to be within first two weeks of January (due to annual meeting being Dec 12). January 9 was suggested.
- Judy Haner: Mark Anderson complimented our group and is really impressed with all of our coastal restoration projects we have going on.
- Patric Harper: Mentioned GPRA again and encouraged everyone to report out on their projects.
- Constructed stormwater wetland feasibility study in Magnolia Springs is underway on Magnolia River. This is an area of interest for mitigation.
- Patric Harper: saw this morning an RFQ to develop water quality models for the MS Sound and Pascagoula River related to MS Sound Estuarine Program.
- Amy Newbold: announced Technical Advisory Committee meeting for Perdido Bay Estuary Program being held next week. Can join by phone as well.
- Ashley Campbell: Master Environmental Educator (MEE) program – Ashley Campbell and Amy Newbold – had training in Baldwin County and will be taking it to Mobile County, going over to Dog River first. Had 50 people in the recent training.

6. Adjourn

Patric Harper asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:50 pm. Carl Ferraro made the motion, which was seconded by Randy Shaneyfelt.