



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Herndon Graddick**

**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program**

[hgraddick@mobilebaynep.com](mailto:hgraddick@mobilebaynep.com) (251) 422-3947

[www.mobilebaynep.com](http://www.mobilebaynep.com)

**The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Commences Development of the *a Watershed Management Plan for Mobile Bay's Eastern Shore***

This week, the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program kicked off work to develop a watershed management plan for Baldwin County's Eastern Shore, from Daphne to south of Point Clear. As with other watershed management plans (WMPs) developed by the MBNEP using *Deepwater Horizon*-related funding sources, the *Eastern Shore WMP* will serve as a guide to environmental resource managers, elected officials and policy makers, citizens, stakeholder organizations, and other groups who care about the Watershed. The Plan will describe the current conditions of the Watershed, identify areas of concern, and recommend potential actions to improve conditions along the Eastern Shore, while preventing possible degradation in the future. Further, the WMP will act as a comprehensive blueprint for informing public decisions guiding actions that have an effect on the health and productivity of the area's waters.

Because the MBNEP considers public knowledge to be an invaluable resource, citizen feedback will be a crucial component to every step of the watershed management planning process. Throughout WMP development, the community will be given the opportunities to voice concerns about known issues throughout the Eastern Shore as well as chances to help prioritize issues of concern and recommend strategies to address them.

Initial conversations with Watershed stakeholders indicate primary concerns related to encouraging responsible development, reducing sediment and pathogen inputs, and allowing for improved recreational access.

The Eastern Shore Watershed encompasses approximately 21,900 acres along Mobile Bay and includes portions of the cities of Daphne and Fairhope as well as Point Clear and Barnwell communities. The Watershed comprises multiple subwatersheds, primarily draining directly to Mobile Bay. Primary named tributaries within the Watershed include Yancey Branch, Rock Creek, Fly Creek, Point Clear Creek, and Bailey Creek.

The mission of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program is to promote the wise stewardship of Alabama's estuaries and coast by using the best available science to measure status and trends, to restore benefits of healthy ecosystems, to build local capacity for environmental management and community resilience, and to grow the number of citizen stewards across our region.

###