



**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

June 27, 2014

International Trade Center, Killian Room

10-12pm

In attendance: *Scott Brown, Alabama Department of Environmental Management; Casi Callaway, Mobile Baykeeper; Mike Dardeau, Dauphin Island Sea Lab; Randy Davis, Alabama State House Representative; Jennifer Denson, People for Environmental Progress; Leslie Gahagan, City of Foley; Charles 'Skip' Gruber, Baldwin County Commission; Judy Haner, The Nature Conservancy; Patric Harper, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Programs; Phillip Hinesley, ADCNR-Coastal Section; Hank Hodde, NOAA; Jimmy Lyons, Alabama State Port Authority; Eliska Morgan, Alabama Gulf Coast Restore Council; Patti Powell, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; John Valentine, Dauphin Island Sea Lab*

Staff present: *Kelley Barfoot, Rick Frederick, Christian Miller, Linda Sierke, Roberta Swann*

1. Call to order: Patti Powell called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and committee members provided around-the-table self-introductions. Hank Hodde from NOAA introduced himself and gave a brief overview of the NOAA Office of Coastal Services.

2. Approval of minutes: Ms. Powell asked if there were any comments or revisions to the minutes of the March 28, 2014 Executive Committee Meeting, no comments or revisions. Casi Callaway made a motion to approve the minutes and Jennifer Denson second.

3. Directors Report: Roberta Swann

Ms. Swann gave an overview of current NEP activities-Living Shorelines document, finalization of the Three Mile Creek Watershed Management Plan and completion of the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan that has been released and will be available for public comment until July 31, 2014. After the public comment period, revisions/edits will be made and the CCMP will be submitted to the EPA as a final document. Ms. Callaway made a motion to submit the CCMP document after the comment period and all revisions/edits have been made. Mr. John Valentine second.

Ms. Swann gave an update on the NFWF projects. She began by discussing the progress of the Fowl River Watershed Sediment Study. She showed a map of proposed sampling sites for the study. She then put up a map included in the Alternatives Design study for the tip of Mon Louis Island. Although the NFWF grant proposed restoring to the 1979 shoreline using adjacent dredge material from the Fowl River channel, after further study it has been decided that sediment from this area is too low quality for the project. As a result, the project team is assessing what the options are for restoration, including the following alternatives: stabilization of existing shore; building out to the 1997 shoreline footprint; or pursuing additional funding to restore to the 1979 footprint. The issue is related to both quantity of appropriate fill and how to transport it to the site. The investigation has determined that there is adequate quality material, but the cost of transport is prohibitive. The best alternative is to dredge from a location within close proximity to the restoration site, where additional borings have shown a supply of quality sand. At this point, size of the project using this method would create approximately 5 acres of marsh and

restore approximately 1200 feet of shoreline. Roberta stated that she had contacted Bob Harris of the Port to inquire about any mitigation needs the Port may have and if they might consider being a partner on this project. Otherwise, discussions are ongoing with the State and NFWF to see if the project should be downsized or an additional request for funding from NFWF should be prepared.

Mr. Lyons asked what the budget was for the restoration. Ms. Swann stated the budget was \$1.4 million not including engineering and design- the NEP had money set aside for these activities. She stated Scott Hardaway, living shorelines expert, has been hired to work with Thompson Engineering as an advisor. Thompson Engineering was instructed to take the design phase of the project to the 50% level using a treatment of rock sill with marsh landward. Once complete the project will be discussed with NFWF and area stakeholders.

Mike asked about future use of the site. Ms. Swann stated the property would be put into a conservation easement. She also stated the property has been offered as a donation, but we are unsure at the moment who would take the property.

Mr. Lyons asked about permitting of the project and Ms. Swann replied that there was some concern about getting the corps and NMFS to approve of the borrowing of fill. Mr. Lyons stated that in fact, the Fowl River channel does need to be dredged and that the Corps has a line item for dredging small, underutilized harbors. He suggested that maybe the corps would entertain approval of borrowing from the adjacent site and using the hole created for the material dredged from the channel. Ms. Swann stated that the Alternatives report has been sent to Larry Parsons and Nate Lovelace and she and Linda would follow up with them next week to discuss.

Ms. Swann presented a slide of Joe's Branch step pool storm conveyance (SPSC) completion and discussed the success of the project. Ms. Powell stated NFWF representatives toured the Joe's Branch site and were very impressed with the design and how it withstood the recent hundred year rain event. Mr. Randy Davis stated Alabama Department of Transportation normally spends \$75-100,000 on repairs for Joe's Branch after rain events, but no repairs were needed after the hundred year rain event. Ms. Judy Haner suggested tracking the savings over time.

Ms. Swann went over the complete Joe's Branch plan for restoration and showed a map of the proposed restoration sites. An inter-governmental task force was developed that included mayors of Spanish Fort and Daphne. The task force has agreed to continue using Thompson Engineering because of their previous work and extensive knowledge of the watershed. The next phase of restoration will be the continuation of the SPSC.

Ms. Swann stated the Fowl River Watershed Management Plan RFQ was due Friday June 27, 2014 at noon and the D'Olive RFQ for design services is due Monday June 30, 2014 by 5:00 p.m.

Ms. Swann stated round two of NFWF funding would include watershed planning proposals for West Fowl River, Tensaw-Apalachee, Dog River, Wolf Bay and possibly Bon Secour River.

Ms. Swann stated the EPA has designated funding for Climate Ready Estuaries and she asked for a vote to amend the current workplan to include the Three Mile Creek Watershed-Toulmins Spring Branch Flood Modeling/Community Adaption project. Mr. Davis motioned to approve the amendment, Mr. Skip Gruber seconded. She stated an intern from Bangladesh, Maharam Dakua, will work on this project from August to December 2014. Mr. Jeff DeQuattro has agreed to be his community advisor.

Ms. Swann gave an update regarding the Three Mile Creek Watershed Management Plan. She stated the plan is completed and will be released for a 30 day public comment period.

4. Committee Reports

SAC-Mr. Mike Dardeau gave an update of the Science Advisory Committee's progress on the development of the Biological Conditions Gradient (BCG). The SAC has decided to measure quantity and quality of habitats with land use land cover as the stressor. He stated there are currently not many long-term data sets and therefore that creates trouble finding real numbers. The SAC will spend the next couple of months identifying a protocol for monitoring the three stressed habitats. The hope is that the monitoring program will dovetail with other monitoring programs being established around the gulf.

PIC-Ms. Haner gave an update of the Project Implementation Committee's progress on prioritization of watersheds. She stated the PIC will need to continue look at resources, needs and issues for projects. Now that there is money available the PIC can began work. The PIC would like to forecast and know which direction to move. Ms. Swann stated the NEP has started to standardize the RFQ process by adding the engineering firms are required to report to the Project Implementation Committee and to the Community Action Committee.

BRC-Ms. Denson gave an update of the Business Resources Committee's progress with developing an RFP for marketing firms to help with the Clean Water Future Campaign. The BRC is also conducting outreach to the business community and elected officials regarding the value of Three Mile Creek. They have done so by host numerous guided canoe trips down Three Mile Creek.

CAC-Ms. Callaway gave an update on the Community Action Committee's progress with YR1 of the five year strategy. She stated a survey/questionnaire will be sent out to CAC members asking for the progress in their communities. The results will be announced at the July 11th CAC meeting.

FIN-Ms. Eliska Morgan gave an update on the progress of the Finance Committee. She stated they are currently developing a formula to use when requesting funding to various municipalities. She stated the formula would make the amount requested fairer for each community.

GOV-Ms. Swann stated there would not be an update to the Government Networks Committee due to the need to discuss progress with chair and co-chair. Mr. Gruber stated the last GOV meeting was very well attended with new and existing members.

5. Old Business

None

6. New Business

None

7. Announcements/Other

Ms. Callaway announced the Government Street Presbyterian Church is hosting a summer long Urban Missions Camps. Each week campers will be involved in a community service project and Thursdays the campers are doing environmental cleanups along Three Mile Creek. She stated any additional help is welcome.

Ms. Swann announced the City of Mobile is creating a litter ordinance and as part of the ordinance, the city is interested in purchasing a trash boat. She stated they are currently looking for funding opportunities. Ms. Denson asked about the cost of a trash boat. Ms. Swann stated the boat that was demonstrated at Langanh Park was \$250,000.00. Mr. Hank Hodde stated he will check to see if the purchase of a trash boat would qualify under the NOAA Marine Debris program or the Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

Ms. Powell asked if there were any other announcements, none.

8. Adjourn

Ms. Callaway made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:22. Mr. Harper second.