



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

September 26, 2014
Five Rivers Delta Center
10-12pm

In attendance: *Eliska Morgan, Alabama Gulf Coast Restore Council; Jennifer Denson, Partners for Environmental Progress; Merceria Ludgood, Mobile County Commission; LaDon Swann, MS/AL Sea Grant; Patrick Harper, U.S. Fish & Wildlife; Patti Powell, ADCNR; Phillip Hinesley, ADCNR; Casi Callaway, Mobile Baykeeper; John Valentine, DISL; Mike Dardeau, DISL; Judy Haner, TNC; Leslie Gahagan, City of Foley; Charles 'Skip' Gruber, Baldwin County Commission; Susan Rees, Army Corps of Engineers; Diane Altsman, U.S. EPA Gulf of Mexico Program; Guy Busby, Baldwin County Legislative Office*

Staff present: *Kelley Barfoot, Rick Frederick, Linda Sierke, Roberta Swann, Maharam Dakua*

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. Roberta Swann introduced Maharam Dakua and gave a brief overview of his project for Three Mile Creek.

2. Approval of minutes: Ms. Powell asked if there were any comments or revisions to the minutes of the June 27, 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 financial report. Ms. Swann stated the NEP is coordinating efforts with Alabama Department of Transportation on the I-10 repairs from the spring rain event and is expecting projects to begin by early 2015. The Living Shorelines document is currently in review by the state. Ms. Powell stated the Living Shorelines document is a great resource, but has to be reviewed to be sure that it contains the right balance of technical and scientific data.

Ms. Swann gave an update on the watershed planning implementation status. She showed a map of the implemented watersheds (Eight Mile Creek, Three Mile Creek & D'Olive), the Fowl River watershed (plan initiated), and the submitted NFWF watersheds for funding (Bayou la Batre, West Fowl River (Delchamps Bayou), Dog River (upper, lower, halls mill creek), Tensaw (Apalachee, The Basin, Grand Bay), Fish River (upper, middle, lower), Bon Secour, Wolf Bay (Miflin, Sandy, Graham, Perdido Pass), and Oyster Bay). The Fowl River Watershed Management Plan contract was awarded to Goodwyn, Mills & Caewood. They are working with a small steering committee that they will build upon and also working with Sam St. John on aerial photography of the watershed. Ms. Powell stated the planning phase is an important foundation for future NFWF projects to be successful. It is also a requirement for the engineering firms to work together with the Project Implementation Committee and the Community Action Committee for input when planning for the community.

Ms. Swann gave an update on the Restoration of Three Mile Creek. The NEP is currently working with Commissioner Ludgood on securing funding to restore the Toulmins-Spring Branch located in the North

East corner of the Three Mile Creek Watershed (includes a portion of Prichard City limits). Maharam Dukua will conduct a community assessment and will recommend a strategy for planning with the community. The NEP has requested funding from the New York Trust Grant to conduct climate change and adaptation planning for the Toulmins-Spring Branch. The City of Mobile is working to secure funding to develop a trail from Tricentennial Park to MLK Ave. Judy Haner stated The Nature Conservancy has a proposal out for an ADEM 319 grant for a stormwater management plan that will include retrofitting areas of existing development to include amenities for the community within the Three Mile Creek Watershed.

Ms. Swann gave an update on the completion of the Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan. She stated the document is now complete and will go to printing next week. It was recommended the NEP charge \$30.00 per hard copy to cover the cost of printing. Ms. Susan Rees and Ms. Casi Callaway agreed to charge for hard copies.

The 2014 Bays & Bayous planning is well underway. The program committee has received 170 abstracts and is currently sorting through them to determine which ones will be presenters and which will be on display. The committee decided to add a 5th session for overflow (monitoring). Ms. Swann stated Mr. Winston Groom has been confirmed as a keynote speaker along with Mr. Scott Hardaway, Mr. Ari Daniels and Ms. Holly Bamford.

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 add Ms. Renee Collini to the study and she will be providing a document that will help with identifying freshwater marshes, habitats and riparian buffers. Mr. Dardeau stated the idea is to repair the upper habitats and in turn the ecosystem services in the lower waters will fix themselves. The completed project will not include an index, but will include 2 years of monitoring.

PIC-Ms. Haner gave an update of the Project Implementation Committee's progress on prioritization of watersheds. She stated the PIC decided to include all intertidal watersheds. The PIC is currently working to plan what next steps will need to be taken once NFWF funding is available.

BRC-Ms. Denson gave an update of the Business Resources Committee's progress. She stated the BRC's goal was to education business owners about who and what the NEP is and does. They are currently working on Phase II of the Clean Water Future Campaign. The BRC has been working to review the submitted marketing proposals and will next interview each one chosen and make a decision.

GOV- Mr. Gruber stated the last GOV meeting was very well attended with new and existing members. He stated their goal is to get more elected officials involved with the watershed planning efforts and to follow the outline for involvement. Ms. Ludgood stated there are currently many cities and counties that are represented, but not familiar with the work of the NEP. Ms. Eliska Morgan stated the Restore Council recognizes the value of updating elected officials to involve them as part of the process.

Mr. John Valentine stated Ms. Holly Bamford is currently working with National Ocean Service regarding Flood Insurance & Premiums. He stated to Mr. Gruber that this was a hot topic right now. Mr. La Don Swann stated HUD has a billion dollar RFP currently out to enhance resiliency in communities. There is also funding available from the Rockefeller Foundation. He stated these grants are for phase projects and must be submitted through a state agency. Mr. Swann and Mr. Phillip Hinesley agreed to work together to lead this grant effort and opportunity for Alabama.

CAC-Ms. Leslie Gahagan gave an update on the Community Action Committee's progress with the Clean Water Future Campaign. She discussed examples of advertisements that have been done with the Baldwin County High School football programs. She stated at the next CAC meeting that community involvement with watershed management planning will be discussed.

FIN-Ms. Eliska Morgan gave an update on the progress of the Finance Committee. She stated they are considering adding a new member, Ralph Helmlich with the Oil and Gas Board and he is also a City Council member in Foley.

5. Old Business

None

6. New Business

Ms. Swann stated December 17th will be the NEP's first Annual Management Conference Reception. She is working with Ms. Linda Ingram to plan a breakfast event; more details including time and location to follow.

7. Announcements/Other

Ms. Swann stated the EPA is submitting a proposal to request funding in the amounts of \$500,000.00 per year per NEP. There are five NEP's working together to request this funding that will address habitat restoration, water quality issues and status & trends in support of CCMP implementation efforts.

Mr. Hinesley stated Bird Fest will be held on October 2-4 and the Weeks Bay Plant Sale will be on October 10-12.

Ms. Callaway stated on October 1, 2014 at the International Trade Center from 6-8pm Mobile Baykeeper along with the NEP's CAC Committee will host a workshop on how to submit restore projects into the online portal.

Ms. Powell stated there will be an invitation going out soon regarding a meeting being held on October 9, 2014 that will discuss the Federal Council's side of Restore. It will be held at the Daphne Civic Center. She stated that projects have to be submitted by members. Submission deadline will be set for some time in October in order for a project to be considered by the State of Alabama. Ms. Powell stated once the review begins she might not be aware of all projects submitted and requested that if any projects move through NOAA or USGS to please inform her. Ms. Rees stated the Army Corps of Engineers is working with four corps groups to submit the best proposal and they are also working with 25 different tribes along the gulf coast who were impacted because of the oil spill.

8. Adjourn

Ms. Callaway made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:30. Ms. Rees second.