

**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Government Networks Committee Meeting
Original Oyster House, Mobile AL
November 17, 2017**



The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Government Networks Committee was established to bring State agencies and regional government administrators together with local officials of Mobile and Baldwin counties to more effectively communicate local needs/understand State agency functions and priorities. The goal of this committee is to articulate innovative ways to improve communications and management of our coastal environment.

In attendance:

Joseph Abston, Washington County Commission; David Baker, City of Semmes; Guy Busby, Baldwin County Legislative Delegation; Jeff Collier, Town of Dauphin Island; Marlon Cook, Cook Hydrogeology LLC; William Criswell, City of Creola; Randy Davis, Alabama House of Representatives; Susan Dingman Summerlin, ADEM; Chris Elliot, Baldwin County Commission; Jimmie Gardner, City of Prichard; Charles 'Skip' Gruber, Baldwin County Commission; Kae Hamilton, Town of Perdido Beach; Veronica Hudson, City of Saraland; Scott Hughes, ADEM; Michael McMillan, City of Spanish Fort; Eliska Morgan, Alabama Gulf Coast Restore Council; Chris Plymale, U.S. EPA; Patti Powell, ADCNR State Lands Division; Casey Rains, City of Spanish Fort; Elizabeth Roney, Bradley Byrne's Office; Margie Wilcox, Alabama House of Representatives; Terry Williams, Town of Mount Vernon; Tom Williams, City of Satsuma; Helen Wright, City of Prichard; Scott Bannon, ADCNR Marine Resources Division; Tonya Moss, Creola City Council; Ralph Walker, Creola City Council; Chris Thomas, U.S. EPA; Miriam Boutwell, City of Foley; John Carlton

MBNEP Staff: Roberta Swann, Christian Miller, Bethany Dickey, and Jackie Wilson

Takeaways

- NFWF-GEBF has approved \$33 million funding for 5 projects and amendments to 2 existing projects.
- The Alabama Restore Council is evaluating 64 projects equaling around \$300 million.
- The Federal Restore Council is in the process of selecting a new chair.
- The MBNEP is developing a regulatory review to help guide municipal and county officials in better management of stormwater issues on a watershed basis.
- Plan Lower Alabama Now (PLAN) is a collaboration of the municipal planners/managers in Baldwin County that seeks to improve communication and coordination in planning.

Commissioner Skip Gruber welcomed members, and each gave a quick introduction. The meeting was called to order at 7:45 a.m. Mayor McMillan moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, the motion was seconded by Mayor Gardner, and the minutes were approved.

Next on the agenda, Eliska Morgan gave an update on the status of RESTORE & NFWF-GEBF funding. An announcement came out this week from NFWF. \$33 million will fund 5 projects and 2 amendments - Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge Acquisition; Salt Aire Restoration (Living Shoreline/Wetlands creation); Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary; Little Dauphin Island Restoration; City of Mobile acquisitions and restoration activities (Three Mile Creek, Helen Wood Park, Perch Creek); and amendments for 2

existing NEP projects to add to our watershed planning grant that includes a hydrologic modeling project and cultural resources survey. Phase VI will begin soon and the call for projects will begin in early January. Alabama Restore Council Buckets 1 and 3 have 64 total projects undergoing evaluation equaling around \$300 million. Patti Powell gave an update on Federal Restore Council funding. The Federal council consists of the 5 Gulf States and 6 federal agencies (Dept. of Commerce, Dept. of Interior, Dept. of Defense, U.S. EPA, USDA, and Coast Guard). Bucket 2 is the federal level projects. The council is chaired by one of the Federal agencies and co-chaired by one of the Gulf States (rotates). USDA was selected at the end of 2016 as the federal chair. USDA decided that they didn't think they were properly appointed and the process for selecting a new chair has begun. The council cannot vote on projects without a chair. A NRDA draft plan should be out in the next couple of months. Please go to www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org to sign up for e-mail updates. Deadlines, release of a plan, meetings, and information on funding are all on the website.

Next, John Carlton spoke about the Coastal Alabama Regulatory Review that he was contracted to do for MBNEP. The review looks at stormwater requirements in the 2 counties and each municipality. Requirements and regulations for buffers, permits, pier/bulkheads, and living shorelines are some of the items being put into the master matrix spreadsheet for both pre and post construction. The purpose of the regulatory review is to look for regulatory inconsistencies across all municipalities in Mobile and Baldwin counties and make recommendations for improving codes and ordinances to better manage stormwater on a watershed scale. John Carlton led the regulatory review as part of the development of the Weeks Bay Watershed Management Plan, and that review will be used as a guide for the coastal review.

Miriam Boutwell with the City of Foley then gave a presentation on Plan Lower Alabama Now (P.L.A.N.). P.L.A.N. is a working group of municipal officials that arose out of the development of the Weeks Bay Watershed Management Plan. The group has met monthly and have focused on improving communication and coordination on planning efforts between municipalities and the County. The group has also developed a county-wide GIS project that can be utilized to aid local planners and officials of ongoing projects. Anyone interested in participating in the PLAN meetings is encouraged to contact Miriam Boutwell at 251-952-4011 or mboutwell@cityoffoley.org

The MBNEP 4th Annual Breakfast meeting is December 8, 2017. The next Government Networks Committee meeting will be held in February and the discussion will focus on the new GNC strategy for the updated CCMP.

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 a.m.