

**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Government Networks Committee Meeting
Original Oyster House, Mobile AL
March 28, 2014**



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:

Patti Powell, *Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources*; Charles 'Skip' Gruber, *Baldwin County Commission*; Tim Kant, *City of Fairhope*; Merceria Ludgood, *Mobile County Commission*; Eliska Morgan, *Gulf Coast Restore Council*; Patsy Parker, *Town of Perdido Beach*; Wanda Overstreet, *City of Bayou La Batre*; Carl Simpson, *Washington County Commission*; Melanie Baldwin, *City of Prichard*; Rhondel Rhone, *Clarke County Commission*; Scott Brown, *Alabama Department of Environmental Management*; Jeff Collier, *Town of Dauphin Island*; Connie Hudson, *Mobile County Commission*; Dane Hagood, *City of Daphne*; Kathy Couey, *City of Chickasaw*; Guy Busby, *Baldwin County Legislative Delegation*; Charles Murphy, *City of Robertsdale*; Diane Burnett, *South Alabama Regional Planning Commission*

MBNEP Staff: Kelley Barfoot, Tiffany England, Rick Frederick, Christian Miller

Commissioners Merceria Ludgood and Charles 'Skip' Gruber welcomed participants. Speakers included Ms. Patti Powell, ADCNR-State Lands Director, Ms. Patsy Parker, Town of Perdido Beach and Mr. Christian Miller, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program. Ms. Powell provided opening remarks. Ms. Powell spoke on the importance of collaboration and working together with the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, National Fish and Wildlife and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Mr. Christian Miller presented the purpose of the establishment of the Government Networks Committee. He spoke briefly on the process of developing a five year strategy and the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan methodology.

Ms. Powell gave an overview of the funding for the D'Olive and Fowl River restoration projects. She stated the projects were approved for funding because each project prior to funding had significant amounts of research and study already conducted.

Mr. Miller presented the 'living' five year strategies for each management conference group, Science Advisory Committee, Project Implementation Committee, Business Resources Committee and Community Action Committee.

Mr. Gruber presented the Government Networks Committee 'living' five year strategy to the group. He gave an overview of each objective and goal. He emphasized the importance of each municipality working together and

relating the information to the legislature within each district. Ms. Ludgood stated the GNC group needs the support and authority from each municipality in order to present a strong case for funding. Mr. Gruber stated the GNC group should consist of every elected official across Mobile and Baldwin County because everyone's input is important.

Mr. Jeff Collier made a motion to approve the GNC's five year strategy. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ludgood.

Ms. Patsy Parker gave a presentation regarding her work with the President's Task Force: Climate Preparedness and Resilience. She gave brief background information on the Town of Perdido Beach. She stated she was chosen to participate on the President's Task Force because the Town of Perdido Beach was involved in a Coastal Resilience Index Community Assessment with NOAA in 2011. In February 2013, the town was chosen for Climate Adaptation Training for Coastal Communities hosted by Mississippi State University, NOAA, Sea Grant, NE Research Reserve and AL State Lands Division. From December 2012-December 2013 the town was also involved in the Institute for Sustainable Communities Gulf Coast Resilience Communities Program. The Resilience Team consisted of Phillip West, *Natural Resources Manager of Orange Beach*, Jeff DeQuattro, *The Nature Conservancy*, Michael Shelton, *Weeks Bay Reserve*, Traci Sempier, *MS/AL Sea Grant*, Bob Gross, *Environmental Advisory Board* and Mike Crowley, *ISC*. The Town of Perdido Beach is currently in the process of developing a Resilience Plan. The plan will consist of three components, Communications Plan (currently being developed), Natural Resources Management and Funding.

The Task Force structure includes Justification, Objectives, Outcomes and Future. There are 26 members under the direction of the Intergovernmental Agency, 8 governors, 16 mayors and county commissioners and 2 tribal leaders. The Task Force will meet a total of 4 times, December 10, 2013 in Washington D.C., February 13, 2014 in Los Angeles, May 14, 2014 in DeMoines Iowa and July 2014 location TBD. The Task Force will make recommendations to the President on removing barriers to resilient investments, modernizing Federal grant and loan programs to better support local efforts and developing information and tools they need to prepare. Other climate related risks and results include shoreline erosion, stormwater runoff, loss of economic resilience, siltation, sea level rise, ground water issues –salt water intrusion, damage to built structures (roads, bridges, tunnels, buildings, ports), extreme rain events, health issues and changes to ecosystems.

Ms. Parker stated the Task Force work begins locally. The feedback from the community is reported to the full task force and sub groups. The recommendations are then given to the President and the future benefits return to the local communities.

Due to technical difficulties, Mr. Miller's polling session was omitted from the meeting. A subsequent survey will be sent out via email in the near future.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 a.m.