



**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Government Networks Committee Meeting
March 22nd, 2019
Original Oyster House
3733A Battleship Pkwy
Spanish Fort, AL 36527
8:00 am -9:30 am**

Agenda

Meeting Objectives:

- a) Provide status of NFWF GEBF & RESTORE funding and CCMP updates
- b) Review efforts to reduce litter impacts and provide comments/suggestions on proposed anti-litter legislation

1. Welcome & Introductions

Mobile County Commissioner Merceria Ludgood

2. Review and approval of minutes

3. Old Business

- a. NFWF GEBF/RESTORE update – Chris Blankenship, ADCNR
- b. Draft CCMP strategies for the GNC – Christian Miller, MBNEP

4. New Business

- a. Discussion of electing/rotating new GNC Chairs – Christian Miller, MBNEP
- b. Tackling Trash in Coastal Alabama - Christian Miller, MBNEP
- c. Review of Proposed Draft Anti-Litter Legislation – Rep. Margie Wilcox

5. Adjourn



Minutes

In attendance: Scott Bannon, ADCNR-MRD; Chris Blankenship, ADCNR; Diane Burnett, SARPC; Skip Gruber, BCC; Scott Hughes, ADEM; Merceria Ludgood, MCC; Mike McMillan, City of Spanish Fort; Chris Plymale, US EPA; Casey Rains, City of Spanish Fort; Rickey Rhodes, SARPC; Elizabeth Roney, Bradley Byrne's Office; Margie Wilcox, AL House; Matt Anderson, City of Mobile; Joseph Abston, Washington County; Hank Burch, ADCNR; Chris Thomas, US EPA; Terry Williams, Town of Mount Vernon; Marcy Brown, City of Creola; Avis Walker, City of Creola; Patty McCurdy, ADCNR; Ashley Henderson, ALSWCC; Kae Hamilton, Town of Perdido Beach; Veronica Hudson, City of Saraland; Jeff Collier, Town of Dauphin Island; Terry Downey, City of Bayou La Batre; Natalie Ellington, US EPA; Jimmie Gardner, City of Prichard; Howard Smith, City of Semmes

MBNEP Staff: Roberta Swann, Christian Miller, Bethany Dickey, Paul Lammers, Rick Frederick, Jackie Wilson

Takeaways

- ADCNR has created a Deepwater Horizon section to handle all the related work. The staff will all be housed at the State Lands offices at Five Rivers to aid communication.
- The public comment period for the CCMP update will likely be extended an additional 45 days.
- Margie Wilcox is working on draft legislation for a State-wide bill that would be aimed at reducing litter impacts. She welcomes any comments or suggestions on the draft bill.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00

Introductions were conducted and minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Mike McMillian and seconded by Joseph Abston.

Chris Blankenship gave an update on Deepwater Horizon topics. ADCNR has restructured and created a Deepwater Horizon section to handle all the BP-related work. Amy Hunter is the Deepwater Horizon Coordinator and Keri Coumanis was hired in Eliska's position as the new Director of the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council. Currently, the Alabama Restore Council is putting forth two plans. One a multi-year plan which has been approved by US Dept of Treasury. The Bucket three plan has been approved by the Federal RESTORE Council and sent to EPA for their approval. Work has also commenced on the third Federal Funded Priorities List, which is a competitive process among all five states for one pot of money. There will be a meeting to discuss the strategic framework on April 30th at Five Rivers and all are encouraged to attend.

Preproposals for the next funding cycle of NFWF GEBF are due now. These projects have been discussed with Governor and all projects were identified in the Watershed Management Plans under development by the NEP which are critical to guide project selection. NRDA restoration plan two (~\$35 million in projects) has been completed and plan three is under development which will have a focus on recreational use and birds.

Next Paul Lammers gave an update on the status of restoration efforts in the D'Olive Watershed. The D4-D6 restoration that was completed in 2016 is undergoing some adaptive management to correct some issues in the lower portion of the reach (near Hwy 90). Also, recently completed restorations include: DAF in Daphne and the Golf Course Trib and Melanie Loop in the Lake Forest Subdivision.

Next Christian Miller reminded the group about the CCMP update that was out for public comment. The strategies that fall under the purview of the GNC are found in the program area of

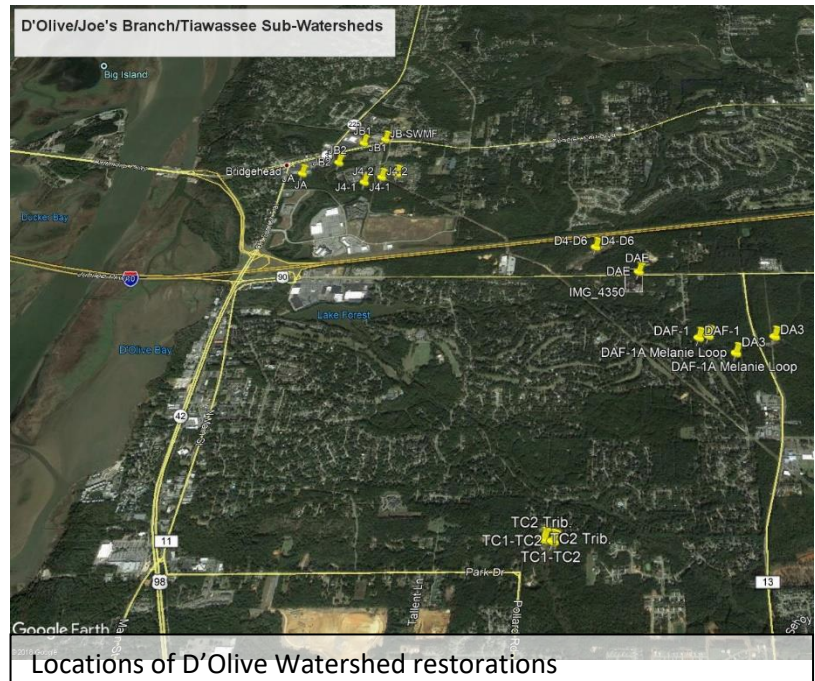
Technical Assistance and Capacity Building, TAC-3 ***Build capacity of local governments to manage and enhance coastal environmental resources.*** The recommended objectives include: *Improve elected officials', planning commissions', and other land-use decision-makers' understanding of the relationship between land-use, water resources management decisions, and environmental impacts; Improve the regulatory framework to better protect coastal resources; Support actions to protect and restore coastal habitats, increasing community and economic resilience; and Inform elected officials and the public about changing climatic conditions and sea level rise.*

Roberta noted that although the public comment period ended on March 18th, it would be extended (~45 additional days) as US EPA was still reviewing the documents.

If you are interested in providing comments on the CCMP update, please visit the MBNEP website: <http://mobilebaynep.com/news/ccmp-update-draft>

Next Christian gave a short presentation on the ongoing efforts to combat littering in coastal Alabama. The MBNEP's current efforts to reduce littering began in 2011 when they joined with the City of Mobile and other partners for the "Clean Up the Bottom" event, a community cleanup targeting legacy trash in the lower reaches of the Three Mile Creek Watershed. This successful effort spurred many similar clean ups across Mobile and Baldwin counties. Clean-ups also focus on building pride and connecting communities to the natural environment and include an educational component.

Since the MBNEP embarked upon the watershed approach, through the development and implementation of watershed management plans, it has become apparent that litter/trash is an issue consistently recommended for action in all the watershed plans. To help raise awareness and provide



resources to local communities, the Create a Clean Water Future campaign was launched in 2014. The Clean Water Future website offers information and tips and challenges residents of different ages plus businesses, schools, and municipalities to reduce stormwater pollution at both individual and community levels. Businesses, government agencies, and non-profits can commit to promoting the Campaign by adding the Clean Water Future logo in email signatures and advertising, including Clean Water Future tips in newsletters, and acting to improve their own stewardship behaviors.

<https://www.cleanwaterfuture.com/>

The Dog River Clear Water Revival has also been at the forefront of the effort, installing an initial (and unsuccessful) litter catching boom and later partnering with the City of Mobile to install a large-scale litter trap that removes ~400 cubic yards of litter/year. In 2016 MBNEP partnered with Partners for Environmental Progress and Thompson Engineering in the *Assault on Maple Street* in the lower Three Mile Creek Watershed. This provided an opportunity to test a prototype litter trap, the "Litter Gitter". Through trial and error this litter trap has been refined and is now installed in multiple waterways in the following watersheds: Three Mile Creek, Dog River, Bon Secour.

Currently, more municipalities are stepping up their efforts to reduce litter. The cities of Foley and Daphne each employ two workers responsible for removing trash from rights of way prior to mowing. Foley also offers curbside collection and recycling, and bulk waste and vegetation removal.

The City of Mobile created a Litter Crew in 2017. Seven days a week, eight city employees supervise Community Service offenders who worked a total of 11,000 hours from April 2017 to February 2019 picking up over 46 thousand pounds of litter from outside of rights of way. Mowing contractors removed over 800 cubic yards of litter from rights of ways in 2017 and 2018. The City, partnering with Mobile Baykeeper, has installed marine debris interceptors in storm drains across the City to prevent litter from entering our waterways. Moving forward, the MBNEP plans to continue combating litter through the development and implementation of watershed plans, working with local partners to continue outreach and education efforts, and with local municipalities to strengthen and improve regulations.

Next, State Rep. Margie Wilcox discussed draft legislation she is proposing to introduce during this year's general session to increase penalties statewide on criminal littering. Margie stated that the littering issue is important to her and is looking to the GNC to provide comments/suggestions for ways to improve the bill. As a small business owner, she does not want to be overly-burdensome to business, but to date business groups have not been helpful with drafting the legislation or offering alternatives to regulations.

Matt Anderson suggested it would be beneficial to give the ability to write citations to any city/municipal worker rather than having to rely on law enforcement officers. The police aren't going to write tickets for littering and there's no point in doing this if it won't be enforced. He also said he would have the City's attorney review the legislation and provide comments/edits.

Terry Downey said that the Bayou City Council has a work session on Monday and he would bring this up for discussion.

Jeff Collier said that the town of Dauphin Island provides dumpsters to the community (at a cost of \$30-40K/year) which has helped to cut down on littering and dumping, but the town doesn't have a recycling service. Margie stated that may give the bottling industry/Coca-Cola an opportunity to get involved. Coke was not in favor of a bottle deposit and stated they have programs that can help. Let them step up and prove themselves. Margie also stated that Sara Stokes with the Environmental Law Center has helped with the bill and would be a resource going forward.

Mayor Terry Williams asked about the possibility of charging for plastic bags. Margie said that is something that has been considered. She is not in favor of an outright ban but charging for bags is a possibility. The grocery store owners she has spoken to are not opposed to a bag fee if it's applied to everyone. A percentage of the fee would need to be returned to the stores to cover their administrative expenses.

Matt Anderson said the City of Mobile has tried using cameras in dumping areas, but their effectiveness has been limited due to poor camera angles, inability to get a license plate shot, and the amount of staff time used to track down violators.

Margie said there is also a need to deal with trash that blows out of truck beds. Mayor Collier said the NEP launched a "Trash Blows" campaign during last year's Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo aimed at raising awareness of this issue and it was very successful in drawing attention to the litter issue. The Town has continued to use the signage from the campaign to educate island visitors about trash. Chris Blankenship thanked Margie for her efforts, and that littering is an important issue to both himself and Scott Bannon.

Margie asked that any comments or suggestions be emailed to her by the week of April 1st, so they can be incorporated into the legislation that will be introduced at the start of the General Session.

margie.wilcox@alhouse.gov

Scott Hughes also said that ADEM has grants to support recycling/litter/dumping programs and the group should feel free to contact him with questions. ash@adem.state.al.us

Next, Christian gave an update on the status of watershed planning. Currently, the West Fowl River plan is wrapping up and a draft will be out for public comment within the next week. The Wolf Bay plan is in progress. Contractor selection is ongoing for the Western Shore complex. Next up will be Little Lagoon/Gulf Frontal and the update of D'Olive. Also, sediment studies are underway/getting going in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta and Fly Creek. These sediment studies set the baseline for the watersheds and are necessary in some watersheds (like Fly Creek) that have erosion/sedimentation issues. Marlon Cook established the protocol with GSA, and these will also be necessary in the watersheds that surround the

Delta in both Mobile and Baldwin counties to inform the watershed planning process. For more information please visit the NEP's website.

Merceria then brought up the issue of selecting new GNC chairs. Originally, the group had wanted a representative from both Mobile and Baldwin counties, but that could be changed. Merceria suggested that the NEP come up with a suggestion and send it out to the committee for review and discussion at the next meeting.

In closing, Roberta expressed her gratitude to Commissioner Blankenship for his leadership in guiding the implementation of the Deepwater Horizon funds and making sure they were used to implement projects in an effective manner.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30