

Land Use Planning for Sustainable Community Development Workshop Summary

I. Impact of Land Use on Water Quality

Workshop participants were asked to brainstorm a list of key growth issues for the City of Moss Point and identify drivers for conserving natural resources. The results are as follows:

Key Growth Issues for Moss Point

- Avoid sprawl
- Open space planning for water quality, floodplain management, bike trails, parks, and recreation
- Restoration of wetlands
- Keep Moss Point beautiful
- Infrastructure needs (e.g., water quality, roads, sewer)
- Infill development in the city
- Diversify opportunities for businesses and ecotourism
- Economic Development along Hwy 63
- Improving drinking water quality
- Rebuilding residential areas
- Need to shift development to center of city (not north)
- Too much development near water bodies (river's edge)
- Price of flood insurance

Identify Drivers for Conserving Natural Resources

- Work to reduce pollution in air, water and soil
- Finite resources
- Preservation of natural beauty, environment, and cultural beauty, and quality of life
- Ecotourism
- Education across the board
- Grow and develop using Smart Code
- Addressing greater threats (e.g., the salt dome project)
- Human health

II. Priority Areas to Conserve

Participants were divided into 4 groups, and each group was asked to select 3 geographic areas that are critical to meeting the City of Moss Point's goals for sustainable growth, improved water quality, and ecotourism. Each group labeled their priority geographic areas on a mylar map, listed the potential uses of each area, identified the level of risk for each area (e.g, current development, environmental issues, etc.), and explained why the area was selected. Additionally, the group members were asked to identify implementation strategies

for protecting these priority areas and create a list of potential partners in the endeavor. Below is a summary of the results:

Team A (Mark LaSalle, Jennifer Flanagan, Mike Dale, Jan Boyd, Greg Wilson, Ron Combs)

Note: Strategy for Future Planning

Of all the wetland areas designated on the associated maps, the Escatawpa River is the “least” protected, and it is critical to maintaining water quality for the City of Moss Point. High repetitive loss areas (due to flooding) include the communities of Kreole and Escatawpa. They should be part of the Greenway. There are opportunities here for open space, recreation, ecotourism, education, and floodplain management.

A) Moss Point Greenway

Use: Public greenspace for education and ecotourism

Risk: Much is privately owned

Why did we choose it? It's part of the greenway plan

Partners: city of Moss Point, Land Trust, DMR, MDOT, Audubon, NFIP, TNC, MEMA

Strategies: purchase, eminent domain, easements, zoning/ordinances

B) Downtown

Use: multiuse (commercial, residential, and greenspace)

Risk: some unwilling landowners. Current zoning is for heavy industry

Why did we choose it?: This is a key focus area for M.P.'s rebuilding efforts.

Partners include the city, FEMA, MDA, HUD, SBA, developers, and stakeholders

Strategies include zoning, smart codes, ordinances, and green space development

C) Kreole

Use: Greenspace for floodprotection, recreation, ecotourism

Risks: Unwilling Sellers and unavailable funds

Why did we choose it? Repetitive losses from flood damage

Partners: FEMA, MEMA, MDA, TNC, DMR, homeowners/landowners, businesses

Strategies: purchase, eminent domain, easements, zoning/ordinances.

Team B (Adam Dial, Judy Steckler, Jennifer Buchanan, Jody Thompson, Aneice Liddel)

Note: Strategy for Future Planning

Moss Point is bounded by floodplains, wetlands and large protected tracts. The city needs to focus on infill, smart development with limited expansion north into Escatawpa. Efforts should be made to protect identified sensitive areas to promote ecotourism and natural flood protection.

A) Piece by Audubon (fresh water pond and the Arjay Holmes property (?))

Risk: High

Why did we choose it?: This property is critical to Audubon, Pelican Landing trail, buffers, and access

Strategies: Work with Land Trust to acquire Audubon/Moss Point waterfront development

B) Upper Black Creek by I-10

Use: This piece of property could be a connector for a blueway trail.

Why?: It's essential for the protection of critical coastal habitat.

Strategies: City ordinances to address buffers around property

C) Escatawpa Riverfront by the ferry overpass

Use: River access for paddlers/boat launch.

Strategies: Identify funding sources

Partners in each effort include the City of Moss Point, Land Trust, DMR, DEQ, MDOT, MS Gulf Coast Heritage Program, local kayaking and canoeing clubs, and Jackson County BOS

Team C (Sue Chamberlain, Dave Ruple, Larry Estes, Chris Boyd, Daphne Vivarette)

A) Riparian Areas

Strategies: Fee simple purchase

Partners: churches, property owners, FEMA, city/county

B) Wetlands

Strategy: Fee simple easements

Partners: DMR, SeaGrant, Land Trust, TNC, DEQ, Trust for Public Land, city/county

C) Audubon Center to Pelican Landing

Strategy: Fee simple easements

Partners: Audubon, city/county, MDWFP, private landowners, DMR, Land Trust

D) Potential Hubs and Connectors in this area include:

Hubs

Audubon Center

Connectors

Pascagoula River Corridor

Pelican Landing
Riverfront
Downtown
NERR
Welcome Center
City Parks

Escatawpa River Corridore and
wetland area
Grierson Road Trail
Hwy 613
Refuge, wetlands
Riverfront

Team D (Janet Chapman, Robert Lavinghouse, Wei Wu, Aneice Lidell, Donna Joseph, Laura Bowie?)

A) Escatawpa Drainage Area to Moss Point

Uses: River and swamp tours, connector to NERR and ecotourism

Risk: Low

Why did we choose it? It's important for water quality

B) Escatawpa Area

Uses: Birding trail, swamp tours, Audubon Center, and nature area

Risk: Medium risk due to development pressures

Why did we choose it? It's good habitat

C) Riverfront

Uses: Boardwalk, river access

Risk: Pollution and stormwater runoff

Why did we choose it?: Central to Moss Point's rebuilding efforts

*All strategies and partners are similar to those listed by previous groups.

III. On-going Efforts and Next Steps for the City of Moss Point

After identifying priority areas for the City of Moss Point, workshop participants were asked to brainstorm a list of on-going efforts within the city as well as next steps city staff can take to implement the above stated suggestions. Below is a summary of the suggestions that were provided:

On-going Efforts

- Gulf Coast Ecotourism Task Force is being organized.
 - "Hop Off the Highway" is a program that is promoting art, culture, and ecotourism opportunities within 30 minutes of I-10.
- Grand Bay NERR is building a LEED certified facility in Moss Point.
- Pelican Landing is seeking LEED certification.
 - There is a neighborhood LEED certification program. The Kreole and Escatawba neighborhoods might be good candidates for the program.
- Pascagoula River Audubon Center is working with local businesses to educate them about eco-certification. The Moss Point Oaks Bed and Breakfast is currently eco-certified through Sustainable Travel International. The program is open to accommodations, attractions, tour operators, transportation providers, etc. Moss Point could seek certification at the community level.

- Municipalities should establish recycling programs.

Next Steps for Moss Point

- Citizen Task Forces are being established to assist with neighborhood housing and waterfront development plans.
- The city might create a list of partners available to help them reach their goals.
- The city has a plan and some money to move forward, but it doesn't have the people in place to accomplish the plans. Moving ahead has been problematic. Challenges include property acquisitions and establishing time tables to get the work accomplished. The city needs a facilitated process to help the staff move forward.
- The city needs training and guidance for current staff. These are the people who are charged to move the city forward.
- Community members need to see action. This is a coast-wide issue.