

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



MOBILE
BAYKEEPER®







A LETTER FROM YOUR BAYKEEPER

2020 was indeed a year for the history books. While it would be easy to dwell on the challenges we faced, I'd like to focus instead on the good stuff that happened this past year.

For one thing, families got outside. More people jumped in a river, walked through their neighborhoods, kayaked in the backyard, and explored all Coastal Alabama has to offer. Many of us took a stay-cation and found all the good places to fish, swim, bird-watch, and explore. That meant Mobile Baykeeper was called on to help even more than usual. In these pages, you'll see an uptick in responses to citizen concerns, additional water quality testing, and more letters being written to elected officials.

Mobile Baykeeper also took on several significant projects. We won a subgrant from the City of Mobile through the EPA's Trash-Free Waters program that kicked off in July. We've already started an extensive PR campaign to educate the community about the negative effects of litter and the easy solution to the problem – namely, if you want trash-free waters, then “Can It, Y'all!” We also won a big award from NOAA's Marine Debris Program. Partnering with the City of Mobile, Downtown Mobile Alliance, and Plastic Free Gulf Coast, we'll be installing gamified trash cans around the city and promoting restaurants that are committed to eliminating plastic and switching to more eco-friendly materials. These two grants fund the work of several organizations and are united by a single message – stop littering and “Can It, Y'all!”

The battle we're waging against coal ash at Alabama Power's Plant Barry has not slowed down. They appear committed to leaving their coal-ash pond in place which pollutes the groundwater alongside the Mobile River. The spring of 2020 saw the eighth-highest water levels at the site in recorded history. Cade and I flew over the area, and then took a boat and a kayak trip for an up-close view. We dodged a bullet with the flooding. When Hurricane Sally arrived in September, it missed the pond by a mere 40 miles. Several other tropical fronts were near-misses as well. Those are bullets we won't miss forever. Digging up and moving that ash, or recycling it into concrete, makes the best, long-term sense.

You'll read more in these pages, but suffice it to say I am proud of this Baykeeper team which found new ways to operate to ensure we could continue our work for clean water, clean air, and healthy communities. I am grateful for our Board of Directors, Young Advisory Council, sponsors, and most importantly, Mobile Baykeeper's members. You made a challenging year a resounding success. ■

Sincerely,

Casi (kc) Callaway
Executive Director



MOBILE BAYKEEPER

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide citizens a means to protect the beauty, health, and heritage of the Mobile Bay Watershed and our coastal communities.

WHO WE ARE

- Environmental Watchdog
- Informed Voice of Reason
- Collaborator for Solutions

ENABLING OUR SUCCESS

- Capable, Stable Staff
- Involved, Diverse Board
- Broad Community Support

OUR KEY FOCUS AREAS

EDUCATE AND ENGAGE CITIZENS

- Raising Awareness
- Educational Programs
- Opportunities to Engage

RESOLVE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES RELATED TO:

- Stormwater
- Wastewater
- Industrial Development
- Commercial Use of the Bay

PROTECT OUR FUTURE

- Ensuring Responsible Growth
- Engaging Early in Regional Planning
- Monitoring and Addressing Key Issues

OUR FINANCIAL FOUNDATION

- Operate Efficiently
- Sustainable Funding Sources
- Endow for the Future

www.mobilebaykeeper.org | (251) 433.4229





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President



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Vice-President



Jep Hill
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Dr. William Dumas



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Ray Mayhall



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Jeremy Milling



Benson O'Connor



George Oswalt



Debbie Quinn



Frank Reed



Scott Schneider



Sam St. John



Jasmine Washington

Special thanks to outgoing board members **Dr. William Dumas**, **Ray Mayhall**, and **Cullan Duke**. We greatly appreciate their years of service and dedication to protecting the health of the Mobile Bay Watershed.

BAYKEEPER STAFF



Casi (kc) Callaway
Executive Director



Cade Kistler
Program Director



Nick Bartkowiak
*Reduce The Use
Grant Coordinator*



Meredith Diskin
Program Coordinator



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Caine O'Rear
*Communications
Director*



Cece Pless
*Development
Coordinator*



Ilka Porter
*Education and
Outreach Coordinator*



Wesley Wyatt
*Membership & Administration
Coordinator*

Special thanks to outgoing Program Coordinator **Meredith Diskin**. We are grateful for her dedication, professionalism, and years of service to Mobile Bay and its coastal waterways. We will miss you, Meredith!



YOUNG ADVISORY COUNCIL



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Renita Allen
Vice-Chair



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Sam Wilkes



Waterkeeper Alliance is a global movement uniting more than 340 Waterkeeper organizations around the world. Waterkeepers protect more than two million square miles of rivers, streams, and coastlines in the Americas, Europe, Australia, Asia, and Africa. Our mission is swimmable, fishable, drinkable waters worldwide.

AMERICORPS



Allison Beaty
SWAMP



Aaron Castle
Patrol



Meghan Condron
SWAMP



Sierra Daugherty
SWAMP



Alyssa Flanagan
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Richardson Irvine
Patrol



Lucy Johnson
A.V.E.



Paul Lockett
Patrol



Colby Leonard
Patrol



Lizzie Simon
Patrol





MOVE YOUR ASH:

The Coal-Ash Pond At Alabama Power's Plant Barry Is Still The Elephant In The Room

Mobile Baykeeper's most urgent campaign is our work to ensure Alabama Power's coal-ash pit at Plant Barry is closed and excavated to a lined, upland landfill, or recycled into concrete.

Coal ash is the toxic byproduct of coal-burning power plants. It typically contains heavy metals such as arsenic, mercury, selenium, chromium, and lead, which are hazardous to human health, wildlife, and waterways.

For decades Alabama Power mixed the ash with water and dumped it in a massive pit that sits just 20 miles upstream from Mobile Bay. The 600-acre, unlined pit at Plant Barry holds more than 21 million tons of ash and is surrounded on three sides by the Mobile River.

Under the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Coal Combustion Residuals (CCR or coal ash) rule, there are two ways to deal with coal ash: either remove it to a lined, upland landfill or "cap-in-place". Capping-in-place essentially means removing the water from the pit and putting a plas-

tic and astroturf liner on top, leaving the pit unlined on the bottom. A utility can only legally cap-in-place if it meets three requirements: (1) the coal ash can't touch water, sediment, or slurry; (2) it must eliminate free liquids; and (3) it must prevent liquid from entering the waste and prevent the waste from getting into surrounding liquid, including groundwater.

None of these requirements are being met under Alabama Power's current plan, which is to cap-in-place.

Cap-in-place is a short-term measure. If capped-in-place, 21 million tons of toxic coal ash – more than 20 times the volume of the BP Oil Disaster – will sit just 20 miles upriver from Mobile Bay indefinitely. And unlike the BP Oil Disaster, this pollution is coming from upstream.

Coal-ash spills have taken human lives, decimated ecosystems, and depressed local economies, costing billions of dollars to clean up. Alabama Power will be legally liable for the "closed" pit for only 30 years.





The risk of a catastrophic spill destroying our Bay and burdening future generations for centuries is too much of a gamble.

Learn more and take action at [MobileBaykeeper.org/moveyourash](https://mobilebaykeeper.org/moveyourash)

Alabama Power has reported arsenic and cobalt levels violating the national limit for groundwater and received the maximum fine from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM). Cap-in-place already failed to stop groundwater pollution at their Gadsden plant, which was capped in 2018 and continues to leak.

Further, cap-in-place means the threat of a spill will loom over Mobile Bay and the Delta for centuries. That's why we are advocating for the ash to be excavated to a lined, upland landfill or recycled into concrete rather than left in an unlined pit mere feet from the powerful Mobile River.

This is not a pie-in-the-sky solution. Across the nation and throughout the Southeast, utilities are moving hundreds of millions of tons of coal ash to upland, lined landfills or recycling it into concrete. This includes:

- More than 130 million tons of coal ash in the Carolinas that is being removed or recycled by Duke Energy, Santee Cooper, and SCE&G.
- More than 35 million tons of coal ash being recycled or removed from coal-ash pits in Virginia.
- Approximately 15 million tons of ash being removed in

Tennessee by the TVA.

- 50 million tons of coal ash that Georgia Power, Alabama Power's sister company, is either lining or removing throughout Georgia.

After releasing last year's pollution report on Plant Barry, we worked diligently this year to meet with key stakeholders and elected officials, and raise awareness among the public.

Citizen outcry at public hearings has led to coal-ash removal in Southeastern states from Virginia to Georgia.

We believe Alabama deserves the same protections as those of our neighboring states. Now is the time to tell Alabama Power that burying toxic coal ash on the side of the river is unacceptable. Alabama Power turns the lights on after the storms pass. They have the chance to avert another disaster before it happens.

Tell Alabama Power to dig up the coal ash and move it away from the Mobile River.

The risk of a catastrophic spill destroying our Bay and burdening future generations for centuries is too much of a gamble. ■





STORMWATER ISSUES

Every time we get a Gulf Coast downpour, our Patrol team is out in the field working to document stormwater pollution and stop muddy water from leaving construction sites and flowing into local waterways.

Stormwater is one of the most significant sources of pollution impacting Coastal Alabama's waterways. Why? When it rains, stormwater carries everything on the ground — litter, pet waste, pesticides, and more — down the drain and into our local waterbodies.

In particular, red clay, dirt, and mud from construction sites ends up in our creeks and Bay, where it clogs fish gills, blocks vital light from wetland grasses, disrupts the food chain, and lowers property values and the ability to recreate by filling in swimming holes, rivers, creeks, and Bays.

Baldwin County is now the fastest-growing county in Alabama, and we're seeing consistent growth in parts of Mobile County as well. Unfortunately, increased construction spreads local and state inspectors thin and the developers who are adding to water pollution often go unregulated.

Our work to stop stormwater pollution starts before the rain comes and continues after it has dried out. Our Patrol team keeps an eye on new construction, reviews permits, and inspects sites after severe storms and whenever a citizen reports a concern. We document violations and reach out to contractors, developers, local municipalities, and the Alabama Department of Environmental

Management (ADEM) to ensure developers are not unduly harming our waterways. This year, we inspected a total of 58 sites and worked to bring each one into compliance.

Many contractors do not understand the importance of stopping muddy stormwater from leaving their site.

Building quickly without investing in tools needed to keep our waterways mud-free impacts the beauty of the region. We will continue to work with contractors to comply with their permits and local and state government to appropriately address violations when they occur.

Keeping our rivers, streams, creeks, and bays mud-free means we can all swim, fish, and play into the future.

DID YOU KNOW?

- We educate citizens to help stop muddy water from filling our waterways. Call our office and inquire about our Muddy Water Watch and learn more about how your group can get trained.

- Our Patrol Team has been trained as Qualified Credentialed Inspectors (QCIs), the same standards certification contractors

receive to inspect sites and understand which stormwater controls are needed.

- We rely on your help in reporting problematic construction sites so we can stop stormwater pollution. Call our office anytime you see a site with issues so we can do what we do best – stop pollution! **251-433-4BAY** or report at MobileBaykeeper.org/report. ■



ANTI-LITTER PROGRAMS



“Litter on the ground often finds its way into our waterways and becomes fish food. And then we eat the fish. It’s a vicious cycle we need to break.”

Litter is a significant problem in the Mobile Bay Watershed. Not only is it ugly, it chokes aquatic wildlife and decreases oxygen levels in the water. In 2020, Mobile Baykeeper was awarded two grants to help combat litter in our waterways.

The grants, which will extend through 2022, are part of a broader anti-litter initiative being promoted by the City of Mobile and united with the hashtag #CanItYall.

The EPA’s Trash-Free Waterways (TFW) grant has several components. One of the primary goals of the campaign is to draw attention to the fact that litter on the ground often finds its way into our waterways and becomes fish food.

And then we eat the fish. It’s a vicious cycle we need to break.

The #CanItYall message will appear on billboards, radio spots, and social media through 2022. Mobile Baykeeper will also educate and engage the community through hands-on education at several local schools.

We will raise public awareness of trash-free waters by implementing the Strategic Watershed Awareness and Monitoring Program (SWAMP) at LeFlore and Vigor High Schools – two low income, predominantly minority schools in the Three Mile Creek Watershed. In 2020, Mobile Baykeeper began urging businesses and restaurants to

reduce single-use plastic in Downtown Mobile in an effort to protect our waterways. This initiative is part of the “Reduce the Use” federal grant we received from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Debris Program.

Mobile Baykeeper is working in conjunction with the City of Mobile, Downtown Mobile Alliance, and Plastic Free Gulf Coast on the campaign.

Businesses that join the program will have their brand promoted by all organizations taking part in the grant. The goal is to draw enough people to each business that the cost of moving away from single-use plastics will be offset by the surplus of new customers and foot traffic.

Mobile Baykeeper also installed gamified trash cans around Downtown Mobile to make discarding trash more fun. In 2021, we will install art pieces around the city made from repurposed litter. The art pieces are meant to highlight an omnipresent problem and serve as a lasting monument to our fight against litter.

We will also host ongoing cleanups in and around Downtown Mobile, especially the area outside of the Business Improvement District where the BID Services team removes litter daily.

Seeing and working with the problem is a great way to increase awareness of the issue. ■







SEWER ISSUES

In 2017, Mobile Baykeeper filed a lawsuit against Daphne Utilities for misreporting sewage spills in D'Olive Creek in violation of the Clean Water Act. Mobile Baykeeper and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) reached a settlement agreement on the matter with Daphne Utilities in 2019. We're pleased to report the work required on the part of the utility as stipulated by the settlement was completed in 2020.

Mobile Baykeeper received tips from whistleblowers in 2017 that Daphne Utilities had been underreporting large sewage spills since 2015. One employee estimated a spill Daphne Utilities reported as 400 gallons was closer to 500,000 gallons. "[It was] the worst I had seen in my 20-year career," the employee said.

It wasn't until after Mobile Baykeeper published its investigative report and addendums that the utility started testing and reporting discharges accurately. Suddenly, monthly average bacteria levels were reported as "too numerous to count" from the utility's daily 3-million-gallon discharges into Mobile Bay.

OUR IMPACT

As a result of the lawsuit, Daphne Utilities directed an outside engineer to review and certify that its system has adequate capacity for rapid growth on the Eastern Shore. The utility spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to improve treatment at the plant. The Daphne Utilities Board also hired an independent contractor to audit its sample collection, analysis, and laboratory

procedures as well as its sewage spill response procedures. Now under new management, the treated wastewater is consistently testing below permit levels, and the water in Mobile Bay is much cleaner.

The year 2020 saw a slight increase in sewer spills in Mobile and Baldwin counties. The region saw 6.9 million gallons of sewage spill from a total of 380 spills this year, compared to 2019's 4.9 million gallons from 292 spills. A significant amount of 2020's spills were due to the numerous tropical storm systems that inundated the Alabama Gulf Coast with heavy rains. The good news is the volume of sewage spilled this year is still less than half of what the region saw in 2017 (584 spills, 26 million gallons). But we won't be satisfied until sewage spills are curtailed to the maximum extent possible.

The use of litigation, such as in the Daphne Utilities case, is always a last resort for Mobile Baykeeper. We prefer to work with utilities when possible, and we'll continue to form partnerships in the coming year. Our goal is to take a proactive approach in encouraging responsible growth in Coastal Alabama, so we can safely swim, fish, and play in the Mobile Bay Watershed. We'll continue to stress the need for localities and utilities

to invest in spill-prevention measures and upgrade sewage treatment facilities. Numerous utilities across the Gulf Coast are currently taking advantage of RESTORE funding to upgrade their systems. But it will take long-term, sustainable system-wide investments to make sure these problems are truly solved. ■





SWIM (SWIM WHERE IT'S MONITORED)

Mobile Baykeeper works hard to ensure citizens across Coastal Alabama know when and where it's safe to swim. For years, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), in conjunction with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), has routinely monitored for bacteria that indicate the presence of pathogens at 25 beaches along the Bay and Gulf. However, many bays, rivers, and streams along our coast go untested.

To solve this problem, we created the "Swim Where It's Monitored" (SWIM) Program in 2017 to provide our



community with up-to-date water quality information at its favorite swimming hole. SWIM also provides companies, non-profits, and private groups the opportunity to sponsor water quality monitoring at a location of their choosing. This monitoring allows citizens to make informed decisions about when and where to safely swim, fish, boat, or play.

HOW WE TEST

The SWIM Program's primary focus involves testing for fecal bacteria known as *Enterococcus* and *E. coli* which indicate the presence of pathogens that can endanger our health. After heading out to sites around Mobile and Baldwin

counties to collect samples, we process them in the lab and analyze them after 24 hours of incubation. Once we have the results, we post them on our website and on the Swim Guide App. We also send out weekly emails throughout the summer with the latest results.

In 2020, we monitored 14 sites through the SWIM Program and took a total of 765 samples. This marked a big increase from 2017-2018 when we were only sampling three sites. Of the 14 SWIM sites that are currently being sponsored through Mobile Baykeeper, ten passed EPA thresholds for swimming the majority of the time. While almost no site passes the safety threshold 100 percent of the time, we know Mobile Bay deserves better. We're going into 2021 with a lot more data to help guide us on where the problems exist. We intend to use that information to track down sources of bacterial pollution in Magnolia River, Chickasaw Creek, Dog River, and Fish River. We look forward to sharing our results with you and working with partners to resolve pollution problems wherever we find them.

In the meantime, we want to keep citizens informed. That's why our team samples on a weekly basis throughout the summer — on weekends and holidays, in rainstorms and on scorching summer days — to ensure you have the latest results. Wondering if your favorite spot to swim is tested? Head to www.MobileBaykeeper.org/swim to find out. If it's not, consider sponsoring a site and letting us monitor it for you.

Want to get the latest water quality results? Download the Swim Guide App from the App Store or Google Play. You can also sign up for email updates on our website at www.mobilebaykeeper.org/swim. ■



SWIM SITE	SWIM SITE SPONSOR	SAMPLES TAKEN	PERCENT OF SAMPLES W/ HIGH* BACTERIA LEVELS
Battles Wharf, Mobile Bay	Families of Fairhope and Point Clear	34	6%
Turkey Branch	South Alabama Land Trust	36	58%
Optimist Lake, Milkhouse Creek	Sheri Lyn Gros and the Highland Park Community Association	15	33%
Cold Hole, Magnolia River	Town of Magnolia Springs	39	36%
Point Clear, Mobile Bay	Families of Fairhope and Point Clear	36	28%
Live Oak Water and Beach Access, Mobile Bay	Families of Fairhope and Point Clear	36	39%
'It'll Do', Mobile Bay	Middleton Family	29	17%
Schwarz Park, Halls Mill Creek	Dorothy D. Trabits Stephens Foundation	55	53%
Honey Road Boat Launch, Fish River	South Alabama Land Trust	29	24%
Bohemian Park, Fish River	South Alabama Land Trust	43	26%
Bellingrath Gardens, Fowl River	Residents of Fowl River	19	58%
Dog River Park, Dog River	Dorothy D. Trabits Stephens Foundation	48	46%
Devil's Hole, Magnolia River	Town of Magnolia Springs	42	24%
Chickasabogue Park, Chickasaw Creek	Ben May Charitable Trust	38	71%
TOTAL SWIM SITES MONITORED	TOTAL SAMPLES TAKEN	PERCENT OF SAMPLES W/ HIGH* BACTERIA LEVELS	
14	499	37%	

**High bacteria levels are defined as any result greater than the EPA threshold of 104 colony forming units (CFU) of Enterococci /100 mL of water or 235 CFU of E. coli /100mL, for sites where E. coli is tested.*





AMERICORPS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

AmeriCorps is a national program that engages adults in public service work that meets critical needs in the community. Mobile Baykeeper hosts AmeriCorps Members who fill our local needs by working for clean water, clean air, and healthy communities. In return for their service, the team Members receive an educational stipend for compensation. The staff and board work hard to ensure the Members are well-trained to enter the workforce upon completion of the program.



Baykeeper (AVE) AmeriCorps Volunteer Engagement Program

Baykeeper AVE seeks volunteers and teaches them to become stewards of our watershed. This team organizes activities such as litter cleanups and invasive species removals. Baykeeper AVE Members coordinate and collaborate with community groups and non-profit organizations to increase participation in environmental stewardship activities.

OUR IMPACT TO DATE

Volunteers Engaged: 4,926
Member Activities Provided: 141
Apple Snails Removed: 13,395

Baykeeper AVE fosters engagement with the community to make sure the education part sticks. Talking to volunteers and hearing their concerns and reasons for service provide the motivation to reach our goals. It's the volunteers who inspire the team to keep working for clean air, clean water, and healthy communities.

Baykeeper AmeriCorps Patrol and Monitoring Program

The AmeriCorps Baykeeper Patrol Team focuses on improving water quality and reducing the impact from stormwater, sewer, and industrial pollution. Our core activities include conducting site inspections, investigating citizen concerns, collecting water quality samples, documenting environmental pollution, researching incoming projects, and performing trash assessments.

OUR IMPACT TO DATE

Citizen Concerns Addressed: 224
Inspections Conducted: 209
Water Samples Taken: 1,291
Bacteriological Samples Taken: 2,377

The Patrol Team interacts one-on-one with our coastal communities and can see the impact of its work first-hand. This is a team chock full of passion who doesn't mind getting its hands dirty.

Strategic Watershed Awareness & Monitoring Program (SWAMP)

SWAMP is a public awareness and citizen-based environmental education and monitoring program. SWAMP AmeriCorps Members spend their time giving educational presentations and training water-quality monitors from grade-school age to retirees.

OUR IMPACT TO DATE

Community Members Educated: 7,877
Presentations Given: 196 (at 29 schools)
Virtual Presentations Viewed: 5,036
Monitoring Workshops Given: 65
Individuals Trained as Water-Quality Monitors: 454

The SWAMP Team has been spotted all over Mobile and Baldwin counties providing watershed education and informing community members that we all play a role in the health of our waterways. Through these engaging, educational sessions, SWAMP is ensuring that generations of Coastal Alabamians will be equipped to fight for clean water.





MOBILE BAY HAS GOT THE SWAMPERS

SWAMP — the Strategic Watershed Awareness and Monitoring Program — is our signature Environmental Education program. Through SWAMP, our education team strives to inform students and adults about the Mobile Bay Watershed. With interactive presentations, curriculum-relevant professional development, and EPA-approved water quality monitor training, we raise awareness and provide citizens opportunities to help protect Mobile Bay and our coastal communities.

Generous funding from grantors allows us to train 30 students from each of our SWAMP schools. Once trained by our Program Director using the Alabama Water Watch program, the students become certified water quality monitors. After certification, the students take monthly field trips to collect and test water from their school's watershed.

During 2020, we were able to continue working with two of our original schools, LeFlore High School and Citronelle High School. Support for LeFlore came from EPA-Gulf of Mexico Program (GOMP), while AM/NS Calvert continued to invest in Citronelle High. We were also able to keep working with Vigor High School thanks to the City of Mobile's EPA grant, Trash-Free Waters. Dog River Clear Water Revival-GOMP focused their efforts on Eslava Creek, a tributary of Dog River. This allowed us to work with Murphy High School, which we had not yet had the opportunity to do.

WHEN COVID-19 CLOSED THE SCHOOLS

What do you do when the majority of your key education program is carried out with local high-school students and they are suddenly not in school anymore? You roll up your sleeves and keep going! When COVID-19 closed the schools

in the first quarter of the year, our education team quickly rallied to continue providing the same usual programming. We started recording videos which featured our SWAMP presentation and watershed table demonstration, as well as problems and solutions to environmental issues in our community. Our AmeriCorps SWAMP Members stepped up and continued to collect and test water from local waterways for the students. They tested five sites for each of the four SWAMP schools totaling 40 samples taken.



Despite losing our ability to teach in-person, our reach became more widespread. Through the videos we released, we were able to educate 5,036 students and community members.

ENGAGING EDUCATORS

During the fall, our education team had the opportunity to assist local Mobile County Public School System fourth-grade teachers with their Water and Land Unit. We identified three curriculum objectives and created lesson plans which included key vocabulary terminology, background information, demonstrations, and experiments.

Most importantly, the Baykeeper education team was able to build a relationship with the curriculum specialists from the school system. We are now looking forward to providing a 5th grade PD in the spring of 2021 and 6th and 7th grade teacher trainings during the 2021-2022 school year. ■



2020

BY THE NUMBERS

612 Volunteers engaged

5,036 Virtual SWAMP presentations viewed

847 Bacteriological water samples taken

6 Apple Snail roundups

4,946 Community letters sent

393 Sewage spills tracked

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWING

 16,643

 5,176

 4,946



Engaging The Community, Empowering Our Citizens

Mobile Baykeeper, along with our dedicated members and volunteers, kicked off 2020 with the 4th annual MLK Day of Service. To honor Martin Luther King, Jr., we partnered with local organizations to host a major cleanup along Eslava Creek. More than 130 volunteers collected over 3,000 pounds of trash at four different sites along Eslava Creek, a tributary of Dog River that empties into Mobile Bay and goes unnoticed by many in the city.

With continued momentum and the help of 75 volunteers, we hosted a post-Mardi Gras cleanup and collected 500 pounds of litter. In years past we focused on removing litter from One Mile Creek, which is located in Downtown Mobile off Broad Street. After two years of trash removal and the addition of a marine debris receptor that collects litter as it flows from a storm drain, we moved our cleanup to the land surrounding One Mile Creek.

Since this area still bears the brunt of leftover Mardi Gras debris, we felt it was an important area to tackle and continue to work on each year. Our next big cleanup occurred on Earth Day. Though we were now in the grip of the pandemic, we did not let it slow us down. Since we could not host an in-person cleanup, we hosted a virtual

Earth Day cleanup. We encouraged our members and volunteers to get out with the family, grab a friend, and clean up their neighborhoods. In all, 77 people participated and collected nearly 600 pounds of litter.

In addition to our big cleanups, local citizens participated in their own DIY Cleanups. Local churches, businesses, and neighborhood groups took initiative and organized their own events. We provided how-to materials and all the necessary equipment.

These DIYs proved to be very popular during the pandemic as people were looking for ways to get out and help the community. In all, Mobile Baykeeper was able to engage 279 people in the community through this do-it-

yourself method. Due to COVID-19, we were not able to engage with community members directly at events. We had to find creative ways of continuing to provide citizens with a means to help protect Mobile Bay and the coastal communities.

We produced and shared videos on various environmental topics, hosted Facebook Live events, and moved Brews with Baykeeper to a virtual setting. These efforts helped us reach over 17,000 people. ■

“Service to others
is the rent you pay
for your room here
on Earth.”

— Muhammad Ali







FUNDRAISING WITH A PURPOSE

2020 brought an entirely new meaning to fundraising with a purpose. With the impacts of the pandemic, we lost our normal ability to fundraise through event growth, reach, and participation. Instead, with the support of our Sponsors, our Board of Directors, and our incredible members, we were able to re-envision 2020 and safely advance our mission — to protect the beauty, health, and heritage of the Mobile Bay Watershed and our coastal communities.

Even without being able to connect in person, we were able to host events with purpose: raising awareness for our mission, connecting with new people in our community, and growing our membership. In 2020, community members and sponsors continued to be our champions enabling us to raise over \$876,000. These funds directly support our work for clean water, clean air, and healthy communities.

17th-Annual Publix Grandman Triathlon & 7th Jubilee Kids Triathlon in Fairhope, Alabama

Hopes were high that our biggest fundraising event would be able to move forward as planned. Due to the pandemic, the race was postponed until September, and finally made into a Virtual Triathlon, allowing athletes to participate as their schedule allowed and submit times online.

Although the participation was lower, the outpouring of commentary and support demonstrating what the race meant to the community reminded us of our purpose in these trying times. Connecting racers from nine states directly to the beautiful Mobile Bay area encourages our efforts to protect local waterways and reminds us how fortunate we are to be able to swim, fish, and play in Mobile Bay even in the midst of a global pandemic.



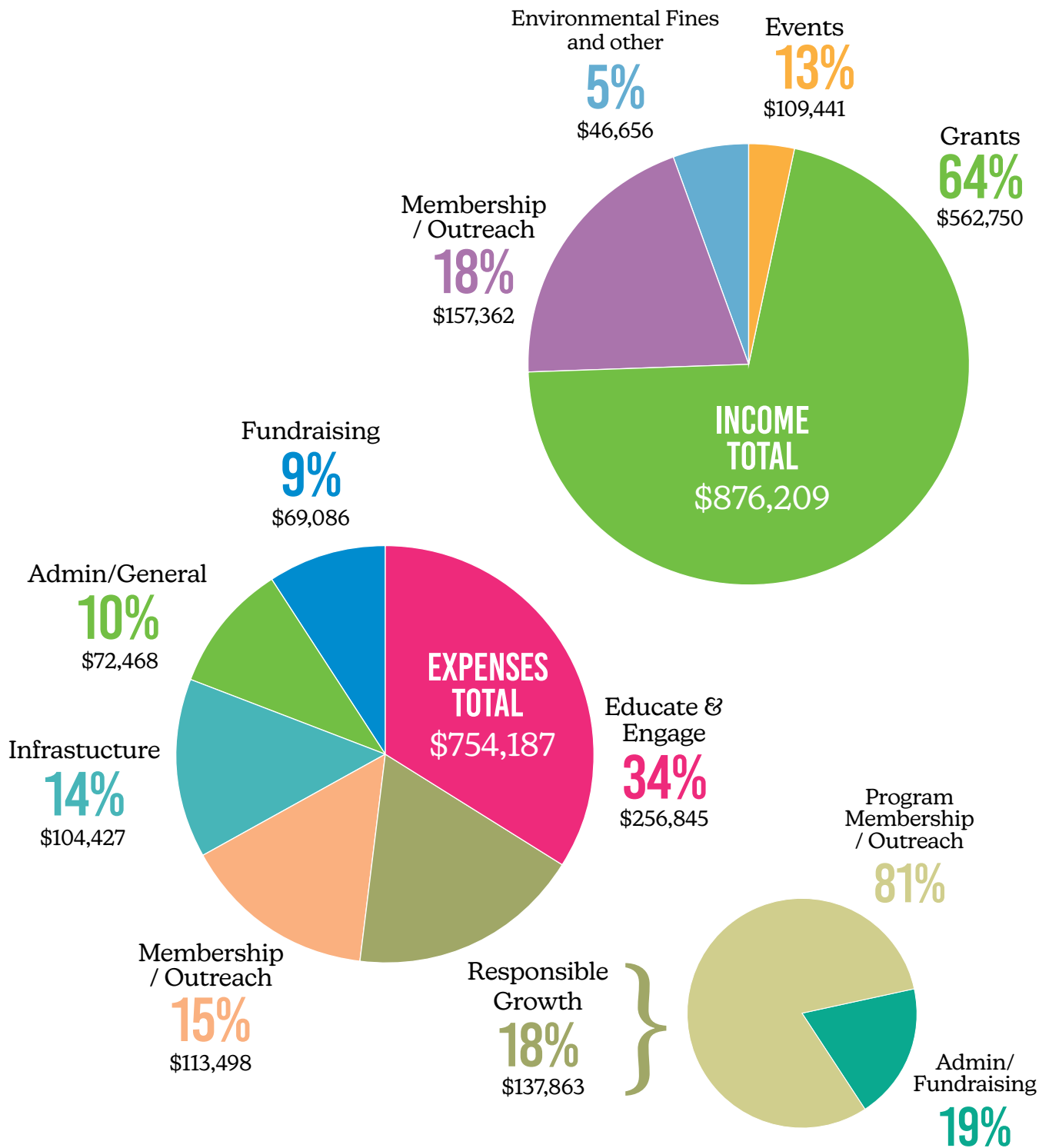
BAY BASH

Bay Bash in November was a virtual affair, lasting through mid-December and inviting guests to “Celebrate the Bounty of Mobile Bay” via a wide array of silent auction items from local businesses, beautiful vacation escapes, and local artists. While the event missed its usual flavor from the in-person catered meal and the flare of dancers, the addition of “Bounty of the Bay Gift Baskets” was a huge success.

These baskets included gifts from local merchants, gift cards to local restaurants on both sides of the Bay, Baykeeper merchandise, sweet snacks, libations from local brewers and liquor distributors, and, to top it off, Ben Raines’ book and DVD, “Saving America’s Amazon,” highlighting the beauty and natural wealth of the Bay region and watershed. All from the convenience and safety of home, our community was able to engage deeply and with purpose to celebrate the bounty of Mobile Bay. ■



FINANCIALS



Grantors, Sponsors, and Visionary Society

Grantor

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Mobile Baykeeper wishes to thank all its grantors, sponsors, and visionary members, without whose support none of this would be possible.

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South Alabama Land Trust
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Town of Magnolia Springs
Vernon and Alice White Charitable Foundation





OUR MEMBERS MAKE MOBILE BAYKEEPER POSSIBLE

Your support enables us to continue working for clean water, clean air, and healthy communities for generations to come.

Mobile Baykeeper has spent the past two decades developing partnerships to help accomplish our goals and provide citizens the means to protect the beauty and health of the Mobile Bay Watershed and our coastal communities.

Throughout this past year's pandemic, lockdown, even civil unrest, our community came together for clean water. We consistently share love for our beautiful 5,000 miles of shoreline. We know how much we need to protect our waterways not just for our own use, but for our children and our children's children.

With your generous financial support, Mobile Baykeeper can serve as the environmental watchdog, informed voice of reason, and collaborator for solutions. Further, we can foster responsible growth, drive smart investments in infrastructure, and educate our coastal communities and the state at large. Whether you volunteer your time, or give your hard-earned dollar, Mobile Baykeeper uses those resources to ensure we all have clean water, clean air, and healthy communities. ■

Join us today for the best possible tomorrow.

VISIT [MOBILEBAYKEEPER.ORG/MEMBERSHIP](https://mobilebaykeeper.org/membership) OR CALL 251-433-4229 TO LEARN MORE AND BECOME A MEMBER.





A LETTER FROM YOUR BOARD PRESIDENT

I am excited that 2020 is finally behind us. We are focused on many great things in 2021, and with your help, we can accomplish so much.

Back in 2019, Mobile Baykeeper revamped its governance structure in order to get the Board of Directors more involved in committee work. This shift allowed our executive director and staff to focus on the day-to-day operations of the organization and work more toward protecting the health and heritage of the Mobile Bay Watershed.

The board and staff have spent considerable effort through the Strategic Planning Committee hammering out the four major areas of the Strategic Plan. They are as follows:

- Identifying what you, the community, expect us to be: an environmental watchdog, an informed voice of reason, and a collaborator for solutions
- Defining our key focus areas: educating and engaging our citizens, resolving environmental issues, and protecting our future through responsible growth
- Recognizing enablers to our success: a capable, stable staff; a diverse, involved board and broad community support
- Building and maintaining our financial foundation by operating efficiently, developing sustainable funding sources, and seeking endowments for the future

Now that we have a firm roadmap, the organization can focus on what it does best and minimize distractions. This year, I want to highlight three major areas of focus, all of which support the strategic plan.

First and foremost are our programs. The big elephant in the room is, of course, the coal-ash pond at Alabama Power's Plant Barry. This is a huge issue for Mobile

Baykeeper and we are collaborating with other organizations across the state and the Southeast to educate and engage citizens about the dangers involved in leaving these toxic substances submerged in groundwater. Our goal is to have the coal ash excavated and transferred to a lined, upland landfill.

A second major effort involves educating and engaging the community about litter and single-use plastics through grant funding. These grants are larger than many we have executed in the past, and we have brought in specialized talent to assist us with world-class project delivery. We are excited about these grants and the additional opportunities their successful completion will open.

A final area I want to highlight is our Strategic Watershed Awareness Management Program (SWAMP). This is an area where we can truly impact the future by going into the schools and teaching young people at an early age the importance of sustaining our environment, which in turn supports increased social and economic justice — the building blocks of global sustainability. Mobile Baykeeper has an awesome staff that works tirelessly, both in the schools and community, to further these goals.

So, what can you do to help? To secure our financial foundation, we need involved members. If your situation allows, please consider helping us by becoming a member, or making a financial contribution to support our efforts. We are truly blessed to have come through 2020 on sound financial footing, but need the support of the entire community to work successfully for you.

J. Steven McClure, PE, LEED AP
President, Board of Directors







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