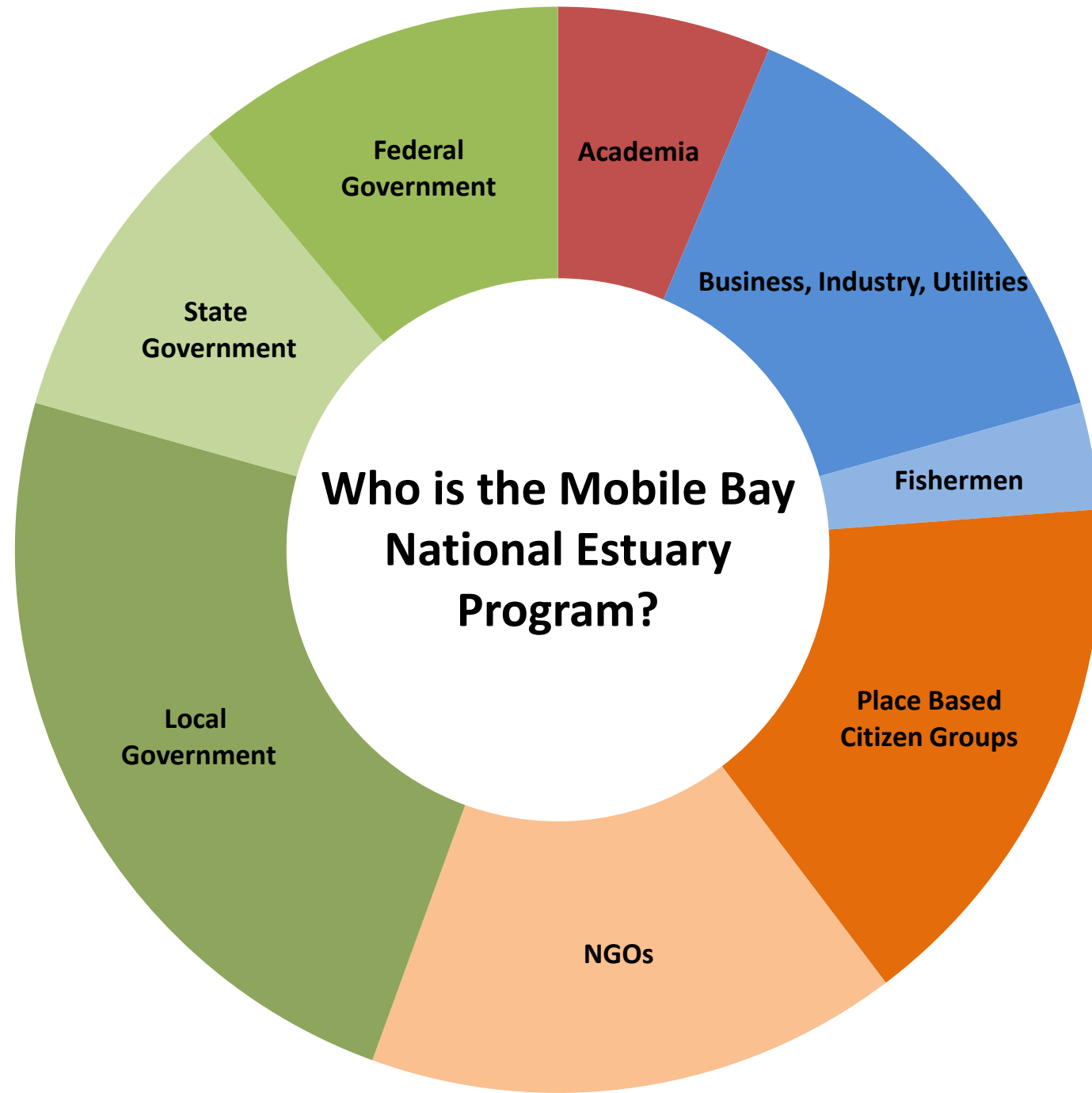


A sunset over a body of water with a pier in the distance. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, with some clouds. The water is dark, and the pier is silhouetted against the horizon.

Regional Challenges, Regional Solutions...

Implementing a Watershed Approach

*Roberta Swann, Director
Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration
Coral Springs, Florida
April, 2016*



**Who is the Mobile Bay
National Estuary
Program?**

Academia

Business, Industry, Utilities

Fishermen

**Place Based
Citizen Groups**

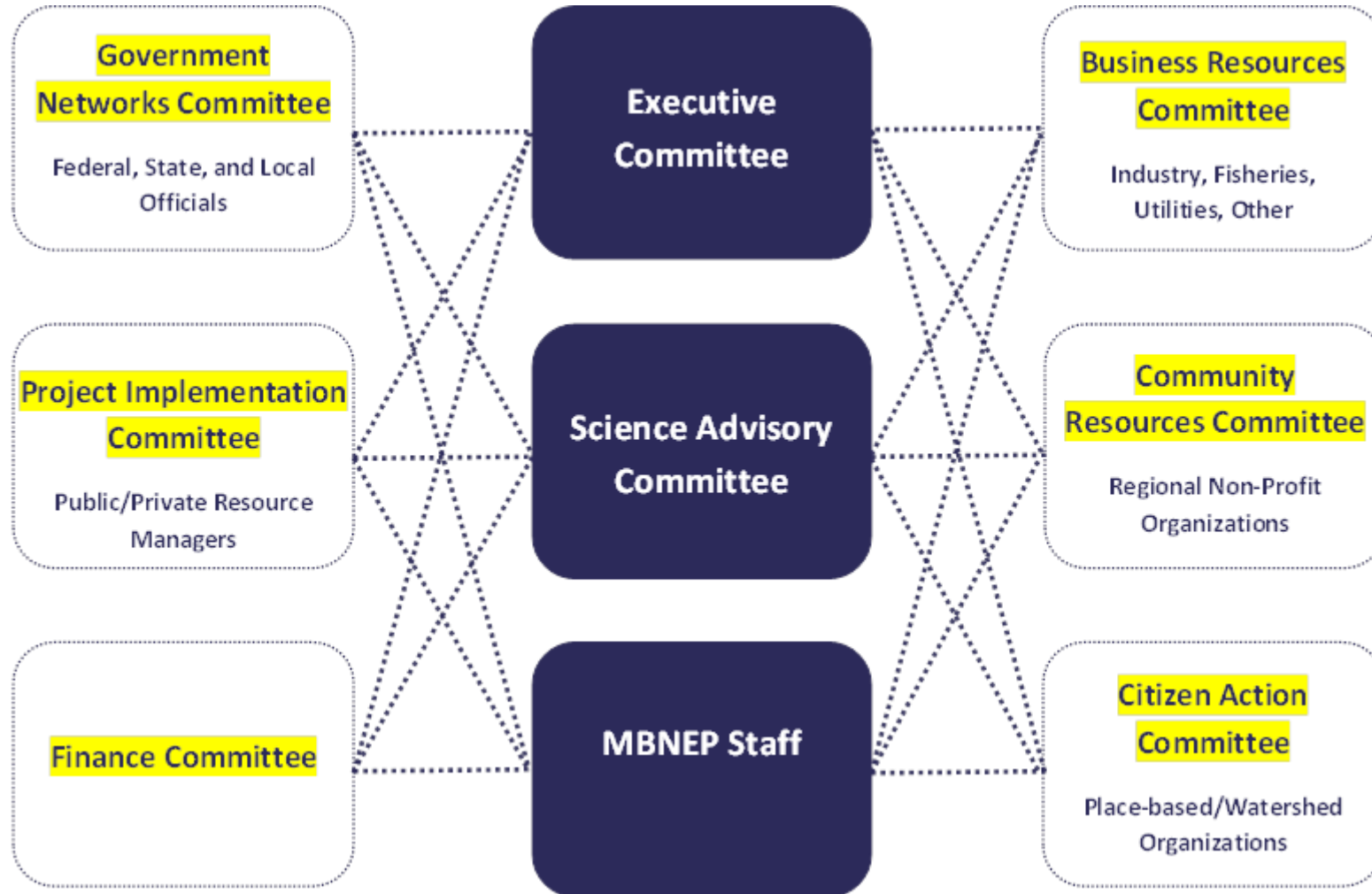
NGOs

**Local
Government**

**State
Government**

**Federal
Government**

How does the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Management Conference Work?





Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan
for Alabama's Estuaries & Coast

2013-2018



What people value most
about living in coastal
Alabama...



Access to Water and Open Spaces



Coastlines
(Beaches and Other Shorelines)



Fish



Heritage and Culture



Environmental Health and Resilience



Water Quality

Promoting Wise Stewardship CCMP Goals

- **Increase community awareness** of the value of our coastal resources.
- **Improve community ability** to participate in ecosystem based management actions.
- **Increase citizen actions to mitigate impacts** of humans on the environment.
- **Build Capacity of grassroots groups** to be resilient to environmental change



Technical Assistance/ Capacity Building CCMP Goals

- Improve **business community understanding and support** for protecting the estuary/coast
- Improve **Local Government capability** to manage and maintain coastal resources
- Promote **the protection and restoration of Gulf beaches** and their associated economies, including **working waterfronts**



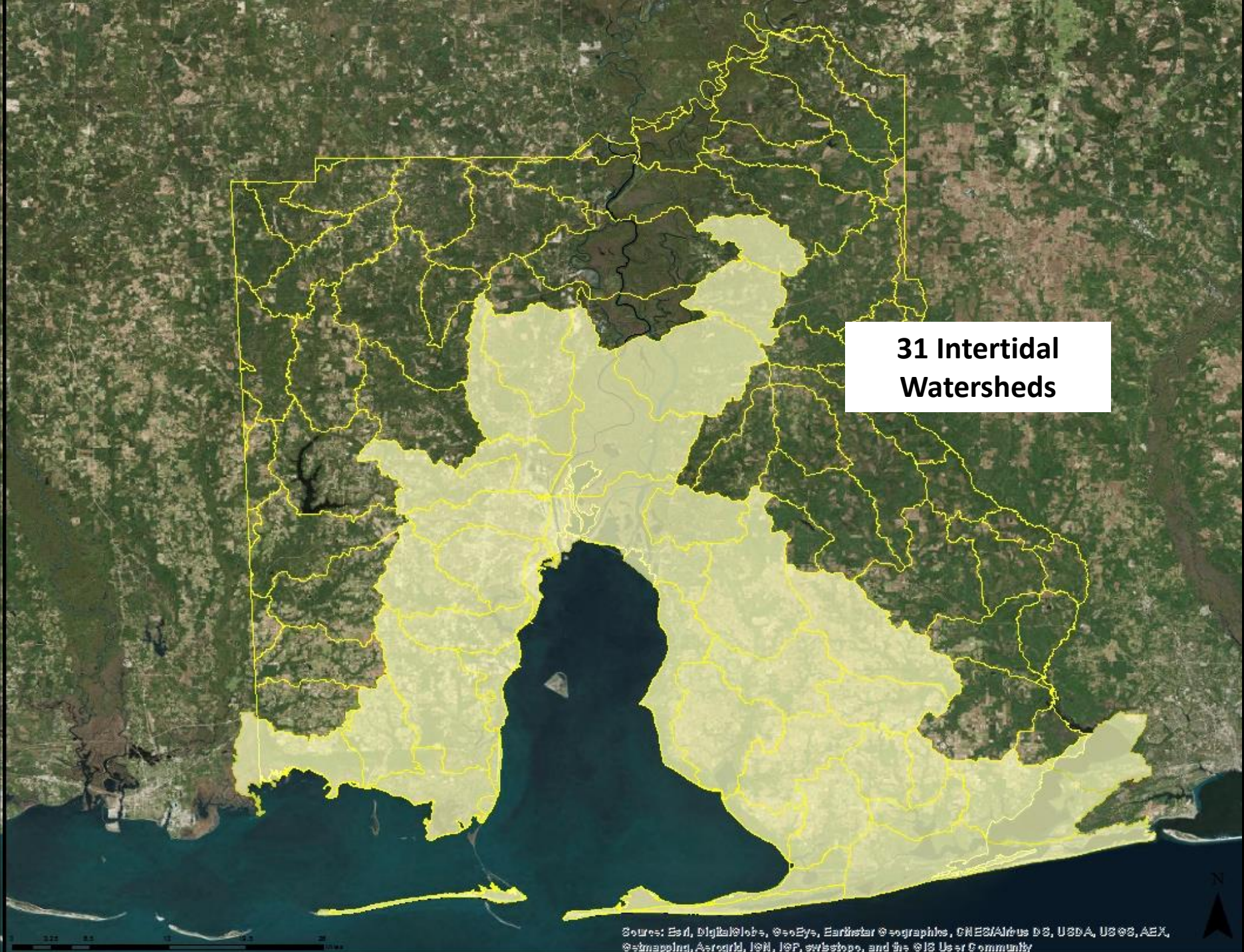
Highest Ranking Habitats, Ecosystem Services and Stresses

Habitat	Ecosystem Services Most Stressed	Top Stress Impacts	Values
Freshwater Wetlands	Nesting for birds and turtles Biodiversity Wildlife, Fisheries	Land Use Change Fragmentation Dredging and Filling	Access Fish Heritage Resilience Water Quality
Intertidal Marshes and Flats	Biodiversity Fisheries Wildlife Water Quality	Sediment Sea Level Rise Fragmentation	Access Beaches Fish Heritage Resilience Water Quality
Streams and Rivers (Riparian Buffers)	Fish Biodiversity Water Quality Sediment	Freshwater discharge Land Use Change Sediments	Access Fish Heritage Resilience Water Quality

Estuary Status and Trends CCMP Goals

- **Increase data** related to the status of the estuarine ecosystem
- **Establish Process for measuring change** in estuarine condition
- **Improve understanding** of how restoration contributes to improved biological conditions and community services





31 Intertidal Watersheds

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, @skmapping, AeroGrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the @IG User Community

Ecosystem Restoration and Protection CCMP Goals

- **Improve trends** in Water Quality
- **Improve function and resilience** of beaches and shorelines
- **Restore/Expand human connections** to our coastal resources



Changing the Paradigm with Watershed Planning

- **Improve water quality**
- **Improve habitats**
- **Protect continued customary uses of biological resources**
- **Improve watershed resiliency**
- **Expand opportunities for community access**



How?

(EPA's 9 Key Elements)

- **Build Partnerships-** Engaging Key Stakeholders
- **Characterize the Watershed-** Pollution sources, species of concern, critical habitats
- **Set Goals and Identify Solutions-** Recommending management measures to reduce pollutant loads or protect critical resources
- **Design Implementation Program-** Prioritizing actions, securing funding, monitoring, adaptive management, evaluation of progress



Reasons why Watershed Planning is good.

- Intensive community **education and engagement**
- Identification of **restoration and protection opportunities** based on scientific assessment
- **National Flood Insurance Program Discounts** through the Community Rating System
- Recommendations prioritized on **“biggest bang for the buck”**
- **Tool for local governments** to use in securing resources (*Read Oil Spill Related funding*)
- Provides Funders **with justification for project selection**



Together, we will



Thank you.