



Alabama *NEMO Program*

Program Initiated: July, 1998

How the Program Developed

The state of Alabama has a long agricultural tradition and its people identify readily with the land. Like many other parts of the country, as subdivisions are popping up in farm fields and woods, Alabamians are beginning to recognize the gradual degradation of their natural and cultural heritage.

In 1998, a consortium of Alabama agencies, led by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, contacted the NEMO Hub with interest in bringing the NEMO message to the state.

How/Where NEMO Works

Early in the planning process, the program's coordinators realized that in order to implement NEMO on a statewide basis, they would need dozens of people trained to present the program. Funding was not readily available, however, to support this number of professional outreach employees. So with funding from the state's Section 319 Program, a coalition of state agencies led by ADEM designed a "train-the-trainers" workshop to prepare volunteers to give the program to municipalities and counties in their area. Alabama NEMO has designed a two-day curriculum to give participants

the kind of "deep background" information they will need to be effective educators. Workshop participants are armed with all the materials they will need to conduct the basic NEMO presentation, including a "NEMO Bible" and CDs with presentations and publications such as fact sheets and promotional materials.



Accomplishments

AL NEMO has trained dozens of trainers across the state. These trainers have given over 175 presentations statewide to over 1,500 people—an impressive feat by a small army of volunteers. But the AL NEMO coordinators have also worked to broaden the program's educational offerings to local officials, having developed programs on forestry, on-site wastewater, watershed restoration and low impact site design. They are currently planning to develop a program

for businesses entitled "Business Partners for Clean Water" that will address the unique challenges local businesses face in being responsible stewards for clean water.

AL NEMO can also point to on-the-ground accomplishments of their program. In Baldwin County, new subdivision rules have been adopted that provide for conservation subdivision design and other low impact development standards. In the municipality of Trussville, new planning documents and ordinances have been recently developed that provide for greenway and open space planning, along with the designation of stream buffers to protect water quality.

(from top) Permeable pavement at a new City of Fairhope facility, installation and final product. Urbanized stream: about 20% of streams assessed in the draft 2002 303 (d) list are impaired due to urban runoff/storm sewers. Photos courtesy of the Alabama NEMO Program.

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The Future

Although AL NEMO has been amazingly productive over the past several years, there is still much to be done. Many counties and municipalities are still in need of assistance and even with the growing corps of AL NEMO volunteers, it will take years

to reach them all. Coordinators of the program are finding growing interest in NEMO, in part due to the impending Clean Water Act Stormwater Phase II deadlines in early 2003. AL NEMO will continue to provide assistance and motivation to improve both planning and land use practices on the local level.

Spotlight on Fairhope, AL

Fairhope is an innovative city adopting new development practices and initiating new plans to protect natural resources. The City is located in southwest Alabama on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, in one of the fastest growing counties in the state. Working with members of the Alabama NEMO Task Force, Fairhope officials have begun to institute many innovative programs that will ensure their leadership in smart growth planning. Examples include:

Planning and "Smart Growth"

Fairhope has parks and green spaces interspersed throughout the community. Fairhope will continue its open space planning efforts in collaboration with AL NEMO as part of the EPA/NEMO Smart Growth Initiative, including emphases on: • Shoreline protection and public access to local waters. • Creating bicycle and pedestrian networks to and between residential and commercial areas to encourage neighborhood and community feeling. • Planning for land use that centers on the "walkable village" concept.

Stormwater Best Management Practices

The City partnered with Sherman International Corporation and the Coastal Alabama Clean Water Partnership to install permeable concrete at one of their new city facilities (*photo, top and middle right*). An educational display on stormwater and polluted runoff will promote water quality stewardship at this highly visible downtown facility. Projects include: • Perma-Turf (plastic grate topped with grass) at city lift stations, as an asphalt/concrete alternative. • Effective stormwater ordinances and educational brochures on sedimentation management, outlining penalties for violation. Future projects include implementing additional innovative urban stormwater bmps, including bio-retention areas.



Program Partners

Department of Environmental Management

Alabama Cooperative Extension

Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

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Alabama NEMO is a charter member of the National NEMO Network.

