

The Partnership for a Resilient Apalachicola Bay
Meeting #2
Franklin's Promise Coalition
May 1, 2024
12:00 – 3:30 pm
Minutes

Facilitator: Betty Webb

Voting Members Present: Chad Hanson, Cameron Baxley, Ken Jones (Treasurer), Shannon Hartsfield, Roger Mathis, Rickey Banks (*Secretary*), Anita Grove, Grayson Shepard, Ottice Amison (*President*), David Barber (*Vice President*), Bruce Millender, Donnie Segree, Gayle Johnson, Erik Lovestrand

Advisory Members Present: Devin Resko, Jenna Harper, Joel Trexler, Portia Sapp, Sandra Brooke

Others Present: Maddie Mahood, John "Derek" Sizemore (FWC LE), Robert Allen (FWC LE), Dr. Andy Kane (University of Florida)

Voting Members Absent: Rickey Banks (*Secretary*), Jim Estes, Steve Rash

- 1) Networking Lunch – 12:00 – 12:45
- 2) Call Meeting to Order – called to order by Ottice Amison, President
- 3) Stakeholder Introductions – Meeting Participants and Agency Representatives
 - a. Newcomers - FWC Law Enforcement
 - i. Derek Sizemore – FWC LE Officer (about 6 years of service)
 1. Moved to Franklin Co. about 4 years ago
 2. Fell in love with the place
 3. Loves to fish, and wants to see the community thrive again. He wants the seafood industry livelihood to come back again
 4. Here today to see how the meeting goes and actually be in the conversation
 - ii. Robert Allen – FWC LE Officer 4 months,
 1. Born and raised in Wakulla County
 2. Wants to see the community thrive again and get people back on the water.
- 4) Review Agenda and Opening Remarks (Betty Webb)
- 5) Bay Restoration Updates/Q&A – Devin Resko, FWC
 - a. Three weeks ago, the FWC restoration Pilot Study began
 - i. Red squares are receiving 2 squares of relief

- ii. Black squares are receiving 1 square of relief
 - iii. They did almost this same work in Mississippi before and it worked well, so they are optimistic it will continue.
 - iv. Capt. TJ Saunders is out there checking the work – making sure everything is staying put and that sites are being completed.
- b. Two weeks ago, many FWC Leadership and Board Members came out on the boats to see the progress of the restoration and status of the Bay
- c. Q&A Session:
 - i. Shannon Hartsfield (SH) – Why will this be different on Peanut Ridge? Why do you think oysters are going to grow now? Oystermen haven't seen oysters there in 30 years.
 - 1. Answer – FWC's contractors mapped the region and ground-truthed the sites to make sure they were viable for oyster growth (tonging, diving, drones, etc.)
 - ii. SH – The reefs have gotten a lot thinner, so what's going on with that?
 - iii. SH – Cat Point is doing GREAT.
 - iv. Anita Grove – Can you remind me what the green squares are?
 - 1. Answer – Completed plots, one square acre each.
 - v. Roger Mathis – Pointed out an area where a couple of pole markers have broken off.
 - vi. Donnie – Are y'all planning on doing any restoration between the two bridges?
 - 1. Answer – Not at the moment, focusing on the center Bay now
 - a. Goal is to come back in 18 months and see what worked and what didn't work during this pilot study. FWC is contractually obligated to have a meeting with the stakeholders and see where they should plant next.
 - vii. Ken Jones – Weren't there a couple of other large plots in the original plan? NFWF gave you \$7 million and you spent some of it. The governor gave you \$10 million and you were going to build some of these big flat reefs.
 - 1. Answer – All the NFWF money has been put to the side for now. Once the pilot study is done, they will circle back around to do more pilot studies and areas. 1/3 East Cove, 1/3 in Cat Point, 1/3 in Eastpoint.
 - viii. Cameron Baxley – What's the monitoring going to look like?
 - 1. Answer – It's in the works but going to use what they've done in the last projects.
 - ix. Chad Hanson – When will the big flat areas that Ken was mentioning come about?
 - 1. Answer – First we will focus on East Cove and the four FSU reefs that are each one square acre. Then they will do Cat Point last. It's an estimated 60 – 90 days to complete the total restoration.

- x. Otlice Amison (OA) – For the stakeholder input, when and where that come?
 - 1. Answer – We will start holding meetings when we get to the rest of the NFWF funding.
- xi. OA – Most of the funds are going to come off these sites and what data comes from this?
 - 1. Answer – Yes, but I (Devin) wouldn't be too pessimistic about them pulling funding. They want us to do their due diligence and make sure we dotting "I's" and crossing "t's."
- xii. Ken Jones – Those other reefs were funded by the state, and the CAB was not part of the stakeholder feedback on how they were going to do those reefs.
 - 1. Answer – Yes, we didn't have a formal meeting with the CAB, but we met informally with several members to get their input.
- xiii. Roger Mathis – Are you going to do 20 acres on East Cove and Cat point for about 6 inches or so?
 - 1. Answer – yes.
- xiv. OA – You mentioned that you talked to members of the CAB, but I think we need to talk to people like Mr. Hartsfield, Mr. Mathis, Mr. Segree, and others that know what's going on in the Bay.
 - 1. Answer – Yes, I couldn't agree more. Whenever FSU hosted their Community Workshops, we had maps that any stakeholders could use to point out where they wanted to put reefs.
- xv. Anita Grove – A point to make. FWC and some of the other cohorts met with a lot of different people one-on-one after the CAB was done. FWC called people personally to meet.
 - 1. Answer – Erica Burgess and Dan Ellinor hold monthly meetings. If anyone is wanting to meet with FWC, please let Betty know and she will connect them with Devin and other FWC personnel.
- xvi. Chad Hanson – A couple months ago, a group of people (who are all now part of the Partnership) met with Devin and were able to sit down and talk.
- xvii. Betty Webb – This is exactly what we are supposed to be doing!
- xviii. OA – We need more people to be a part of this meeting that are out there on the water.
- xix. Donnie Segree – To get stuff inshore Cat Point, is FWC willing to hire oystermen to take things inshore and get materials into the shallower water?
- xx. Derek Sizemore – That's why it's so important to get all those folks (that have grown up oystering/fishing/etc) to come in and tell FWC what will work and not work.

15 Minute Break

6) Organization Business

- a. Quick Review and Signing of Agreement to Serve (*This was approved by Stakeholders at the March 26th Meeting*)
 - i. These are the original CAB bylaws, but adopted for the Partnership members.
 - ii. Anita Grove motions, and Shannon Hartsfield seconds to approve the bylaws and agree to sign it.
 - iii. Betty recommends everyone looks over the document and gather any comments. Then, at the next meeting, the group can make the first amendments.
 - iv. The entire committee (voting members and advisory members) sign the document.
 - v. Ken Jones – suggests taking a photo of people signing the agreement to serve and share it with the community, with the public. Maybe write a press release. Anita Grove and Gayle Johnson took photos.
- b. Review and Confirm Draft 6-Month Workplan (April – Sept 2024)
 - i. Jenna Harper – it's important to keep the science and knowledge flowing in, as well as with restoration updates and such.
 - 1. At the public meetings – maybe give a science and restoration update?
 - 2. Goal A is really about the science behind the Bay – may be a good time to get an update from Sandra and Devin then.
 - 3. Goal B would be great to invite down habitat folks from FWC to also be a part of the conversation too.
 - a. Goal B will take lots of discussion!
 - ii. Ken Jones and Anita Grove brought up that it might be smart to discuss how oyster beds are built – Devin Resko could give this presentation. Possibly Sandra Brooke as well?
 - iii. Jenna Harper also remarks that we need to be clear in making the distinction of thinking of restoring the whole ecosystem versus just the oyster reefs. Funding resources aren't necessarily going to be for both.
 - iv. Homework Assignment – everyone needs to review Goal A and come ready with comments.
 - v. Grayson Shepard motions to approve the workplan, Anita seconds it.
- c. Review DRAFT Organizational Bylaws
- d. Update: Not-For-Profit State Registration and 501(c)3 Submission
 - i. Betty is working with Joel Trexler to get the Not-for-Profit finalized and filed.
 - ii. Once that gets filed then the 501(c)3 form can be filed.
- e. Update: Website/Logo

- i. Website is underway. Maddie Mahood is awaiting an update.
 - ii. Logo has been created and was needed to get the website under contract.
- f. Meeting Schedule Reminder
 - i. May 29th, June 20th, July 31st (Stakeholder Group Meeting), August 28th, September 25th.

7) Other Business

- a. Clearwater Land & Minerals FLA is submitting a permit to conduct exploratory oil and gas drilling in drill at the site, which is in rural Calhoun County in between the Apalachicola and Chipola rivers and near the Dead Lakes. They are looking if there is a commercial opportunity here.
 - i. They will need thousands of gallons of water to do these operations a day.
 - ii. There's a lot of toxic sludge and materials they use to do the drilling.
 - iii. FDEP has intent to approve it and issue the permit.
 - iv. What can be done now?
 - v. Franklin County Commission submitted a letter of opposition.
 - vi. Should The Partnership submit a letter of opposition as well?
 - 1. Shannon Hartsfield motioned for yes, Gayle Johnson seconds it.
 - 2. Anita Grove and Jenna Harper (as DEP employees) will recuse themselves from the letter due to conflict of interest.
 - 3. Betty will write the letter using a draft provided by Cameron Baxley.
- b. Grayson Shepard – Are we the group in charge of continuing to keep plans and management/restoration ideas in motion? If so, with January 1, 2026 looming around the corner, and the potential to open the Bay, we need to get working on this NOW.
- c. Chad Hanson - The Pew Charitable Trusts has a new interview coming out soon with Betty representing The Partnership and Chad representing Pew. They will be talking about the Bay, oysters, the importance of community, etc.
 - i. Betty mentions that we need to have a space for “media/press releases” on the website to put everything together.
 - ii. Sandra also mentions that the CAB “Plan” needs to go on the website as well.
- d. Ken Jones and Betty brought up that barge traffic, dredging, and the channel should be discussed at another meeting.
 - i. Betty said that she would ask Philip W. Clayton (Executive Director of TriWaters Waterway Development Association) to come present at the next meeting.

8) Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 15:35.