



THE APALACHICOLA BAY SYSTEM INITIATIVE (ABSI)



PARTNERSHIP FOR A RESILIENT APALACHICOLA BAY
MARCH 26, 2024

Sandra Brooke PhD
FSUCML Research Faculty
ABSI Project Lead

ABSI seeks to understand the causes of decline of the Apalachicola Bay ecosystem, with focus on oyster reefs
ABSI will help develop a management and restoration plan for oyster reefs and the long-term health of the Bay

ABSI funding is provided by Triumph Gulf Coast Inc. and Florida State University

APALACHICOLA BAY SYSTEM ECOSYSTEM-BASED ADAPTIVE RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

**Recommendations on how to Restore and Maintain a Healthy
Apalachicola Bay System**

DEVELOPED BY THE ABSI COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD





PLAN DEVELOPMENT
BY THE
COMMUNITY
ADVISORY BOARD

- Community Advisory Board (CAB) implemented in 2019.
- Members came from many stakeholder groups, including the seafood industry, commercial and recreational fishers, Government agencies, non-profits and local businesses.
- The CAB met **26 times** - final plan was accepted November 2023
- Full and Summary versions of **The Plan** posted online January 2024

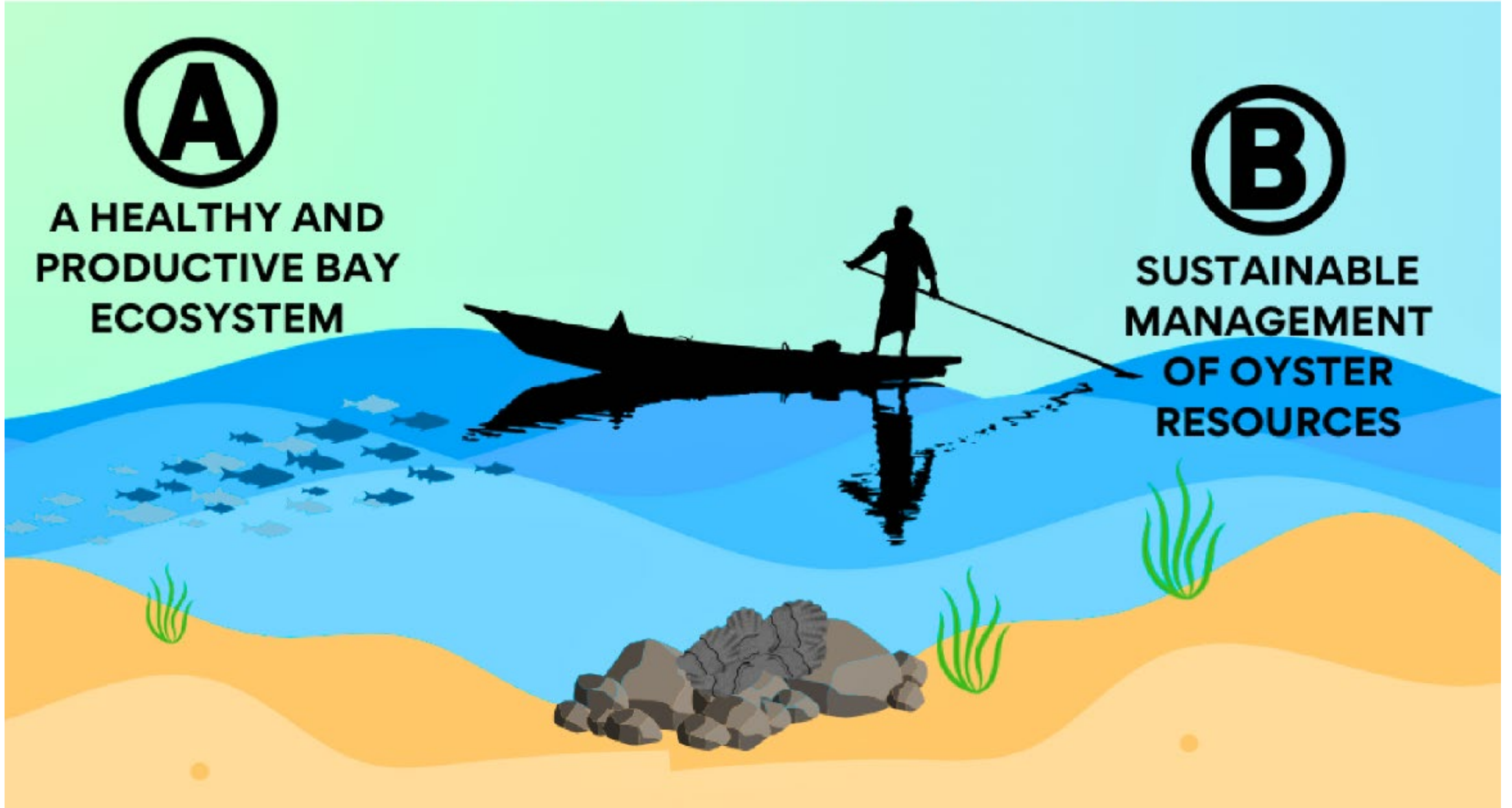
THE PLAN FRAMEWORK

A

**A HEALTHY AND
PRODUCTIVE BAY
ECOSYSTEM**

B

**SUSTAINABLE
MANAGEMENT
OF OYSTER
RESOURCES**



GOAL A

A HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE BAY ECOSYSTEM

VISION: The Apalachicola Bay System is sustainably managed to ensure the ecosystem is productive and economically viable.

OUTCOME: By 2030, the Apalachicola Bay System is a healthy, productive ecosystem that supports a viable oyster fishery and other economic opportunities.

7 Strategies, 33 Actions

STRATEGY: Establish monitoring methods that can be used to help restore and manage the Apalachicola Bay System, including oysters.

5 ACTIONS

Develop Ecosystem Service targets to guide restoration

Assess use of spat on shell for restoration

Conduct restoration experiments to identify best material and location

Create ecosystem models to inform management

Restore and create reef structures

GOAL B

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF OYSTER RESOURCES

VISION: A sustainably managed and enforced wild oyster fishery with a management plan that protects the resource and provides fair access to stakeholders.

OUTCOME: By 2030, a science-driven plan will be in place to sustainably manage oyster resources in the Apalachicola Bay System.

9 Strategies, 40 Actions

STRATEGY: B1

Evaluate management actions that could be used to maintain a sustainable oyster fishery

5 ACTIONS

Evaluate potential for a limited entry fishery

Consider daily harvest limits and 5-day working week

Manage harvest areas to avoid effort concentration and resource depletion

Consider Bay-wide summer (June-August) fishery closure

Consider recreational daily harvest limit

ADDITIONAL GOAL B STRATEGIES

STRATEGY: B1

Evaluate management actions for a sustainable oyster fishery

STRATEGY: B2

Develop criteria for opening and closing the oyster fishery

STRATEGY: B3

Conduct periodic oyster stock assessments

STRATEGY: B4

FWC Law Enforcement reviews enforcement strategies and penalties

STRATEGY: B5

Establish advisory committee to provide oversight on management of oyster habitat and harvest

STRATEGY: B6

Recommend policies and actions that help retain and recycle cultch for habitat replenishment

STRATEGY: B7

Evaluate and develop spawning reefs for protection of broodstock

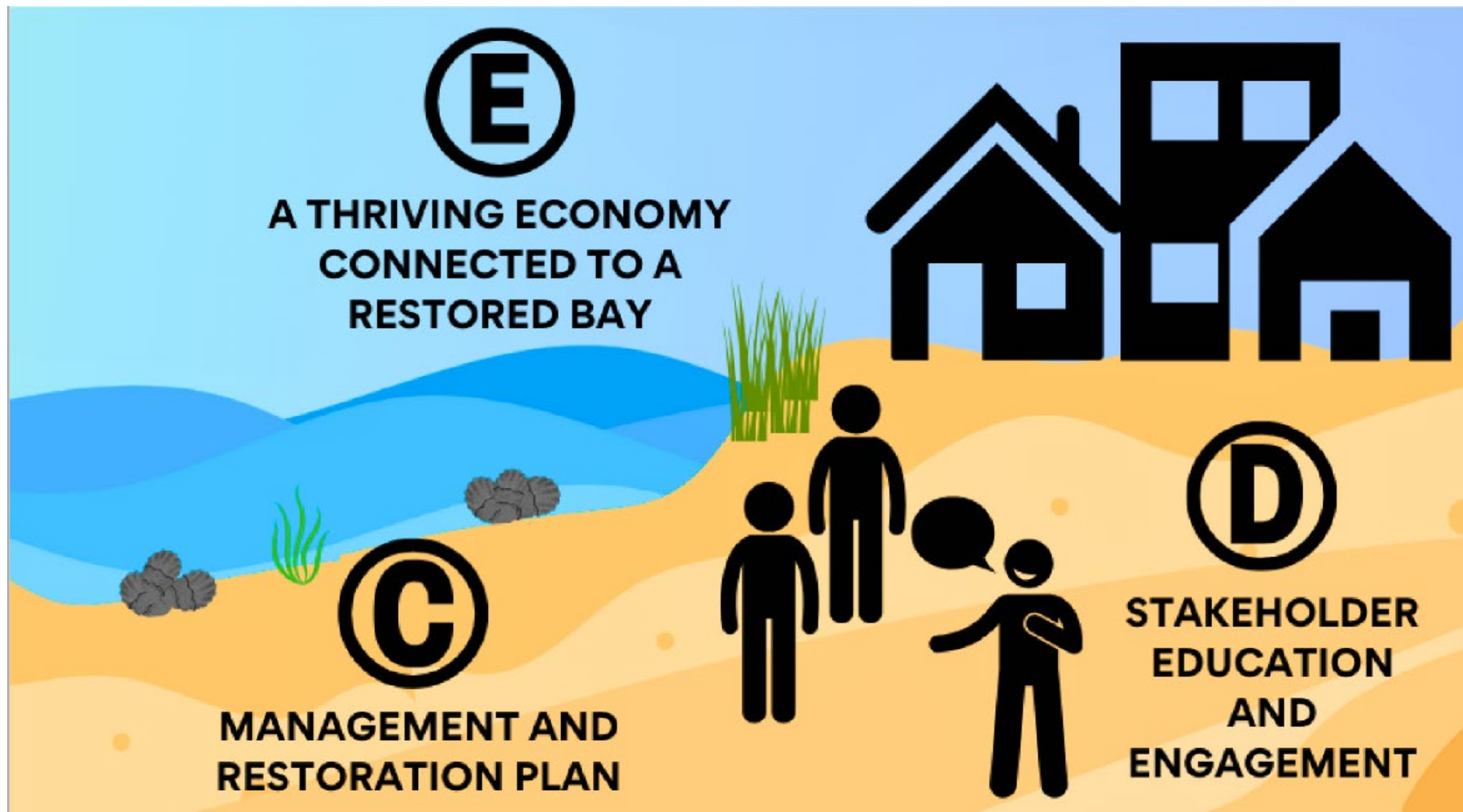
STRATEGY: B8

Ensure oyster aquaculture practices and locations are compatible with oyster restoration and wild harvest

STRATEGY: B9

Assess effectiveness of oyster replenishment using cultch or hatchery juveniles

THE PLAN FRAMEWORK



GOAL C

MANAGEMENT AND RESTORATION PLAN

VISION: The Apalachicola Bay System Ecosystem-Based Adaptive Restoration and Management Plan is developed with support from stakeholders who will help implement the Plan.

OUTCOME: By 2030, the Apalachicola Bay System will be a productive and sustainably managed ecosystem with an Ecosystem-Based Adaptive Restoration and Management Plan.

2 Strategies, 13 Actions

GOAL D

STAKEHOLDER EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

VISION: Community members support the implementation of best management practices and serve as a communication hub between stakeholders and management.

OUTCOME: By 2030 the public are aware of the importance of sustaining the health of the Apalachicola Bay System and are working together to implement the Plan.

2 Strategies, 6 Actions

GOAL E

A THRIVING ECONOMY CONNECTED TO A RESTORED BAY

VISION: Apalachicola Bay sustains commercial fisheries, aquaculture, tourism and other development opportunities that support a strong economy and resilient coastal community.

OUTCOME: By 2030 Apalachicola Bay is thriving economically due to a restored Apalachicola Bay System.

2 Strategies, 9 Actions



The Plan is available at <https://marinelab.fsu.edu/absi/cab/>

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERS

- Sandra Brooke, Ph.D.** - Florida State University, Principal Investigator
- Joel Trexler, Ph.D.** - Florida State University, Co-Principal Investigator
- W. Ross Ellington** - Florida State University, Professor Emeritus
- Jeff Blair** - Facilitated Solutions, LLC, Facilitator
- Maddie Mahood** - Florida State University, Outreach and Education Coordinator
- Jared Fuqua** - Florida State University, Outreach and Education Coordinator
- Edward Camp** - University of Florida, Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, Partner

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

- Georgia Ackerman** - Apalachicola Riverkeeper
- Micheal Allen** - University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) Nature Coast Biological Station
- Ottice D. Amison** - Franklin County Commission
- David Barber** - Barber's Seafood
- Frank Gidus** - Coastal Conservation Association, Florida
- Anita Grove** - Apalachicola City Commission
- Chad Hanson** - The Pew Charitable Trusts
- Jenna Harper** - Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Shannon Hartsfield** - Seafood Management Assistant Resource and Recovery Team
- Becca Hatchell** - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Marine & Estuarine Habitat

- Gayle Johnson** - Indian Lagoon Oyster Company
- Katie Konchar** - The Nature Conservancy
- Erik Lovestrand** - Florida Sea Grant Extension
- Chuck Marks** - Acentria Insurance
- Steve Rash** - Water Street Seafood
- Devin Resko** - FWC, Marine Fisheries Management
- Alex Reed** - Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection
- Portia Sapp, Carrie Jones (alt.)** - Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Grayson Shepard** - Charter Guide
- Chadwick Taylor, Ken Jones (alt.)** - Riparian County Stakeholder Coalition
- Paul Thurman** - Northwest Florida Water Management District

A person wearing a dark wetsuit is holding a large cluster of oysters on a boat. The oysters are dark and glistening, with some showing their shells. The background shows blue water and the boat's surface. The image is partially obscured by a white circular area on the left side.

• Questions?