

Agenda

Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Coalition
Monday, September 18th, 10:00 am CST
~~Washington County Boardroom~~
1331 South Blvd. Chipley FL 32428
Holmes County BOCC
107 E Virginia Ave, Bonifay, FL 32425

- **Public Comments**
- **Formal welcome of Mr. Randall Roland** (*Eglin's ex-officio Director of the Coalition*)
- **Directors' Minute**
- **Approval of Minutes**
- **Visitor**
 - Barbara Gibson, Executive Director, Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority
- **Update - EPA grant application**
- **Action Items –Next Steps**
 - Recommend that the Coalition send a letter to the Okaloosa County Board of Commissioners and the Walton County Board of Commissioners requesting they commit a minimum of 10 percent of their Direct Component/Pot 1 funds to the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Coalition/Program and authorize the Chairman to sign
 - Recommend that the Coalition send a letter to Representatives Drake & Ponder and Senator Gainer requesting they submit a \$4 million appropriations bill to fund the Choctawhatchee Bay and St. Andrews Bay Estuary Programs and authorize the Chairman to sign
 - Option 2 Request \$2 million appropriations bill for only Choctawhatchee Bay estuary program
 - Recommend that the Coalition authorize staff to pursue the following legislative priority and coordinate with NW FL Counties and National Estuary Programs in FL:
 - *Provide Long-Term, Recurring Funding Support for Restoration of Florida's Estuaries of Statewide and National Significance. Develop a statewide legislative policy to provide dedicated state funding to support restoration and stewardship for 10 Florida estuaries representing over 50% of the Florida coastline including the creation of new estuary programs in Northwest Florida. Revenues could be administered through FDEP and allocations made annually based on a detailed, project-based work plan submitted by each of the estuary programs and/or local cost-share projects that implement existing comprehensive conservation and management plans.*
- **Discussion- Okaloosa County's \$2 million Spill Component/Pot 3 request to establish the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program**
 - Timing for funds
 - Okaloosa County's position on use
- **Discussion - Adding additional Directors to the Coalition Board of Directors**
- **Public Comments**



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
GULF OF MEXICO PROGRAM
2510 14th St., Suite 1212
Gulfport MS 39501
Phone 228-679-5900 / Fax 228-679-5921

August 31, 2017

Mrs. Jane Evans
Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Coalition
1540 Miracle Strip Pkwy.
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548
jevans@co.okaloosa.fl.us

RE: EPA-GM-2017-RESTORE-Estuary-Program RESTORE Estuary Program (Planning)

Dear Mrs. Evans,

We received your proposal submitted in response to the above-referenced announcement. After reviewing your proposal in accordance with the terms, conditions, requirements, and criteria stated in the announcement, we regret to inform you that your proposal, "Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program Development," was not selected for award based on the scoring of the proposal in accordance with the stated ranking and selection factors in the RESTORE Estuary Program (Planning) Request for Proposals. The competition was very strong, the quality of the proposals evaluated was extremely high, and the thoughtful effort put into all proposals was evident.

You may obtain a more detailed debriefing of the basis for our decision not to select your proposal for award by making a request for debriefing to gmp-rfp@epa.gov within 15 calendar days of the date you receive this letter. Upon receipt of a timely debriefing request, we will contact you by phone to complete the debriefing.

For further information about the debriefing process and your dispute rights with respect to competition-related issues under the subject announcement, please refer to Section VI of the announcement. If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Houge at gmp-rfp@epa.gov.

We appreciate the effort that went into the preparation of your proposal and look forward to your participation in future competitions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Scaggs".

Ben Scaggs,
Director

Carolyn Ketchel
Chairman, Okaloosa County Board of Commissioners
1250 N. Eglin Parkway, Suite 100
Shalimar, FL 32579

Celia Jones
Chairwoman, Walton County Board of Commissioners
552 Walton Road
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433

Dear Chairman Ketchel & Chairwoman Jones;

As you are well aware, the region is still feeling the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill from both economic and environmental perspectives.

Both the Okaloosa County and Walton County Commissions have shown strong support for the establishment of an estuary program for the Choctawhatchee Bay watershed. In fact, both Commissions directed staff to jointly apply for a \$2 million EPA grant designed to “stand up” an estuary program. Unfortunately, we were not successful in that endeavor but believe that the establishment of the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program is too important an effort to be deterred by this minor setback.

We are convinced that the creation of an estuary program for the Choctawhatchee Bay watershed, modelled after the National Estuary Program, will create a legacy program that will continue to provide positive economic and environmental benefits to our region long after the BP oil spill funds are exhausted.

To that end, the Holmes, Washington, Walton and Okaloosa County Commissions, through an interlocal agreement, have established the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Coalition. The Coalition Board of Directors is composed of Commissioners Allen Bush, Clint Erikson, Bill Chapman and Kelly Windes as current Chair of the Coalition. Additionally, Alison McDowell, Director of the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance also serves as a Director of the Coalition. Finally, Mr. Randall Rowland, with Eglin AFB, serves in an ex officio role on the Coalition Board.

The Coalition is exploring numerous, potential funding sources towards this effort. Walton and Okaloosa Counties are in the unique position to affect their own destinies in this regard. Both counties will receive a Direct Component or “Pot 1” allocation from the Restore Act for the next fifteen years.

The Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Coalition respectfully asks that your Commission consider reserving 10 percent of your Direct Component funds to be used for the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program. If both Okaloosa and Walton County commit to this, it will provide a sustainable level of funding to allow the program to get up and running and more importantly, give the program the ability to leverage other funding sources so that projects within the watershed can be constructed sooner rather than later.

We can provide you and your staff with additional information, including proposals with detailed budgets, administrative and fiduciary safeguards and transparency plans if you so desire and would be happy to speak with you and your Board members if you so desire.

We look forward to working with you on this critically important issue.

Respectfully,

Charles K. Windes, Jr., Okaloosa County Commissioner
Board of Directors Chairman, Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Coalition

cc: Bill Chapman, Walton County Commissioner
Clint Erickson, Holmes County Commissioner
Alan Bush, Washington County Commissioner
Alison McDowell, Director, Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance
Randall Rowland, Chief, 96th Civil Engineering Group Eglin AFB
Graham Fountain, Okaloosa County Commissioner
Nathan Boyles, Okaloosa County Commissioner
Trey Goodwin, Okaloosa County Commissioner
Kelly Windes, Okaloosa County Commissioner
William Chapman, Walton County Commissioner
Melanie Nipper, Walton County Commissioner
Sara Commander, Walton County Commissioner
Tony Anderson, Walton County Commissioner

Dear Senator/Representative;

As you are well aware, our region is still feeling the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill from both economic and environmental perspectives.

We are convinced that the creation of estuary programs for the Choctawhatchee Bay and Saint Andrew Bay watersheds, modelled after the National Estuary Program, will create legacy programs that will continue to provide positive economic and environmental benefits to our region long after the BP oil spill funds are exhausted.

An estuary program is a locally-driven, non-regulatory program that would work to improve the waters, habitats, living resources and economies of both watersheds. In Okaloosa, Walton, Washington, Holmes, Bay, Gulf, Jackson and Dixie Counties, water quality in the bays and watersheds are critical components of our economies. The estuary programs would eventually complete projects throughout these watersheds. Projects would include, but are not limited to: storm water improvements, restoration initiatives, and dirt road paving.

Recently, Holmes, Washington, Walton and Okaloosa Counties, via an Interlocal agreement, formed the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Coalition. The Coalition Board of Directors is composed of Commissioners Allen Bush, Clint Erikson, Bill Chapman and myself as current Chair of the Coalition. Additionally, Alison McDowell, Director of the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance also serves as a Director of the Coalition. Finally, Mr. Randall Rowland, with Eglin AFB, serves in an ex officio role on the Coalition Board.

Additionally, Bay and Gulf Counties have partnered with Florida State University to establish a management group consisting of stakeholders that will direct the operations of the St. Andrew/St. Joe Bays estuary program.

Both estuary programs have management structures and are ready and eager to get started and only lack for funding.

To that end, we respectfully request that you and your colleagues sponsor an appropriations bill for \$4 million to create estuary programs for both the Choctawhatchee Bay and St. Andrew Bay watersheds. This “startup” funding will allow these two estuary programs to more effectively leverage other funding sources (NRDA, Restore, NFWF and Triumph) that will enable the construction of projects throughout the watersheds sooner rather than later. We can provide you and your staff with additional information, including proposals with detailed budgets, administrative and fiduciary safeguards and transparency plans if you so desire.

We look forward to working with you on this critically important issue.

Respectfully,

Charles K. Windes, Jr., Okaloosa County Commissioner
Board of Directors Chairman, Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Coalition

cc: Bill Chapman, Walton County Commissioner
Clint Erickson, Holmes County Commissioner
Alan Bush, Washington County Commissioner
Alison McDowell, Director, Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance
Randall Rowland, Chief, 96th Civil Engineering Group Eglin AFB

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Appropriations Project titled
3 Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program; providing an
4 appropriation; providing an effective date.

5
6 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

7
8 Section 1. Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program is an
9 Appropriations Project as defined in The Rules of The Florida
10 House of Representatives and is described in Appropriations
11 Project Request 1132, herein incorporated by reference.

12 Section 2. For fiscal year 2017-2018 the nonrecurring sum
13 of \$2,000,000 from the General Revenue Fund is appropriated to
14 the Department of Environmental Protection to fund the
15 Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program as described in
16 Appropriations Project Request 1132. Notwithstanding any law to
17 the contrary, there shall be no recurring funding provided for
18 this Appropriations Project.

19 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.