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CHOCTAWHATCHEE
BASIN ALLIANCE **OWC**

THE ALLIANCE

The newsletter of the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance

Volume 11.1, January 2007

The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance is committed to sustaining and providing optimum utilization of the Choctawhatchee Basin watershed. Under the auspices of the Okaloosa-Walton College, the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance provides opportunities for citizens, educators, and technical experts to promote the health of the Choctawhatchee Basin watershed.

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850-729-6456

Advisory Board:

- Al Wenstrand (Chair)
- Dennis Peters (Vice Chair)
- Ross Hamilton (Treasurer)
- Taylor Kirschenfeld (Secretary)
- Holly Booyse
- Mike Flynt
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- Tom Patton
- Dan Robeen
- Mark Shaeffer
- Mitch Shank
- James Ward

Staff:

- Phillip Ellis
- Sarah Kalinoski
- Alison McDowell
- Lauren Nowling
- Julie Terrell

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The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance had its 10th anniversary in 2006! WOW! What a decade it has been. With the support of OWC and the dedication of hundreds of volunteers CBA has grown into one of the most important volunteer monitoring organizations within the State. Today, there are 145 stations sampled monthly within the Choctawhatchee watershed. Just last year, CBA staff spoke at more than 120 public events, provided over 2,000 hours of community service and reached over 40,000 people annually with CBA updates. And if that was not enough, CBA has entered into partnerships with the City of Fort Walton Beach and Walton County to help them meet maximum compliance with their respective National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits (NPDES permits are required by municipalities for stormwater). CBA has also identified priority areas in need of restoration or remediation. CBA has secured funding for multiple projects within the watershed (upcoming hydrological assessment for the Coastal Dune Lakes, Cessna Park, and Clement Taylor) and are continuing to identify more projects that make a difference for the water resources of our area.

The annual meeting in December was a huge success. Thank you all for coming out and celebrating 10 years with us! Let me be the first to introduce to you and welcome CBA newest board members: Mitch Shank and Mark Shaeffer. Mitch's experience as a Naval Oceanographer for 40 years and his work with underwater acoustics make him a valuable asset for the CBA board. Mark, a civil engineer, currently works for Baskerville Donovan in their Destin office. Mark was involved in many of Destin's projects to improve water quality. He also assisted CBA in conducting a basin-wide water quality history and stormwater impact evaluation. Mark is a perfect addition to the CBA board.

CBA also said goodbye to a long-time dedicated staff member, Joy Brown—although if you know Joy, she is never far from Choctawhatchee Bay. In fact, she is currently monitoring the oyster beds that were created in the bay last year. The two oyster beds were pilot projects and with Joy's help we are evaluating the success of that project (for more information on this project,

please read the last newsletter available on line at our website).

Earlier this year CBA welcomed a new staff person, Alison McDowell. Alison is CBA's liaison to the City of Ft. Walton Beach's NPDES and supports ongoing Alliance efforts. A lifelong resident of Okaloosa County, Alison will soon complete her MS degree in Environmental Science at the University of West Florida, where her studies focus on public participation in environmental research. She will be a tremendous asset to CBA and we are proud to have her aboard our team.

Keeping all of you up to date with what projects we are working on, what events are going on and all the data that you have been collecting is a priority for us. Our web page has a new look: <http://www.basinalliance.org>. If you haven't seen it, please go and view the website. **Bookmark it in your favorites.** I hope that this will be a valuable tool for you in learning about the water resources of the area and what CBA is doing to fulfill its mission. We will be posting all our volunteer events, newsletters, meeting minutes, CBA updates, CBA data and photos of all our events. Some areas of the website are still under construction but others are up and ready for you to review. It is our intent to provide you with the best website out there so if you have any comments or advice please let us know!

Knowing how busy everyone's schedule is these days, I think its crucial to get information out to you quickly and in a timely manner. So with that being said, the CBA updates will resume in February. **For those who wish to opt out of receiving the updates, please call our office (729-6456) and let us know.** Remember, all the updates will be posted on the website for you to review but we will be purging the update list to discard outdated information periodically.

The New Year looks promising for CBA. With your help throughout the year, CBA will continue to fulfill its mission. I hope to meet all of you at the various CBA volunteer opportunities and public meetings. Happy New Year!

Julie Terrell, CBA Program Manager

FORT WALTON BEACH NPDES PROGRAM

(Joy Brown)



Earth Day at the FWB Landing is just around the corner!

The 3rd Annual FWB Earth Day/Arbor Day event will be held on Friday, April 20th at the Landing. For the last two years the event has been focused strictly on bringing in the local school children, but this year the City of Fort Walton Beach is teaming up with the University of West Florida to extend the hours of the event into the evening. Please come out to join the CBA staff in the afternoon and evening portion of the event where staff will be present with educational materials for all visitors.

The University of West Florida has been working with City staff and the Earth Day Committee not only to provide an event with extended hours, but also to bring in daytime entertainment for the students that will be present. In the past CBA has participated in the event with an educational booth for the local school children. This year the CBA staff and volunteers are working to bring a one of a kind experience to the students during the daytime event. CBA staff is coordinating with our water quality monitoring volunteers to provide bay tours for the students. The tours will give students a chance to see and experience the Choctawhatchee Bay while learning about the shoreline and submerged grasses as well as the benefits of oysters and other natural filtering organisms present in the bay.

CBA staff has been coordinating a poster contest with three public elementary schools, Kenwood, Elliott Point, and Liza Jackson Prep, and the National Arbor Day Foundation for the City of Fort Walton Beach. Each of the three public schools will enter grade levels winners in a city wide contest. The poster that wins the city wide contest will be the logo for the 2007 Earth Day/Arbor Day event. Any fifth grade winners from the schools will automatically be entered and sent in to the National Arbor Day contest for the state of Florida.

CBA staff has been working with the schools to incorporate the poster contest into their curriculum. We have also been working to bring local water education into the elementary schools by providing watershed posters from the Northwest Florida Water Management District and submitting grant applications to purchase watershed models for each of the schools. Joy Brown spent numerous days assisting with watershed and water testing curriculum materials at Kenwood Elementary in November.



Sarah Kalinoski with students -
Earth Day, April 2006



Joy Brown at Kenwood
Elementary - November 2006

WALTON COUNTY NPDES PROGRAM

(Phillip Ellis)



The first Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) Workshop for the Alliance's NPDES partners was held on December 14th. Currently, NPDES permits held by municipalities within the Choctawhatchee Bay require development of a comprehensive IDDE program to improve water quality within their jurisdictions. Illicit discharges are usually defined as pollutant loads to receiving waterbodies that are not associated with stormwater runoff. These impacts are considered "dry weather flows", whose sources typically "include sanitary wastewater or industrial and commercial pollutant entries, failing septic tank systems, and vehicle maintenance activities" (Pitt 2004).

Through partnerships, the Alliance is striving to create a model IDDE program that provides the highest protection for water resources by effectively utilizing the limited resources available to local governments. The workshop was designed to provide technical expertise to the City of Fort Walton Beach and Walton County in developing their individual IDDE programs. The Alliance sought the national leaders in this field by contracting with Dr. Bob Pitt of the University of Alabama, Dr. Alexander Maestre of Geosyntec Inc. in Atlanta, Georgia, and Mr. Yukio Nara of Woolpert Inc. in Cincinnati, Ohio, to facilitate this workshop. Under the guidance of Dr. Pitt these specialists coordinated with other professionals to produce the federally accepted manual (albeit in draft form) for the IDDE Program.



The panel of experts provided a technical background and history of the IDDE measure with special emphasis on the essential components for a successful program during the morning session. After the introductory session, Walton County personnel and citizens worked in unison with the presenters to define the next steps in the County's IDDE program. The participants chose to focus their initial resources on prioritized issues south of Highway 20. The majority of the tasks identified for the next year were to coordinate with County staff to identify the staff, budget, and responsibilities essential in initiating this program. The next steps would be to unify the existing map resources, develop an ordinance defining illicit discharges, and educate the public on this issue.



If you would like more information about the IDDE program, please contact the CBA office. The IDDE manual referenced in this article is available to download at www.cwp.org.

Photos of the IDDE workshop provided by Joy Brown.

VOLUNTEER NEWS

(Sarah Kalinoski)

RECENT VOLUNTEER EVENTS:

FWB City Cleanup, October 14th:

CBA volunteers and staff worked at three sites throughout Fort Walton Beach to spruce up the city. The majority of our efforts were focused at the Fort Walton Beach Library where we cut back and pulled exotic species and planted native flowers along the walkway. We also performed clean-up duty at the city's sediment basin near the intersection of Beal and Mary Esther Cutoff, and at Vesta Heights Park on Memorial Drive. A special thank you goes out to the Master Gardeners who designed and directed the planting at the library!

Shoreline Restoration at Cessna Park, November 18th:

Approximately 25 volunteers spent a beautiful Saturday morning with CBA at Cessna Park (Hogtown Bayou) November 18th. Over 2000 *Juncus roemerianus* plants were placed in an area about 115 feet long with an average width of 15 feet. This vegetation, which is native to our area, will reduce erosion and stabilize the north shore of the park by absorbing wave energy, trapping sediments, filtering stormwater runoff, and moderating the effects of storms and floods. Watch for our upcoming 2nd Planting at Cessna once the construction of the park is finished, estimated to occur in April 2007. We are grateful to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who funded these plants through a Coastal Program grant.

*** THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS WHO MADE THESE EVENTS SO SUCCESSFUL!!! ***

New Volunteers this Quarter:

Amanda Blum
Jerry Mallory
Alison McDowell
Brooke Saari

Of course, CBA is continuously indebted to our volunteer water quality monitors, who work with us monthly to collect the data we depend on. In this essential work that you do, I'd like to offer a few REMINDERS...

- Fill out forms completely, including your best estimate of wave height, wind direction, and strength.
- Include the names of everyone on board on at least one of the datasheets so I can record and track volunteer hours. We want to make sure that we are accurately representing the immense dedication of our volunteer team to our partners and funders.
- Fill out the stickers on the sampling bottles completely.
- Remove excess water from filters by blotting the folded filters between paper towels before dropping them into the dessicant.
- Make sure all machines are off (hydrolab *and* GPS), and the hydrolab probes are disconnected from the display unit.
- Leave just a little water in the hydrolab's storage cup – too much water makes it very difficult for the next user to remove the cup from the hydrolab unit.

And for our Dune Lakes volunteers in particular:

- Please DO NOT remove the hydrolab from the hangar unless you have reserved it for that day!!! Remember that someone else may have already reserved it.
- Leave your datasheets (hydrolab *and* LAKEWATCH) in the metal file holder in the cabinet at the hangar, not in the plastic bag with the bottles.

THANK YOU and KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!!!!

Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance

"Striving to Protect and Enhance the Resources of the Choctawhatchee River Basin"

Membership Registration and Renewal Form:

Membership Dues:

- Individual or Family (\$25 to \$250)
- Lifetime (\$250)
- Bronze Alligator Sponsor (\$250)
- Silver Osprey Sponsor (\$500)
- Golden Dolphin Sponsor (\$1,000)
- Platinum Sturgeon Sponsor (\$2,500)



Please make checks payable to:
Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance of OWC

Please send payment to:
 CBA
 Attn: Membership Dues
 100 College Blvd
 Niceville, FL 32578

*For payment by credit card, please call
 the CBA office at 729-6456.*

Total Enclosed: _____

Name: _____ e-mail address: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Thank you to our new and renewed members !!!

- Gail Baker
- Amanda Blum
- Jean Blumer
- Holly Booyse
- Jerry Brewer
- Bryan Bruns
- Dr. Larry Casey
- Thomas Church
- Michael & Ella D'Autilia
- Guy Donaldson
- Emerald Coast Association of Realtors
- First City Bank, Ft. Walton Beach
- Julie Arther & Marie Garrett
- Caroling Geary
- Christine Gramlich
- Vaughan & Frank Greene
- John Haass
- Hubert & Susan Hamilton
- Ross Hamilton
- Joan Head

- John & Cynthia Jannazo
- William G. Keyes
- Lake Powell Community Alliance, Inc.
- Margaret & Keith Landry
- Jerome & Joyce Lanning
- Mid-Bay Bridge Authority
- Jerry Najarian
- Mary O'Daniels
- Jane & Barry Pritchett
- Scott & Leslie Provow
- Beth Ritter
- Mark E. Shaeffer
- Town of Shalimar
- Mitch Shank
- Nancy & Duane St. John
- Dr. Judith LaMarche & Dr. Robert Stainback
- Julie Terrell
- Dr. Forrest Townsend, Jr.
- James Ward
- Al Wenstrand

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Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance
Okaloosa-Walton College
100 East College Boulevard
Niceville, FL 32578
An Equal Access/Equal Opportunity Institution

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www.basinalliance.org

To:

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities:

FWB EARTH DAY/ARBOR DAY 2007

In our work with the City of Fort Walton Beach, CBA is designing mini eco-tours of the Santa Rosa Sound for kids participating in FWB's Earth Day/Arbor Day event on April 20th, 2007. (See page 2 of the newsletter for details.) As part of this project, we need volunteers who are willing to offer their boats and their captaining skills for the day. We are also looking for volunteers interested in sharing their knowledge of the bay and giving brief educational presentations on the boats.

WATER QUALITY MONITORING:

We want to expand our coverage of the watershed by moving our monthly sampling program further up the Choctawhatchee River. Accordingly, we're looking for volunteers with boats who either live along the river or who are willing to drive to a public landing and navigate the river from there. Volunteers must be willing to commit to sampling once a month for at least one year.

Contact Info:

Sarah Kalinoski, CBA Volunteer Coordinator

kalinoss@owc.edu

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