



The Alliance

Quarterly Newsletter of the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance

Volume 6.4

October - December 2002

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- October 3, 2002** - Florida Yards and Neighborhoods - Joint Program - Choctawhatchee Audubon Society
- October 12, 2002** - Western Lake Vegetation Planting - 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
- October 18, 2002** - Sunset Cruise aboard the Southern Star Dolphin cruises Glass Bottom Boat - Volunteer Appreciations and Future Interests
- November 21, 2002** - Bad Bug Advice - Joint Program - Niceville, Valparaiso, Bay Area Chamber of Commerce Beautification Committee.
- December 4, 2002** - Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance Annual Membership Meeting "State of the Alliance"
- For More Information about any of the UPCOMING Events please contact the CBA Office at 650-9330!**

\$200,000.00

The Northwest Florida Water Management District has confirmed that the 2002 Florida Legislature earmarked two hundred thousand dollars to improve the health of Choctawhatchee Bay. The designation of monies for the bay came under the leadership of Senator Charlie Clary of Destin. The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance will execute the revision of an existing contract with the NFWMD to evaluate water quality and nutrient loading in the bay. The new funding will allow CBA to seek remediation of shortcomings in ecosystem health. By partnering with other agencies and organizations CBA will leverage the legislative allocation to attack problems such as low quality stormwater and high volume stormwater that may introduce toxic substances or exceed nutrient loading standards. A technical advisory committee will assist the board of the CBA in the selection and completion of corrective measures. With the assistance of volunteers and area professionals the Alliance will pinpoint problems and implement management of specific factors impacting our bay. CBA will continue to monitor parameters of water quality across the bay under the existing program "Bay Rally" named for the Rally For Recreation. Every effort will be made to disseminate information on the Choctawhatchee Basin and the practices that will sustain the bay and provide for optimum enjoyment of the bay.



The CBA Office is located at the Mattie M. Kelly Cultural and Environmental Institute of Okaloosa Walton Community College in Destin, Florida. The CBA is a program of Okaloosa Walton Community College.

MISSION STATEMENT

"The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance is an organization committed to sustaining and providing optimum utilization of Choctawhatchee Bay. The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance, under the auspices of the Okaloosa-Walton Community College, provides opportunities for citizens, educators, and technical experts to promote the health of the Choctawhatchee Basin".

CHOCTAWHATCHEE BASIN ALLIANCE

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Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance
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Niceville, FL 32578

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Mike Flynt and his wife Charlotte lead a constructive life in South Walton County. He is a charter member of the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance and was a leader in water quality matters prior to the Alliance. Mike is a retired, but not tired, United States Air Force Officer (his auto tag reads F9UM) currently serving the City of Valparaiso as the City Administrator. His persistence with excellence is remarkable, rare and of utmost value to CBA and the basin. As the second Chairman of the Board Mike lead CBA to hire staff and expand our function. With his leadership we obtained our first grant and he assisted the City of Valparaiso in the execution of large stormwater management and shoreline restoration project. Mike continues to lead following his tenure as chairman. Since he is so active in civic and public affairs he takes the programs of the CBA into the community and has since the inception been the coordinator of public programs. Whether the project is Bay Day, Planting, Monitoring or Educating you can count on Mike to be a vital part of sustaining the basin. The experiences in the Air Force combined with a childhood in the Tampa area gives Mike a cosmopolitan outlook on environmental function steeped in a deep love for estuaries. Cur-



rently Mike Flynt is a crusader for clean water and the best management practices that keep them clean. He obtained a Masters Degree from the University of West Florida in Coastal Zone Studies following his Air Force career. Other degrees include a Baccalaureate in Zoology from The University of Florida. Also a member of the Okaloosa County Artificial Reef Committee, Aqua-Lab water quality monitoring program Coordinator with the Okaloosa County Environmental Committee, Technical Coordinating Committee member of the Fort Walton Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization, and a member of the Okaloosa County Comprehensive Plan Committee.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

CBA lost a champion for the BAY on August 3, 2002 with the passing of

David Wolfenden. David joined CBA shortly after arriving in Niceville in 2000 from Flint, Michigan. David was one of the first team leaders in Bay Rally, the CBA water quality monitoring program, as well as an active member in Alliance activities. After renal carcinoma forced him to relinquish his team leadership David continued to volunteer with the Niceville team. As late as June, David participated in a CBA sponsored workshop on TMDL status in Florida. The service and friendship of David Wolfenden will be sorely missed. He retired from the Flint Fire department as Fire Battalion Chief after 23 years of dedicated service. In 2001 David became a faculty member at Edge Elementary School fulfilling a lifelong dream to serve as a teacher. His Principal, Don Varner, said, "David was key in raising fifth grade math scores here at Edge." David's positive attitude and commitment to service is an inspiration to us all. David leaves behind his wife Debra; two sons, Tyler (Niceville) and Lucas along with wife Michelle (Grand Rapids, Mich.). His mother and two brothers in Michigan survive him. He leaves a host of friends in the Niceville area including many of us in CBA. Thanks to David and his family for making a difference in our community.

Nutrient Loading Assessment Study

By Sean McGlynn, PhD.

Choctawhatchee Bay, an unparalleled Florida aquatic ecosystem, is destined for increased development. It is within one of the most rapidly growing regions of the fastest growing states in the union. Choctawhatchee Bay has never been recognized as having abundant aquatic life: fishing; oystering; and shrimping have never been extremely lucrative. Lingering suspicions persist that harmful chemicals like Mercury or Polynuclear Aromatic Hydrocarbons or Coliform bacteria may be affecting the bay. Fish kills, including mortalities of marine mammals, caused by toxic algal blooms or 'red tides' have fueled concerns about the long-term health of the Choctawhatchee Ecosystem.

The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance is directing an investigation, the Choctawhatchee Bay Watershed Water Quality Assessment. The consultants, Baskerville Donovan Inc, Biological Research Associates and McGlynn Laboratories Inc., are completing Phase I of this study, a painstakingly search for data from government agencies and educational institutions. They have completed the Phase I Choctawhatchee Bay Data Base. Some sections of Choctawhatchee Bay had over 12,000 water quality measurements over the past 30 years. Hogtown Bayou had almost 4000 measurements and it was the most monitored of all Bayous, Creeks or Rivers. Why would more water quality monitoring be necessary when faced with numbers like these? Well, almost all of these measurements were for physical parameters, like salinity. Water quality data, including nutrients (Nitrogen and Phosphorus), water clarity (secchi) and algal densities (chlorophyll) were very rare. There was water quality monitoring in 1986 and 1987, Aqual Lab began a shoreline collection program in 1995 and CBA initiated the Bay Rally program in 1999.

Important water quality parameters, such as the inorganic nutrients, Nitrate/Nitrite, Ammonia and reactive Phosphate, the fuel for Algae blooms, are lacking. There is very little data on sea grass beds, but they seem to be expanding, and this is a very good trend that may be related to water quality parameters. Other parameters showed signs of good water quality. Dissolved oxygen was at levels considered healthy for fish and the pH values in Choctawhatchee Bay are considered good, while salinity increases with proximity to the Gulf and has increased in recent years due to the drought. Low turbidity was another good sign, but increases following storm events were troublesome. Coliform bacteria were at safe levels, except in LaGrange Bayou which appears to have consistent problems.

Nutrients can cause numerous problems in Choctawhatchee Bay, like algal blooms. Certain limiting nutrients determine the water quality in Choctawhatchee Bay, and phosphorus appears to be the limiting nutrient. Without excess phosphorus, water quality should be good and the primary source for phosphorus in Choctawhatchee Bay is stormwater. Significant sources of phosphorus loading to Choctawhatchee Bay, as identified by the Phase I Choctawhatchee Bay Data Base are: the Choctawhatchee River; Wrights Creek; Holmes Creek; LaGrange Bayou; Alaqua Bayou; Hogtown Bayou; Indian Bayou; Garnier Bayou; Cinco Bayou; Destin Harbor and Old Pass Lagoon. Phase II of the Choctawhatchee Bay Watershed Water Quality Assessment should focus on verifying these historical trends with an intensive investigation into sources and solutions.

Coastal Dune Lakes

Western Lake/ Highway 30-A Planting

On **Saturday, October 12**, come take part in restoring over 40,000 square feet adjacent to Western Lake. We will be planting over 12,000 plants along both sides of highway 30-A between Watercolor and the bridge over Western Lake. Roads and cleared land are some of the major contributors to non-point source pollution into our water bodies and watersheds. Nutrient loading and habitat loss are key concerns to watersheds and communities. Restoring native plants to the watershed and creating a buffer, especially in these critical areas, will reduce nutrient loading, improve water quality, create habitats for a large variety of wildlife, including fish, and looks good too.

The restoration will take place from 9 am till 12 noon. Volunteers can park at Watercolor and walk over to the site. Please bring a gardening tool, plenty of water, and sunscreen. *For questions and to sign-up, please call the CBA office at 650-9330.*

Eastern Lake Park Clean up

On August 10th, Eastern Lake community members, along with a handful of other volunteers, braved the heat and pulled out and cut down invasive plants and dead limbs from Eastern Lake Park to prepare the acre site for its up-coming restoration on **September 28th**.



On September 28th 500 shoreline plants and over 100 upland plants including bushes, flowering plants, and a few live oaks will be planted at the park. The goal of the planting is to educate the public on the benefits and beauty of environmentally friendly landscaping. The photos provided above and to the left are of the Eastern Lake Clean up on August 10, 2002.

Water Quality Volunteers Needed

Community volunteers are needed to do monthly water quality monitoring on the following lakes:

Camp Creek, Alligator, Draper, Allen, Oyster, and Steward.

To sign-up call the CBA office at **650-9330**.

Choctawhatchee Bay Monitoring

With assistance from US Fish & Wildlife Services CBA has recently completed a Sediment Study on the Choctawhatchee Bay. The samples were collected over a two day period from 13 stations that spanned the entire bay. Shallow grabs were made with a ponar instrument provided by the USFWS on their 18 foot Boston Whaler. The sediment samples were sent to Geochemical & Environmental Research Labs at Texas A & M University for a suite of analysis which included metals, aromatic &

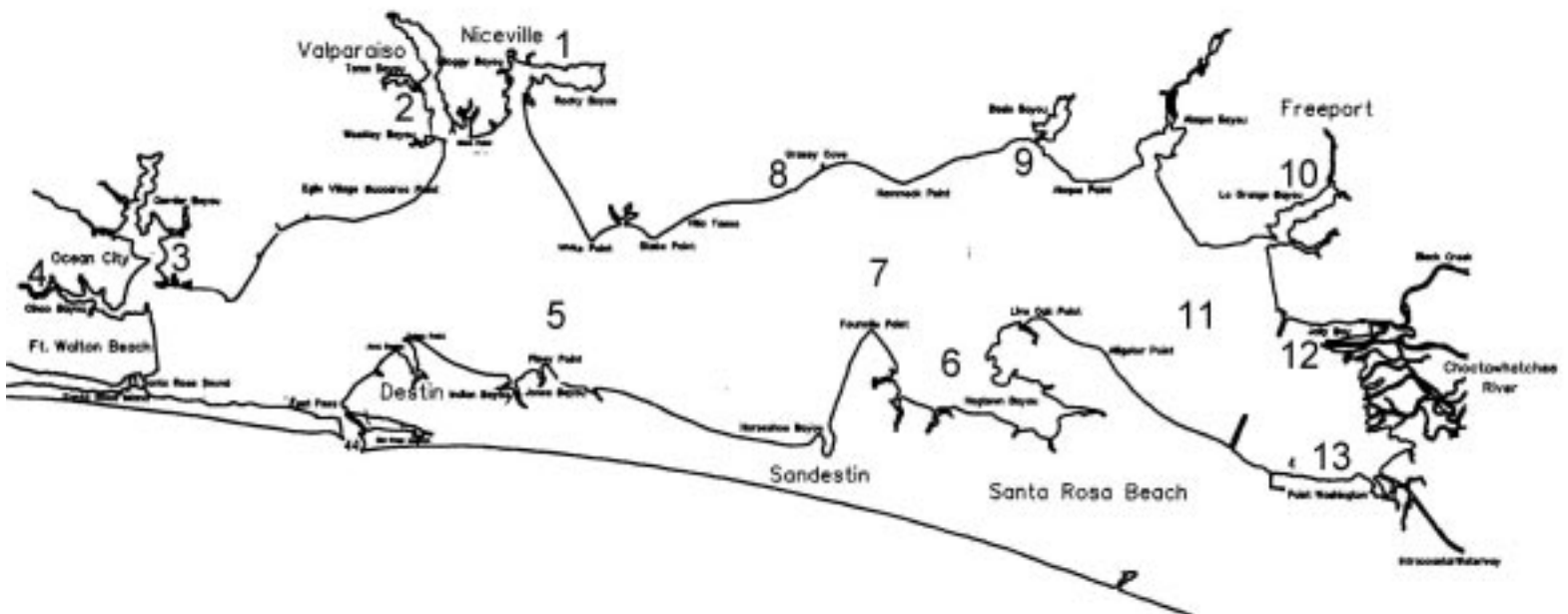


Rocky Bayou Sediment Sample



Ross Hamilton - opening Ponar in Garniers Bayou

aliphatic hydrocarbons, organochlorines and pesticides. Rocky, Tom's, & Hogtown Bayou along with Mullet Creek were also sent to Wellington Labs in Canada for a full dioxin scan. Results from the sediment study are expected by the end of October.



Water Quality Websites

303 (d) List

Waters NOT meeting Water Quality Standards and/or not supporting designated uses.

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/tmdl/303drule.htm>

Aqualab Water Quality

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/northwest/ecosys/okaloosa/okwqcurr.htm#water%20report>

Beach to Bay

South Walton County Conservancy.

<http://beachtobay.org>

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us>

FL DEP – Northwest District

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/northwest>

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

<http://floridaconservation.org>

Florida Healthy Beaches Program

<http://apps3.doh.state.fl.us/env/beach/webout/default.cfm>

Florida Marine Research Institute (FMRI)

<http://www.floridamarine.org/>

Index for Watershed Indicators

<http://www.epa.gov/iwi/iwi-overview.pdf>

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

<http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA Special Projects Office (SPO)

Provides expertise, products and services that help the National Ocean Service (NOS) to design and implement an effective program of coastal stewardship throughout the agency.

<http://spo.nos.noaa.gov/>

Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD)

<http://www.state.fl.us/nwfwmd/>

South Walton Turtle Watch

<http://www.seaturtlewatch.org/>

US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)

<http://www.fws.gov/>

University of Florida Extension Service – Walton County

<http://walton.ifas.ufl.edu/>

UF Lakewatch

<http://lakewatch.ifas.ufl.edu>

US Environmental Protection Agency – Monitoring Water Quality

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring>

Water Quality Reports

<http://www.epa.gov/store/>

Water Quality – State Standards

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/rules/62-302t.pdf>

Watershed Environmental Profile for Choctawhatchee Basin

http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/huc.cfm?huc_code=03140102

Other environmental websites

<http://www.epa.gov/watershed/envsites/>

The Alliance

The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance

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

I am so excited, I want to join now!

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone (Home) _____

Telephone (Work) _____

e-mail address _____

Additional Donations _____

CBA T-Shirt (\$15 by mail) _____

Total Enclosed _____



__ Individual or Family **\$25 annual**

__ Senior Citizen **\$15 annual**

__ Full-time Student **\$5 annual**

__ Lifetime **\$250**

__ Bronze Alligator Sponsor **\$250 annual**

__ Silver Osprey Sponsor **\$500 annual**

__ Golden Dolphin Sponsor **\$1,000 annual**

__ Platinum Sturgeon Sponsor **\$2,500 annual**

I am so excited about Volunteer Opportunities! I am willing to assist with . . .

__ Marsh Grass Restoration

__ Water Quality Monitoring

__ Speakers Bureau

__ CBA Information Booth

__ Children's Educational Activities

__ General Education

__ Newsletters/Brochures

__ Grant Writing

__ Fundraising

__ CBA Office

__ Whatever

The Alliance

Thank you !

New and Renewed

Members

David Keener

Betty & Don Hefner

Laura Hall

Charles Felker

Loyal & Helen Weaver

Nancy Ann James

Judith & Donald Rutland

Donations

Jim Tucker

Mid Bay Marina

Bluewater Bay Marina

The Kayak Experience

Hartman & Associates, Inc.

Angie Kiefer - SAIC

Captain Steve & Wendy Wilson -

Southern Star Dolphin Cruise Boat



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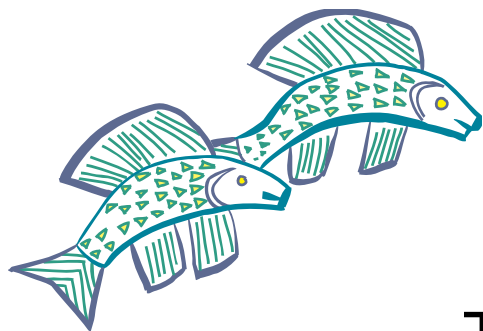
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Return Service Requested

www.basinalliance.org

Attention

We are updating our files!
If you have a **CHANGE** of
address, phone number, email or
volunteering efforts please
contact us by Email at
cba@owcc.net or phone at
(850)650-9330.



www.basinalliance.org

Thank you for helping us better
communicate with our
community.