

**RESTORE ACT  
Public Meeting  
August 13, 2013**

**Attendees:** Ryan Bell, Chairman, Board of County Commissioners  
Chris Cowart, Vice-Chairman, School Board Representative  
Leslie Sturmer, Aquaculture  
Andrew Gude, Citizen Representative  
Drinda Merritt, Citizen Representative  
Marilyn Ladner, Higher Education Institution (college/university)  
David Pieklik, Economic Development Representative  
Fred Moody, County Coordinator  
Anne Bast Brown, County Attorney  
Vacancy, Development/Job Creation Representative

**Absent:** Bruce Wilson, Tourism Industry Representative

Chairman Ryan Bell opened the Town Hall meeting of the Levy County RESTORE Act Advisory Committee at 5:00 p.m. at the Williston City Hall, Williston, Florida.

**Vision for a Healthy Gulf of Mexico - Andrew Gude**

Andrew Gude explained that U.S. Fish and Wildlife has developed their own document for the Big Bend area addressing the watersheds and establishing partnerships with private landowners, water management districts, federal agencies, timber companies, mills, and other agencies or businesses to form conservation easements. Mr. Gude said the focus of the report is to encourage conservation easements and focus on economic sustainability for the timber, fishing, farming and nature based tourism industries while supporting public recreation in the conservation easement areas and a continuation of the lifestyle and culture. Mr. Gude said Dixie County has requested the Governor's support of the timber companies, mills and communities who want to keep the resources intact. Mr. Gude explained the U.S. Fish and Wildlife has always been established for wildlife and fisheries and the goal of establishing conservation areas with multiple partners in the local communities comprised of communities, businesses, large land owners, federal and state agencies to provide economic diversity based on the overlay of the land and waterscape to guarantee the future of these areas for future generations.

Leslie Sturmer commented that the report specifically describes the Big Bend area reflecting our area and resources. Ms. Sturmer said she had provided a copy of the report to a diverse group of people in the Cedar Key area and they were supportive of the report.

Mr. Gude said marine areas has untapped potential, is off limits to oil, gas and mineral extraction until 2027 when Congress will have a review. Mr. Gude said there is potential for large scale marine culture, cage fishing which have not been thought of. Mr. Gude said the establishment of economic sustainability in the Gulf area would involve multiple partners and would involve federal agencies but should not be seen as being controlled by large (federal) government. Mr. Gude said it is necessary to coordinate with sister counties and form partnerships for more integration across the region using the watershed approach to tie into larger projects for funding from federal sources. Mr. Gude

said Mr. George Willson has been a strong proponent of the Big Bend area and contributed substantially to the protection of the gulf.

Chairman Bell said Mr. George Willson has been invited to attend the next RESTORE Act Committee meeting in Fanning Springs to present his proposed project. Mr. Bell explained it appeared to be a viable project and could be used as a template for other projects.

Ms. Sturmer commented on Mr. Boudreau's presentation at the July 23, 2013 meeting and her response to his comment of joining with a proposed project in Pasco County for dredging and constructing living shorelines in the Big Bend area. Ms. Sturmer explained the Big Bend area is not compatible for this type of project and recently in a meeting with the Florida Wildlife Federation comments were made about the Big Bend area not having a comp plan and not being in the position to be competitive for the other Pots of funding. Ms. Sturmer said the report from U.S. Fish and Wildlife stresses water dependency and the watershed is the Suwannee River for Levy, Dixie and Taylor counties. Ms. Sturmer said Erich Marzolf is the contact at the Suwannee River Water Management District for the RESTORE Act funds and the water management districts have their own projects and the Committee should obtain the list of water management district projects. Ms. Sturmer said she is not opposed to being in a project with a NGO but not with the NGO as a lead on the project.

Mr. Gude said the Committee should focus on commonalities and then work on the differences for projects.

Mr. Gude added that landscape conservation can tie in with education, job creation and restoration within a larger project.

Chairman Bell said Mr. Don Quincey would be Levy County's contact with the Suwannee River Water Management District. Mr. Bell said he advised Mr. George Willson that his project should be presented to this Committee first to see if the Committee was interested in the project.

#### **Educational - Marilyn Ladner**

Marilyn Ladner reported that she had attended an event hosted by Bill Williams and Amber Davis in Tallahassee and was impressed with the curriculum that Pasco County has established for their students. Ms. Ladner said she followed up with a visit to the Pasco County school system where the curriculum in grades K-6 prepare for every 7<sup>th</sup> grader to become a "watershed ambassador" and from there the emphasis is on environmental studies. Ms. Ladner said this curriculum exposes students to watershed and environmental concerns and is a connection for future professionals in research. Ms. Ladner added that Dr. Henningsen, President of the College of Central Florida contacted the superintendents in Levy and Citrus counties to discuss a comprehensive education plan and this type of curriculum could form a part of the plan which could be a critical piece for job creation but prepare students to be good stewards.

Mr. Gude said putting an education component related to conservation in a plan for K-12, university and adult education certification students would create an investment larger than the landscape.

Bill Williams spoke on the infrastructure of the Pasco County school system and the investment they have made their educational system. Mr. Williams said a collaborative relationship with connecting areas can have unparalleled results.

Mr. Williams said Professor Thomas L. Crisman, Professor, Dept. Of Integrative Biogy, Dept. Of Environmental & Occupational Health, USF has worked on water

management projects and Dr. Andrew S. Kane, Associate Professor of Environmental and Global Health, University of Florida has been involved with the Apalachicola Bay report and would like to have them come to the next committee meeting in Fanning Springs on August 27, 2013.

### **Congressional Field Hearing, Apalachicola, FL - Bill Williams**

Mr. Williams explained he had attended the Congressional Field Hearing today in Apalachicola which was held to address the failed fishery in the Apalachicola area. Mr. Williams said it was announced that the federal government had declared a disaster area. Mr. Williams said the Congressional Delegation had a bi-partisan discussion and speakers presented information on the collapse of the oyster harvesting in the bay area. Mr. Williams reflected on the need to work with coastal and interior counties to secure funding for major projects which promote economical development and enhance the education of the public to develop projects for watershed protection.

Mr. Williams said that there will be a meeting of the Federal Eco Task Force in New Orleans which he would be attending and reporting on his findings.

Ms. Sturmer said there have been recent appropriations at the University of Florida for shellfish research and will be recurring positions and also the Extension Office will be working with the Department of Agriculture to offer oyster workshops.

Mr. Berlon Weeks asked for clarification concerning the consolidation of four (4) counties with smaller projects combining their projects into one larger project.

Mr. Bell said there had been a presentation by another consultant at the last meeting and he spoke of Levy, Dixie, Taylor and Jefferson combining efforts at creating a joint regional project. Mr. Bell clarified this was a presentation only. Mr. Bell said on September 10 will be the workshop for properly submitting a project application.

Ms. Ladner made a motion to approve the minutes of the Committee and Town Hall meeting held on July 23, 2013 at the College of Central Florida in Chiefland, second by Chris Cowart, and the motion carried.

The Advisory Committee closed and there was a recess of five minutes prior to the commencement of the Town Hall meeting.

### **Town Hall Meeting, Williston, FL**

Chairman Bell opened the Town Hall meeting at 6:06 p.m. with the Pledge to the Flag and invocation by Chris Cowart. Chairman Bell introduced the Committee members and thanked the City of Williston for allowing the Town Hall meeting to be held in the City Council Chambers.

Mr. Williams gave a short summary of his role as consultant and his involvement with the RESTORE Act.

Mr. Williams explained the Clean Water Act ("CWA") and the Oil Pollution Act ("OPA"). Mr. Williams explained how funds were previously directed to the federal trust fund for prior oil spills under the Oil Pollution Act and with the enactment of the RESTORE Act those funds would be returned to the five (5) affected states.

Mr. Williams presented the Power Point explaining how the funds will be disbursed and the percentages disbursed through the Pot 1, Pot 2, Pot 3 and Pot 4 funds. Mr.

Williams explained that Pot 1 funds will be controlled by the local Board of County Commissioners, Pot 2 applications will be submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection through the state to be determined for awards at the federal level and is competitive, Pot 3 will be decided by the Gulf Consortium which consists of representatives from the 23 affected counties to work with the Governor and his technical advisory group and Pot 4 will be allocated for academic research and monitoring with the awards coming from US Fish and Wildlife and NOAA.

Mr. Williams said that the treasury rules are past due in being released in response to an inquiry by Mr. Scott Lippman on the timing of the release of the treasury rules.

Mr. Fred Moody said the RESTORE Act Advisory Committee is currently hold Town Hall meetings in the municipalities and that meeting times and places are posted at [levycounty.org](http://levycounty.org).

Mr. Williams said projects will be submitted to Department of Environmental Protection and be used to create a state-wide plan and will have applicants who have formed public/private partnerships, local or state projects, private citizens or anyone who applies for funds.

Mr. Williams explained until the court case with BP is settled in Federal Court in Louisiana there are no funds and there is a possibility of penalties and fines being distributed to the federal government through the NRDA trust fund.

Chairman Bell said the application and scoring criteria for the Pot 1 funds can be reviewed at the County website.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

**RESTORE ACT COMMITTEE**



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Ryan Bell, Chairman