

**RESTORE ACT
Public Meeting
August 27, 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)
Bruce Wilson, Tourism Industry Representative
Fred Moody, County Coordinator
Anne Bast Brown, County Attorney
Vacancy, Development/Job Creation Representative

Absent: David Pieklik, Economic Development Representative

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

Coalition for Big Bend Projects - Bill Willson, Willson Consulting, LLC

Andrew Gude Mr. Andrew Gude introduced Mr. George Willson of Willson Consulting, LLC who was present to discuss the possibility of a coalition with Dixie, Taylor and Jefferson counties of the Big Bend area.

Ms. Leslie Sturmer recognized Mr. Eric Marzolf with Suwannee River Water Management District.

Mr. Willson explained he has been working with private industries and public land owners including County Managers and County Commissioners promoting conservation easements and other projects to provide protection for water resources, water quality which include waste water, road paving, shellfish research. Mr. Willson explained he has contacted the counties located within the tide water basin of St. Marks river to the lower Suwannee River. Mr. Willson said he has been working with Senator Dean and with the new leadership at the Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP"), local legislators, local governments and the water management district for the protection of water resources and agriculture lands. Mr. Willson said counties could still work individually on specific projects and join together to form regional projects.

Chairman Bell said a regional approach by aligning with counties with geographic and economical similarities and tied together with the watershed. Chairman Bell explained that with the multiple pots for funding projects a viable alliance and coordination with other counties provides for more opportunities to receive funding. Chairman Bell said direct contract cannot be made on a person to person basis due to the "Sunshine Law" and is requesting direction from the Committee to the possibility of pursuing public meetings to see what projects may be of importance to these counties with similarities to Levy County and including the water management district projects and have the water management districts' endorsement for possible projects.

Mr. Willson explained his presentations and informal conversation with the counties and landowners providing input from community and discussions with resource agencies have been receiving positive responses and by working together funding requests can be presented to the legislative body through Senators Dean and Munford.¹

Mr. Willson said he was acting as messenger and would be contacting Dixie, Jefferson and Taylor counties to discuss regional projects to protect the valuable watersheds and natural wildlife.

Ms. Sturmer said a regional coalition may help the Big Bend area and would rather see it locally driven than by NGO's and it makes sense to form a Big Bend Coalition. Ms. Sturmer added that Suwannee River Water Management District may have some plans they have already which will help protect our resources.

Chairman Bell said the dialogue needs to be instituted with these counties and there is a representative from Taylor County and Mr. Tim Alexander is representing Dixie County for the Gulf Consortium which is looking fragmented at this time but possibly can pull together and have more resolution at the next meeting in West Palm Beach.

Mr. Willson said Dixie County has now formed a RESTORE Act Committee.

Mr. Andrew Gude said the US Fish and Wildlife is pursuing projects to conserve the viable ecosystem working with federal, state and local land owners who rely on tourism, agriculture, fishing and forestry.

Ms. Sturmer recommended arranging a meeting and invite other county representatives who may or not have formed RESTORE Act committees and may be at different stages.

Chairman Bell said the meeting might need to be arranged in the middle and arrange a designee from the Boards or Committees.

Ms. Anne Brown, County Attorney explained it would need to be advertised, minutes taken including coordination with the Executive Board of the Gulf Consortium where 2 or more of their members possibly would be present. Ms. Brown said the coalition could be part of the plan and would be in the realm of the duties of the Levy County RESTORE Act Advisory Committee.

Ms. Sturmer said the Committee could arrange this without a consultant.

Ms. Amber Davis advised they would be available to do what leg work might be needed.

Mr. Willson said the panhandle and the southern portion of the state have ample resources and it will be a good move to team up with Suwannee River Water Management as they can help with watershed projects.

Chairman Bell said the consensus of the Committee to pursue a meeting with representatives from Dixie, Taylor and Jefferson counties.

Thomas L. Crisman, Professor, Department of Integrative Biology, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, University of South Florida

Mr. Bill Williams and Dr. Crisman appeared by telephone for the Committee meeting. Mr. Williams gave a introduction of Dr. Crisman explaining that Dr. Crisman has done extensive research with the watershed and water quality.

Dr. Crisman explained he had previously been with the University of Florida and was

¹Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve; Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge; Gulf of Mexico Initiative Priority Areas and 4-Digit Hydrologic Units that Encompass Them; Lower Suwannee NWR Region of Hydrologic Influence - maps

familiar with the entire coastal regional of the Big Bend area. Dr. Crisman said while considering the water quality you do not want to add another level of bureaucracy or a confrontational situation. Dr. Crisman said adding the human quality of human health, environmental industries are issues not handled by the water management districts and an approach to create a sustainable project with economic incentives which creates jobs and allows the young people to remain within the county by forming the economic link including public/private partnerships. Dr. Crisman said he would be happy to come and make a presentation.

Mr. Williams said part of this plan is what has been done in Pasco County with educational programs exposing the elementary children and working with state parks, environmental institutes by using resources.

Mr. Williams explained Dr. Andrew S. Kane was to call in, however, he did not have done extensive work with the failure of the oyster industry.

Ms. Marilyn Ladner explained after her personal inspection of what has been done in Pasco County, key players in education have been identified within Levy County and would like to proceed with her being the facilitator or having advertised meetings of the RESTORE Act Committee.

Chairman Bell recommended that Ms. Ladner proceed with one on one meetings and then further plans can be made.

Chairman Bell said the next Committee meeting will be held in Bronson at the Courthouse and the meeting was scheduled for October 15 at 3:00 p.m.

Chairman Bell said the Committee will meet October 15 then the review of projects will be November 15, then there will be a Committee meeting November 19 at 3:00 p.m. at the Courthouse in Bronson, there will not be a Committee meeting in December and the meetings for January, February and March will be set at the November meeting.

Ms. Marilyn Ladner moved to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2013 meeting, second by Drinda Merritt 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, Fanning Springs, Florida

Chairman Bell opened the Town Hall meeting at 6:00 p.m. with Chairman Bell thanking the Town of Fanning Springs for allowing the Town Hall meeting to be held in the Council Chambers.

Ms. Amber Davis gave an overview with a power point presentation of the different pots of funding available and explained how the RESTORE Act was enacted and its relation with the Clean Water Act ("CWA"), the penalties from criminal and civil penalties and fines. Ms. Davis explained the formulas that will be used in disbursing the funds at the local, state and federal levels and how the RESTORE Act Committee is working to provide the information to the public. Ms. Davis further explained how the funds will be divided among the five (5) affected states and how the funds will be distributed in Florida. Ms. Davis said the funds in Pot 1 will be controlled by the County Commission, Pot 2 will be federal funds under the control of an eleven (11) member council, Pot 3 will be state funds under the control of the Governor and the Gulf Consortium, and Pot 4 will be for science and research, including Centers of Excellence controlled in part by NOAA and USF&W and USDEP.

Ms. Davis had the Committee members identify themselves for the public. Ms. Davis explained there will be a live application available on September 10 and the Committee will be hosting a workshop at the College of Central Florida from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. and initial applications will be reviewed November 19, 2013.

Mr. Joe Mittauer asked if the Pot 2 funds would filter past the Big Bend area. Ms. Davis responded that the concern was that those funds would be sent to south Florida where there was limited impact and not to projects in the Big Bend area where there was major impact from the Deep Horizon oil spill.

Mr. George Willson said it is very political and southern Florida has had projects waiting for funding for many years.

Chairman Bell said that the process for submitting projects for the Pot 3 funding has not yet been developed and are awaiting for the Restoration Council to complete the development of the process.

Ms. Davis said the Pot 4 funds will be used for science with a percentage to be for public/private institutions and administered by DEP and FWC with another percentage of the funds to be administered by NOAA and USFWS.

Ms. Davis explained the amount of money involved is still open and will be pending until the resolution of the BP settlement.

Mr. Greg Lang of Mittauer & Associates inquired into the status of the state plan that must be adopted prior to the release of any funds.

Ms. Davis responded that the state plan will be in place before any funds are disbursed and the treasury rules have to be adopted and in place.

Mr. George Willson said the criminal trial starts in September and there is no limitation on how long the case can continue.

Ms. Davis explained there is no money until the case is settled.

Ms. Davis explained in response to an inquiry by Mr. Greg Lang that the Florida Gulf Consortium will be representing for Pot 3 funds with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administering the project applications that are submitted.

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

RESTORE ACT COMMITTEE



Ryan Bell, Chairman

Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve



*St. Martins Marsh
Aquatic Preserve*



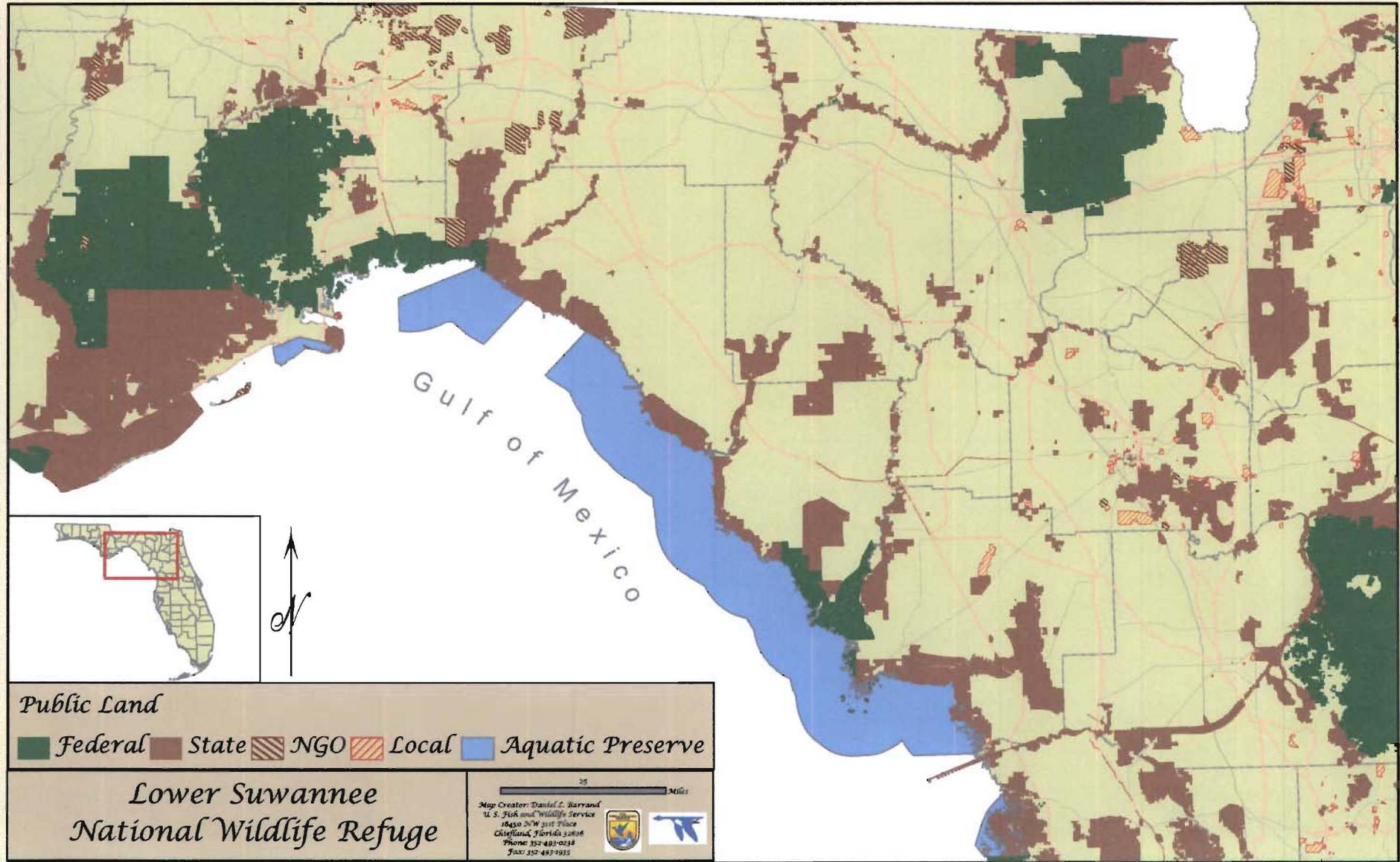
-  Aquatic Preserves
-  State Parks
-  National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs)



CAMA Map
Created May, 2005

Aquatic Preserves layer maintained by:
Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas
3900 Commonwealth Blvd, MS 235
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000
850-245-2094

Aquatic Preserves include all the state-owned submerged lands within their boundaries. This map is not intended for use for determination of wetlands or land ownership.



Gulf of Mexico

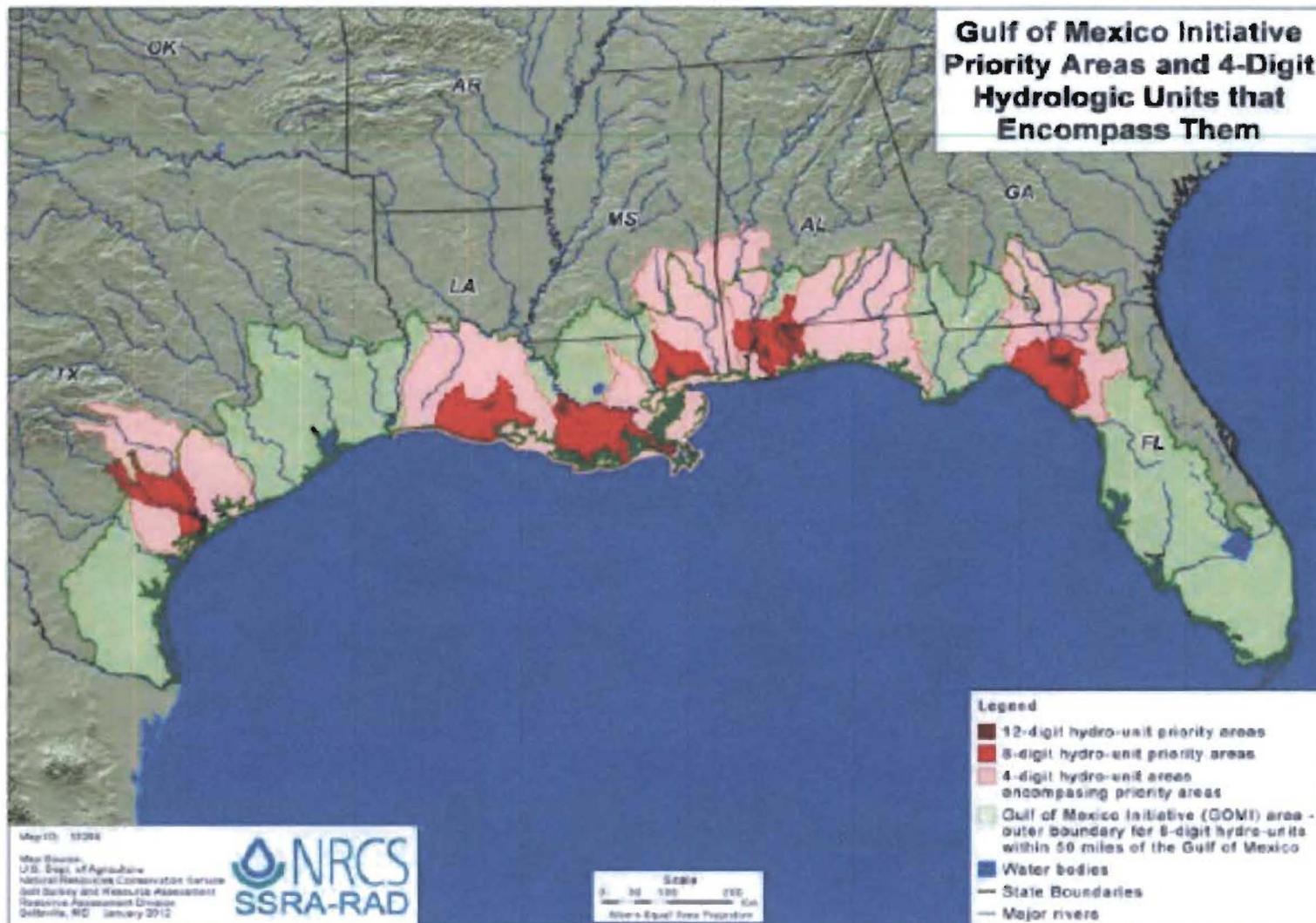
Public Land

- Federal*
- State*
- NGO*
- Local*
- Aquatic Preserve*

*Lower Suwannee
National Wildlife Refuge*

25 Miles
 Map Creator: Daniel L. Barrand
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Drawing from recent state natural resource assessments, NRCS identified Gulf Coast watersheds where substantial opportunities exist to reduce nutrient and sediment loading through focused technical and financial assistance. Working in conjunction with state and federal agencies, local partners, and producers, NRCS selected seven river basins containing 16 of the watersheds with the greatest opportunity to build upon existing conservation efforts. They include Weeks Bay in Alabama, the Escambia River in Alabama and Florida, the middle Suwannee River area in Florida, the Atchafalaya and Mermentau Basins in Louisiana, the Jourdan River in Mississippi, and the Lower San Antonio River in Texas.

