

**APALACHICOLA BAY SYSTEM INITIATIVE (ABSI)**

<https://marinelab.fsu.edu/absi/>

**ABSI COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD (CAB)**

**OYSTERMEN'S WORKSHOP—WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2020**

**IN-PERSON FOR INVITED OYSTERMEN ONLY DUE TO SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS: APALACHICOLA NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE**

**ALL OTHERS OBSERVE BY VIRTUAL MEETING: VIA ZOOM WEBINAR**

**JOIN ZOOM MEETING URL: <https://fsu.zoom.us/j/98669877084>**

**MEETING ID: 986 6987 7084—PHONE NUMBER: 646.558.8656**

**WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES**

- ✓ To Receive Overview of Project Scope, Purpose, and Status
- ✓ To Hear Presentation and Receive Oystermen's Feedback on FSU/FWC Restoration Experiment
- ✓ To Receive Oystermen's Recommendations on Suitable Habitat Locations and Materials for Restoration
- ✓ To Receive Oystermen's Feedback on Management and Restoration Alternatives

**ABSI OYSTERMEN'S WORKSHOP—DECEMBER 2, 2020**

*All Agenda Times—including Public Comment and Adjournment—are Approximate and Subject to Change*

1.)	3:00 PM	<b>WELCOME AND REVIEW OF PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES</b>
2.)	3:05	<b>AGENDA REVIEW AND MEETING OBJECTIVES</b>
3.)	3:10	<b>OVERVIEW OF PROJECT MEETING SCHEDULE AND WORKPLAN</b>
4.)	3:15	<b>OVERVIEW OF ABSI PROJECT SCOPE, PURPOSE, AND STATUS</b>
5.)	3:30	<b>PRESENTATION AND OYSTERMEN'S FEEDBACK ON FSU/FWC RESTORATION EXPERIMENT</b>
6.)		<b>OYSTERMEN'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUITABLE HABITAT LOCATIONS AND MATERIALS FOR RESTORATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recommendations using maps</li></ul>
7.)		<b>OYSTERMEN'S FEEDBACK ON MANAGEMENT &amp; RESTORATION ALTERNATIVES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Questions on Page 5</li></ul>
8.)	4:55	<b>NEXT STEPS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Next Oystermen's Workshop (Tentatively May 2021)</li></ul>
	<b>~5:00 PM</b>	<b>ADJOURN</b>

**MEETING AND WORKSHOP FACILITATION**

The ABSI CAB meetings and workshops are facilitated by Jeff Blair and Robert Jones from the FCRC Consensus Center at Florida State University. Information at: <http://consensus.fsu.edu/>



**COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION**

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>
<b>Agriculture/ACF Stakeholders/Riparian Counties</b>	
1. Chad Taylor <sup>^</sup>	Riparian Counties Stakeholder Group/ACF Stakeholders/Agriculture
<b>Business/Real Estate/Economic Development/Tourism</b>	
2. Chuck Marks	Acentria Insurance
3. Mike O'Connell	SGI Civic Club/SGI 2025 Vision
4. John Solomon	Apalachicola Chamber of Commerce
<b>Environmental/Citizen</b>	
5. Georgia Ackerman <sup>^*</sup>	Apalachicola Riverkeeper
6. Lee Edmiston	Retired DEP/ANERR
7. Chad Hanson <sup>^*</sup>	Pew Charitable Trusts
<b>Local Government</b>	
8. Anita Grove <sup>^*</sup>	Apalachicola City Commissioner
9. Ricky Jones <sup>^</sup>	Franklin County Commissioner
<b>Recreational Fishing</b>	
10. Chip Bailey	Peregrine Charters
11. Frank Gidus	CCA Florida
<b>Seafood Industry</b>	
12. David Barber	Barber's Seafood
13. Shannon Hartsfield <sup>^</sup>	Franklin County Seafood Workers Association and Oysterman
14. Roger Mathis <sup>^</sup>	Oysterman and R.D.'s Seafood
15. Steve Rash <sup>^</sup>	Water Street Seafood
16. Denita Sassor	Outlaw Oyster Company, Aquaculture
17. TJ Ward	Buddy Ward & Sons Seafood
<b>State Government</b>	
18. Jim Estes	FWC Division of Marine Fisheries Management
19. Jenna Harper	ANERR/DEP
20. Alex Reed	FDEP Office of Resilience & Coastal Protection
21. Portia Sapp	FDACS Division of Aquaculture
22. Paul Thurman	NWFWMD
<b>University/Researchers</b>	
23. Tom Frazer	UF/DEP Governor's Science Advisor
24. Erik Lovstrand	UF/IFAS/Florida Sea Grant Franklin County
<b>CAB SUBCOMMITTEES</b>	
Community Outreach Subcommittee	* Lead: Sandra Brooke
CAB Successor Group Subcommittee	<sup>^</sup> Co-Leads: Anita Grove and Shannon Hartsfield
<b>PROJECT TEAM AND FACILITATORS</b>	
<b>FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY</b>	
Sandra Brooke <sup>^*</sup>	Marine Biologist
Felicia Coleman	Marine Biologist
Madelein Mahood*	Outreach and Education
Gary Ostrander	Vice-President for Research
<b>FCRC CONSENSUS CENTER, FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY</b>	
Jeff Blair	Community Advisory Board Facilitator
Robert Jones	Community Advisory Board Facilitator



## ABSI CAB PROJECT SCHEDULE AND WORKPLAN

**UPDATED AS OF DECEMBER 2, 2020**

### PHASE I—STANDING UP AND ORGANIZATION OF THE ABSI CAB

<b>ABSI Assessment Process</b>	May- Aug. 2019  Report Sept. 2019	Assessment report based on interviews of over 60 stakeholders and agency personnel (May – August 2019) summarized key challenges and issues that should be addressed in the Apalachicola Bay System Initiative (ABSI) and by its Community Advisory Board (CAB); facilitators recommend members for the CAB.
<b>ABSI CAB Questionnaire</b>	Sept. 2019	Questionnaire report on the CAB members’ views on successful short and long-term outcomes and on critical ABSI challenges and issues.
<b>Meeting I.</b> Eastpointe FL	Oct. 30, 2019	Scoping and organizational meeting, review and refinement of overall project purpose, vision and goal framework. Presentation on the ABSI project’s four main components: research, management, community engagement, and oyster reef and bay restoration. Public comment.
<b>Meeting II.</b> Eastpointe FL	Dec. 18, 2019	Member-requested presentations on Apalachicola River Slough Restoration project, Oyster Fishery and Harvest Statistics, ABSI Research Update, and FWC Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration, Phase II. Review and refinement of vision themes and goal framework, and identification of key topical issues to inform the drafting of objectives. Public comment
<b>Meeting III.</b> Eastpointe FL	Jan. 8, 2020	Member-requested presentations on Oyster Ecology, Hydrologic modeling and Oyster Population Models. Review, refinement and adoption of five vision themes, goals, outcomes and objectives, and initial review of draft performance measures. Public comment

### PHASE II—SCOPING OF ABSI ISSUES, IDENTIFICATION OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES & STRATEGIES

<b>Meeting IV.</b> Eastpointe FL	Mar. 11, 2020	Member-requested presentations on current status of Apalachicola Bay, FDACS Aquaculture Leasing Program, Oyster Reef Management in Apalachicola Bay, and the Chesapeake Bay Oyster Futures Consensus Process. Review of Apalachicola Bay System Ecosystem-Based Management and Restoration Plan goals, outcomes, and objectives. Identification of initial draft strategies and related performance measures. Public comment.
<b>Meeting V.</b> Virtual Meeting	May 22, 2020	Member-requested presentations on FWC Overview of Oyster Management, FWRI Oyster Monitoring and Restoration Effects in Apalachicola Bay, MK Ranch Hydrologic Restoration, and TNC Lake Wimico project. Identification and evaluation of preliminary strategies and performance measures to achieve each of the five goals and objectives. Public comment.
<b>CAB Strategies</b>	June 2020	CAB Worksheet to identify potential strategies for each of the five goals.
<b>Meeting VI.</b> Virtual Meeting	July 16, 2020	Member-requested presentations. Decision support tools update & demonstration. Review and evaluation of the preliminary strategies by CAB member for Plan Goal. Public Comment.
<b>Meeting VII.</b> Virtual Meeting	Sept. 9, 2020	Member-requested presentations. Identification, evaluation and refinement of objectives, strategies and performance measures for Goals A-E. Public Comment.
<b>Meeting VIII.</b> Virtual Meeting	Oct. 15, 2020	Member-requested presentations. Review of strategies and identification, and evaluation of actions steps to achieve strategies. Evaluation of Performance Measures and categories. Public Comment.
<b>Meeting IX.</b> Virtual Meeting	Nov. 12, 2020	Member-requested presentations. Agreement on Apalachicola Bay System Ecosystem-Based Adaptive Management and Restoration Plan (Plan)



		framework. Public engagement on the Plan strategy discussion. Discussion of strategies and action steps to achieve Goals. Discussion of ecological and management goals. Public comment.
<b>Oystermen's Workshop #1</b>	Dec. 2, 2020	Overview of Project Scope, Purpose, and Status, and Oystermen's input on restoration experiment, suitable habitat for restoration, and management and restoration alternatives. In person meeting for Oystermen, virtual for all others.
<b>PHASE III—BUILDING CONSENSUS ON CAB RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ABS ECOSYSTEM-BASED ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT AND RESTORATION PLAN</b>		
<b>Meeting X.</b> Virtual Meeting	Jan. 13, 2021	Member-requested presentations. Sub-committee reports. Discussion of estuarine metrics and management and restoration goals. Prioritization of Strategies. Public comment.
<b>Public Workshop</b>	<i>TBD</i>	<i>Schedule &amp; format dependent on status of the COVID-19 pandemic.</i> Review and public comments on Plan Framework (Goals/Objectives/Strategies/Actions).
<b>Meeting XI.</b>	Feb. 24, 2021	Review of any public input on Draft Plan Framework. Review of scenarios and consensus rating of strategies and actions using decision-support tools relative to goals and objectives. Public comment.
<b>Meeting XII.</b>	April 21, 2021	Review of scenarios and consensus rating of draft strategies and actions using decision-support tools relative to goals and objectives. Public comment.
<b>Oystermen's Workshop #2</b>	Tentatively May, 2021	Review draft Plan with oystermen, and oystermen's feedback on management and restoration alternatives.
<b>Meeting XIII.</b>	June 16, 2021	Review of scenarios and consensus rating of draft strategies and actions using decision-support tools relative to goals and objectives. Public comment.
<b>Meeting XIV.</b>	Aug. 18, 2021	Continue review and consensus testing of Draft Plan and implementation strategies and actions, and agreement on Draft Plan for public comment. Public comment.
<b>Public Workshop 2</b>	<i>TBD</i>	<i>Schedule &amp; format dependent on status of the COVID-19 pandemic.</i> Review and public comments on Revised Draft ABS Ecosystem-Based Adaptive Management Plan and implementation strategies.
<b>Meeting XV.</b>	Oct. 20, 2021	Review of public comment, agreement on recommendations for inclusion in the Plan. Public comment.
<b>Meeting XVI.</b>	Nov. 17, 2021	Complete Phase III of project. Recommendations for Management and Restoration for the Plan finalized.
<b>PHASE IV—PLAN IMPLEMENTATION</b>		
	<b>TBD</b>	Restoration Component

**PROJECT RESOURCES AND CONTACTS**

**PROJECT WEBPAGE (URL):** <https://marinelab.fsu.edu/the-apalachicola-bay-system-initiative/>

**PROJECT EMAIL:** [fsucml-absi@fsu.edu](mailto:fsucml-absi@fsu.edu)

**PROJECT FACILITATION:** Jeff Blair and Bob Jones from the FCRC Consensus Center at Florida State University. Information at: <http://consensus.fsu.edu/>

**ABSI CAB ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL POLICES AND GUIDELINES**

Located under the ABSI CAB Procedures and Reports Menu: <https://marinelab.fsu.edu/absi/cab/>



## KEY QUESTIONS FOR OYSTERMEN'S FEEDBACK

1. When in your experience, did the Apalachicola Bay oyster fishery start to decline?
2. In your experience, when did the oyster fishery 'crash' or collapse?
3. Do you think closing the Apalachicola Bay wild oyster fishery is a good strategy for the oyster harvester community? Why or why not?
4. Do you think closing Apalachicola Bay wild oyster fishery is a good strategy to help restore the overall health of the Bay? Why or why not?
5. Where were the best and worst sites for oyster harvesting, before the population crashed?  
*(Use maps to identify locations)*
6. Where are the best and worst sites now? *(Use maps to identify locations)*
7. Where do you think the best locations would be for fisheries restoration? *(use maps to identify locations)*
8. Where do you think would be the best locations for 'Sanctuary Reefs'? These would not be fished, but would help restore the oyster ecosystem *(Use maps to identify locations)*
9. What kinds of materials do you think would be best to restore oyster fisheries?
10. What kinds of materials do you think would be best to restore the oyster ecosystem?
11. There are several approaches that have been used here or elsewhere to successfully manage oyster populations and support a sustainable wild harvest fishery. How would you feel about the following management approaches:
  - a. Seasonal (summer) closures
  - b. Permanent closures or Sanctuary Reefs
  - c. Rotating closures
  - d. Limited entry fishery
  - e. Closures based on stock levels
  - f. Reduced bag limits
  - g. Additional enforcement presence, and more oyster-specific law enforcement (including possibly, on-water check-point, checking wholesalers, etc.)
  - h. Some combinations of the above approaches
  - i. Other approaches

## ABSI MISSION STATEMENT, PROJECT SUMMARY, AND CAB GOAL STATEMENT

**APALACHICOLA BAY SYSTEM INITIATIVE MISSION STATEMENT.** The Apalachicola Bay System Initiative (ABSI) seeks to gain insight into the root causes of decline of the Bay's ecosystem and the deterioration of oyster reefs. Ultimately, the ABSI will develop a management and restoration plan for the oyster reefs and the health of the Bay.

**PROJECT SUMMARY.** In response to the rapidly declining health of the Apalachicola Bay System (ABS) and the collapse of the oyster fishery and reefs therein, Florida State University sought and was awarded a grant from Triumph Gulf Coast Inc. to undertake a series of scientific approaches intended to aid in the development of an ecosystem-based oyster management and restoration plan for the Apalachicola Bay System. The plan will be informed by science while involving representative stakeholders and the public in its creation, development and implementation by state and federal management agencies. Developing such a plan will help the state agencies responsible for marine resources improve the overall health and the rich biological diversity of the bay, including that of other ecologically and economically important species. Because oyster populations are declining in estuaries across the Florida panhandle, ABSI project leads will work with scientific, non-profit and governmental entities working on similar issues throughout this region to develop a consistent oyster management framework.

The vitality of Apalachicola Bay is key to the socio-economic prosperity of Franklin County and the surrounding area. Specifically, as the bay's health has declined, so has the area's once-booming oyster industry, resulting in widespread job loss and increased economic insecurity for many Franklin County residents whose livelihoods are tied to the Bay.

Florida State University through its Coastal and Marine Laboratory will investigate what precipitated the dramatic decline of the Apalachicola Bay System, and working with the ABSI Community Advisory Board (CAB) and Science Advisory Board determine a viable course of action for improving its condition.

**APALACHICOLA BAY SYSTEM INITIATIVE COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD GOAL STATEMENT.** The overarching goal of the Apalachicola Bay System Initiative Community Advisory Board is to develop a package of consensus recommendations informed by the best available science, data, and stakeholders' experiences for the management and restoration of the Apalachicola Bay System, and to ensure there is a reliable mechanism and process for the monitoring, funding, and implementation of the Apalachicola Bay System Ecosystem-Based Adaptive Management and Restoration Plan.

A critical component of the management plan is oyster reef restoration with full consideration of factors affecting the biology, ecology and sustainable management of the resource. Restoration related actions, as indicated above, should be informed by the best available science and shared stakeholder values, that in turn, result in an economically viable, healthy, and sustainable Apalachicola Bay System.

The process will be designed so that members can explore and evaluate oyster fishery practices and management options, and restoration policies in the Apalachicola Bay System. The Community Advisory Board's consensus recommendations, in the form of an Apalachicola Bay System Ecosystem-Based Adaptive Management and Restoration Plan, will be directed to the Apalachicola Bay System Initiative project team, natural resource managers and environmental regulators, and other agencies/entities as appropriate.