



## The BFA April 2018 NEWSLETTER

Hope Everyone has been enjoying this beautiful spring!

Please mark your calendar for the next General Membership Meeting

**Wednesday, 2 May 2018**

This will be an Eating Meeting with a Guest Speaker! Doors open at 5:30 PM.

Dinner will be provided by the Hip Pocket Deli  
& will include some vegetarian options.

Dinner Cost \$10.00/person  
1615 East LaRua Street, Pensacola

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Mike Lewis, a research scientist at the Gulf Ecology Division at the US EPA National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory on Sabine Island. The Gulf Ecology Division conducts innovative research and modeling to assess and forecast future risk to ecological integrity from pollutants and other stressors, to develop tools and criteria for supporting resilient watersheds and water resources, to predict the adverse outcomes of chemicals at molecular through population scales, and to link environmental condition to the health and wellbeing of people and society.

Dr. Lewis has been an environmental toxicologist for 40 years part of which (15 years) was conducting research in the Pensacola Bay System. He has authored numerous scientific publications many of them focused on the biological and chemical health of Pensacola and Escambia Bays, Santa Rosa Sound and various bayous. He will present his findings based on an intensive review in which he summarized reports, data bases and studies from the last 100 years to present and synthesized a report entitled, ***Environmental Quality of the Pensacola Bay System; Retrospective Review for Future Resource Management and Rehabilitation.***

## Opportunities Continue in our Community

We've come such a long way in the last decade...In case you haven't been downtown recently, you might just want to pass through the area and check out all the new businesses, buildings and countless activities.

In 2008, the downtown wastewater treatment plant was still up and running while **ECUA was busy designing the new \$316-million dollar, state-of-the-art facility, is the largest public works project in the history of Escambia County.** The new plant sits on 2,200 acres of land on Old Chemstrand Road near Cantonment. It has been designated as an AWT (advanced wastewater treatment) facility, meaning it will produce effluent of a very high quality, which will be disinfected to the level required for unrestricted exposure to the public. One hundred percent of the reclaimed water from the plant will be reused, eliminating any potential surface water discharge. (<http://pulsegulfcoast.com/2015/12/see-before-and-after-photos-of-pensacolas-most-notable-construction-projects>)

The 27.5 acre waterfront parcel known as the **Trillium Property** was a contaminated industrial property considered a Brownfield Site with one building developed by the engineering firm Baskerville Donovan on Coyle Street & Main (if Coyle Street went through to main, i.e., an incomplete street). Today, the Community Maritime Park and Maritime Place are economic engines which draw the public to the waterfront through baseball, football and community events.



January 2008 Google Image of downtown Pensacola waterfront

The aerial image from 2008 shows us the site of **Bruce Beach**, once a thriving industrial hub serving the early 20th-century maritime industry — and later a celebrated neighborhood gathering place for Pensacola's black



community — until recently, it has been all but forgotten. (<http://pulsegulfoast.com/2017/11/remembering-bruce-beachs-history-of-segregation-and-industry-in-pensacola>) In the image, the shoreline nearest the tank farm has one of the first shoreline restoration projects in the area – as mitigation from impact at the Port of Pensacola years earlier. In the photo, a rocky jetty system protects a small man made lagoon from wave action while allowing water to circulate through a designed wetland system. The 2008 photo above shows a vegetated area which was used by area schools for hands-on learning.

Also visible in the photo are two creek discharges, one at the base of Spring Street and the other adjacent to the building and appearing as a straight canal. Both creeks continue to convey water to the bay to this day. Both creeks are ‘culverted’ (meaning the creek has been redirected into culverts towards the bay) and buried under streets and buildings – such that the average person may not realize that when they drive south on Spring Street or enter the building at the foot of the bridge on Main and Spring Streets that a creek runs underneath them. Today there are discussions about day-lighting these creeks, i.e., bringing them back to life.

Today, Bruce Beach is the site of a hotly contested issue which asks, what is the best use of the last bit of remaining waterfront property? Prior to the recent development, the site was identified as home to a new hatchery, but many question if the city and state followed their own development timeline and process after deciding a hatchery was needed. **[The BFA contends that if we clean up our area surface waters and reduce sedimentation and erosion; the habitat (namely emergent grasses and submerged seagrass beds) and good, clear waters will serve to naturally recruit important fisheries, boost abundance and support diversity.]**



January 2018 Google Image of downtown Pensacola waterfront today.

By 2020, the public property is set to be the site of the [\\$19 million Gulf Coast Marine Fisheries Hatchery](http://pulse.gulfcoast.com/2017), home to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's flagship research lab and public education center. The project is being entirely funded from civil penalties awarded to the State of Florida in the wake of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. (<http://pulse.gulfcoast.com/2017>)

In the 2018 aerial photograph, the Bruce Beach property remains vacant, and the mitigation site has grown with additional mitigation and some reengineering. Bruce Beach was built long before **Project GreenShores Phase I** was designed or installed. As a science, **living shorelines are still in their infancy** and in 2018, we are barely at the crawl stage in the 'Crawl, Walk, Run' analogy. What we have learned is that one size does not fit all scenarios. Bulkheads and seawalls can be detrimental to seagrasses, mainly due to scouring, whereas living shorelines can absorb and attenuate wave and wind energy. Prevailing winds, area of fetch, depth of basin, and what type of infrastructure is being protected are some of the type questions coastal engineers consider when designing wave attenuation systems. **Hybrid designs** between living shorelines and wave attenuating systems as seen in **Project GreenShores Phase II** are gaining popularity, as residents and visitors would rather not see rock or oyster outcroppings. Also in the recent aerial, the canal discharging next to the engineering offices of Baskerville Donovan and Nick's Boathouse Restaurant has been creatively redesigned to appear sinuous, thus following a more stream like appearance.

Another thing we are learning as a district is to tap into the local community, especially those folks who live here and use the area to understand their concerns, needs and issues. This concept is the basis for a new discipline called **Decision Science**, which is in part similar to the approach being taken by **CivicCon**; **empowering Pensacola through civic conversations**. This year long venue is inviting the engaged public to be a part of the community by helping to shape its future. Local **CivicCon** leaders have identified experts from architects to planners to come here and help our community shape Pensacola, as it rebrands itself; in appearance, activities, development and waterfront. This opportunity is exciting because it is inviting the public to participate in shaping the future. **Great cities begin with civic dialogue**. An offshoot of this program is the **Center for Civic Engagement** which is offering assistance to the community in navigating the city, county and state bureaucracies to have a seat at the 'decision table' and have meaningful two-way dialogues.

One difficult question this group hopes to resolve is: Why are neighborhood groups sometimes the last to know when county bureaucracies implement projects that impact them directly? Some of the folks in **Navy Point Community** would have appreciated being part of the conversation whenever the decision was made to convert their sandy natural shoreline with interspersed emergent grasses to an oyster reef lined shore – which potentially interferes with swimming, paddle boarding and access to the water. Spearheaded by the county, this project is designed to create habitat and improve water quality, and protect the linear park sidewalk, road and a lift station at Gibbs Point. The project intent is great; the solution not so great. Are other options available? Yes. Where they discussed? Unknown, as there is little transparency in these processes. Maybe the new **Estuary Program** can assist here.

Our area has been selected to be the home of the new **Perdido and Pensacola Bay Estuary Program**. While the details are still being discussed and the actual hiring of the Program Director and Senior Scientist is

forthcoming, one thing is certain – Estuary Programs are great for education and outreach, wonderful for research, improving area water quality and associated habitat and in areas such as Tampa Bay, have achieved the goals set forth by their program in expanding seagrass meadows in half the time they anticipated.

**Project Oyster** – in early December 2017, twenty-five folks signed up to participate in a study in which 75 baby oysters will be placed in mesh cages and hung off area piers. Oysters can filter up to 50 gallons of water each day under optimum conditions, so perhaps participants can improve their local water quality through these efforts. Each site was visited to assure conditions were appropriate for oysters and the paperwork submitted. The FL State Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission has worked closely with the BFA Board for months to verify that oysters used for this program would not be eaten. This state agency is responsible for permitting state leases to shellfish farmers; this program (Project Oyster) is similar to oyster gardening programs common in the Chesapeake Bay system – which is a new program for this state agency. Project Oyster Participants will be contacted to pick up their baby oysters, cages, and instructions before the end of the month.

**Indian Bayou** – Approximately two years ago, the folks living in Monterey Shores noticed their small beautiful bayou would turn red from clay run-off every time it rained. Road expansion activities nearby seemed to be the source of the problem. Citizens asked for help: from their county; their elected official's seat was empty; from the state Dept of Environmental Protection; from the state Water Management District; from the Dept of Transportation; and from anyone who would listen. BFA Board members were aware of the bayou and its condition and sought a small grant from Patagonia (clothing) to help the citizenry protect their resource. The outcry from citizens during rain events seemed to be falling on deaf ears until a local land use attorney, Will Dunaway (Clark Partington) agreed to participate and represent the stakeholders.

By October 2017, a meeting arranged by Santa Rosa County (SRC) with the stakeholders, FDEP, WMD & FDOT at the behest of attorney Dunaway afforded the community the first opportunity to share their concerns and ask questions. Fast forward six months and little has occurred. The \$38.57 M FDOT road expansion project is close to being finished. The FDEP has taken the lead on oversight; SRC has developed turbidity and erosion control and monitoring plans – which will come in handy as FDOT continues to expand the interstate eastward; and a study conducted by an FDEP geologist in Nov 2017 indicates that there was no impact to the bayou from all the sediments.

The **Patagonia Grant** has become a hands-on opportunity to integrate critical thinking with scientific oversight and an environmental knowledge for area residents, interested citizens and students. The funding provides the opportunity to enhance learning through hands-on involvement with actual community based relevant monitoring for the area resources.

Similarly, the Escambia County Restore Project, **Revitalization of Carpenter Creek and Bayou Texar**, was developed to provide a long-term platform for area citizens, students, and elected officials to learn about watersheds, stormwater run-off, erosion control, sedimentation, riparian zones, flood plains, native and invasive plants, creek crossings, choke points and past engineering mistakes – to restore this small urban watershed to a healthy and flourishing creek and bayou system.

**The Bream Fishermen Association** is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of the conservation responsibilities as well as the recreational enjoyment of fishermen, hunters, campers and related outdoorsmen.

It is the objective of the BFA to support, develop, and implement programs that will:

- 1) Improve the quality of our environment;
- 2) Protect and maintain our present wilderness type lakes, rivers, swamps, marshes, bays, forests, and beaches in their natural undeveloped state;
- 3) Advance the causes of plant, marine, and wildlife preservation; and
- 4) Environmental education and outreach.

Membership is open to all individuals who support these objectives. Please join the BFA by sending us your contact information (name, mailing address, phone, and email) be sure to notify us if you prefer to receive notices and announcements by mail or email, and \$20 annual dues to our mailing address:

## Bream Fishermen Association

*1203 N. 16<sup>th</sup> Ave, Pensacola, FL 32503*

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