



BFA

## BREAM FISHERMEN ASSOCIATION

1203 N 16th Avenue  
Pensacola, Florida 32503

A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION CHARTERED IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA

# January 2015 Newsletter

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### Happy New Year Everyone!

Please mark your calendar for the next General Membership Meeting, **Wed, 4 February**.

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

Dinner will be served at 6:00 PM.

Dinner will consist of a fish fry, baked beans, coleslaw and hushpuppies.

Cost \$8.00/person.

1615 East LaRua Street, Pensacola.

**Presentation** – Please join us in welcoming Dick Snyder, UWF CEDB Director, who will share and update our membership on UWF oil spill research. April 2015 marks the 5 year anniversary of the BP Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and researchers are now starting to better understand how the oil and the dispersant have impacted the various ecosystems within the Gulf.

### Issues We are Keeping an Eye On: by Barbara Albrecht, BFA President

The October 2014 BFA Newsletter discussed the political hot potato of allowing dredging of the Santa Rosa Shores canal system through the near shore shoal into deeper water, to the Santa Rosa Sound for boat access. This dredging from the canals to the deeper waters within the sound will impact 3.4 acres of healthy seagrass beds living in that region. As we discussed in the earlier newsletter, this project can set a precedent in the state of FL. Many eyes are watching this process, and currently the Army Corps of Engineers (federal agency) has the permit application. The ball is in their court. Let's see what they do.

Another threat to our Santa Rosa Sound seagrass beds is the treated effluent discharge from the Pensacola Beach wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). The ECUA owned and operated facility is currently requesting another 5-year operating permit. This aged facility suffers from infiltration during heavy rain events (cracked pipes which take in water from the ground), as well as discharging an effluent that does not meet water quality standards for dissolved oxygen. The facility's location itself is vulnerable to the elements, much as the Pensacola Main Street Plant was vulnerable during Hurricane Ivan.



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Probably the most disturbing aspect of the discharge is the proximity to Quiet Water Beach, a highly used public area where many mothers and young children are able to access the shallow water without fear of strong currents or unpredictable tides. The City of Gulf Breeze faced a similar dilemma year back and opted to take their WWTP off line because it was discharging into Sound Side Recreational Park. What's more, the city took a long look at the population growth of Gulf Breeze and the surrounding area decided to be proactive in building a facility that could address the future growth needs as well as offering sewage treatment to those areas still on septic systems.

Sediment analyses around the P'cola Beach WWTP diffuser pipe show an increase in several heavy metals and a decrease in the benthic invertebrate community. Seagrass beds in the immediate area are also declining.

Pensacola Beach is an important economic driver for our local economy. The Santa Rosa Sound is an Outstanding Florida Water and has exceptionally high value to the residents of Escambia, Santa Rosa and Okaloosa Counties for its marine habitat, recreational uses and the remaining seagrass (submerged aquatic vegetation) beds. Technology is available to remove the effluent from the island and send it to the Gulf Breeze Peninsula or mainland Pensacola for advanced treatment. We need to eliminate this type of discharge from our valuable waters which happens to double as our swimming holes.

The FDEP has agreed to host an Administrative Hearing in Feb 2015. In addition, there will be two public meetings for interested citizens to learn more about this issue and why these issues are important. Please visit the BFA Website and check the calendar for times and locations – which were unavailable at the time of writing this newsletter.

For those keeping up & interested in local, regional, and national water quality issues, here's a short update starting with Restore.

**Local - Restore Update – Santa Rosa County** - Santa Rosa County will begin accepting proposals for projects to be included in the county's RESTORE Multi-Year Implementation Plan on Monday, Jan. 12. Approximately \$4.3 million is available to Santa Rosa County in the first dollars offered through the RESTORE Act.



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**Local - Restore Update – Escambia County** – Escambia County Restore Committee finalized their community needs in Dec 2014, and is now developing their project criteria and ranking guidelines. Unlike Santa Rosa County, Escambia County hired the contractor Dewberry in Aug 2014 to assimilate 18 months of public input. Santa Rosa County hired Adkins in 2013 to assist with the process of identifying and vetting projects. Each of the 23 counties in FL has a different process based on their county and community needs.

**Regional - Restore Update** – The third phase of the BP oil spill trial is set to start on January 20, 2015. This phase (the “Penalty Phase”) is focused on the eight penalty factors set out in the Clean Water Act (CWA), which the court must take into account in determining civil liability under the CWA. This has important implications for the 80% of CWA penalties that will be channeled through the RESTORE Act.

**Flooding & Escambia County Stormwater Advisory Team (SWAT)** – have finally organized themselves in Dec 2014 and met Tues, 6 Jan 2015, at the Civic Center for a well attended meeting. Many citizens who were affected by the flooding event attended this meeting and participated in a workshop afterwards. The city & county have hired Arcadis Environmental Consultants to ascertain the changes and magnitude of flooding in different areas within the county. In addition, the public was invited to participate by offering their input to different styles of stormwater abatement. Keep in mind, the more we develop the landscape, the less area available for stormwater to percolate into the ground. There will be another opportunity to provide input regarding stormwater and areas in your community which may have been impacted. Interested parties should consider attending the Thurs, 22 Jan 2015, Stormwater Workshop at Sanders Beach Community Center. The meeting begins at 5:00 PM. This is a wonderful opportunity to provide feedback and input to our local decision makers.

**National Stormwater Update** – Stormwater is not just an issue along the Gulf Coast, in fact the entire nation is grappling with how to handle this important issue. As our cities and communities grow, and often grow together – such as south Florida – stormwater and its impacts on the quality of area surface waters becomes everyone’s problem. We know that healthy environments support healthy communities. Which is why two environmental groups have sued the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for what the groups said was failing to comply with a court order requiring the agency to strengthen regulations preventing pollution from stormwater runoff.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Environmental Defense Center (EDC) said in a statement that they filed the suit in Dec 2014 in the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. The groups said EPA has not



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obeyed a 2003 ruling from the 9th circuit in EDC v. EPA that required the agency to redo portions of its 1999 stormwater regulations dealing with urban runoff because they were not in line with the Clean Water Act. The order also directed the agency to consider regulating runoff from unpaved forest roads.

### **Reflections and Opportunities - by Barbara Albrecht, BFA President:**

As we enter the New Year, let us learn from our past, let us listen and be heard, let us have respectful dialogue with all community stakeholders, be tolerant of others and try to understand different viewpoints and missions, so we may avoid repeating any hastily made - poor decisions. Often, it is the unexpected collateral damage that results in the biggest, most expensive impacts. Are we applying, or even considering, new and innovative technology to our local environmental issues or just applying technology to our electronic toys and cars?

Many were disheartened when we saw that widening I-10 resulted in the demise of the oak trees adjacent to Scenic Hwy ingress/egress for larger stormwater ponds, but was the removal of the large oak hammocks really necessary to sequester and slowly release water? Was there a study done to measure respiration & transpiration rates versus the engineered 'bigger-deeper-hole method' of storm water retention? (That stand of trees was a remnant of an old Maritime Forest which starts near Scenic Bluff Preserve and is fragmented today by subdivisions and roads.)

For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction (Sir Isaac Newton's Third Law of Physics). As we look to the future to grow and develop our communities for economic, infrastructure and socio-economic gain - let us not trade what is left of our environment to attain these goals - as all these categories are integrated and linked. Could BP, Transocean, Macondo, or Haliburton have anticipated the coastal communities which were and continue to be impacted by the 2010 oil spill? Or the cost associated with the tragedy?

We share the landscape with many different species that depend on conditions that have evolved slowly over time. Alterations of the landscape on accelerated bases like fragmenting a wetland, ditching wetlands to lower the water table, and allowing developments in poorly suited areas have resulted in many environmental impacts we are working on today. Our large bays and associated deltas are important resting areas for many migratory animals - terrestrial and aquatic in nature (birds, insects, and sturgeon to name a few).

Think about it this way, the egg-laden Loggerhead Turtle that was run over on Perdido Key Drive in 2014 likely hatched from that sandbar 50-60 years earlier, when the island didn't have a road system, businesses, homes, and condominiums. Imagine what today would be like without sea turtles? A 1949 University of Miami publication offers economic tips for the management techniques for Sea Turtles and the Turtle Industry. It



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didn't take long to deplete the fishery, as turtle parts we sought as ingredients for making turtle soup, a popular 19th century American dish, including meat, turtle eggs, turtle shell (buttons, jewelry) and leather (handbags, shoes). Within 40 years, laws were developed to protect the sea turtles.

In 2014, FL surpassed New York in becoming the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest state population, following CA and TX, with 20 million residents. FL attracts 100 M tourists annually, and another 1,000 people per day move to FL. These are huge pressures on communities and especially the environmental resources that support this level of population growth, and the needs that are required to sustain them.

As we move forward to accommodate this growth, let us learn from the lessons we have endured. Problems in our bigger communities mirror the problems in our smaller communities. Whether you live in the city (Pensacola, Ft Walton Beach, Crestview) or out on the land (Milton, Davisville, Foley, Century, Molino, or Mossy Head) – recognize that all these communities mirror the same problems (lack of jobs, drugs, crime, aging infrastructure, poor transportation, inadequate schools, food deserts, etc.), but the culture within each community pocket is different. One size does not fit all. If we don't get the stakeholders from each community to the table, the lessons will be repeated until they are learned.

In 2015, let's create an environment that is good for the future, environmentally, economically, and for the communities living within.

**Time to Renew your Membership** – The BFA is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting our natural resources. All funds and contributions received are tax-deductible, and are used for projects such as our water quality monitoring program. No money is paid to the Board of Directors, all of whom graciously volunteer their valuable time.

**Save the Dates:** The BFA will host a General Membership Meeting 4 February, 6 May, and 5 August 2015. Each meeting will include a speaker and a dinner. The BFA Annual Picnic will be Sat, 7 Nov 2015. Newsletter updates will be sent out prior to each General Membership Meeting.

**The BFA Website** contains a **Calendar to keep up with important meetings** and will soon have several position papers for our membership, and any other interested individuals. The main stressors in our area include: Sedimentation, Nutrient Runoff, Stormwater Runoff, to name just a few. If you have questions or concerns about our area waters, please let us know. Call 850.384.6696 or send an email to:

[PanhandleWatershed@gmail.com](mailto:PanhandleWatershed@gmail.com)



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**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; and
- 3) Advance the causes of plant, marine, and wildlife preservation.

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 \$10 annual dues to our mailing address: 1203 North 16th Ave, Pensacola, FL 32503

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