

DRAFT Franklin County Restore Act Committee (RAC)
RAC Meeting Notes
Franklin County Courthouse Annex, Apalachicola, Florida
March 8, 2017, 5:00 p.m. ETZ

Attendees:

*Rose McCoy-Thomas – Citizen of Apalachicola, Former City Administrator (Retired)
*Brenda La Paz – Mayor of Carrabelle
*Eric Lovestrand – University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences County Extension Office, Franklin County Extension Director
Greg Kristofferson – Citizen of Carrabelle
Bill McCartney – City of Apalachicola
An additional member of the public (unidentified)
Alan Pierce – Franklin County RESTORE Coordinator
Stella Wilson – Dewberry, Inc.

*Denotes official RAC member

Note: This meeting was recorded live and is available for public viewing on the Sea for Yourself YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqxeQf5INogo1j6AC9DOt0A>)

Minutes:

- A. Pierce opened the meeting at approximately 5:00 p.m. (ETZ) by welcoming those in attendance and thanking the RAC members who submitted their individual scores for the previously developed Selection Criteria.
- A. Pierce explained to the attendees that S. Wilson had received scores from all members of the RAC except for Lynn Martina, who is unable to serve on the RAC due to the time commitment. A. Pierce indicated that the County Commissioner overseeing Ms. Martina's district would appoint a new RAC member. A. Pierce expressed that he supported moving forward with five out of six RAC members.
- A. Pierce announced that the next step would be seeking Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approval for the scores, followed by developing and opening the project portal. Next, he introduced S. Wilson, who would discuss how the scores were averaged, as well as the next steps in the Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP) process.
- B. McCartney asked if recent changes to the Needs Assessment would be discussed at this meeting.
- S. Wilson replied that they could discuss the Needs Assessment and as well as any other comments/questions on any step of the process.
- B. McCartney noted that "bike trails" was listed under "seafood and tourism." B. McCartney suggested that this be changed to simply "trails" or "trails and walkways" to accommodate all modes of alternative transportation.
- S. Wilson and A. Pierce agreed and made a note to update the Needs Assessment

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- B. McCartney also recommended that “public waterfront access including public parking” be changed to “waterfront facility access” which would include parking.
- S. Wilson explained that omission of the word “facility” was intended to accommodate beaches that did not have structures or amenities. S. Wilson suggested that “facilities” could be added, but explained that, from her federal grants experience, parking lots were considered a different type of infrastructure and were handled differently than other facilities.
- R. McCoy inquired about adding “potable water” on page 2 of the Needs Assessment under Restoration and Protection.
- S. Wilson stated that potable water needs are not part of any eligible activity. Other counties have attempted to include potable water as an infrastructure project that will benefit the economy, but the County is then required to submit a growth analysis to demonstrate how the County has expanded economically as part of that upgrade. If the project is just for maintenance or everyday utility needs, the US Treasury (Treasury) is not amenable to the project.
- R. McCoy explained that, in the mid-80’s in Eastpoint, a breakwater barrier was installed to protect the seafood houses, boats, and other infrastructure there, and that the breakwater was in need of replacement or improvement.
- A. Pierce indicated that specific improvement was already permitted under a project to re-dredge of the Eastpoint Channel; the area R. McCoy refers to is designated as a marsh area.
- S. Wilson stated that this project would fall under Estuarine Habitat.
- A. Pierce explained that Eastpoint did not have a disposal site and the breakwater was intended for that purpose; however, involved parties were informed that they could not use that area for disposal unless it was a designated marsh area. Because the site has already been permitted, the breakwater improvements will be executed the next time that Eastpoint Channel is dredged.
- S. Wilson used this discussion as an opportunity to quickly review the process to date. S. Wilson explained that the Needs Assessment was revised based on comments received at the previous RAC meeting and the most recent version (Version 1.3) has been posted on the website Franklin County RESTORE website (www.franklincountyrestore.com), and distributed to the RAC via e-mail. S. Wilson indicated that making the few changes discussed at the current meeting would be relatively straight-forward.
- S. Wilson then explained that the RAC members had submitted scoring sheets for the Franklin County Selection Criteria which would be used to generate questions for the application portal.
- Individual Criteria scores would be averaged across the five submittals.
- Although it is anticipated that the Commissioner for Lynn Martina’s district will appoint a new RAC member, S. Wilson and A. Pierce explained that this new member would not be able to participate in the scoring. Thus both Category Scores and Individual Criteria Scores would be averaged over the five submittals.
- S. Wilson explained that she had provided the RAC members an additional box to submit “other” criteria as a fill-in. No RAC members used the “other” option so this cell was deleted from the spreadsheet in S. Wilson’s presentation.
- An attendee asked S. Wilson to review the purpose of the scoring system, as she was new to the RESTORE process.

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- A. Pierce explained that the scoring would be used to assess the project applications when the County gets to that point in the process.
- S. Wilson indicated that the Treasury requires that MYIP projects are not chosen arbitrarily, but rather are evaluated based on some pre-determined Selection Criteria.
- The averaged totals will be recommended to the BOCC at their next meeting and the BOCC will either approve or amend the scores at that point.
- S. Wilson presented the individual RAC member's scores for each of the Criterial Categories as well as the RAC average.
- A. Pierce explained that when projects are in hand and the RAC begins to score projects, the maximum number of points a project can receive is the RAC average. For example, Restoration and Protection of Natural Resources received an average score of 17%, meaning the highest score any project can receive in that category is 17 points.
- S. Wilson went on to explain that each Criteria Category was further broken down into Individual Criteria. Each member submitted their point breakdown for the Individual Criteria as well, based on their point selection for the over-arching Criteria Category. S. Wilson provided the following example: if a RAC member allocated 25% or 25 points to a Criteria Category, they were asked to break down the Individual Criteria so that the total number of points for that category equaled 25 (i.e., 10 points for one individual criterion and 15 points for another). Those scores were, in turn, averaged across the five submittals.
- S. Wilson stated that she would e-mail the average scores to the RAC members after the meeting.
- S. Wilson went on to explain that all projects would be scored against all criteria. Thus, a project that was designed to provide flood protection would, in theory, not garner many points for habitat restoration.
- S. Wilson provided the RAC with a set of Programmatic Bonus Criteria for the RAC to score, which includes public benefit and leveraging.
- A. Pierce and S. Wilson explained that the Selection Criteria would essentially be a sliding scale, by which the RAC would assess how well the project meets each criterion. For example, if the maximum possible score for a criterion is 8, the RAC member may assign any score between 0 and 8.
- A. Pierce indicated that the completed score sheet will be presented to the BOCC for approval during the next BOCC meeting, which is currently scheduled for March 21, 2017.
- A. Pierce directed attention to Apalachicola Bay, stating that the Apalachicola Bay is facing a number of threats: lack of water flow, lack of substrate in the bay, and reduced oyster productivity.
- A. Pierce asked rhetorically if the RAC committee would be held in poor regard for ranking tourism higher than the Apalachicola Bay (restoration of natural resources)?
- The RAC should recall that there are other pots of money available including consortium money (Pot 3), that the state of Florida is assisting the County in allocating.
- A. Pierce indicated that the BOCC intends to use consortium money as the main impetus for oyster restoration, which is \$10 million by itself, thus a substantial amount of money will be put towards the Apalachicola Bay.

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- E. Lovestrand noted that under the “tourism, recreational fishing, and local seafood” category, there is language that says “provides for oyster recovery.” Therefore, oyster restoration is technically included in the category worth the highest number of points.
- A. Pierce confirmed that this was true, and added that the category was also broad and included many tourism-related activities that do not provide for oyster recovery.
- B. McCartney noted that, in Okaloosa County, they had a line item in the county application that denoted other sources of funding available for that type of project. That particular component of the application was subjective.
- S. Wilson confirmed this, but explained that there are multiple ways that information could be evaluated. If the goal is to leverage funds and ultimately accomplish a project with further-reaching impacts, the availability of other funding sources reflects positively on a project. If the goal is to execute projects for which there are no other funding sources, additional funding sources can reflect poorly on a project. S. Wilson advised against having an application with a fundamental contradiction that may confuse applicants.
- B. McCartney argued that there is a difference between asking if an applicant has additional funds in hand or if additional funds were available.
- S. Wilson agreed, but also noted that during Selection Criteria development, it was unclear how that distinction would help Franklin County in their process given the priorities that RAC and BOCC have already discussed.
- B. McCartney agreed that Okaloosa County had been very direct in their decision not to fund projects with readily available public funds from other sources.
- B. La Paz indicated that the Franklin County Tourist Development Council (TDC) does have money available to put towards “tourism, recreational fishing, and local seafood” projects that can be used for leveraged funds, but she also noted that some items listed in the Needs Assessment, such as parking to accommodate beach access (particularly on St. George Island), are already being funded through the TDC.
- A. Pierce noted that, while money has been allocated for those parking spaces, they may not be open to the public; therefore, the funds B. La Paz referred to may be returned to the TDC.
- B. La Paz indicated that while that may be the case, this sets a precedent for projects the TDC will fund.
- S. Wilson noted that if the TDC, or an entity like the TDC, had a project that was \$100 thousand or more in cost, but short \$20 to \$40 thousand in budget, the respective organization may be an appealing applicant as they would have an 80% match and all stakeholders would share in the project’s goal.
- S. Wilson thanked the RAC members for turning their scores in and asked if there were additional questions or comments.
- A. Pierce took a moment to review the proposed time line:
 - Project submittal and accompanying review process would encompass a two-to-three month period.
 - November is the target goal for submitting the MYIP to Treasury.
 - A potential three-to-four month review time could follow before approval.
- B. McCartney asked if the BOCC has the ability to change the Selection Criteria scores.

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- S. Wilson and A. Pierce confirmed that the BOCC has the final say on the Selection Criteria scoring. They could ask the RAC to completely rescore or change individual scores.
- A. Pierce reminded attendees that the RAC is an advisory committee and that the BOCC has the final say.
- S. Wilson indicated that she would send the RAC an e-mail notifying them of the March 21st meeting along with any updates.
- S. Wilson explained that the next step, after the Selection Criteria and scoring are approved by the BOCC is to open the project portal and review which projects are submitted. S. Wilson noted that the BOCC or the RAC may opt to adjust the project ranking at a later date as new priorities come to light, but the Selection Criteria and point system presented at this meeting will be the final version that goes to the BOCC for approval.
- A. Pierce indicated that the next step in the process would be developing the project application. A. Pierce suggested that S. Wilson send out an example application, such as the one the Dewberry team developed for Gulf County.
- S. Wilson agreed to send out an example application and indicated that the selection Criteria would be used verbatim to develop questions for the application portal. Questions that applicant responds to will be assigned a point value.
- B. McCartney inquired if there would be a second application for Treasury, or if the Dewberry team was going to attempt to streamline the application process into a combined application.
- S. Wilson explained that, although they had considered this option, the Treasury application is arduous. It would be preferable to see which projects rank highest and are ultimately approved by the BOCC for inclusion in the MYIP before asking applicants to put in the time and effort necessary to complete a Treasury-level application.
- S. Wilson elaborated that the Dewberry team would work with the applicants to fill in those blanks and gaps simultaneously should they move on to the next stage.
- A. Pierce revisited the topic of oyster recovery in the Apalachicola Bay. A. Pierce indicated that he did not anticipate many oyster recovery projects to be part of the applicant pool for Pot 1 funds. A. Pierce indicated that he has been in conversation with the Seafood Management Assistance Resource and Recovery Team (SMARRT) committee and that the County's perspective is to encourage consortium and state agencies to assist with oyster recovery because the Apalachicola Bay is a state resource.
- B. McCartney noted that there were a number of projects that would likely fall under multiple criteria and address multiple priorities.
- A. Pierce agreed, but he also noted that a re-shelling project, for example, would not likely be the type of project submitted to the portal or integrated into the MYIP.
- The meeting was adjourned.