

**Jackson Blue Springs Working Group  
Inaugural Project – 2006 – 2007 Accomplishments  
Chipola College**

The Jackson Blue Springs (Basin) Working Group was formally funded in August 2006 by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The project program and fiscal direction was tasked to Chipola College. The inaugural project involved preparation, organization, and facilitation of meetings with stakeholders to educate them about the Jackson Blue spring basin. The tasks which were developed and implemented in year one included the following.

Four (4) quarterly meetings were to be held focusing on successes, challenges, and tasks on behalf of the basin and springs, designed to help identify interested / concerned stakeholders and to help them understand why and how to protect surface, ground water, and the first magnitude springs in the basin.

1. Identify and maintain a list of spring basin stakeholders.
2. List and assemble springs basin maps and reports.
3. Identify threats to the ground water in the spring basin.
4. Plan and facilitate four (4) working group meetings of all stakeholders within the basin.
5. Organize and conduct a spring “Old Timers Day” or “Spring Appreciation Day” for the spring basin. One of these two events can substitute for one (1) working group meeting.
6. Support land acquisition efforts in the spring basin by providing guidance to the DEP acquisition staff.
7. Identify springs champions to receive Springs Task Force awards.
8. Determine research and monitoring projects underway and identify needed projects with action steps.
9. Conduct two (2) field trips of the basin and give presentations to the public and organizations in the basin.
10. Work to develop trust and rapport with community leaders, including the city manager, county manager, county commissioners, business leaders, agency heads, etc.

The following activities were accomplished on behalf of the ten (10) tasks identified above.

1.
  - a. Spring basin stakeholders were identified at each springs working group meeting.
  - b. Public Service Announcements – paid and unpaid – were published by the Jackson County Floridan.
  - c. Word of mouth also provided contact by interested persons in the community.
  - d. Local radio included the working group meetings in their weekly announcements on Wednesday mornings, specifically the Daun Moore show on WJAQ (100.9)
  - e. Participants included in the email distribution list receive information and announcements about all things related to the springs basin, state items of interest, and other related news items of note. (email distribution list in Appendix).
  - f. A website has been developed and maintained throughout the year, <http://www.chipola.edu/Grants/Blue%20Springs/index.htm>
2.
  - a. Jackson County Spring Basin maps, reports, data, photographs, and other visual materials have been collected by the College.
  - b. Visual materials are on display at every working group meeting.

- c. A permanent display of donated books and materials relating to the Jackson Blue Springs Basin, spring shed, and surrounding areas and rivers was installed in the Chipola College Library.
  - d. Some materials have been framed or are on bulletin board display; all items are currently located in the Math and Science building (D) on Chipola' campus.
  - e. Some of the materials have been copied and transferred to the above mentioned webpage for viewing.
3. Threats to the Basin have been identified and include the following:
- a. A reduction in water quantity
    - 1. drought
    - 2. use by:
      - Agriculture, industry, municipalities, resident
  - b. A reduction in water quality
    - 1. Nitrate pollution from agricultural application, septic systems, residential lawn applications
    - 2. EDB from agricultural application
    - 3. Arsenic from natural resources
    - 4. Pharmaceuticals from residential septic systems
    - 5. Pesticides, from agricultural applications, residential lawn applications and improper disposal in sink holes
    - 6. Petroleum products from leaking storage tanks and dumping used oil
    - 7. Various pollutants from dumping in sink holes, storm water drainage into sink holes from roads, and leaching from land fills
- 4.
- a. All working group meetings have taken place during the 2006-2007 year, the inclusion of the Old Timers Day on May 5, 2007.
  - b. Dates of meetings were September 21, 2006, January 18, 2007, and April 19, 2007.
  - c. September 14, 2006 the Working Group was hosted at the art exhibit, "Apalachicola, an American River."
- 5.
- a. Old Timers Day was held on May 5, 2007
  - b. Interviews of older residents were held during the event, and will be edited and duplicated for distribution to the FDEP and Chipola's CCTV.
- 6.
- a. Project Director Steve Shimmel has communicated with stakeholders and agency personnel to determine priority purchases, potential for purchasing, and alternatives to purchasing.
  - b. These communications have attempted to educate the landowners about the springs' values on their properties, to promote best practices of the properties, to secure diving rights if appropriate, and to seek government intervention or relief for loss of revenue of such properties.
7. The newspaper *Jackson County Floridan* was recognized as the Jackson Blue Springs Champion for 2006-2007.

8.
  - a. FDEP, USGS, Florida Geological Survey, NFWFM, Florida Rural Water Association have reported on monitoring and research projects currently in progress or funded for future implementation.
  - b. Business stakeholder Edd Sorenson has taken many professional dives providing mapping of the underwater caves of the Jackson Blue Springs, including some video footage of the process.
  
9.
  - a. A field trip to several private properties was conducted after the April 19, 2007 working group meeting.
  - b. Old Timers Day provided a field trip to the Blue Springs park.
  - c. The Chipola College BS Science Education students participated in a field trip to Waste Management's Spring Hill landfill facility to learn about resource management and conversion of methane (April 2007).
  
10.
  - a. County commissioners have been personally contacted and invited to attend working group meetings. One has attended. The project director has communicated with the county administrator, the director of Jackson County Parks and Recycling, and the county planner. The director of parks and recycling, and the county planner attend working group meetings and field trips when they are available.
  - b. The following list is an example of the variety of presenters at the working group meetings.
    - Individual Business Owner perspective (Byron Ward, April 19 meeting)
    - Planned nutrient & pesticide accounting study in the Chipola River/Floridan Aquifer System, US Geological Survey, Christy Crandall
    - Report on Blue Springs Recreation Area, Jackson Co Parks and Recreation, Chuck Hatcher
    - Well water quality in and around the basin, Jackson Co Health Dept., Bill Dean
    - Row crop best management practices (BMP's) BMP cost sharing, Mobile irrigation lab, FL Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services Bill Bartnick & Charlie Rosborough
  - c. Copies of all three meeting agendas Appendix B.

Speakers at the working group meetings or other public meetings provided information on the following activities which took place or have been scheduled.

### **Best Management Practices**

Books on Row Crop BMP, Pasture BMP, and silvaculture were donated to the college to add to the water conservation display. The Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services department presented on availability and location of BMP materials.

### **Waste Management**

Local business Waste Management / Spring Hill has announced its capture and conversion to energy of its methane from the facility. The College Science department hosted a field trip to the landfill to learn more about management and this new energy project.

### **Research and Monitoring**

Edd Sorenson found and explored an additional 5,400 feet of line in Jackson Blue Springs (Jan – April), including a possible new springhead.

Film and dive company, High Def, visited Jackson Blue Springs and videotaped approximately six (6) hours of raw footage (not yet available) May 2-5, 2007.

### **Regulations**

Jackson County Commissioners voted down an ordinance to inhibit the amount of residential growth per acre in the Basin. Stakeholders and citizens promoted a revision to the ordinance that would promote controlled residential growth throughout the county, but both resolutions were voted down.

### **Education**

- Annual Old Timers Day conducted on May 5.
- “Apalachicola, an American River” opened at Chipola College Arts Center, September 2007, and proceeded to a regional road show.
- Dr. Steve Shimmel completed an interview for CCTV about the Jackson Blue Springs initiative.
- “River Talks” interviews addressing specific topics have been ongoing throughout the year and run on CCTV.
- The FDEP and TAPPwater.org commercials were edited for content and run throughout the college district and panhandle via WJHG TV-7 in Panama City (May 2007).
- Three field trips were conducted; to a springs property, the Mill Pond, and Waste Management Spring Hill facility.
- Promotion of working group meetings was held via print and radio media throughout the year (September 2006 – May 2007).
- *Jackson County Floridan* and *Jackson County Times* promoted the working group meetings and wrote several articles on the Springs initiative, values, and political and consumer issues.
- Chipola College Chemistry professor Dr. Gerald Buffone promoted education through his honors students’ special projects on “blue baby” syndrome and the springs and ground water values.
- Chipola College Science professors Dr. Santine Cuccio and Allan Tidwell developed lesson plans and activities for science education majors and earth science students focused on local geography.
- Chipola College webpage developed and updated on a regular basis.