

**Jackson Blue Springs Working Group
2008 – 2009 Accomplishments
Chipola College**

The Jackson Blue Springs (Basin) Working Group was formally funded in August 2006 by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Springs Initiative. With the retirement of Dr. Stephen Shimmel, Allan Tidwell was tapped for the project director position for the working group. Mr. Tidwell is a science faculty member at Chipola College with more than thirty years teaching experience. Mr. Tidwell has been project director for two years.

Four (4) quarterly meetings are held annually focusing on successes, challenges, and tasks on behalf of the basin and springs. These meetings are 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. Many federal and state agency personnel attend the meeting to inform the public about activities taking place in the region.

The tasks identified in the original contract are:

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 spring basin, state items of interest, and other related news items of note.
 - f. Chipola College staff assisted the Indian Springs Homeowners Association with the development of a homeowner contact list.

- g. A website has been developed and is 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. These materials are displayed at each working group meeting. Some materials are used during local civic group presentations and during the instruction of the Earth Science course at Chipola.
 - 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. Materials are continually donated.
 - 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
This concern has been somewhat alleviated over this past year due to a better rain year throughout the South.
 - b. An extenuating circumstance of the excess rain has been an increase in sink holes. The springs ambassador has worked throughout the year on this project, meeting with landowners and discussing existing and potential sinkhole problems and opportunities for clean up.
 - c. A reduction in water quality
- 4. Working group meetings have continued to be held regularly.
- 5. Old Timers Day was held on May 2, 2009. A video of the event, including the interviews with old timers and their stories was captured and made available via CD and the college's website. Potential publication of the old timers meetings over the past years is not fiscally feasible at this time.
- 6. Allan Tidwell worked with a volunteer group that included Jim Steverson, Clyde Smith, Russell Williams and Chuck Hatcher, among others, to determine how best to serve the citizens of the country through the working group meetings. This included ideas for meetings at other locations and times, and a sink hole clean up volunteer landowner, which could serve as the launch for working with landowners throughout the basin to improve sinkhole sites.
- 7. The springs champion for 2007-2008 was Chad Taylor. The springs champion for 2008-2009 was Edd Sorenson. Presentations were made at the October meetings the past two years.
- 8. Scientists and government representatives continue to provide presentations on their research and data. Many of the presentations were accompanied with a PowerPoint

presentation and can be found on the college website
<http://www.chipola.edu/Grants/Blue%20Springs/events.htm>.

9. The April 2009 meeting culminated in a field trip on the Mill Pond, hosted by homeowners from the homeowners association, and the docent was Edd Sorenson. Edd provided information on each of the spring outlets into the mill pond and the significance of these outlets, in addition to other special features about the mill pond. The homeowners provided pontoon boats for the working group participants to ride in, in order to get a closer look at some of the spring entrances.

Students participated in field trips to the Caverns State Park, and the Apalachicola River Bluffs. Approximately 20 adults and more than 175 college age students participated in these field trips. Students also participated in the working group meetings when held on campus.

11. Meeting agendas, continuing education participant forms and other media identify the number of people participating in the working group meetings, and their professional status. One county commissioner, the city planner and the previous county manager all attended at least one meeting during this past year.

Waste Management

Local business Waste Management / Spring Hill continues to capture and convert to energy of its methane from the facility. The College Science department again hosted a field trip to the landfill to learn more about management and this new energy project; participants were students enrolled in the Chipola College BS Science Education program.

Jackson County Recycling Center

The recycling center continues to promote recycling to the citizens of the county.

Regulations

There has been no change to residential or commercial regulations for the county. It is anticipated that the volunteer amnesty project may be the best solution to proactive participation in environmental conservation practices moving forward.

Planning

The Science Department Dean has met with project staff to develop activities and timelines for the 2009-2008 working group.

The Natural Science department met and developed a proposal with Florida Agriculture & Mechanical University (FAMU). The proposal, submitted to the National Science Foundation, would provide funding for further research in the basin and Econfina Creek, among other water systems in Jackson County. If funded, this body of research will be presented to the working group and future publication made to federal and state agencies. Funding of the proposal will not be announced until May 2010, at the earliest.

Other?

