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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **October 29, 2015**

OKALOOSA COUNTY AND EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE DEPLOY
CONCRETE TO REEFS PROJECT
In Correlation with the Community Partnership Initiative

Fort Walton Beach/Destin, Fla., - The Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners and Tourist Development Department in conjunction with Eglin Air Force Base is scheduled to move forward with the deployment of a project involving the repurposing of over 2,000 tons of clean, durable concrete material, provided by the county and the Air Force Research Laboratory, for the purpose of building two artificial reefs in the Gulf of Mexico. The program, a Department of Defense mandated Community Partnership Initiative, is the first of many including the joint forces of Eglin AFB and the Board of County Commissioners with positive community, environmental, and economic implications.

The pilot project is funded using grant money awarded to Okaloosa County by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission with matching funds provided by Okaloosa County. Eglin AFB typically pays a contractor to dispose of its unneeded concrete material; however, in order to save money and promote recycling, Eglin AFB initiated the "concrete to reef" community partnership initiative. The initiative will save over $60,000 dollars in concrete disposal cost and will benefit the local community and tourism industry for years to come.

While the creation of artificial reefs is not new, the project is extra special to many, thanks to the Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners naming one of the reef sites in honor of Charles H. "Mac" McClenahan. The Charles H. McClenahan Memorial Reef, colloquially referred to as "Mac's Reef", honors the legacy of a long-time Okaloosa County resident who dedicated 50 years of his life to honorably serving his Country working for the Department of Defense. Mac's work at Eglin Air Force Base included developing technologies to defeat concrete targets, which contributed to the generation of the concrete material used to construct the artificial reef named in his honor at the center of Fish Haven 13.

"Mac inspired those who knew him with his hard-charging, can-do attitude and his out of the box approach to problems. AFRL is proud that Okaloosa County will honor him with "Mac's Reef"-- it is fittingly imaginative idea honoring a truly innovative scientist," said Col. John Gloystein, Acting Director, Munitions Directorate.

"The project is a good use of material which would otherwise be sitting there. Eglin AFB is a strong partner and the community partnership initiative serves as an avenue for future projects," said Commissioner Kelly Windes.

A media event is scheduled for November 4 from 9:00a to 10:00a. The event will be held at Vulcan Materials Company located at 157 N John Sims Pkwy, Valparaiso, FL 32580. All members of the media are encouraged to attend.

For further information concerning the Concrete to Reef project, please contact Erika Zambello, Marine Economic and Tourism Resource Coordinator, ezambello@co.okaloosa.fl.us. Media inquiries should be directed to R. Justin Bing, Marketing Coordinator, rbing@co.okaloosa.fl.us.

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