City of Fort Walton Beach

America's Most Beautiful Beaches

105 Miracle Strip Pkwy SW,• Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548
(850) 833-9697 • Fax (850) 833-9926

Engineering and Utilities Department
Planning and Zoning Division

May 6, 2015

Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners

RE: Letter of Recommendation for Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance of Northwest Florida State College

Dear Board Members:

The City of Fort Walton Beach wishes to express support for the efforts of the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA) to deliver experiential science-education curriculum that focuses on student-led restoration in our Choctawhatchee Bay watershed. In the past, the City and CBA have partnered with each other giving students the ability to interact with our local water resources at City-owned parks, providing the basis for shoreline restoration. For this new proposal, the City will work with CBA to establish shoreline restoration sites at appropriate City-owned properties.

We are enthusiastic about the proposed expansion of the CBA's Grasses in Classes and Dunes in Schools programs, as it will increase watershed awareness among Okaloosa County's schoolchildren, while providing students with hands-on science education that meets state science education standards. We find that the student-led restoration component of these programs sets them apart from other programs by allowing schoolchildren in Okaloosa County a direct role in the restoration of our vital natural resources.

I would strongly encourage the Commission to contribute funding assistance to help the CBA to continue its efforts to foster the next generation of watershed stewards and restore valuable coastal and estuarine habitat. Based on our past experience, I am confident that such funding will lead to successful habitat restoration, increased watershed awareness and long-term public benefits.

Sincerely,

Samuel O. Wilson IV
Development Services Manager
W:850-833-9697
C:850-585-0869