FRESH AND SALTWATER SPORTS
ON CHOCTAWHATCHEE BAY

HOME OF
EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE

CITY OF VALPARAISO

465 VALPARAISO PARKWAY • (850) 729-5402

VALPARAISO, FLORIDA 32580

May 4, 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 Valparaiso 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 in the Grasses in Classes program at City-owned Florida Park, providing a site for students to restore habitat by planting shoreline vegetation. 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, 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,

Joseph L. Morgan, III
Commissioner