MAY 10, 2010 – WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Workshop on May 10, 2010, at 3:00 p.m., at the Walton County Courthouse Annex in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner Scott Brannon, Chair; Commissioner Larry Jones, Vice-Chair; Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen, and Commissioner Sara Comander. Mr. Lyle Seigler, County Administrator; and Attorney Lynn Hoshihara, Interim County Attorney; were also present.

Chairman Brannon called the meeting to order to discuss the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

Mr. Emmett Hildreth, Walton Gulf Front Property Owners Representative, requested that 90 days be given to the public to analyze the HCP before it is presented for public hearing.

Mr. Billy McKee, Environmental Manager, gave a brief history of the HCP and introduced the representatives that would be speaking during the workshop.

Mr. Bob Ernest, Ecological Associates, Inc., discussed the following topics within the HCP: conflicts with the ESA in Walton County; the direct and indirect effects; Incidental Take Permitting (ITP); ITP issuance criteria; covered activities; areas not covered by County's HCP; emergency shoreline protection; beach driving; other minimization measures; Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA); other voluntary conservation measures; mitigation; monitoring; funding; and plan administration. The HCP ensures compliance with ESA, benefits protected species and their habitat, enhances the beach experience, unifies beach management, provides property owners with uniform guidelines, facilitates future permitting, and allows FDEP to issue CCCL permits for existing temporary armoring.

Ms. Lorna Patrick discussed the General Conservation Plan (GCP) and the criteria required to meet the plan.

Chairman Brannon asked how the total cost of the plan was derived. Mr. Ernest stated that the estimate was based on practical experience and discussed the elements that affected the cost. Chairman Brannon asked if this plan was in line with the costs of other counties. Mr. Ernest stated that other counties have assumed the cost of mitigation fees.

Commissioner Comander asked if this could be paid over a number of years. Mr. McKee stated that payment details could be worked out and that Mr. Bill Imfeld, County Finance Director, would have to be consulted.

Chairman Brannon asked if sand would be used for sea wall coverage. Mr. Ernest stated that language is provided to allow the county to amend the ordinances and to determine how it will be implemented. Chairman Brannon asked how covering the walls would be addressed. Mr. McKee stated that it would determine on the distance from the water, high tide, and various other factors. Some agencies ask that the wall not be completely covered.

Mr. Bradley R. Jones discussed previous meetings held to address erosion and armoring. Chairman Brannon asked the status of his permit. Mr. Jones stated that his issue had come to a standstill. He spoke against an additional fee being charged to cover the HCP.

Chairman Brannon asked Mr. McKee to give an update on the permitting process. Mr. McKee stated that there are some owners who will not be able to obtain a permit due to eligibility requirements. He reported that approximately 196 property owners applied for county issued emergency permits after Hurricane Dennis; 192 applied to DEP for CCCLI permits after receiving a permit from the county; 18 were issued by DEP; 52 were denied; and 122 are

pending. There are approximately 19 armoring installations without county permits and 19 outstanding CCCLI permits.

Mr. Bob Hudson, Walton County Taxpayers Association, spoke against the methods in which the cost estimates were derived. He felt that a qualified financial analyst should determine the cost amounts. He questioned when the HCP would be presented for first public hearing. Mr. McKee stated that a specific date had not been set, but felt that a Quasi Judicial hearing should be scheduled as soon as possible. Mr. Hudson agreed with Mr. Hildreth's request for a 90 day review. Chairman Brannon questioned Mr. McKee as to a suitable review time frame. Mr. McKee felt that 30 to 45 days would be sufficient. Mr. Hudson felt that 45 days would be the least amount of time. He asked that a cost estimate break down also be made available for public review.

The Board concurred to allow 45 days for public review of the HCP before first public hearing.

APPROVED _____
Scott Brannon, Chair

ATTEST _____
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts