



Coastal & Marine Laboratory
The Florida State University



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Jeff Blair, Facilitated Solutions, LLC, served as Facilitator for the Community Advisory Board (CAB) of the Apalachicola Bay System Initiative (ABSI) between August 2019 and December 2023. ABSI is a multi-year \$8.5M initiative funded by Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc, conducted by staff of Florida State University's Coastal and Marine Laboratory to support job creating and economic development related to the seafood industry associated with the Apalachicola Bay. The ABSI CAB was a 21-member board comprised of diverse stakeholders representing the seafood industry, real estate, economic development, tourism, environmental groups, local citizens, local government, recreational fishing, and state government. Jeff's duties through our contract with Facilitate Solutions included planning, preparation, design, facilitation and reporting on the CAB process. However, this list fails to fully capture the critical role Jeff played in creating, managing, and bringing to a successful conclusion the work of our ABSI CAB. Jeff brought years of experience with similar efforts to our project, which informed his work and was apparent in the leadership and direction that he provided. That experience was evident in his leadership of this multi-year process that unfolded over more than 28 public meetings and workshops.

Jeff demonstrated a remarkable skill in leading the FSU administrators and faculty running the project, in addition to leading the diverse and potentially contentious stakeholder group to a respected final product. This required his consistency in focus on the project mission, clarity in understanding of the process necessary to reach the final goal of the project, and a mix of supportive guidance, handholding, dogged determination, and measured use of forceful discipline of group dynamics. The strongest statement I can make about that effort is that the resulting ABSI CAB Plan Framework¹ is the basis of efforts by our successor group, The Partnership for a Resilient Apalachicola Bay², which is dedicated to encouraging and guiding implementation of the Plan. To date, no modifications or amendments have been required to the Plan.

Because of our experience with Jeff in the ABSI CAB process, Facilitated Solutions will be my first choice to engage for similar future projects by our group.

Sincerely,

Joel Trexler

Director, Coastal and Marine Laboratory
Professor, Biological Science

- 1- https://marinelab.fsu.edu/media/5580/absi_cab_plan_framework_adopted_16_nov-2021_and_revised_27-july-2022__1-feb-2023.pdf
- 2- <https://www.partnershipforapalachbay.org/>