



Date: January 20, 2026

Subject: Proposal to Hold a Community Roundtable on Gap Creek Remediation

To:

- 1st Congressional District Liaison, Mr. Kyle Blanchard
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – South Atlanta Division, Mobile District
- 96 TW/CC, Eglin Air Force Base, BG. Mark A. Massaro
- 96 CEG/CC, Eglin Air Force Base, Col Michelle Sterling
- State Rep., Patt Maney
- Okaloosa County Commissioner, Trey Goodwin
- City Managers of Fort Walton Beach and Cinco Bayou
- Community Stakeholders

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

The Okaloosa County Branch, NAACP, continues to address the environmental and public health concerns at Gap Creek, advocating for federal support, regional collaboration, and equitable solutions for underserved communities such as Sylvania Heights and the entire Lovejoy area.

Recent Actions:

- Engaged congressional liaison to promote federal intervention
- Worked with state legislators to secure funding for environmental studies and remediation
- Coordinated with local officials to unify efforts
- Monitored progress of the latest state- and county-funded study

Roundtable Proposal: Today we propose convening a roundtable within the next 90 days, including all listed entities, to:

- Review findings from recent and ongoing studies
- Identify actionable, coordinated solutions
- Center the perspectives of underserved communities
- Establish a timeline for implementation and monitoring

Next Steps: The NAACP recommends initiating these discussions after the completion of the latest study to ensure its findings inform our deliberations.

While we recognize the challenges facing Gap Creek did not develop overnight and that remediation will require sustained time and effort, the urgency of this issue cannot be overstated. Continuing to address the creek in a piecemeal fashion, as has been done in the past, will not resolve the full scope of the problem. Such an approach risks leaving certain communities behind—not because of their health needs, but due to their economic status. The Okaloosa County Branch, NAACP believes It is essential that we move forward with a comprehensive, actionable plan that addresses the entire creek, ensuring equitable outcomes for all affected communities.

We applaud the long-standing efforts of community activist Mr. Barry Gray, and Ms. Debi Riley, along with NAACP Environmental Justice advocate and immediate past president of this branch, Mr. Lewis Jennings. We also recognize the ongoing work of Rep. Patt Maney, Okaloosa County Commissioners Trey Goodwin and Paul Mixon, Fort Walton Beach City Manager Jason Davis, and Aid to Congressman Jimmy Patronis, Kyle Blanchard, and we welcome the aid and assistance from our NAACP Legal Redress/Research Chair, Musur Wallace. While this list does not include all those who have contributed over the years, we certainly want to acknowledge and thank the many others who have played key roles in bringing us to this point.

Now we look forward to forging a partnership in this critical effort to restore Gap Creek and advance environmental justice for all affected communities. *For further details, see: Gap Creek Report, Okaloosa County Branch, NAACP, January 15, 2026.*

Contact for Participation and Further Information:

Sabu L. Williams
Email: sabu355@gmail.com
Phone: 850-902-8312

Lewis Jennings
Email: chiefj9@cox.net
Phone: 850-259-7171

Sincerely,

Sabu L. Williams

President,
Okaloosa County Branch, NAACP