Watershed Planning
Wolf Bay Watershed

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is an area of land where the water within it flows to a common point such as a lake, stream, river, bay, or estuary. A properly functioning watershed provides water quality, wildlife habitat, and protects homes and businesses from flooding. We all live in a watershed, and we all play a role in protecting our watershed.

What is a Healthy Watershed?

A healthy watershed is one in which natural land cover supports:

- The natural processes of hydrology across the landscape,
- Habitat that supports native wildlife both on the land and in the water, and
- Water quality conditions that support healthy biological communities.
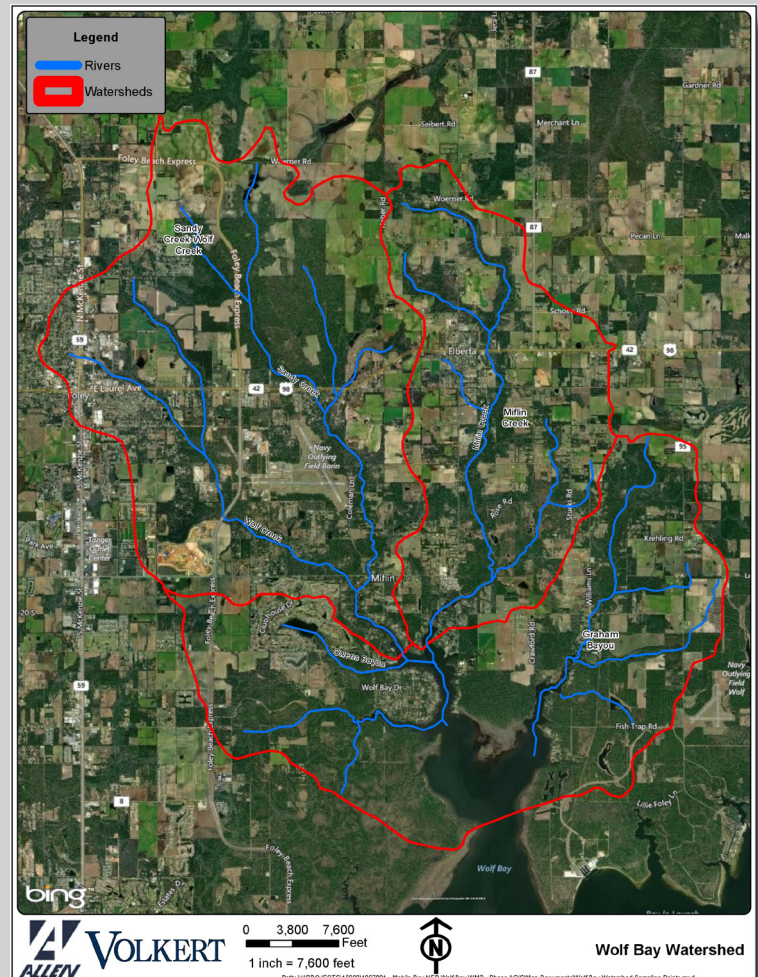
Benefits of a Healthy Watershed

Healthy watersheds provide many important functions including:

- Nutrient cycling,
- Carbon storage,
- Erosion/sedimentation control,
- Biological diversity,
- Soil formation,
- Wildlife movement corridors,
- Water storage,
- Water filtration,
- Flood control,
- Food,
- Timber,
- Recreation,
- Reduced vulnerability to invasive species, and
- Reduced effects of climate change and other natural disasters.

Tips to Improve Your Watershed

When we each do our part on a small scale, we can have a major impact on our watershed. The EPA offers tips on how you can help keep your watershed clean and healthy.

- Conserve water every day. Take shorter showers, fix leaks & turn off the water when not in use.
- Don't pour toxic household chemicals down the drain; take them to a hazardous waste center.
- Use hardy plants that require little or no watering, fertilizers or pesticides in your yard.
- Recycle yard waste in a compost pile & use a mulching mower.
- Use surfaces like wood, brick or gravel for decks & walkways; allows rain to soak in & not runoff.
- Never pour used oil or antifreeze into the storm drain or the street.
- Pick up after your pet, and dispose of the waste in the toilet or the trash.
- Drive less - walk or bike; many pollutants in our waters come from car exhaust and car leaks.

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What Can You Do to Help?

Please complete the survey at
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WolfBay

Wolf Bay Facts and Figures:

- Wolf Bay is located on the Gulf of Mexico in Baldwin County, Alabama nestled between Perdido Bay to the east and Mobile Bay to the West.

- Wolf Bay is an estuary where freshwater and saltwater mix to create a diverse environment that fosters a rich array of plant and animal life.

- The Wolf Bay watershed covers about 44,700 acres, which is approximately 23% forest, 27% urban/suburban, 27% agricultural, 16% wetlands and 7% other uses.

- Streams that flow into Wolf Bay include Wolf Creek, Sandy Creek, Milflin Creek, Graham Creek, Owens Bayou, Moccasin Bayou, and Hammock Creek. Wolf Bay, in turn, flows into the Intracoastal Waterway, which flows into either Perdidio Bay or Mobile Bay, depending on the moon, wind, and tide, and ultimately into the Gulf of Mexico.

- Wolf Bay and its watershed hosts a tremendous diversity of habitats including bald eagles, Florida manatees, sea turtles, Gulf sturgeons, red-cockaded woodpeckers, American alligators, Alabama red-bellied turtles and Eastern indigo snakes.

- The watershed is undergoing dramatic changes as forested and agricultural lands are converted into residential and commercial developments.

- The Wolf Bay Watershed Watch (WBWW) formed in 1998 and tests water quality.

- WBWW volunteer monitors have taken approximately 2,500 water quality samples at 44 sites.

Steps in the Watershed Planning Process

Step 1:	Build partnerships
Step 2:	Characterize your watershed
Step 3:	Finalize goals and identify solutions
Step 4:	Design an implementation program
Step 5:	Implement the watershed plan
Step 6:	Measure progress and make adjustments

Sources:
Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
www.mobilebaynep.com/the_watersheds/wolf_bay_watershed/

Environmental Protection Agency
https://www.epa.gov/hwp

The Nature Conservancy
https://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/indiana/journeywithnature/watersheds-101.xml