



5-4-15

Miller, Sherrie ~ Oral History Interview

Anna Hamilton

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Recommended Citation

Hamilton, Anna. Sherrie Miller Panacea Oral History. (Jan. 28, 2015). *Voices from the Working Waterfront: Oral Histories from around the Nation. Voices from the Fisheries*. NOAA. <https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/humandimensions/voices-from-the-fisheries/index>.

This Oral History was produced in 2015 as part of the *Voices from the Working Waterfront: Oral Histories from around the Nation* project by the NOAA Office of Coastal Management, National Sea Grant Law Center, and Maine Sea Grant College Program with funding from the NOAA Preserve America Initiative.

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Interview with Sherrie Miller by Anna Hamilton

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Miller, Sherrie

Interviewer

Hamilton, Anna

Date

January 28, 2015

Place

Panacea, FL

ID Number

VWWF_SM_008

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Biographical Note

Sherrie Miller is a resident of Panacea, Florida born on December 19, 1961. She works in her family's restaurant, Posey's Restaurant, and serves as the Vice-Chairman of the Panacea Waterfronts Florida Partnership.

Scope and Content Note

Sherrie Miller was interviewed to document Panacea, Florida's experience as a designated Waterfronts Florida Partnership Community. The Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program was created by the Florida Coastal Management Program in 1997 to address the physical and economic decline of traditional working waterfront areas. Designated communities receive technical assistance to develop and implement community visioning plans to revitalize and preserve the working waterfront. Ms. Miller discusses the Panacea's history as a tourist destination, its efforts to develop the Panacea 2020 Visioning Plan, and several activities that resulted from the Plan (e.g. a waterfront overlay zone, boat-building classes).

Indexed Names

Parrish Barrwick, Gene Charbonneau, Eloise Crum, Ronald Fred Crum, Walt Dixon, Roger Pinholster, Pam Portwood, Larry Tucker

Transcript—SM_008

Key:
Sherrie Miller=Answer
[Inaudible] = Inaudible
[Word] = Attempt at Word
[Gesture/Action] = Gesture/Action

WWF/NOAA
Sherrie Miller - Panacea Waterfront

February 12, 2015

[Begin Sherrie Miller Interview]

00:00:00

Interviewer: I'll go ahead and start and ID us. This is Anna Hamilton for NOAA's Voices from the Working Waterfront Oral History Project and I'm here with Sherrie Miller—it's [Sha-rie], not Sherrie which I apologize for calling you Sherrie—in Panacea. Today is Wednesday, January 28, 2015 and it's about 2 o'clock. I'm going to start by asking you to tell me—to tell me who you are and what you do, just to introduce yourself to me.

00:00:28

Sherrie Miller: Hi; I'm Sherrie Posey Miller. My family owns a restaurant Posey's Restaurant and we also do catering and I'm also a member of the Panacea Waterfront's Florida Partnership.

00:00:41

Interviewer: And will you tell me your birth date for the record also, please?

00:00:44

Sherrie Miller: December 19, 1961.

00:00:47

Interviewer: Thank you. And so tell me a little bit about how you came to live in this area.

00:00:51

Sherrie Miller: My family—my mom and dad both were born and raised; my mother was born and raised here in Panacea. I'm a fourth generation on her side and her family was always involved in the seafood industry.

00:01:04

Interviewer: And so did you follow in your family's business?

00:01:07

Sherrie Miller: The restaurant part; we also—my family on—and processed natural crab shells for stuffing the deviled crabs. I sold that business and went into the restaurant and motel business; sold—ran that for 17 and a-half years. And sold it and my brother had opened this oyster bar, so I—I work with him here.

00:01:28

Interviewer: Nice; nice. Will you tell me about Panacea for somebody who's never been here? Describe me—describe to me what it's like.

00:01:36

Sherrie Miller: It's a small fishing village as some people would say. Seafood has always been one of the main livelihoods of the people that live here. Crabbing was one of the big industries that was here years ago. It's a very small town, less than 2,000 population, just everyone knows everybody, just a very family-oriented and community-oriented community.

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WWF/NOAA
Sherrie Miller - Panacea Waterfront

February 12, 2015

00:02:02

Interviewer: So what does the waterfront mean to this community?

00:02:05

Sherrie Miller: The waterfront is where most people that live here make their livings from the waterfronts here whether it be oystering, crabbing, or shrimping, or mullet fishing. That's the main business where most people made their living from. Since regulations and the depletion of the seafood in the area, a lot of people have had to go into other you know occupations and crabbing—from crabbing and oystering and shrimping and all and do construction or other businesses.

00:02:37

Interviewer: What else do the—construction is one; what is—?

00:02:39

Sherrie Miller: Construction is one, just finding different jobs around in the area.

00:02:45

Interviewer: How—so has the seafood industry declined here?

00:02:47

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WWF/NOAA
Sherrie Miller - Panacea Waterfront

February 12, 2015

Sherrie Miller: Yes; it has. In this county there used to be ten to twelve working crab houses.

We're down to 1 in this county working now.

00:02:57

Interviewer: And what's their status?

00:02:58

Sherrie Miller: They're open. They process the crabs. They don't get as many crabs as they used to—to process, but they—they do pick fresh crabmeat here. It's in the Sopchoppy area; the only crab house we have left.

00:03:10

Interviewer: And are they blue crabs?

00:03:11

Sherrie Miller: Blue crab claw—yeah blue crabs; yes.

00:03:14

Interviewer: Got you. What makes this community's waterfront unique?

00:03:22

Sherrie Miller: Just the families that have passed down the tradition and working together. And that's the one thing that makes it very unique here and the people that still work on the bays. And

through the—through the Waterfronts Florida Program I think that was formed in 2001, it has kind of helped to bring back tradition and trying to revitalize—has been the goal—main goal of the Waterfronts is to revitalize this area.

00:03:50

This area also back in the 1900s was a big tourist attraction for the Mineral Springs. So Waterfronts is trying to revitalize a lot of that stuff to bring that back for recreational fishing, for the Mineral Springs, and this being a destination.

00:04:05

Interviewer: So part of it is to sort of go back to the historical roots?

00:04:08

Sherrie Miller: Historical roots and bring that forward; yes.

00:04:12

Interviewer: Will you talk to me a little bit more about the Mineral Springs that were here?

00:04:15

Sherrie Miller: The Mineral Springs was people would come from all over to pump the water which is right next door where we're at, and they would come get the water and they would drink it because they—there was a healing powers in it, which Panacea means cure-all. So that's why they would come here and get the waters. And over the years there was an old hotel behind there which is no longer there and it's been privately owned which we would like to see a grant

to purchase that and get that back restored. We also—we have drawings of how it would look restored. And that was a big tourist—people would come here from all over to get that water to drink because they thought it was a healing power.

00:04:51

Interviewer: What was the timeframe for that? When was the heyday, maybe in the early 1900s?

00:04:57

Sherrie Miller: Early 1900s; uh-hm.

00:04:58

Interviewer: Okay; I'm going to back up just a little bit, to sort of start at the beginning and then we can talk about some of the grants. Sorry; I'm leaning towards you, so let me make sure you sound clear. Why did your community want to become a Waterfronts Florida Partnership community?

00:05:15

Sherrie Miller: We saw opportunities through them. One of our members was actually out traveling in Panama City and saw the St. Andrew's Bay sign that they were a Waterfronts Community. She started asking questions. She come back and talked to our County Administrators and said we'd like to you know pursue becoming a Waterfronts Community. We

see what's happening in those different communities. So we got a grant—we went through and applied for the program, got accepted, and one of the things we did was our visioning. And through that visioning we set goals of what we would like to see and then we became in 2001, we became a working—I mean a Waterfronts Florida Partnership. But mainly the resources that we could gain from them, there are a lot of resources where we couldn't—to look up research for us on different projects and to help us—they're always there for us.

00:06:08

Interviewer: And what kinds of steps did the community take to become a Partnership Community?

00:06:14

Sherrie Miller: We had to go set visionings; it's the Panacea 2020 Visioning Plan and we had community meetings where people had input. We—you know talked about things we would like to see happen here. One of the things in our visioning plan was a welcome center in which we worked with the county to get a welcome center here in Panacea and different things revitalized like sidewalks and lighting and the Mineral Springs restored and just bringing back the heritage of the community was the main goal of that.

00:06:47

Interviewer: And I understand that there's a connection to the timing of when the Partnership Community, the steps were starting to be taken with the net ban *[Interviewer's note: this*

references the 1994 Florida constitutional amendment regulating fish net size and net mesh size, and banning the use of gill nets.]

00:06:58

Sherrie Miller: This would have been after—yes; we formed after the net ban. And there was—you know, this community after that—there were so many people that could not make their livings off the bay. And so the Waterfronts—that’s one reason why we realized we needed to go you know become a Waterfronts Community to start looking at resources and to help the fishermen to find alternatives to work and how to work with the, you know bays.

00:07:23

Interviewer: And will you just tell me for some background context, what the net ban was and how it affected you all?

00:07:29

Sherrie Miller: It was the size limits of the nets which meant that they could not catch as many fish as they were before. And from what I understand, the nets they have to use now, it kills a lot of the juvenile fish. So that really hurt this area during the main fishing time and the sizes of the nets and what they can catch. And there was not a clear interpretation of the law so a lot of people can—did not understand what they could and couldn’t fish with, so they’ve got numerous tickets and fines and you know, stuff like that.

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WWF/NOAA
Sherrie Miller - Panacea Waterfront

February 12, 2015

00:08:06

Interviewer: And it put some of the fishermen out of work?

00:08:08

Sherrie Miller: Out of work; uh-hm.

00:08:09

Interviewer: And that was 1994 maybe? I should check my dates.

00:08:16

Sherrie Miller: It was in the '90s [*Laughs*]; I can't remember the exact date.

00:08:18

Interviewer: And it wasn't long after that the steps started to—?

00:08:22

Sherrie Miller: Steps started; uh-hm.

00:08:23

Interviewer: And so what—who were some of the people that helped you all get started?

00:08:29

Sherrie Miller: When we started this process we had Pam Portwood was the Grants Coordinator for Wakulla County and our County Administrator, Parrish Barrwick let her— assigned her to help Panacea with this grant, go through the visioning process, and to reach our goals and what all, you know, we needed to do down here to go through the visioning process to become a Waterfronts Community.

00:08:54

So there was a lot of key people, older community people. Dr. Gene Charbonneau was a local doctor and he was very involved in that and Eloise and Ronald Fred Crum, Walt Dixon; there was just numerous people that became a part of that visioning process.

00:09:10

Interviewer: And how did you all sort of reach out to the community when you were going through all of this?

00:09:15

Sherrie Miller: Well we—we held the town hall meetings and we'd have people come and we'd break up in small groups and people would you know put ideas together and then there was a consulting group that actually put all this together for us in our 2020 Plan.

00:09:29

Interviewer: Okay; and how did you qualify then for the program?

00:09:33

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WWF/NOAA
Sherrie Miller - Panacea Waterfront

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Sherrie Miller: There was an application process that we had to fill out and Pam Portwood handled all that with the County and then we got designated as a Waterfronts Community.

00:09:43

Interviewer: And what—what was the year you said you were designated?

00:09:44

Sherrie Miller: It was 2001; our first meeting was September 11, 2001.

00:09:50

Interviewer: Okay.

00:09:50

Sherrie Miller: And that was our first official meeting when we formed the Waterfronts Community.

00:09:54

Interviewer: What sort of technical assistance have you all received as you were being designated from the State of Florida?

00:10:00

Sherrie Miller: Technical assistance, there's been, like, grants. They do research when we're looking at projects. I'm trying to think; I'm sorry.

00:10:12

Interviewer: No; that's okay. I know it's—it's been a few years now.

00:10:15

Sherrie Miller: The program did some changing, so but most of it they would help us with you know when we were wanting to look for grants or—they were just—having the state Waterfronts meetings where you go and you sit and talk to other waterfront communities and get ideas from them. There's been times we'd go—we're having trouble with cleanups and Millsville was a community that had done a lot of cleanups and they would put us in contact with the different communities on what projects we were wanting to do so we could gain ideas from them. And I guess the networking from the different communities has been a big support that we've gotten from all over the state.

00:10:55

Interviewer: That's interesting. So what are some of the communities that you reached out to?

00:10:58

Sherrie Miller: St. Andrew's Bay, Millsville, just different ones all over when they'll send out; you know, 'Hey, Panacea is having trouble with this; how did y'all handle this?' And they would respond back to us.

00:11:10

Interviewer: Will you talk to me a little bit more about some of the specific obstacles then that you all encountered and how those communities helped you and how they dealt with them there in their own communities?

00:11:21

Sherrie Miller: Just with ideas on different things. I can't remember any specifics but, you know, one of the things is Panacea Waterfronts took a lead on, you know. like getting our 501(c)3 for our Waterfronts Community for being incorporated and we've reached out to different—you know different waterfront communities for help in that. And like I said, the cleanup when we were wanting to do a major cleanup through here, Millsville had—you know gave us some information that they had done through their program to help with that.

00:11:50

Interviewer: That's good; that's good. What are some of the projects—?

00:11:55

Sherrie Miller: Okay. *[reaches for a drink]*

00:11:55

Interviewer: I'm sorry. There is no—we don't need to get—this isn't like a sprint or anything.

[laughs]

00:12:00

Sherrie Miller: I've had real—yeah.

00:12:01

Interviewer: Don't worry. What are some of the projects then that you all have done through being a Partnership Community?

00:12:07

Sherrie Miller: We have done—like I said we did a major cleanup where we went and the County came in and people just got their stuff out of the side of the roads and we got tons of garbage out of people's yards. And got, you know, things cleaned up; old boats out of yards, old cars out of yards, and that's a project we had to work with our County and since we're not incorporated in Panacea we have—we have to work through our County to get a lot of these projects done.

00:12:32

And finding funding for projects is our biggest obstacle I think and you know—that we have here in Panacea. We have grand ideas. Some other projects we're working on right now is like the—we got our 501(c)3. We're helping the community do the feasibility studies to become incorporated. And the bill has been wrote now; this has been going on since 2009. We finally got our feasibility study, went before—the bill didn't make it out of committee last year. Went back this year, reworked it; hopefully it's going to go through and this area will be incorporated. And we think that will help Panacea to do better with getting grants and funding. And we'll be able to take some of the burden off the County to get projects done here in Panacea.

00:13:17

But over the years the projects we've worked on; we've helped you know jointly with the leg work and doing the grants for revitalizing a park here. We were very instrumental in working with the County to write a grant at Rock Landing where all the commercial fishermen put in and out to get a commercial fishing dock and it's also for recreational fishermen, too, built here in Panacea. One—the old one was taken down and a new one built.

00:13:47

Interviewer: And that's through the Partnership?

00:13:50

Sherrie Miller: Partnership; we work with the County a lot on a lot of our projects to get them—help get them you know—get them funded and ideas and the County is really good about working with us when we come up with projects and everything. We did a Walkable Community study; we had someone come in through a grant and like I said, we did a Walkable Community study and figured out you know what would be best, how this community would be better off walking you know to get people moved around and everything.

00:14:18

Interviewer: So, like, accessibility?

00:14:20

Sherrie Miller: Accessibility yeah; where it would be good to have a public parking place, where would sidewalks be, when people are walking through your community what is the first things they see? You know, oh, your garbage dumpsters out beside your building where everybody sees it; it should be behind there. I can't think of the guy—we had a guy that is well known for doing that all over the country that we brought here from a grant and did that and came up with a plan.

00:14:42

Interviewer: I also read that you all had after the 2005 hurricane *[Interviewer's note: Hurricane Dennis]*; the Waterfronts Partnership sort of had a response event for that.

00:14:55

Sherrie Miller: Yes; we did. That happened in 2005 when Dennis came through and this community was just like—there was a lot of debris and stuff and I will say that after Dennis, the people in this community got in and cleaned their own stuff up. You know we didn't wait for people to come in. People got here and started cleaning the community up and helping. Well it came Christmas time and we wanted to do an event, so we started Christmas in the Panacea, because so many people here did not have money to you know—the seafood industry was on the decline. You know the storm had come through; it affected a lot of people that had damage to their homes where they never had water before.

00:15:35

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WWF/NOAA
Sherrie Miller - Panacea Waterfront

February 12, 2015

So we started Christmas in Panacea and we had our—bought a big Christmas tree and put it up downtown and we gave away free hot chocolate, cookies, and we did a boat on trailer parade downtown because we don't have a deep enough channel to do one on the water. And we've just had our 11th year for that and—pretty big thing. And now we have 2,000 people or more, you know 20-something boats, different floats or golf carts decorated up. We do free hotdogs. We have free entertainment. We do free activities and games for all the kids. And this is—some of these kids never had the opportunity to go to big winter festivals and see things, so it was a pretty big event for here.

00:16:18

Interviewer: Sounds like a morale booster too.

00:16:20

Sherrie Miller: Yes; uh-hm. That was what it was for is to try and get people—there was people that cared and that we could come together as a community. We also have through the—the leadership—the Wedgeworth Leadership Program, one of their stops that they come here during the Leadership Program is here in Wakulla County and some people we met through there. So I contact them and they send us free fruit to give out to the families and everything. So it's a pretty big thing.

00:16:44

Interviewer: That's nice, and what—where—I'm trying to understand clearly like where the funding comes from for all of these projects.

00:16:52

Sherrie Miller: Okay; Panacea, we do a major fund-raiser every year. It's called Rock the Dock Fishing Tournament. And it started out because of the—the commercial docking facility I was telling you it was called—it's called Rock Landing. So one of the members of ours came up with well, let's do a Rock the Dock fishing tournament. And it's grow(ed) pretty—you know we first started out and we had 100-something anglers and now we're up to 600-something over six years. And it's growing and growing. And so that's our main—main funding mechanism for the community to do the different projects that we do.

00:17:29

We also, during Rock the Dock, we sell only 250 tickets at \$100 and raffle off a Skeeter boat. We've got some great partnerships with our businesses here, Mike's Marine, Crum's Mini Mall; everybody here—whatever their contacts is they help to make this project go forward. And through, you know, the local businesses, our Youth Division every year for Rock the Dock we give away a G3 motor—boat and motor with a trailer to a kid that fishes in the tournament as long as he weighs a fish in—and in the Kayak Division. But it's good partnerships with this community. And I—I think I go back to our first Director, Pam Portwood; one thing she always taught us is that to make anything successful it's going to have to be built on partnership and that's something we go forward with.

00:18:19

We're in the process now, there was an old tram—this is our latest project—that runs from Panacea to Sopchoppy over the years through the woods and it was pulled by a horse or mule. So when we have events in Panacea, we have trouble getting people around because there's not a lot of parking. So we're in the process; we went yesterday, two of our gentlemen on our Committee drove to Ocala. We bought the base of our wagon and we are doing a replicate of this old tram that would be ready for Rock the Dock and we'll pull it somehow, more modern, probably with a tractor or a mule or a Gator-type electrical motorized vehicle and we'll move people around. And we can take them from a parking lot to the event.

00:19:02

And then our goal once we get that done is to look for a grant to do some interpretive, you know, signage inside to tell people the history—even a voice box that when you sit in the tram you can hit it and it tells you the history.

00:19:15

Interviewer: That's really interesting. That all sounds like really thought-out, too, with what's been here historically and—. So where does the state relationship come from?

00:19:28

Sherrie Miller: With the Water—the State Waterfronts?

00:19:29

Interviewer: Uh-hm.

00:19:30

Sherrie Miller: They're basically like I said a support group if we need information. And another project we have, as you'll see here, is a mosaic wall right beside here. And that was a project of Waterfronts. We had this ugly concrete wall and everybody that come through Panacea they'd say, 'y'all need to do something on that concrete wall.' Well Brook's Concrete is actually one of the major employers of Panacea.

00:19:51

So we went to him and we said we need to do something about this wall. So a Visit Florida—someone that worked for Visit Florida put us in contact with the community of Brooksville. And they have a lot of mosaics. Well we had our high school to do the mosaic that's on there now. And the Waterfronts Community Partnership now is partnering with Keep Wakulla Beautiful who helped with that and we're actually going to try and finish that wall and work with them and try to get the wall finished. They want to—they've got all this tile before because the school instructor did half the wall and said it's time for someone else to take over the other half. And that's been many years ago, so now we're going to partner and find someone else to finish the wall.

00:20:34

Interviewer: That's great. It's striking about all of these projects. They're all so different. There's some that you know you rebuilt the dock or you cleaned up garbage or you're making a

mosaic or—. It's really interesting the breadth of things that you're doing with this Partnership Program.

00:20:49

Sherrie Miller: Uh-hm; well Panacea, like I said, it's a very unique place because as you're coming into Panacea from 98, you get here and the refuge, the St. Mark's Refuge, and then you've got the water that runs in front of us and then behind the town, the St. Mark's Refuge runs, and then on the other end of the town it runs. So it's kind of landlocked; we're not going to get—we're not—we're going to grow but we're not going to grow you know enormous as a big city.

00:21:16

Another project that the Panacea Waterfront's also worked on is we had got a special overlay for Panacea which gives a little bit of code on things and how things can be built. And so you know certain height restrictions by the County that you know that we won't get all these high-rises on the water, on what property that is left that could be, you know, developed. And there's some—they're not real strenuous on—we want it to keep the character of an old—you know of the historic town of the fishing village. People working with crab traps in their yard, because that's just a part of being a part of this community; you bring your crab traps and you work on them and you get them ready and then you take them back and put them in the bay. So that was part of the special overlay.

00:22:00

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WWF/NOAA
Sherrie Miller - Panacea Waterfront

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While we were also doing that we worked on a public access with the County. And in the comp plan any County right-away that goes to the water cannot be given to landowners on each side or can't be closed. All public access has to stay open so people can use it to get to the water. And that was an important thing to us, so you couldn't start—okay; I own land on this side. Somebody else owns land on the other side. Will you close this road and give it to us? And so we worked on that project of getting the special overlay done. The Panacea Waterfronts took the lead. We have a lot of people that golf carts are their—or motorized wheelchairs are their way of transportation to get around the community, so Waterfronts took the lead on doing a golf cart community with the County and getting that adopted that this is a golf cart community. And people can get around.

00:22:50

Interviewer: So in a lot of ways this Partnership Program is like an advocate for Panacea in bigger circles?

00:22:57

Sherrie Miller: Uh-hm; yes.

00:22:58

Interviewer: Is that—am I right in saying that?

00:23:00

Sherrie Miller: Uh-hm; yes, uh-huh.

00:23:02

Interviewer: And what's been the response from the community with some of these projects and some of the things you've accomplished?

00:23:06

Sherrie Miller: Well sometimes people don't understand. They don't come to meetings. They don't educate their selves and then all of the sudden it's like when we were doing the special overlays, someone thought, 'oh my god; they're going to tell me I got to paint my building pink.' And that's not what the special overlay was. We wanted to keep it you know—for example, when the Dollar General come, everybody loves the Dollar General but if we'd have had input from the beginning we probably would have said, 'Okay, we want a different front than the big yellow and black building. We want to do something that fits more with our community.'

00:23:33

And you know I know they do it in other communities and we could have sat down at the table but without the special overlay you have no control over that. And so but people don't understand and not taking a part in the project once it gets started and not understanding from the beginning then they get bits and pieces and they don't understand and they get scared that you're going to try and take over their land or something. And then once you educate them on what a special overlay was, what a public access was, then they're all for it.

00:24:02

Interviewer: So there's been some misunderstandings?

00:24:04

Sherrie Miller: There's been some misunderstandings. You like anything, you know you have your ups and downs and people don't understand because they don't educate or we don't educate them enough about a project. You know some people are like, 'okay; whatever they're doing is going to be you know fine.' And then once it gets down to it then they want to have input. So our main goal is trying to educate everybody about the projects and making them a part of it from the beginning.

00:24:25

Interviewer: So were you able to overcome those misunderstandings along the way?

00:24:29

Sherrie Miller: We stepped back and yeah; stepped back and went forward again and once they understood that we wasn't trying to tell people what color to paint their buildings, that we were trying to protect this community and their—you know and the historical value of it and then they understood that.

00:24:44

Interviewer: And I would imagine with projects like rebuilding Rock Landing, the response is a little more positive and—.

00:24:51

Sherrie Miller: Oh yeah; well of course somebody—you know it's—either it's too high or they didn't like the concrete. You've always got controversy. [*Laughs*]

00:24:59

Interviewer: Okay; what are some of the things that you all are planning to do in the future?

00:25:09

Sherrie Miller: Future plans? Well we—we—like I said, the main thing is getting this community incorporated and just steady working on bringing back—one of the projects we're working—things we're working now—we're a member of Visit Florida because we have a 501(c)3. And we're going to—applying for grants to do advertising to try and market this area back for a destination for people coming here to fish because this used to be a lot of people came down here and would go out recreational fishing and you know over the years they've started going other places, but trying to make it where this will be an area again where people come back fishing from and bringing families to.

00:25:50

Interviewer: And any like, other projects that are more I guess concrete like building the pier or —?

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Sherrie Miller: The tram is our biggest one right now. And we would like to work with the County. We have a park here that needs a lot of major upgrading to be more—for the community to use more. We have a wonderful walking trail in there. The playground equipment is old, so we'd like to see that upgraded. So just working on things like that—sidewalks and, you know, we have to go through the County to apply for the money through DOT *[Interviewer's note: Department of Transportation]*, but they've always been you know working with us and—. The other project that we have been working on is we worked with a company CSA down in South Florida but we were trying—we would like to see—our main goal is to get a study done of our bays because there's areas where you used to harvest oysters that you can't harvest oysters anymore.

00:26:44

And there's areas where you can so we feel like there's got to be a study done of the bay and we can then—we need a storm water study done. Now you can find the money to do the projects after you find out what your issues are, by getting the storm water study done to find out what the issues are—is where we're you know—through the Waterfronts, they've tried to help us and find things and helped us research out different options. But our goal right now is we've been talking to legislature and would like to talk to FWC *[Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission]*, some of the people on our committee—we need to get a study done of our bay to find out why some of these places aren't viable for oysters anymore; why you can't harvest oysters in this area, so we can go back to process—you know getting a large number of oysters from this area.

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00:27:31

Interviewer: Because the seafood industry—?

00:27:33

Sherrie Miller: The seafood industry; uh-huh.

00:27:34

Interviewer: Do you have a relationship then with other communities up along the—?

00:27:38

Sherrie Miller: Yeah; like with Frank—. Everybody you know—Franklin County everybody wants to make sure nobody is getting into their—their money and stuff like that. So you know the different communities, the—it may end up being that's something we may have to do jointly with some other communities. Most of the oystermen that oyster from Wakulla County they have to take their oysters to Apalachicola and they have to—that's where they have to sell them through a licensed house over there. So when the funding comes, most of the people from Franklin County get it even though these people are licensed—from Wakulla County but they're licensed over there. They don't get in a lot of those programs.

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But, you know, it's something we're steady working on and trying to get done.

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Interviewer: That's interesting. I imagine it's a little hard to contend with like the Apalachicola brand because it's so—

00:28:25

Sherrie Miller: Yes; uh-huh. But then when we opened some of these oyster beds when they were closed over there a lot of their oystermen(s) came over here and oystered. And people come from Cedar Key. We do what they call oyster relays in this area, where you move oysters from one area to another area and get them to grow. But we need to find out why those areas no longer oysters can be harvested from.

00:28:45

Interviewer: That's interesting. And that's something that the Waterfronts Program can—?

00:28:48

Sherrie Miller: Yes; we've been trying to take the initiative on getting that funded.

00:28:52

Interviewer: That's good. That seems really timely.

00:28:55

Sherrie Miller: Yeah. [*Laughs*] Yeah; well like I said, we—we realize there's an issue with the bays and we got to find out what that issue is whether it be storm water or what the issues are

going on out there. And you won't have a viable oyster industry again until you find out what those issues are.

00:29:11

Interviewer: Right; right. Let me think. Let me just look at my notes just really quickly. Is there anything that you want to say that I've forgotten to ask you about so far? Okay; maybe I will ask you about the committee itself and how many people are on it, how often you all meet, sort of those kinds of things.

00:29:31

Sherrie Miller: We meet once a month, the second Tuesday of every month at 10:00 a.m. We're seventeen members. I think we're a couple short right now. We have people from all different backgrounds on there. Everybody, you know, has got their—what they're interested—there's some people you know interested in different programs and that's the part they do. But we're all a group that comes together and really work together well. You know, they're very supportive and go out in the community and do things.

00:30:05

You know, we got another project we did last year; we have a Maritime Center here that hasn't—whenever it was first bought through the years it's a—a Big Ben Maritime Center, and over the—when it was first bought, the grants and the money before 2005 wouldn't have went away this thing would have probably been opened. But one of the projects they started was a boat-building class. And one of our members, Larry Tucker is a—he was a commercial

fisherman, a charter fishing captain, and he also—his family—father and grandfather built boats. So the Panacea Waterfronts has—he actually is a part of the Maritime Center and him and Roger Pinholster, the guy that heads up the program, teach boat-building classes. So the Panacea Waterfronts sponsors those; it's the Larry Tucker Scholarship Fund for boat-building.

00:30:56

This will be our second year. We pick kids from Panacea and like I said, it was unreal when we did it. The community came together. We had the Sea Tow guy gave us life jackets. Crum's gave us the tools for the kids to have. Every restaurant kicked in and paid for lunches every day so the kids didn't have to worry about that. We had people that went down and volunteered to help with the class. And so they ended up with a finished boat which one of the kids in the class, parents ended up buying but it's a real good, you know—it was something they made and then they got to put it in the water and made sure it floated. And so we're in the process now of we're going to do our second one in June when school gets out.

00:31:34

So that's—that's a good project that we're, you know, we're proud of because that's the heritage of a lot of people here building boats and things.

00:31:43

Interviewer: And it's a way of teaching those kids that might not otherwise have the opportunity.

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Sherrie Miller: No; uh-um, the opportunity to learn the right skills to build and you know, I'm sure with these skills, the first thing they do is they build their own toolboxes out of wood. So they learn other skills than just building a boat and how to—you know they learn how to use all the different tools.

00:31:59

Interviewer: That's amazing. And hopefully then you have some like people sign on for Waterfronts—?

00:32:04

Sherrie Miller: Yes. *[Laughs]*

00:32:06

Interviewer: What are some things that you might tell another community who wants to become a Partnership Community?

00:32:14

Sherrie Miller: I think there's been—it's been a very beneficial program for this community. Like I said, the networking with all the different communities, getting ideas of projects that they're doing, most of them are tied directly with the City or something like that which we're not. We're kind of with—you know our County is very supportive of us. But we're our own entity.

00:32:34

It's just been very beneficial and you know the networking and the support we get from the State agencies is really good.

00:32:42

Interviewer: And is there anything that you would say like when you start this process don't do this, that, or the next thing?

00:32:48

Sherrie Miller: *[Laughs]* Just make sure you put everything out there so everybody understands what's going on. And everybody that you can get involved, get involved, and make sure you know all the information is always out there, so everybody understands what the projects are and what you're trying to do.

00:33:04

Interviewer: So you don't have misunderstandings. Let me just see; I think that's everything. Is there anything that you want to add that I forgot to ask you about or that didn't occur to me?

00:33:18

Sherrie Miller: No. *[Laughs]*

00:33:19

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time. I appreciate it.

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00:33:21

Sherrie Miller: Oh thank you.

00:33:23

[End Sherrie Miller - Panacea Waterfront]