



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

August 6, 2015

Mr. Leonard Sossamon
County Administrator
Hernando County
20 North Main Street, Room 263
Brooksville, Florida 34601

Dear Mr. Sossamon:

We have reviewed the Multiyear Implementation Plan (Multiyear Plan) from Hernando County submitted on April 21, 2015 and deemed complete on July 31, 2015. We find the Hernando County Multiyear Plan is complete and appears to conform to the RESTORE Act and regulations. As of the date of this letter, Treasury accepts Hernando County's initial Multiyear Plan, which includes three projects for \$569,500 of the \$701,121.06 available in Hernando County's allocation in the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund (Trust Fund). The County can begin to submit applications through GrantSolutions.gov for Direct Component funding to support activities included in the accepted Multiyear Plan. We encourage you to refer to the Direct Component Guidance and Standard and Program-Specific Terms and Conditions on Treasury's RESTORE Act website at <http://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/default.aspx> as you prepare grant applications.

We will post all accepted Multiyear Plans on Treasury's RESTORE Act website. In addition, please post the Multiyear Plan on your County website and provide us with the web address so we can include the link on the Treasury RESTORE Act website.

Treasury's acceptance of this Multiyear Plan is not a final determination of the eligibility of activities, projects, and programs for Direct Component funding and does not bind Treasury to obligate funds from the Trust Fund. The County must submit applications for Direct Component funding separately through GrantSolutions.gov. Treasury will review these applications to determine if the requested funding complies with the RESTORE Act and regulations, and Federal law and policies on grants. Applicants may submit applications only to seek funds already available for distribution from the Trust Fund, in accordance with allocations established under the statute.

In the future, whenever there is a material change in the Multiyear Plan, Hernando County must follow the requirements for an initial Multiyear Plan, including those for public review and comment. For more information, see the RESTORE Act Direct Component Guidance on the RESTORE Act website.

We look forward to working with you. Please send any questions to restoreact@treasury.gov.

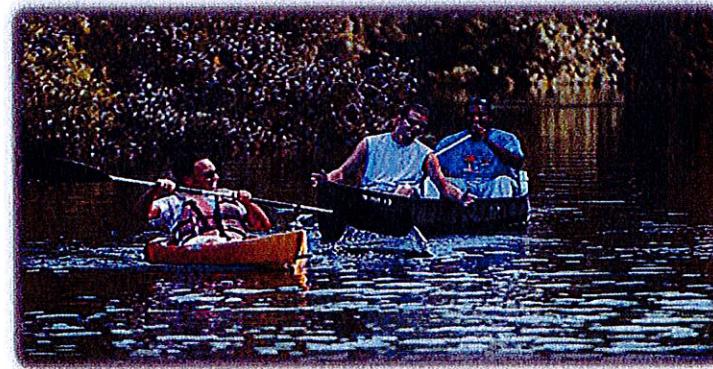
Sincerely,



Laurie McGilvray
Program Director

cc: Johnathan Walker, Operations Assistant
Hernando County
Ted Kowalsky, Director
Office of Grants and Asset Management
John Stutts, Grants Management Specialist
Office of Gulf Coast Restoration

HERNANDO COUNTY RESTORE ACT MULTI-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



April 15, 2015
June 10, 2015
Revised July 16, 2015

Table of Contents

I.	RESTORE Act Background.....	3
II.	Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP) Purpose	3
III.	Project Application Process	4
IV.	Project Ranking Process	4
V.	Project Selection	5
VI.	Public Input Activity.....	5
	 Appendix A – Direct Component Overview & Guidelines.....	 8
	Appendix B – Direct Component Scoring Criteria Guide.....	10
	Appendix C – Project Scoring Results.....	17
	Appendix D – Direct Component Overview & Guidelines.....	22

I. RESTORE Act Background

On April 20, 2010, the largest offshore oil spill in the United States occurred, allowing oil to flow in the Gulf of Mexico for three months. The cause was an explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. Before the well was capped, millions of barrels of crude oil were released, closing tens of thousands of square miles of federal waters to fishing, and causing extensive damage to marine and wildlife habitats, and tourism.

On July 6, 2012, the President signed into law the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act (RESTORE Act; Subtitle F of Public Law 112-141). The Act established the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund in the U.S. Treasury Department. Eighty percent of the civil penalties paid after July 6, 2012, under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act and in connection with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, will be deposited into the Trust Fund and invested. Under the Act, amounts in the Trust Fund will be available for programs, projects, and activities that restore and protect the environment and economy of the Gulf Coast region. These funds were split into five different funding streams.

One of the streams, known as the Direct Component, includes funds available for access by Hernando County through the Treasury Department. As of October 1, 2014, the amount available for distribution to Hernando County was \$569,348. Additional funding is anticipated to be made available upon the conclusion of the pending lawsuits. As additional funding is made available to the Trust Fund, the Multi-Year Implementation Plan will be modified to add additional projects.

II. Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP) Purpose

The requirements of the RESTORE Act define the conditions entities must meet before receiving Direct Component Funds. In order to access funds from the Treasury Department the MYIP must be created, approved by the Board and presented to the public for comment. After a 45-day public comment period, the MYIP with associated forms can be sent to the Treasury Department for approval. Once approved, grant applications for the specific projects listed in the plan can be submitted for approval and processing.

Projects selected for this plan must meet the eligibility requirements of the Act. In addition, they must be selected based on “meaningful input from the public, including broad-based participation from individuals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations.” The plan will be created to describe each project for which funding is sought and include a description of the need, purpose and objectives. The plan will specify how each project meets the criteria used to evaluate the success of each project in restoring and protecting the Gulf Coast. Locally approved project goals may be found in Appendix A.

III. Project Application Process

In order for projects to be selected for consideration to receive RESTORE Act funds they must meet at least one of the eligible activities defined in the RESTORE Act. Those eligible activities are as follows:

1. Restoration/protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region
2. Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife and natural resources
3. Implementation of a federally approved marine, coastal or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring
4. Workforce development and job creation
5. Improvements to or on state parks located in coastal areas affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill
6. Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure
7. Coastal flood protection and related infrastructure
8. Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast region, including recreational fishing
9. Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast region

The process of project selection was started in 2012 with a request from all County Departments and County citizen advisory committees to submit projects for consideration. These projects were initially investigated by staff to ensure that they met the eligibility requirements of the Act. The projects were originally submitted to the Board during a publically advertised meeting on December 4, 2012. The list was later refined and again submitted to the Board on October 14, 2014 for further discussion. At this time, the County again solicited input from the public to provide other potential project ideas that met the eligibility requirements of the Act. A project application submittal form was created and placed on the County website and e-mailed to interested members of the public. The deadline for submittal of project applications for inclusion in the initial project ranking list was December 5, 2014.

All submitted projects were posted on the County website and presented to the Board for public input at the January 13, 2015 meeting.

IV. Project Ranking Process

There were a total of 25 projects submitted for consideration and ranking during the initial process. The County utilized a Board-approved ranking criteria that was based on the nine project eligibility requirements set forth in the RESTORE Act. Additional ranking factors were added for project timing and matching funds. A copy of the criteria is included in Appendix B of this document.

An internal committee was created by the County to encompass staff members from varied backgrounds and with differing areas of expertise. This committee included staff members from the Department of Public Works, Utilities Department, Environmental Planning, Engineering

Department, Parks Department, Finance Personnel, and Grant Management Personnel. This committee reviewed each project and weighed them against the ranking criteria.

This internal ranking was presented to the Board on January 13, 2015 to foster public input and garner Board support. The projects recommended by the Board at this meeting were used to create the MYIP project list.

V. Project Selection

The Hernando County Board of County Commissioners was presented with a list of twenty five eligible projects, ranked with the Board approved criteria for consideration in creating the initial MYIP. The highest three ranked projects were recommended to the Board for inclusion in the

Bayou Drive Repair and Restoration	\$350,000
RESTORE Funding Request:	\$175,000
County Match:	\$175,000
Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef Project	\$105,000
RESTORE Funding Request:	\$ 94,500
County Match:	\$ 10,500
Linda Pederson Park Improvements	\$300,000
RESTORE Funding Request:	\$300,000

VI. Public Input Activity

Overview

Public participation is an important part of the RESTORE ACT project development process. The MYIP was adopted after review and consideration of meaningful input from the public. The general public was informed and given the opportunity to provide comment three ways:

1. Public meetings
2. County website
3. Print and broadcast media coverage

Method	Reach	Number of comments received
Website	Approximately 1,000	18
Eight public meetings	Approximately 200	5
Media coverage	3.4 million	4

Response to public input

Although the vast majority of public comments received regarding the plan were accolades and appreciation, there were two that resulted in material changes to either the plan or operations within the County government.

1. The letter from the National Wildlife Federation dated March 27, 2015 resulted in modifications to the project descriptions which include adding high level milestones and an explanation of how project success will be evaluated. In addition, more details were added regarding public input and the website was updated to include all

- RESTORE Act and MYIP documents pertaining to Hernando County's submittal. These additions provide a plan more focused on meeting the goals and objectives of the Federal legislation.
2. Public comment received at the October 14, 2014 Board meeting from County resident Forrest Bennett resulted in the adoption of a County ordinance requiring the removal of invasive species commonly known as "Lead Tree" within the jurisdictional boundary of Hernando County.

Details

RESTORE Act webpage

www.hernandocounty.us/restoreact/

- This webpage provides an overview, documents, public meeting dates, news articles, helpful links and contact information. It also provides directions and an email address to where comments should be directed. A total of 18 comments were received via email.

Public Meetings

The following eight public meetings resulted in five comments from the public. All public meetings were broadcast live on the Hernando County Government Broadcast Channel.

September 25, 2012

- Approved Resolution 2012-124 and Interlocal Agreement relating to establishment of the Gulf Consortium.
- Public comment – Resident Dick Ross stated he firmly supports joining the Gulf Consortium adding that the shrimp industry was crippled after oil spill and suggested that funds from RESTORE Act be used to help shrimpers.

October 9, 2012

- Designated County Commissioner Wayne Dukes as Director and County Administrator Len Sossamon as alternate Direct to act as a representative for Consortium members.
- Public comment - none

December 4, 2012

- Workshop - recommended to the Board of County Commissioners that they consider the development of a portfolio of potential projects that would be eligible for funding.
- Public comment – Resident Hamilton Hanson spoke against using RESTORE Act monies because it's not in the constitution.

December 18, 2012

- Approved the RESTORE Act Estuary list for submittal to the Southwest Florida Water Management District for the development of a regional ecosystem restoration plan. Selected firm to provide services related to RESTORE Act funding.
- Public comment - none

October 14, 2014

- Reviewed a presentation outlining the RESTORE Act and the potential to receive funding for projects.

- Public comment - Resident Forrest Bennett from the Nature Coast Action Team provided comments and recommended to include on the project list invasive species management for Brazilian Peppertree, Lead Tree and Australian pine tree.
- October 28, 2014
- Adopted staff's recommendation to approve the RESTORE Act Direct Component Project Guidelines and Ranking Criteria and authorized staff to continue efforts to solicit, rank, and present potential projects that meet criteria.
 - Public comment - none
- January 13, 2015
- Discussed RESTORE Act Direct Component Project Ranking. Approved staff's recommendation for the ranking and selected three projects (Bayou Drive Restoration; Shallow Water Reef project; and Linda Pedersen Park) for inclusion in the Multi-Year Implementation Plan.
 - Public comment – Resident Chuck Gordon provided his support for the chosen projects and resident Judith Simpson commented that the list was diverse and comprehensive and that more money should be put toward these types of projects.
- February 10, 2015
- Reviewed proposed RESTORE Act Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP) for Submittal to Treasury Department and started the 45-day public input period.
 - Public comment – none

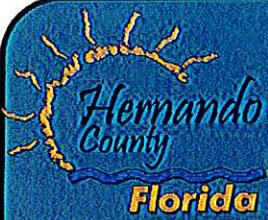
Media releases and news coverage

- Bay News 9 – Restore Act funding applications in Hernando due by Dec. 5
- Media release – RESTORE Act funding for Hernando County is imminent
- Media release – RESTORE Act ecosystem restoration project proposals
- Dredging Today – Hernando County: RESTORE Act project proposals
- Hernando Times – County makes wish list for money from BP oil spill
- Media release – Pubic input sought for RESTORE Act projects

The Tampa Bay Times website features a prominent headline: "County makes wish list for money from BP oil spill fines". Below the headline is a photograph of children playing with beach toys. A sidebar on the left includes a "RELATED NEWSARCHIVE" section with links to other stories. On the right, there is a video player showing a video titled "Hernando County's BP oil spill wish list".

DredgingToday.com has a banner for "NMDC WORKS FOR INVESTMENT". The main article is titled "Hernando County: RESTORE Act Project Proposals (USA)". It includes a photograph of a dredging vessel at work. The text discusses the county's role in the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund and its impact on the environment and economy.

The Hernando County website has a banner for "Get the FREE Ray Now! app with Hurricane 9 on the go!". The main article is titled "Restore Act funding applications in Hernando due by Dec. 5". It features the Hernando County logo and provides details about the application process and available funds.



Appendix A

Direct Component Overview & Guidelines

PROJECT GOALS

The Hernando County Board of County Commissioners has endorsed the following goals for use of RESTORE Act Direct Component funds. Projects and programs to implement these goals, to the extent feasible, should (1) provide and/or contribute to countywide and/or regional environmental and/or economic benefits, and (2) utilize a collaborative approach emphasizing environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.

All projects must benefit the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem through one or more of the five goals:

1. Preserve, Restore and Conserve Habitat
2. Protect and Restore Water Quality
3. Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources, Springs, Ecosystems, and Habitat that is critical to the Gulf Coast
4. Enhance Community Resilience
5. Build and Revitalize the Gulf Economy including activities that promote Tourism, Ecotourism and Recreation

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

1. Restoration/protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region
2. Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife, and natural resources

3. Implementation of a federally approved marine, coastal or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring
4. Workforce development and job creation
5. Improvements to or on state parks located in coastal areas affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill
6. Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources
7. Coastal flood protection and related infrastructure
8. Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast region, including recreational fishing
9. Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast region

PRIORITIES (not in order of priority)

- Protect, conserve, and/or restore native habitats including springs protection
- Provide storm water or surface water quality improvements including the prevention of erosion and sedimentation that may impact waterways that connect to the gulf
- Reduce withdrawal of potable water from the aquifer
- Create policies, programs, and or mechanisms to remediate environmental and/or economic damages
- Protect against future environmental and/or economic vulnerability
- Provide climate change/sea-level rise planning, adaptation and/or related community engagement
- Provide flood and storm protection to infrastructure and other publically owned assets that consider resilience and changing sea levels
- Diversify and improve the economy including tourism and recreational opportunities
- Promote sustainable recreational fishing and consumption of seafood dependent on the gulf ecosystem and/or protect or promote working waterfronts
- Provide groundwater quality improvements



Appendix B

Direct Component

Scoring Criteria Guide

Projects are scored related to the anticipated benefit it will provide in each category with a maximum of 5 points possible per category. Guidelines for scoring each category are provided below.

1. Restoration and protection of the natural resources (NR), springs, spring runs, groundwater resources, ecosystems, waterways designated as Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW), upland habitats that contribute to waterways that drain to the Gulf, fisheries, marine, and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region
 - 0 No increase in protection of NRs.
 - 1 Identified NRs to be protected but only projected to create a minor increase to NR protection. No new services provided to the public and no public lands set aside or placed in to conservation easements. Protective measures estimated at 5 years.
 - 2 NRs identified and will be protected; but lifespan of protective measures estimated at 5 to 10 years.
 - 3 NRs identified and will be protected. Specific lands to be set aside for protection. Lifespan of protective measures more than 10 years.
 - 4 New lands set aside and conservation effort engaged. Public education and benefit elements from the resources have been included in the project. Lifespan of protective measures is estimated to be greater than 20 years.
 - 5 New conservation lands created providing or enhancing wildlife corridors. Actively protects native species especially T&E species or Species of Special Concern; or long term protection of other natural resources such as minerals, archeological sites, etc.
2. Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife and natural resources, including erosion and sedimentation of waters that feed the Gulf and improve water quality
 - 0 No change in current status to mitigate damages to fish, wildlife, or NR

- 1 Project indirectly halts any existing impacts to fish, wildlife or natural resources. No action is planned to restore or repair any previous damage that has occurred. Any mitigation will occur naturally and over a long duration. No change in current wildlife or fish status. No long term water quality improvement achieved.
 - 2 Project intentionally halts existing impacts. Has some limited direct impact as well as long to mid-term indirect impact. Positive impact noted on recreational fishing and wildlife use. Natural resources benefit to a limited degree. Some short term water quality achieved.
 - 3 Minor immediate impact seen in correcting damage. Fish, wildlife and natural resources damage is immediately mitigated although on a minor scale. Invasive species are eradicated or significantly reduced. Water quality is improved in the short term.
 - 4 Immediate impact noted. Indirect effects permanently felt. Public health is positively increased to some degree. Growth or recovery from previous damage noted immediately. Economic growth due to actions noted. Long term water quality improvement is achieved.
 - 5 Action results in immediate, long term correction of damage. Public health is positively increased. Invasive species removed. Long term potential to correct endangered or threatened status. Other benefits such as economic growth are realized as a result.
3. Implementation of a federally -approved marine, coastal, springs protection, or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring
- 0 Does not implement a federally-approved plan
 - 1 No growth of the current status. Fisheries monitoring created on a minor basis. Recreational fishing areas developed.
 - 2 No growth on status however fisheries status is monitored for greater than the short term. Recreational fishing and other watersports develops as a result.
 - 3 Some increases in the size and scope of the current conservation plan. Fisheries monitoring completed on a regular basis. Seasonal recreational use rises significantly as well as other watersport use.
 - 4 Conservation plan increases in both size and scope. Fisheries monitoring is conducted on a routine basis with positive results noted. Annual increase in recreational use.
 - 5 Broad increase in the fisheries development as a result of the project. Monitoring occurs on a frequent basis. Conservation areas are significantly increased in size resulting in a positive impact on the aquaculture industry.

4. Workforce development and job creation

- 0 Project does not provide any opportunity for additional jobs within the private or public sector. Work can be performed through existing roles or jobs are lost through the termination of a job provider.
 - 1 Project provides an increased backlog of available work for existing workers within the County and maintains the current number of public and private sector jobs.
 - 2 Project demands that part-time jobs be created to perform necessary work within the project schedule.
 - 3 Project creates 5-10 full-time positions which are necessary to perform work related to the project within the schedule determined for project execution. Upon project completion, 1-5 jobs (part-time or full-time) are created to staff any long-term result of the project.
 - 4 Project provides for the creation of 20-30 jobs related to the construction/implementation of the project or as a result of the project's completion. Upon project completion, 6 or more jobs (part-time or full-time) are created to staff any long-term result of the project.
 - 5 Project provides a significant increase of jobs provided by an entire industry.
5. Improvements to or on State parks or County recreation areas located in coastal areas or waterways and rivers that drain to the Gulf
- 0 Project does not provide any benefits or improvements to a State Park or county recreation
 - 1 A portion of the project indirectly provides benefits to a State Park or county Recreation
 - 2 Less than 50% of the project directly provides improvements to a State Park or county recreation
 - 3 Less than 50% of the project directly provides improvements to a State Park or county recreation; and the project is not specifically designed for the purpose of improving the impacted portions of the State Park or county recreation.
 - 4 A significant portion of the project (more than 75%) directly provides improvements to a State Park or county recreation; and the project is specifically designed for the purpose of improving the impacted portions of the State Park or county recreation.

- 5 A significant portion of the project (more than 75%) directly provides improvements to a State Park or county recreation; and the project is specifically designed for the purpose of improving the impacted portions of the State Park or county recreation.
6. Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy (including projects that increase access to recreational opportunities) or ecological resources, springs protection, or groundwater protection
 - 0 Project has a negative impact to the economy or has no net positive benefit to the local economy. Project does not benefit ecological resources.
 - 1 Project provides an indirect, revenue generating mechanism for either the public or private sector. Growth provided in the short term with no sustainable effects. Impact upon ecological preservation or protection is minimal.
 - 2 Project provides a direct revenue generator that bolsters the local economy but not significantly. No specific local industry become more robust through job creation, increased revenue, or increased patronage; however project results in an increase in local jobs. Project promotes habitat preservation or protection which can lead to increased benefits to the local economy.
 - 3 Project provides a direct revenue generator that bolsters the local economy more significantly. One specific local industry becomes more robust through job creation, increased revenue, or increased patronage and there is a projected increase in other local jobs. Promotes habitat preservation or protection which can lead to economic impact.
 - 4 Project provides a direct revenue generator that bolsters the local economy significantly. One or more specific local industries become more robust through job creation, increased revenue, or increased patronage and there is a projected increase in other local jobs. Some new long-term residents are projected. Habitat protection directly related to tourism or increased quality of life.
 - 5 Project provides a sustainable revenue generator that significantly bolsters the local economy with two or more local industries becoming more robust through job creation, increased revenue, or increased patronage. Project results in a definite an increase in local, long-term residents. Habitat protection has long-term benefits for tourism or increased quality of life.
7. Coastal flood protection and the preservation of habitat in flood zones, coastal surge areas and floodways
 - 0 Project does not reduce flood protection or habitat preservation to a portion of the community nor has no net increase in flood protection to a known flood prone area.

- 1 Project identifies areas potentially affect by floods but provides no measure for increasing the flood protection for those areas; or project may indirectly provide minor benefit to flood prone area.
 - 2 Project identifies areas potentially affect by floods and provides means for measuring the increase in flood protection for those areas (Level of Service [LOS]); or project may indirectly provide a fairly significant LOS benefit to flood prone area.
 - 3 Project identifies areas potentially affect by floods; and there is more than 50% increase in the LOS to a large flood prone area (more than 100 residents) or a 75% increase to an area with less than 100 residents.
 - 4 Project identifies areas potentially affect by floods; and there is more than 75% increase in the LOS protection to a large flood prone area (more than 100 residents) or a 90% increase to an area with less than 100 residents.
 - 5 The project's primary goal is to improve storm water level of service for the local community. The project includes sustainable solutions that include long term, large scale drainage improvements that do improve known flood prone areas to acceptable LOS with 90% LOS improvement to large scale (more than 100 residents).
8. Projects (including infrastructure development) that promote tourism in the Gulf Coast Region, including promotion of recreational fishing, swimming, bird watching, passive recreation and kayaking
 - 0 Does nothing to promote Tourism or recreational opportunities
 - 1 Project spending anticipated having little effect on tourism or increasing access to recreational opportunities. Impact may be short term
 - 2 Some effect on tourism or recreation expected on a seasonal basis. Some economic income for the local area or city created as well as for small businesses.
 - 3 Multi-seasonal impact. Generates some significant economic income and enhances recreational opportunities for tourists and residents
 - 4 Multi seasonal to year round impact. New generation of economic income created. Recreational opportunities are regional and benefits seasonal or tourist population
 - 5 Year round draw of new people to the area. Recreational opportunities contribute to quality of life long term. Large amounts of economic income created. Entire county benefits.

- 9. Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast Region and projects that provide or benefit marine habitat**
- 0 No additional seafood consumption created or project has the potential to negatively impact the seafood industry.
 - 1 Small amount of seafood consumption created. Anticipated that the local seafood market increases sales of seafood consumption by less than 5% and catch rates do not increase noticeably. Minor increase in marine habitat.
 - 2 Increased amount of seafood consumption created (more than 5%). Little positive effect on the seafood industry occurs, in general, but catch rates increase some.
 - 3 Noticeable positive effect on the seafood industry. More than 10% increase in seafood consumption anticipated. Includes habitat restoration and anticipated increase in catch rates of identified species by 5% or more.
 - 4 Industry growth experienced. Some positive effect on the local economy seen because of seafood consumption increase. Anticipated increase more than 15%. Catch rates of identified species more than 10%.
 - 5 Industry experiences new growth and invigoration. Measurable positive impact on the economy as evident by more than 20% increase in seafood consumption. Significant increase in the catch rate and production of new seafood products (by more than 15% in identified species).

10. Project Funding Match

- 0 No matching funds will be provided
- 1 10% matching funds will be provided from a source other than RESTORE Act
- 2 20% matching funds will be provided from a source other than RESTORE Act
- 3 30% matching funds will be provided from a source other than RESTORE Act
- 4 40% matching funds will be provided from a source other than RESTORE Act
- 5 50% matching funds will be provided from a source other than RESTORE Act

11. Project Timing

- 1 Initial effects of the project benefits projected to be realized more than 10 years away.
- 2 Initial effects of the project benefits projected to be realized 6-10 years away.
- 3 Initial effects of the project benefits projected to be realized 4-6 years away.
- 4 Initial effects of the project benefits projected to be realized 2-4 years away.
- 5 Initial effects of the project benefits projected to be realized 0-2 years away.



Appendix C

Project Scoring Results

RANK	PROJECT	POINTS	PROJECTED COST	MATCH	RESTORE FUNDS REQ'D
1	Bayou Drive Repair and Restoration	29	\$350,000	\$175,000	\$175,000
2	Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef Project	24	\$105,000	\$10,500	\$94,500
3	Linda Pedersen Park Improvements	23	\$300,000	\$0	\$300,000
4	Norfleet Property Acquisition	22	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
5	Hunter's Lake Tussock & Invasive Vegetation Removal	21	\$2,800,000	\$0	\$2,800,000
6	Glen WRF Reclaimed Water Main & Storage Area	21	\$5,400,000	\$2,700,000	\$2,700,000
7	Hernando Beach Boat Ramp Expansion	20	\$1,380,000	\$414,000	\$966,000
8	Alfred McKethan/Pine Island Park Improvements (Seawall, Sidewalk and Handrails)	19	\$470,000	\$0	\$470,000
9	Hunter's Lake Channel Restoration	19	\$625,000	\$0	\$625,000
10	Nobleton Wayside Park Preserve Improvements	19	\$300,000	\$0	\$300,000
11	Cypress Lakes Preserve	19	\$700,000	\$210,000	\$490,000
12	Lake Townsen Preserve	18	\$625,000	\$0	\$625,000
13	Pine Island - Water & Sewer Improvements	18	\$3,434,150	\$0	\$3,434,150
14	Bayport Boat Ramp Expansion	18	\$1,035,000	\$310,500	\$724,500
15	Airport WWTP Reclaimed Water Main & Storage Area	18	\$12,254,900	\$6,127,450	\$6,127,450
16	Peck Sink Preserve	17	\$350,000	\$105,000	\$245,000
17	Chinsegut Hill	15	\$150,000	\$0	\$150,000
18	Alfred McKethan/Pine Island Park Improvements (Observation Deck Improvement)	14	\$135,000	\$0	\$135,000
19	Oakley Island & Palm Grove Colony - Water & Sewer Improvements	14	\$2,245,134	\$0	\$2,245,134
20	Tourism Marketing Program	14	\$350,000	\$0	\$350,000
21	Museum at Weeki Wachee Springs State Park	13	\$1,500,000	\$0	\$1,500,000
22	Hernando County Reuse Water Master Plan	13	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
23	USDA STARS Properties (Federal Surplus Lands - Deer Run Road))	11	\$4,400,000	\$0	\$4,400,000
24	USDA STARS Properties (Federal Surplus Lands - Headquarters Main Station Unit)	11	\$5,150,000	\$0	\$5,150,000
25	USDA STARS Properties (Federal Surplus Lands - Turnley Unit)	10	\$9,350,000	\$0	\$9,350,000

RANKING CRITERIA

RANKING CRITERIA

	RANKING CRITERIA												
	Implementation of a Federally Approved Marine, Coastal, Springs Protection, or Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan, including fisheries monitoring												
3	Does not implement a federally approved plan.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	No growth on static status. Fisheries monitoring conducted on a minor basis. Recreational fishing areas developed.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	No growth on static however fisheries status is monitored for greater than the short term. Recreational fishing and other water sport develops as a result.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Some increase in the size and scope of the current conservation plan. Fisheries monitoring completed on a regular basis. Seasonal recreational use rises significantly as well as other water sport use.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Conservation plan increases in both size and scope. Fisheries monitoring is conducted on a routine basis with positive results noted. Annual increase in recreational use.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Broad increase in the fisheries development as a result of the project. Monitoring occurs on a frequent basis. Conservation areas are significantly increased in size resulting in a positive impact on the aquaculture industry.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Workforce development and job creation.	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	2
	Project does not provide any opportunity for additional jobs within the private or public sector. Work can be performed through existing roles or roles are lost through the termination of a job provider.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	Project provides an increased backlog of available work for existing workers within the County and maintains the current number of public and private sector roles.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Project demands that part-time jobs be created to perform necessary work within the project schedule.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	Project creates 5-10 full-time positions which are necessary to perform work related to the project within the schedule determined for project execution. Upon project completion, 6 or more job (part-time or full-time) are created to staff any long-term result of the project.	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Project provides a significant increase of jobs provided by an entire industry.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Improvements to or on State parks or County recreation areas located in coastal areas on waterways and rivers that drain to the Gulf.	0	4	4	4	4	3	3	0	4	3	0	4
	Project does not provide any benefit or improvements to a State Park or county recreation.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	A portion of the project [indirectly] provides benefit to a State Park or county recreation.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Less than 50% of the project directly provides improvements to a State Park or county recreation.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	Less than 50% of the project directly provides improvements to a State Park or county recreation; and the project is not specifically designed for the purpose of improving the impacted portion of the State Park or county recreation.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	A significant portion of the project (more than 75%) directly provides improvements to a State Park or county recreation; and the project is specifically designed for the purpose of improving the impacted portion of the State Park or county recreation.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5	Project is specifically designed to improve damaged State Park (100%), or county recreation. An education component is included in the project. The public experience within the State Park or county recreation is significantly improved. The project adds improvements that relate to the principal feature of the State Park or county recreation.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
6	Infrastructure projects benefiting the economy (including port infrastructure and projects that increase access to recreational opportunities) or ecological resources, springs protection, or groundwater protection.	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	2	1	0	2	3

RANKING CRITERIA

RANKING CRITERIA



Appendix D

Selected Projects

Overview

1. Bayou Drive Repair and Restoration

Project Summary:

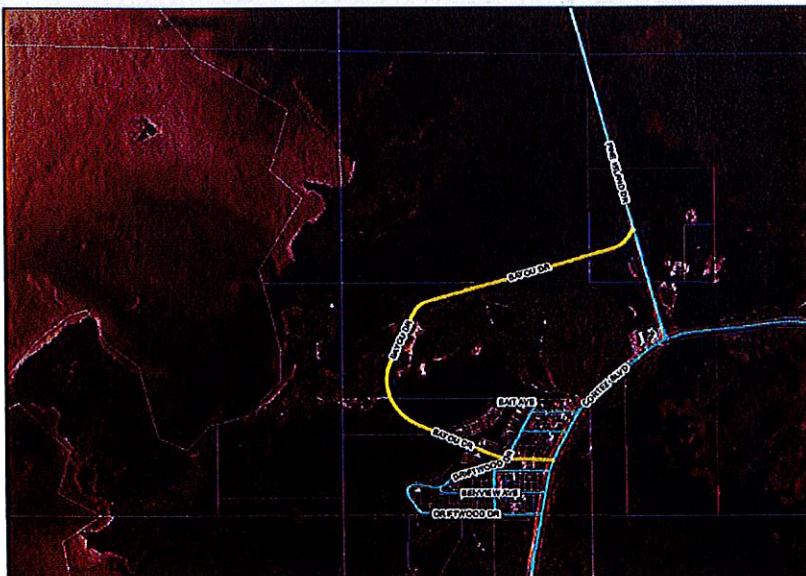
This project involves the repair of two miles of coastal roadway and the restoration of the adjacent coastal marshes. The site is listed in the Hernando Audubon Society's *Birding in Hernando* booklet. The area is noted for exceptional bird watching for serious birders as there is a large variety of birds found in the Gulf Coast lowlands and swamp areas.

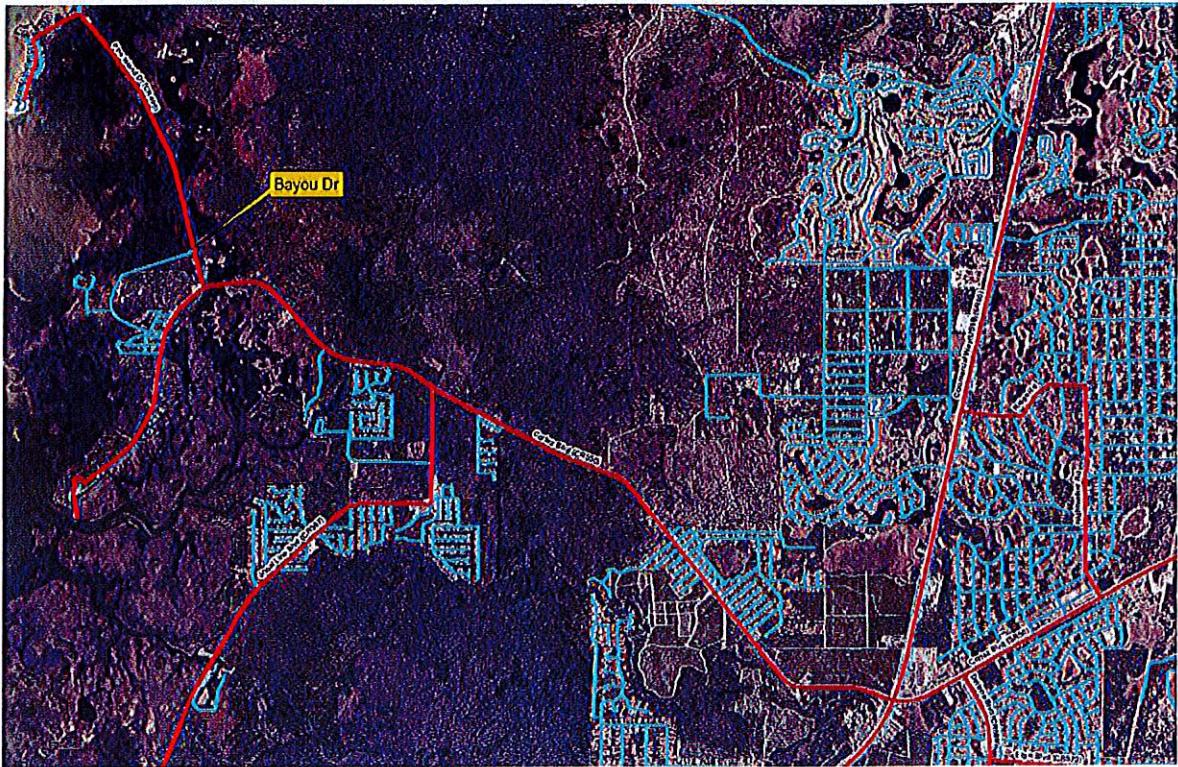
The damaged roadway and parking areas will be repaired to current safety standards and existing parking areas will be repaired and upgraded to allow greater utilization of the recreational resource by all citizens.

Accumulated roadway sediments and non-native vegetation along the corridor will be removed from the adjacent marsh and native plantings will be installed to improve fish and wildlife habitat. The design will include Best Management Practices and other measures to ensure protection of the improvements and reduce future maintenance costs.

Location:

Bayou Drive, Spring Hill, Florida.





Project Goals:

- Restoration of salt marsh habitat for wildlife along the shores of Hernando County.
- Improve roadside parking areas to reduce future damage and potential erosion caused by vehicular use.
- Provide additional recreational activities for nature-related tourism in the Gulf Coast region.
- Provide better access to recreational fishing and birding opportunities.

Project Need, Purpose, Benefits and RESTORE Applicability:

Need:

Bayou Drive is a coastal roadway that provides a linear park-like setting for residents and visitors to enjoy bird watching, fishing, and non-motorized boating. The roadside use has resulted in areas of extreme erosion that not only threaten to damage the roadway but have degraded the nearby salt marsh. In addition, there are sections where non-native Brazilian pepper and lead trees have made a presence.

Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to restore the roadside infrastructure and habitat along Bayou Drive by repairing eroded areas and cleaning up natural areas affected by the sediment and non-native plant species.

Benefits:

Restoration of this area will help to not only reduce the degradation of the adjacent salt marshes but will provide a recreational opportunity for Nature Coast visitors. Reduction in sedimentation and non-native species will provide restorative benefits to the salt marsh environment.

RESTORE Applicability:

- Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region.

The project entails the restoration of eroded areas along the linear park/roadway corridor. In addition, the removal of non-native plant species along this corridor will help to restore the native habit of the saltwater marsh community.

Proposed Schedule:

Project Phase	2016						2017						2018											
	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun	jul	aug	sep	oct	nov	dec	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun	jul	aug	sep	oct	nov	dec
Project Design																								
Project Permitting																								
Project Bidding																								
Project Construction																								
Project Close-out																								

Project Funding:

Funding for this project will be provided as follows:

RESTORE Act Funding	\$ 175,000
Hernando County Storm Water MSTU	\$ 65,000
Hernando County Transportation Trust Fund	\$ 110,000

Funding provide by Hernando County will be reserved for the culvert replacement and roadway overlay portion of the project. RESTORE Act funding will be utilized for the repair and stabilization of corridor slopes, removal of sedimentation along the corridor as well as the removal of non-native plant species throughout the project boundaries.

Applicable Best Available Science (BAS)

Brazilian peppertree, *Schinus terebinthifolius* Raddi (Anacardiaceae), is an aggressive, rapidly colonizing weed of disturbed habitats, natural communities and conservation areas in southern California, Hawaii, Texas and peninsular Florida. In Florida, Brazilian peppertree is a pioneer species of disturbed sites such as highways, canals, power line rights-of-way, fallow fields, and drained wetlands. Once established, it quickly displaces the native vegetation adjacent to the disturbance, often forming dense monocultures that reduce the biological diversity of plants and animals in the invaded area. (Cuda et al., 2006)

Appropriate water management through the development of a water management plan may be the key to preventing slope failures. Vegetation and mechanical structures can be used alone or in conjunction to stabilize slopes. When using vegetation to stabilize slopes, mulch and soil amendments can aid in on-site vegetation establishment. Saving and reusing topsoil and mulching with on-site materials are cost-effective and sustainable practices. Erosion control products could be considered for use at every site on any disturbed soil surface, as it

is much easier to prevent erosion than to fix an already eroded slope. Methods used to control surface erosion or stabilize slopes can be used alone or as components of a system. Mechanical slope stabilization methods can also be used alone or in conjunction with plants (biotechnical stabilization). Earthwork techniques can be used to make slope surface less likely to erode and more stable (Fay et al., 2012)

REFERENCES

1. Cuda, J.P., Ferriter, A.P., Manrique, V., Medal, J.C., (2006). Florida's Brazilian Peppertree Management Plan: Recommendations from the Brazilian Peppertree Task Force, Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council. 2nd Edition.
2. Fay, L., Akin, M., Shi, X., (2012). Cost-Effective and Sustainable Road Slope Stabilization and Erosion Control: A Synthesis of Highway Practice. NCHRP, Synthesis 430. Transportation Research Board.

2. Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef Project

Project Summary:

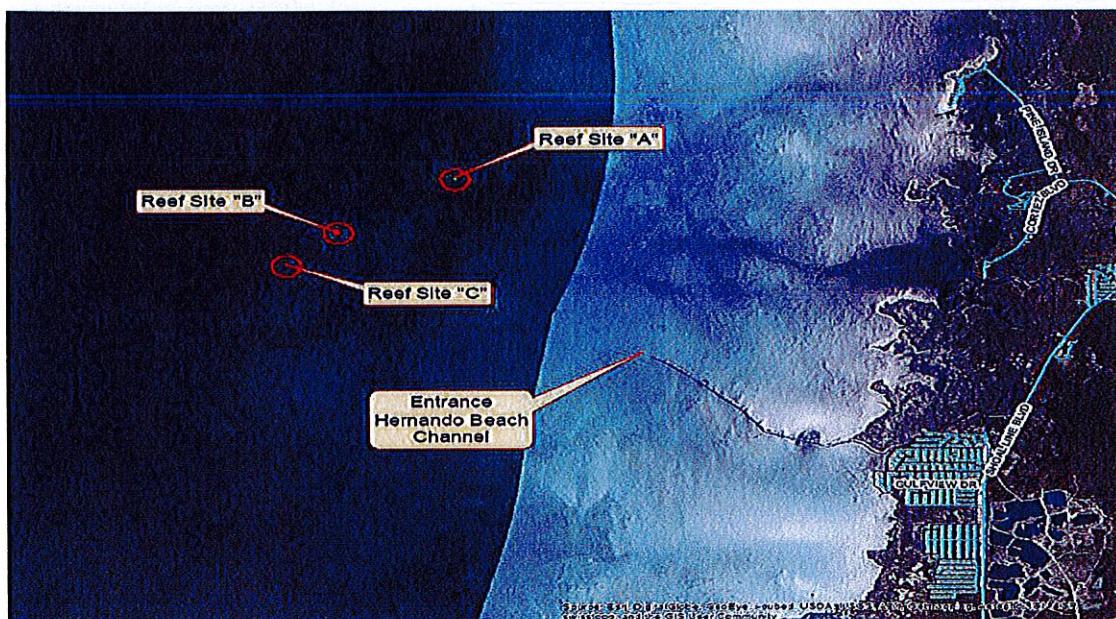
This project involves the creation of three (3) new artificial reefs west of the newly dredged Hernando Beach Channel. These proposed in-shore reefs will provide a shallow water habitat to enhance the recreational fishing, diving and snorkeling opportunities within the County.

The first reef (Reef Site A) will be populated with 38 pallet balls, the second reef (Reef Site B) will be populated with 47 pallet balls, and the third reef (Reef Site C) will be populated with 41 pallet balls. This project has been submitted for permitting through the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and is proposed to be incorporated into a large area management zone which is currently in the planning stages. The Florida Fish and Wildlife (FWC) artificial reef program has also been involved in the growth of the Hernando County Artificial Reef Program.

Interest in recreational fishing has skyrocketed along the Gulf in the last several decades and Hernando County is no exception. Overfishing and loss of spawning and juvenile protection habitat have been linked to the reduction in recreational fish populations within the Gulf of Mexico. The placement of the reefs will provide mitigation of damage to the fish populations inhabiting the coastline of Hernando County.

Location:

Coastal waters less than 7 miles from the Hernando Beach Channel; and less than 10 miles from the coastline of Hernando County, Florida.



Project Goals:

- Provide additional habitat for marine wildlife off the shores of Hernando County.
- Improve barren areas of the seafloor so that they may sustain marine life.
- Provide additional recreational activities for nature-related tourism in the Gulf Coast region.
- Provide better access to recreational fishing opportunities.

Project Need, Purpose, Benefits and RESTORE Applicability:

Need:

Hernando County is located in an area known as the Nature Coast. Its unique shoreline provides for a shallow water shelf extending from the mainline out into the Gulf of Mexico. Although the area off the coast of Hernando County is known for its excellent sea grass beds, there are areas void of vegetation and structure. Hernando County, through its Port Authority, has made a concerted effort over the years to create marine wildlife habitat along the coastline within these void areas.

Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to provide a viable marine habitat in areas off of the Hernando County shoreline that are currently void of structures with a potential to sustain marine life.

Benefits:

Creation of additional habitat capable of sustaining marine life is the major benefit of the project. These reefs will also provide additional opportunities for recreational fishing, diving, and snorkeling activity.

RESTORE Applicability:

- Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife, and natural resources.

The project entails the creation of several artificial reef habitats along the Coast of Hernando County. Construction of these reefs will provide protection for dwindling fish species so they have safe havens to live and spawn. These areas will allow fish to grow bigger and reproduce more, which in turn provides the healthy fish populations that provide more seafood and fishing opportunities.

Proposed Schedule:

Project Phase	2016						2017						2018											
	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	june	july	aug	sep	oct	nov	dec	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	june	july	aug	sep	oct	nov	dec
Project Design																								
Project Permitting																								
Project Bidding																								
Project Construction																								
Project Close-out																								

* The design for this project was started in fiscal year 2014/15 and is currently in the permitting stage.

Project Funding:

Funding for this project will be provided as follows:

RESTORE Act Funding	\$ 94,500
Hernando County Boating Improvement Fund	\$ 10,500

The Hernando County funding match will be utilized to finalize the permitting process and provide underway survey for the project. RESTORE Act funding will be utilized to implement the creation of the artificial reefs.

Applicable Best Available Science (BAS)

The use of artificial reefs has been increasing worldwide in an effort to increase fish abundance and diversity, improve catch rates of targeted species, and restore damage to nature coral reefs. Productivity in real terms in relation to artificial reef deployment relies on the assumption that artificial Reefs provide additional critical habitat which increase the environmental carrying capacity and there the abundance and biomass of reef biota (Polovina, 1994, Bortone et al., 1994). Near shore artificial reefs can be created that will develop communities of encrusting organisms and bait fish over time. As various encrusting organisms such as corals and sponges cover the artificial reef material, small animals take up residence. As these small animals become abundant larger animals are attracted and feed upon these, and so on until a reef food web is created. Energy is able to then provide biological growth potential that provides additional protective habitat, as well as sustenance for fish species. Some experts believe that artificial reefs can function comparably to natural reef communities. Others argue that artificial reefs merely attract existing fish from the adjacent open water habitat, forming more dense fish aggregations (Fikes, 2013).

Artificial reefs also create an avenue to promote visitation and marine tourism within a community. Artificial and natural reefs are public resources that provide recreational benefits to reef user and income to local economies (Johns et al., 2001). As residents and visitors spend money in the county to participate in reef-related recreation, income and jobs are created within the county as a result (Johns et al., 2001).

REFERENCES

1. Johns, G.M., Leeworth, V.R., Bell, F.W., and Bonn, M.A. (2001, October). *Socioeconomic Study of Reefs in Southeast Florida, Final Report*, Hazen & Sawyer Environmental Engineers and Scientists.
2. Polivina, J.J., (1994). Functions of artificial reefs. Bull. Mar. Sci. 55 (2-3), 1349.
3. Bortone, S.A., Martin, T., Bundrick, C.M., (1994). Factors affecting fish assemblage development on a modular artificial reef in a northern Gulf of Mexico estuary. Bull. Mar. Sci. 55 (2-3), 319-332.
4. Fikes, R., (2013) Artificial Reefs of the Gulf of Mexico: A Review of Gulf State Programs & Key Considerations. National Wildlife Federation.

3. Linda Pederson Park Improvements

Project Summary:

The Linda Pederson/Jenkins Creek Park is a 140-acre passive park located along the Gulf of Mexico estuary that offers fishing, swimming, boat launching, picnic shelters, and an observation tower all located along a freshwater spring run. The park improvement project entails the installation of a canoe and kayak launch area, which will be integrated into a replacement of the existing seawall and boardwalk adjacent to the swimming area.

The replacement of the existing seawall and boardwalk along the Jenkins Creek spring run will prevent sedimentation impacts to the spring run and provide needed repairs to aging park infrastructure. The addition of the kayak and canoe launch integrated into the seawall and boardwalk area will provide direct public access to the spring run and its tributaries for non-motorized boats. It will also serve to provide a separation of recreation watercraft user groups (motorized and non-motorized) to improve safety in the area. These improvements will directly benefit the public, tourism industry, and will aid in maintaining water quality in the spring.

Location:

Linda Pederson Park
6300 Shoal Line Boulevard
Spring Hill, Florida



Project Goals:

- Provide recreational access to the spring run and tributaries for non-motorized water craft.
- Provide additional recreational activities for nature-related tourism in the Gulf Coast region.
- Provide better access to recreational fishing opportunities.
- Repair aging coastal infrastructure within the park.
- Reduce sedimentation into the Jenkins Creek spring run.
- Improve spring run aesthetics for park users.

Project Need, Purpose, Benefits and RESTORE Applicability:

Need:

The Jenkins Creek spring run located within Linda Pederson Park has an existing seawall and boardwalk viewing area that are in need of repair. The existing boat launch facilities at this park consist of a boat ramp and dock system constructed to provide access to a mix of recreational watercraft including motorized and non-motorized alike. This regional coastline park is in need of a non-motorized boat launch facility to allow canoes and kayak to take advantage of the spring run as well as access to the Gulf of Mexico coastline. Integration of a canoe and kayak launch into the existing seawall and boardwalk area will provide the benefit necessary to meet this need.

Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to provide additional non-motorized boat launch facilities in the area for residents and visitors wishing to partake in nature-related recreational activities. This project will also replace existing seawall and boardwalk facilities within the park and integrate them into the new launching facility.

Benefits:

The addition of non-motorized boat launch facilities along the Hernando coastline will provide opportunities to expand the canoe and kayak offerings publicized through the County's Tourism office. The new launching facility and improved spring run area will be integrated into the County's "Florida's Adventure Coast, Brooksville Weeki Wachee" advertising campaign.

RESTORE Applicability:

- Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast Region, including promotion of recreational fishing.

This project provides non-motorized recreational watercraft launch facilities to be utilized in the County's ongoing tourism promotion program. Linda Pederson Park is currently marketed as part of the County's "Florida's Adventure Coast, Brooksville-Weeki Wachee" marketing program and is featured as a site for our "Canoe and Kayak Trail" adventure.

Proposed Schedule:

Project Phase	2016												2017												2018												
	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun	jul	aug	sep	oct	nov	dec	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun	jul	aug	sep	oct	nov	dec	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun	jul	aug	sep	oct	nov	dec	
Project Design																																					
Project Permitting																																					
Project Bidding																																					
Project Construction																																					
Project Close-out																																					

Project Funding:

Funding for this project will be provided as follows:

RESTORE Act Funding \$300,000

The RESTORE Act funding will be utilized to accomplish the project in its entirety.

Applicable Best Available Science (BAS)

Not applicable for this project.

RESTORE ACT Direct Component Multiyear Plan Narrative

OMB Approval No. 1505-0250

Eligible Applicant Name: Hernando County, Florida

Name and Contact Information of the Person to be contacted (POC) on matters concerning this Multiyear Implementation Plan:

POC Name: Johnathan Walker

POC Title: Operations Assistant, Department of Public Works, Hernando County, Florida

POC Email: Johnathan.Walker@hernandocounty.us

POC Phone: +1 (352) 754-4060 ext. 17028 or 17327

B. PROVIDE A BRIEF NARRATIVE THAT DEMONSTRATES:

1. The need, purpose, and objectives for each activity, including a detailed description of each activity.

Project 1 - Bayou Drive Repair and Restoration. This project involves the repair of two miles of coastal roadway and the restoration of the adjacent coastal marshes. The damaged roadway and parking areas will be repaired to current safety standards and existing parking areas will be upgraded to allow greater utilization of the recreational resource by all citizens. Accumulated roadway sediments and non-native vegetation along the corridor will be removed from the adjacent marsh and native plantings will be installed to improve fish and wildlife habitat. The design will include Best Management Practices and other measures to ensure protection of the improvements and to reduce future maintenance costs. For more detailed information see the MYIP, Appendix D, page 22.

Project 2 - Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef Project. This project involves the creation of three new artificial reefs west of the newly dredged Hernando Beach Channel. The proposed in-shore reefs will provide a shallow water habitat to enhance recreational fishing, diving and snorkeling opportunities within the County. The three reef sites will be populated with a total of 126 pallet balls as follows: Site A - 38, Site B - 47 and Site C - 41. The placement of the reefs will enhance the restoration and protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region. For more detailed information see the MYIP, Appendix D, page 26.

Project 3 - Linda Pedersen Park Improvements. Linda Pedersen/Jenkins Park is a 140-acre passive park along the Gulf of Mexico Estuary that directly benefits public recreation and tourism. This facility offers fishing, swimming, boat launching, picnic shelters, an observation tower and swimming within a freshwater spring run. In addition, Jenkins Spring and Spring Runs provide a habitat to West Indian Manatees which are an endangered species. The project includes the installation of a canoe/kayak launch which will provide direct access to the spring run/tributaries for non-motorized boats and provide separation of recreational user groups to improve safety. Other improvements will include the replacement of an existing seawall and boardwalk within the swimming area to prevent erosion and provide protection from storm damage. For more detailed information see the MYIP, Appendix D, page 29.

2. How the applicant made the multiyear plan available for 45 days for public review and comment, in a manner calculated to obtain broad-based participation from individuals, businesses, Indian tribes, and non-profit organizations, such as through public meetings, presentations in languages other than English, and postings on the Internet. The applicant will need to submit documentation (e.g., a copy of public notices) to demonstrate that it made its multiyear plan available to the public for at least 45 days. In addition, describe how each activity in the plan was adopted after consideration of all meaningful input from the public.

Hernando County determined that the most effective way to obtain broad-based participation from the entire community was to take the following three-fold approach:

1. Presented all aspects of the proposed plan at regular meetings of the Board of County Commissioners which are always open to the public for input. The public was initially asked for general comments at the October 10, 2014 meeting and an application form was created and placed on the County website to solicit potential projects meeting the RESTORE Act criteria from outside groups. Then, after the three proposed projects were ultimately recommended by a select panel based on all the ranking criteria and input sources, the projects were presented to the Board of County Commissioners on February 10, 2015 for final review. The Board approved the selected projects for forwarding to the US Treasury for consideration and approval. The plan was immediately posted to the County website and made available for comment and input from the community for a 45-day period ending on March 27, 2015.

2. Posted the proposed plan and a request for public comment to a dedicated page on the County website focusing on the RESTORE Act and County involvement. The page includes links to the actual Multi Year Implementation Plan (MYIP), an e-mail address to submit comments to County staff, a link to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection site that explains the RESTORE Act and its impact on the Gulf Coast, as well as a link to the US Treasury RESTORE Act web page. This collection of web sites and links to information on the RESTORE Act is virtually a one-stop shop for the public to learn about, submit comments on and to stay informed regarding the status of the RESTORE Act and the important connection to Hernando County.

3. Notified the local media outlets and area non-profit organizations of the proposed plan along with a request for input from all community members and groups. The County Information Manager provided a news release with general project information and invited the local media to tour the actual project locations, where they would receive a detailed briefing on the projects and be provided an opportunity for photo and video coverage of the proposed enhancements to the community.

Consideration was given to having bilingual staff members present the proposed plan in Spanish, however, based on past experience resulting in virtually no public turnout to this type of venue, it was determined to not be a worthwhile endeavor.

Although the vast majority of public comments received on the plan were accolades and appreciation there were two that resulted in material changes to either the plan or operations within the County government.

1. The letter from the National Wildlife Federation dated March 27, 2015 resulted in modification in the project description and addition of information to the MYIP in order to provide a plan more focused on meeting the goals and objectives of the Federal legislation. In addition, the website was updated to include all RESTORE Act and MYIP documents pertaining to Hernando County's submittal.
2. Public comment received at the October 14, 2014 Board meeting from County resident Forrest Bennett resulted in the adoption of a County ordinance requiring the removal of invasive species commonly known as "Lead Tree" within the jurisdictional boundary of Hernando County.

3. How each activity included in the applicant's multiyear plan matrix is eligible for funding and meets all requirements under the RESTORE Act.

Project 1-Bayou Drive Repair and Restoration. This project meets the eligibility requirements by providing restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region. The project entails the restoration of eroded areas along the linear park/roadway corridor. In addition, the removal of non-native plant species along this corridor will help to restore the native habitat of the saltwater marsh community.

Project 2 - Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef Project. This project meets the eligibility requirements by providing mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife and natural resources. The project entails the creation of several artificial reef habitats along the Coast of Hernando County. Construction of these reefs will provide protection for dwindling fish species so they have safe havens to live and spawn. These areas will allow fish to grow bigger and reproduce more, which in turn provides the healthy fish populations that provide more seafood and fishing opportunities.

Project 3-Linda Pedersen Park Improvements. This project meets the eligibility requirements by promoting tourism and recreational fishing in the Gulf Coast Region. Linda Pederson Park will be marketed as part of the County's "Adventure Coast, Nature's Place to Play" tourism marketing program and is featured as a site for our "Canoe and Kayak Trail" adventure.

4. How the applicant will evaluate success of the activities included in the matrix.

Project 1 - Bayou Drive Repair and Restoration. The main measure of success for this project will be an after project assessment to ensure non-native plant species removal and reduction in erosion along the corridor. Success rates will be measured by comparing a pre and post exotic species vegetation survey to measure the percentage removed.

Project 2 -Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef. Annual post construction monitoring will be done to detail the marine species inhabiting the reef. This information is part of the reef permit and will be provided to the Army Corps of Engineers on an annual basis. Project success will be indicated by a rise in fish population and diversity at the reef sites.

Project 3 - Linda Pedersen Park Improvements. In 2014, an estimated 1.7 million visitors traveled to Hernando County. The focus of the upcoming "Florida's Adventure Coast, Nature's Place to Play" tourism marketing campaign is to promote nature and water-based activities. This non-motorized watercraft launch will be featured in the campaign, which aims to increase tourism by five percent each year. The launch facility will be monitored to determine frequency of use and number of daily users. An annual campaign survey will be conducted to determine increase in use and interest from kayak and canoe visitors.

5. How the activities included in the multiyear plan matrix were prioritized and the criteria used to establish the priorities.

The projects were prioritized using the following nine criteria (not in order of priority):

1. Protect, conserve and/or restore native habitats including the protection of natural springs.
2. Provide storm water or surface water quality improvements including the prevention of erosion and sedimentation potentially impacting waterways connecting to the Gulf.
3. Reduce the withdrawal of potable water from the aquifer.
4. Create policies, programs and/or mechanisms to remedy environmental and/or economic damages.
5. Protect against future environmental and/or economic vulnerabilities.
6. Provide climate change/sea-level rise planning, adaptation and/or related community engagement.
7. Diversify and improve the economy including tourism and recreational opportunities.

8. Promote sustainable recreational fishing and consumption of seafood dependent on the Gulf ecosystem and protect working waterfronts.
9. Provide quality improvements to existing groundwater resources.

Then, eleven ranking criteria and a point values system were used to determine how well projects met select County Comprehensive Plan element goals and priorities, RESTORE Act eligible activities, regional benefits, partnerships, project benefit longevity and matching fund applicability. The following criteria were used to determine the top three priority projects out of twenty five potential candidates considered for RESTORE Act funding:

- 1 - Restoration and protection of the natural resources, springs, spring runs, groundwater resources, ecosystems, waterways designated as Outstanding Florida Waters, upland habitats that contribute to waterways that drain to the Gulf, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region.
- 2- Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife and natural resources, including erosion and sedimentation of waters that feed the Gulf and improve water quality.
- 3- Implementation of a federally-approved marine, coastal, springs protection or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring.
- 4 - Workforce development and job creation.
- 5 - Improvements to or on State parks or County recreation areas located in coastal areas or waterways and rivers that drain to the Gulf.
- 6- Infrastructure projects benefiting the economy (including port infrastructure and projects that increase access to recreational opportunities) or ecological resources, springs protection or groundwater protection.
- 7 - Coastal flood protection and the preservation of habitat in flood zones, coastal surge areas and flood ways.
- 8 - Projects (including infrastructure development) that promote tourism in the Gulf Coast Region, including promotion of recreational fishing, swimming, bird watching, passive recreation and kayaking.
- 9 - Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast Region and projects that provide or benefit marine habitat.
- 10 - Applicability of matching funds from a source other than the RESTORE Act.
- 11 - Timeliness of the realization regarding initial project benefits.

The three projects in the matrix appear in order of their selection based on priority, significance to the community and the probability of success in a reasonable amount of time.

6. The relationship, if any, between the activities the applicant included in the multiyear plan matrix and other activities funded under the RESTORE Act.

Not applicable at this time.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1505-0250. Comments concerning the time required to complete this information collection, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information, should be directed to the

Department of the Treasury, RESTORE Act Program, 1500 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20220.

Public Input

Overview

Public participation is an important part of the RESTORE ACT project development process. The MYIP was adopted after review and consideration of meaningful input from the public. The general public was informed and given the opportunity to provide comment three ways:

1. Public meetings
2. County website
3. Print and broadcast media coverage

Method	Reach	Number of comments received
Website	Approximately 1,000	18
Eight public meetings	Approximately 200	5
Media coverage	3.4 million	4

Response to public input

Although the vast majority of public comments received regarding the plan were accolades and appreciation, there were two that resulted in material changes to either the plan or operations within the County government.

1. The letter from the National Wildlife Federation dated March 27, 2015 resulted in modifications to the project descriptions which include adding high level milestones and an explanation of how project success will be evaluated. In addition, more details were added regarding public input and the website was updated to include all RESTORE Act and MYIP documents pertaining to Hernando County's submittal. These additions provide a plan more focused on meeting the goals and objectives of the Federal legislation.
2. Public comment received at the October 14, 2014 Board meeting from County resident Forrest Bennett resulted in the adoption of a County ordinance requiring the removal of invasive species commonly known as "Lead Tree" within the jurisdictional boundary of Hernando County.

Details

RESTORE Act webpage

www.hernandocounty.us/restoreact/

- This webpage provides an overview, documents, public meeting dates, news articles, helpful links and contact information. It also provides directions and an email address to where comments should be directed. A total of 18 comments were received via email.

The screenshot shows the Hernando County, Florida website with a blue header featuring the county logo and the text 'Board of County Commissioners RESTORE Act'. Below the header is a navigation menu with links to Home, Board of County Commissioners, Constitutional Officers, and Departments. The main content area has a sidebar on the left with links to MAIN MENU, RESTORE Act, RESTORE Documents, Public Meetings, and In the News. The main content area features a large image of a coastal landscape with palm trees and water. At the bottom of the page, there is a section titled 'RESTORE Act and Hernando County, FL Overview' with text about the RESTORE Act and its purpose to restore the Gulf Coast region. There is also a section for 'Gulf Consortium'.

Public Meetings

The following eight public meetings resulted in five comments from the public. All public meetings were broadcast live on the Hernando County Government Broadcast Channel.

September 25, 2012

- Approved Resolution 2012-124 and Interlocal Agreement relating to establishment of the Gulf Consortium.
- Public comment – Resident Dick Ross stated he firmly supports joining the Gulf Consortium adding that the shrimping industry was crippled after oil spill and suggested that funds from RESTORE Act be used to help shrimpers.

October 9, 2012

- Designated County Commissioner Wayne Dukes as Director and County Administrator Len Sossamon as alternate Direct to act as a representative for Consortium members.
- Public comment - none

December 4, 2012

- Workshop - recommended to the Board of County Commissioners that they consider the development of a portfolio of potential projects that would be eligible for funding.
- Public comment – Resident Hamilton Hanson spoke against using RESTORE Act monies because it's not in the constitution.

December 18, 2012

- Approved the RESTORE Act Estuary list for submittal to the Southwest Florida Water Management District for the development of a regional ecosystem restoration plan. Selected firm to provide services related to RESTORE Act funding.
- Public comment - none

October 14, 2014

- Reviewed a presentation outlining the RESTORE Act and the potential to receive funding for projects.
- Public comment - Resident Forrest Bennett from the Nature Coast Action Team provided comments and recommended to include on the project list invasive species management for Brazilian Peppertree, Lead Tree and Australian pine tree.

October 28, 2014

- Adopted staff's recommendation to approve the RESTORE Act Direct Component Project Guidelines and Ranking Criteria and authorized staff to continue efforts to solicit, rank, and present potential projects that meet criteria.
- Public comment - none

January 13, 2015

- Discussed RESTORE Act Direct Component Project Ranking. Approved staff's recommendation for the ranking and selected three projects (Bayou Drive Restoration; Shallow Water Reef project; and Linda Pedersen Park) for inclusion in the Multi-Year Implementation Plan.
- Public comment – Resident Chuck Gordon provided his support for the chosen projects and resident Judith Simpson commented that the list was diverse and comprehensive and that more money should be put toward these types of projects.

February 10, 2015

- Reviewed proposed RESTORE Act Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP) for Submittal to Treasury Department and started the 45-day public input period.
- Public comment – none

Media releases and news coverage

- Bay News 9 – [Restore Act funding applications in Hernando due by Dec. 5](#)
- Media release – [RESTORE Act funding for Hernando County is imminent](#)
- Media release – [RESTORE Act ecosystem restoration project proposals](#)
- Dredging Today – [Hernando County: RESTORE Act project proposals](#)
- Hernando Times – [County makes wish list for money from BP oil spill](#)
- Media release – [Pubic input sought for RESTORE Act projects](#)

Tampa Bay Times
WINNER OF 10 PULITZER PRIZES

12:20 AM, Wednesday, April 15th, 2015

Get to know the real Marco Rubio as he embarks on his presidential campaign

County makes wish list for money from BP oil spill fines

Barbara Edwards, Times Staff Writer • Friday, December 14, 2012 4:15pm

BROOKSVILLE — Little girls and boys with visions of sugarplums aren't the only ones preparing their wish lists this holiday season.

County officials have one doozy of a list to show the Hernando County Commission on Tuesday, a list of tens of millions of dollars worth of capital projects that could be funded by the federal Restore Act.

Hernando is part of a consortium of coastal Florida counties preparing to receive their share of the billions of dollars that BP is expected to pay soon in additional fines for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2010.

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Hernando County: RESTORE Act Project Proposals (USA)

The newly established Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund is anticipated to provide funds to the five Gulf Coast States to restore and offset the environmental and economic impacts associated with the Deep Water Horizon oil spill.

The Charlotte Harbor, Sarasota Bay, and Tampa Estuary Programs have banded together with the Southwest Florida Water Management District in development of a regional ecosystem restoration plan to maximize the region's opportunity to secure funding under the Act.

As a partner in this coalition, Hernando County staff was requested to develop and provide a list of prioritized projects which would restore and protect the natural resources, ecosystems, water quality and coastal wetlands of the Southwest Florida coast.

[More info](#)

June 3 10:35:07 AM Temp: 77°

NEWS WEATHER TRAFFIC SPORTS ON THE TOWN COMMUNITY POLITICS BU

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Restore Act funding applications in Hernando due by Dec. 5

Hernando COUNTY

Last Updated: Tuesday, November 11, 2014, 9:50 AM

BROOKSVILLE — Hernando County is accepting applications for Restore Act funding for economic development or environmental projects.

The Restore Act was signed into law in 2012 and assures that 80 percent of the fees and penalties paid after the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill are used to restore the natural resources and economies of gulf coastal communities.

Hernando County has about \$566,000 in Restore Act funds to spend.

The deadline to submit a project is 5 p.m., Dec. 5, and specific criteria must be met for a project to qualify. Applications can be submitted through [www.hernandocounty.us/restoreact](#).

Johnathan Walker

From: Jessica Koelsch <KoelschJ@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2014 2:49 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Timeline and Public Input

Congrats on making sure great progress with your Direct Component plans!! I have looked at the County-sponsored projects listed on the County website and see a few that I think would be good choices to include in the MYIP. I also notice that you are soliciting projects from the public. I am however not clear on the timeline, even after referring to the schedule online: <http://co.hernando.fl.us/restoreact/index.php/restore-documents/8-timeline/file>.

Specifically, what is the deadline for submitting projects? And when will all of the projects (County-sponsored and public-submitted) be evaluated (I saw the scoring criteria)? Furthermore, who will be doing the scoring? Although the numeric criteria are intended to be subjective, based on results of other "project reviews" (done by other counties or groups), scores for one project can vary widely, so the issue of WHO does the evaluation may be quite relevant.

I noticed a Feb 2015 timeframe for submitting your MYIP to Treasury, but depending on deadline for project submittal, as well as results of project ranking, there seems to be little time for the public to have 45 days to review before plan is submitted to Treasury. My understanding was that the MYIP was supposed to include the projects to be funded.

Thanks so much for addressing my questions. Please feel free to give me a call to discuss if that would be easier than emailing.

Best wishes,

Jessica Koelsch
Florida Policy Specialist
Gulf of Mexico Restoration
National Wildlife Federation
www.nwf.org
727.424.9957 c
850.332.0266 o

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Barbara Jannicelli <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 2:12 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 25, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.

The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Barbara Jannicelli
6305 Alderwood St
Spring Hill, FL 34606-3924

1

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Christine Cock
<NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 2:41 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 25, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.

The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Christine Cock
25099 Powell Rd
Brooksville, FL 34602-8189

2

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Michelle Thoemke <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 3:09 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 25, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County. The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Ms. Michelle Thoemke
3313 Grayton Dr
Spring Hill, FL 34609-2939

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of M Timmerman <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 4:39 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 25, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County. The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Ms. M Timmerman
7356 Mina Ave
Brooksville, FL 34613-5901

L/

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Patricia Cooke
<NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 5:40 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 25, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I have lived with my family in Hernando County for over thirty years.

I know that growth and urban sprawl is going to occur, but I am hopeful that the most sensitive, unspoiled areas will be protected from development.

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.

The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Patricia Cooke
2263 Batten Rd
Brooksville, FL 34602-8325

5

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Shelley Driskell
<NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 10:14 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 25, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County. The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Ms. Shelley Driskell
5994 Avenue of The Palms
Weeki Wachee, FL 34607-1303

4

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Michele Ginouves <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2015 6:48 AM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 26, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County. The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Ms. Michele Ginouves
25373 Ladyhawk Ln
Brooksville, FL 34601-7887

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Melliny Lamberson <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2015 8:48 AM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 26, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County. The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Melliny Lamberson
184 Spring Lake Hwy
Brooksville, FL 34602-8201

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Ralph Gelso
<NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2015 11:48 AM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 26, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County. The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Mr. Ralph Gelso
9181 Scepter Ave
Brooksville, FL 34613-4931

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Yvonne Nelson <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2015 2:49 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 26, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County. The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Dr. Yvonne Nelson
7280 Flyway Dr
Spring Hill, FL 34607-2495

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Michael Wyatt
<NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 3:21 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 27, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County. The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely

Michael Wyatt

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael Wyatt
Sewell Ln
Spring Hill, FL 34608

11

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Matt Chamness
<NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 2:20 AM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 27, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County. The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Mr. Matt Chamness
9247 Spring Hill Dr
Spring Hill, FL 34608-6351

12

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Maria Forte
<NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Saturday, March 28, 2015 12:53 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 28, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County. The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Ms. Maria Forte
2279 Portofino PI Unit 2022
Palm Harbor, FL 34683-7738

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Richard Furr
<NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Saturday, March 28, 2015 10:22 AM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 28, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County. The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Florida's beautiful Gulf Coast provides great recreational opportunities as well as critical habitat for a number of endangered species, including the endangered manatee.

Sincerely,

Mr. Richard Furr
9445 Midway St
Spring Hill, FL 34608-3437

/u/

Johnathan Walker

From: Michelle Erenberg <merenberg@oceanconservancy.org>
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 2:09 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Comments Hernando County MYIP
Attachments: Comments Hernando MYIP-Florida Coalition_March2015.pdf

Dear Mr. Malmberg,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on Hernando County's Draft Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP).

Our collective organizations (Audubon Florida, Florida Wildlife Federation, National Wildlife Federation, Ocean Conservancy, and The Nature Conservancy) represent nearly 100,000 members and supporters along Florida's Gulf Coast, several of whom are Hernando County residents. Working together as a coalition as well as within our individual organizations and chapters, we have been advocating for Gulf restoration that is comprehensive, and targets watersheds for protection of coastal and marine resources.

On behalf of our organizations, I submit the attached comments.

Thank you for your efforts to create the county's MYIP and for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,
Michelle Erenberg



Michelle Erenberg
Policy Analyst
307 Tchoupitoulas St, Suite 300
New Orleans, LA 70130
O: 504.208.5818
merenberg@oceanconservancy.org
[Web](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)



March 27, 2015

Brian Malmberg, Assistant County Administrator/Director of Public Works
Hernando County Department of Public Works
1525 East Jefferson Street
Brooksville, FL 34601

Re: Comments on Hernando County's Draft Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP)

Dear Mr. Malmberg,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on Hernando County's Draft Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP).

Our collective organizations (Audubon Florida, Florida Wildlife Federation, National Wildlife Federation, Ocean Conservancy, and The Nature Conservancy) represent nearly 100,000 members and supporters along Florida's Gulf Coast, several of whom are Hernando County residents. Working together as a coalition as well as within our individual organizations and chapters, we have been advocating for Gulf restoration that is comprehensive, and targets watersheds for protection of coastal and marine resources. Our collaboration began with the crafting and passage of the RESTORE Act and is now focused on ensuring the best allocation of restoration funds.

In anticipation of the diverse perspectives on how to spend restoration funds, our groups collaborated to develop a framework, including comprehensive restoration principles and outcomes, designed to inform project selection and Multi-Year Implementation Plans (MYIP). We encourage Hernando County to consider these themes throughout the planning and implementation of both current and future restoration activities.

A successful MYIP should have four key project outcomes: environmental impact, fisheries management, wildlife resource enhancement and community resiliency.

The cornerstone of a strong MYIP should be careful consideration of environmental impact; we are pleased to see that the Hernando County MYIP has focused on this element. A MYIP should include projects that protect water quality and wildlife habitat, and provide the public with environmentally sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities. The Plan should promote restoration, health and sustainability of coastal habitats, fisheries, marine resources and vulnerable species. Projects included in the MYIP should work together to maximize environmental benefits. Most importantly, the plan should not include projects

that would result in further damage to the Gulf ecosystems. MYIPs should include regional projects that advance priorities toward achieving identified restoration goals that enhance watersheds and estuaries along the Gulf Coast. We applaud Hernando County for its participation and leadership in the Watershed Planning processes (working with The Nature Conservancy and National Wildlife Federation) and encourage the County to reference this “watershed frame” during plan development and refinement.

The MYIP should also consider the sustainability and health of its commercial and recreational fisheries, building in projects that protect and restore habitats and estuaries, and remove threats to fisheries such as marine debris and invasive species.

In addition, the MYIP should prioritize **wildlife resource enhancement** as a means to ensure healthier communities and a thriving nature-based economy. We applaud Hernando County for focusing on these enhancements in their MYIP.

Another key project outcome is enhanced **community resiliency**. We ask Hernando County to make investments in projects that will enhance resiliency by reducing the impact of hurricanes and other disasters. Restoring and protecting marshes, wetlands, reefs and other coastal habitats also mitigate storm surge, erosion and coastal flooding, further reducing the costs of insurance and disaster relief.

In order to efficiently and effectively achieve these outcomes, we encourage Hernando County to consider several guiding principles for project selection: science-based metrics and evaluation, phased approach to implementation, clear outcomes, local input/participation, leverage opportunities, and mutual project compatibility.

Employing the guiding principle of **science-based evaluation** is instrumental to proper project selection and plan development. Every project should be evaluated across a broad metrics of science-based criteria. In addition, project implementation should be monitored and subject to an ongoing review process to ensure short and long-term goals are being met, allocated funds are being spent responsibly and projects are performing and managed adaptively.

Furthermore, project descriptions should state clear, measurable and achievable ecological and **community outcomes**. Making these outcomes understood by the public and stakeholder groups, and providing opportunities for meaningful input into project selection and evaluation increases public confidence in the success of these projects and will elicit more public support.

Counties should consider ways to **leverage resources** across RESTORE funding allocations and as a match for other local, state and federal funding sources, and we were pleased to see Hernando County identify some matching funds for its selected projects. Hernando County should also seek to achieve **mutual project compatibility** to ensure that discrete projects are not inadvertently working at odds with one another. Accordingly, it would be

beneficial for an panel of resource and economic managers to provide oversight and ensure project designs avoid unintended impacts to key resources that are also restoration targets.

The ultimate success of the RESTORE Act rests on selecting and implementing integrated ecological restoration projects, consistent with a state-wide plan, and rigorous application of criteria to ensure that only the best and most appropriate projects are funded. We encourage Hernando County to keep these themes in mind in planning and implementing current and future restoration activities.

We applaud Hernando County for being leaders in the state and among the first to select projects and prepare a Draft MYIP. We respectfully urge Hernando County to consider our comments and incorporate them as appropriate into both the current Draft MYIP, as well as in future MYIPs (which may be prepared as additional RESTORE Act funds become available). Moreover, we encourage Hernando County to move forward with implementing the proposed projects.

Thank you very much for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Audubon Florida
Florida Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Federation
Ocean Conservancy
The Nature Conservancy

Johnathan Walker

From: Jessica Koelsch <KoelschJ@nwf.org>
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 11:30 PM
To: restoreact
Cc: Virginia Singer; Len Sossamon
Subject: RE: Comments on Hernando County MYIP
Attachments: Comments on MYIP Hernando Revised.docx

Brian,

Earlier this evening I submitted comments on Hernando County's MYIP, including comments related to Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef Project. Shortly after submitting these comments, I had a conversation with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Artificial Reef Program Staff indicating that while they are in fact working with Hernando County on the creation of new artificial reefs, the proposed Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef Project was not among the projects that they were actively partnering on. FWC staff indicated they may have some concerns about the shallow water reefs, but did not have enough information on the proposed project to say with certainty.

As indicated in the comments I submitted earlier this evening, I was under the impression that FWC was an existing partner on the proposed shallow water reef project. Apparently, I may have been mistaken, based on my conversations with them late this afternoon. NWF's support for the Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef Project is contingent upon endorsement by the FWC Artificial Reef program. If FWC is not able to endorse this project, NWF encourages you to work with them to modify the project in a manner to which they can endorse it.

Given this development, I wish to slightly revise the comments I submitted earlier this today. Please consider the attached comments to replace the version submitted previously. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,
Jessica Koelsch

From: Jessica Koelsch
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 4:00 PM
To: 'restoreact@hernandocounty.us'
Cc: 'Virginia Singer'; 'Len Sossamon'
Subject: Comments on Hernando County MYIP

Brian,

I apologize for missing you earlier this week when you were on leave, but I was very happy to meet with Virginia Singer ✓ in your absence and go over some of my comments and recommendations for your MYIP. I understand that Hernando ✓ County did not have a great deal of public participation throughout the process, and offered to help in that capacity with ✓ any future RESTORE efforts.

Based on my comments (both attached, and discussed in my meeting with Virginia), I anticipate that you may be making ✓ some revisions to your MYIP before submitting it to Treasury. I am more than happy to review your revised MYIP. I ✓ would ask that you post your revised MYIP, as well as the supporting documents that I discussed with Virginia (and ✓ include in my attached comments) on your website. I have already heard from at least one county in Southwest Florida ✓ who is starting to draft their MYIP and is looking at Hernando County's MYIP as a model. Given that other counties may ✓ be using your MYIP as a model, it is important to the success of Florida's overall restoration activities that Hernando ✓ County set a high standard for the others to emulate, and their final and complete MYIP is publically available. ✓

Thank you so much for working with me and considering my comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me with ✓
questions or seeking clarification on any of my input. I am more than happy to help in any way I can as you prepare you ✓
MYIP to submit to Treasury. ✓

Sincerely, Jessica

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March 27, 2015

Brian Malmberg, Assistant County Administrator/Director of Public Works
Hernando County Department of Public Works
1525 East Jefferson Street
Brooksville, FL 34601

Re: National Wildlife Federation's Comments on Hernando County's Draft Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP)

Dear Mr. Malmberg,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on Hernando County's draft Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP).

National Wildlife Federation (NWF) is the nation's largest conservation organization. We have four million members and supporters nationally, hundreds of whom reside in Hernando County. Working closely with our state partner Florida Wildlife Federation, we have been on the ground, lobbying for comprehensive Gulf restoration in the wake of the BP oil spill. Our work has been focused on long-lasting action, such as coastal and watershed protection. The work that began with the passage of the RESTORE Act is now directed towards supporting ecological restoration. We have been closely following as Florida's 23 Gulf Coast Counties consider projects to fund with their Direct Component funds available through the RESTORE Act, as they develop Multi-Year Implementation Plans (MYIP).

Working with a coalition of organizations in Florida, NWF and its partners crafted a restoration framework with project outcomes and guiding principles, which is outlined in a separate comment letter. We encourage Hernando County to keep these themes in mind while planning and implementing restoration activities.

In addition to these themes and principles, NWF has also carefully reviewed Hernando County's MYIP, and wishes to present comments and recommendations on two the two main components of the MYIP: **Process and Projects**.

Process:

In 2014, the U.S. Treasury Department issued their "Direct Component Guidance and Application to Receive Federal Financial Assistance". This Guidance provides critical context for ensuring effective process and describes the following:

As a prerequisite under the RESTORE Act for requesting and receiving Direct Component funding for eligible activities, each applicant must submit a multiyear plan to cover a period of time during which projects could be undertaken with funds available from the Trust Fund...An applicant must use the form shown at Section 4.0 for its multiyear plans... The multiyear plan must include the Multiyear Implementation Matrix, a map showing the locations where the work will be performed, and the narrative description. An applicant must provide detail on planned activities in the multiyear plan, including the information required in the multiyear plan matrix and narrative in Section 4.0. The multiyear plan must be available for 45 days for public review and comment, in a manner calculated to obtain broad-based participation from individuals, businesses, Indian tribes, and non-profit organizations. If the applicant has developed a more detailed multiyear plan document in addition to the forms in Section 4.0, the document should be included as an attachment to the multiyear plan submission to Treasury.

We feel that while Hernando County may have met the minimum requirements outlined in the Treasury Guidance, and did have some of the elements available for public review and comment, the full suite of documents (including the Matrix and the Narrative) were only available by request, which is an area of concern. We respectfully offer input related to public process.

Website:

Although Hernando County established a website with information on the process (including Project Consideration Form, Ranking Criteria, Scoring Criteria Guide), we could not readily find information announcing public meetings, a list of projects submitted for consideration (or details on those proposed projects), names of the members of the “internal committee” created by the County, the final rankings of the submitted projects, or several other topics as described below.

The Hernando County RESTORE website (<http://co.hernando.fl.us/restoreact/>) states: “Public participation is an important part of the RESTORE ACT project development process” yet information to facilitate public participation is not readily available. As one example, the “Public Meeting” section of the RESTORE website is blank; no meetings are listed:
<http://co.hernando.fl.us/restoreact/index.php/public-meetings>.

We were pleased to see the Scoring Criteria and Ranking Criteria were posted on-line, and also to see that project scoring will follow an objective evaluation process. It is important to the transparency and integrity of the process to clearly indicate evaluation methods.

Public Engagement:

Although the MYIP recognizes that projects must be selected based on “meaningful input from the public, including broad-based participation from individuals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations...” it is not clear how this was accomplished. No list of public meetings or other documentation was included, nor a list of what community members of groups were engaged.

As for soliciting proposals from the public, although a Project Consideration Form and Flier were both posted on the website (October 14, 2014), we understand that no projects were submitted by the public. Given that other Florida Counties have received numerous project submittals when advertised to the public, the lack of public submittals in Hernando County may be an indication that the announcement of the funding opportunity or the application were not advertised widely enough or readily available. Because there was so little public participation, we would have liked to see Hernando County explore other avenues or seek assistance for partners.

As future opportunities for public input on RESTORE Act related issues become available, NWF would be happy to help engage the community through public workshops, social media, and outreach to community groups. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Additional Information Omitted from Publicly Available MYIP:

There were several elements that are required to be submitted to Treasury that were omitted from the MYIP available for public review and input.

According the U.S. Treasury Direct Component Guidance, the multiyear plan must include the Multiyear Implementation Matrix, a map showing the locations where the work will be performed, and the narrative description. We acknowledge that the published MYIP includes maps of the project locations, and well as brief project overviews and summaries. However, the Multiyear Implementation Matrix and Direct Component Multiyear Plan Narrative were not publicly available (although those documents were available upon request). Given that the Guidance specifies the elements required for the MYIP, and all of those elements were not included in the document published on-line, the MYIP (published February 10, 2015) posted on the Hernando County website (<http://co.hernando.fl.us/restoreact/index.php/restore-documents/12-2-10-2015-multi-year-implementation-plan/file>) is incomplete and the Multiyear Implementation Matrix and Direct Component Multiyear Plan Narrative should be added.

As for reviewing the projects being considered for funding, the only information that we could locate describing projects being considered for inclusion in the MYIP, was a list of project titles contained within a presentation dated October 14, 2014:

<http://co.hernando.fl.us/restoreact/index.php/restore-documents/4-restore-act-powerpoint/file>.

Additional information on the proposed projects should have been readily available so that the public could more easily weigh in on their preferences; this could have been accomplished by posted a project summary on-line, or linking to the full proposals (which presumably was available to the internal review committee). We also recommend including a table/list on-line and/or in the MYIP including the following for all projects submitted for consideration:

- Project Title
- Brief Project Summary
- Project Location
- Project Cost (and match)
- Partners (if any)
- Final Project Rank

Project Goals and Hernando County Priorities:

An area where we feel Hernando County excelled in the MYIP Process is in the development and publication of their Direct Component Overview and Guidelines (Appendix A). We fully support the Goals and Priorities Hernando County identified (also listed in the Overview and Guidelines document). In addition, we support the inclusion of the Direct Component Scoring Criteria and Guide (Appendix B); as noted above, we support the objective project scoring and evaluation process for reviewing proposed projects.

Projects:

Although the MYIP process was not as transparent or accessible as it is for many of the other Florida coastal counties, we support¹ the projects selected by Hernando County for inclusion in their MYIP. All three projects have a direct connection back to the Gulf ecosystems that were directly impacted by the spill, will enhance nature-based tourism, and will in turn positively impact the local economy. Furthermore, two of the projects (Bayou Drive and Linda Pederson Park) address NWF's highest priority among the eligible activities: restoration/protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region.

The Gulf Coast's economy and way of life are deeply entwined with the land and the water. The fines and penalties from the Deepwater Horizon disaster have great potential to restore and protect the Gulf of Mexico's lands, waters, wildlife, communities, and economy. However, there is a risk that some of these funds could be spent unwisely—even squandered on projects that would harm the very places the money was intended to benefit. The public can and should insist that all recovery monies are spent in a science-driven, transparent process that ensures a healthy Gulf of Mexico for wildlife as well as for future generations.

Although we support¹ the projects that were selected, we respectfully offer the following comments and recommendations on the Project Overview and Summary (Appendix C), as well as the unpublished Direct Component Multiyear Plan Narrative.

Overall, the Multiyear Plan Narrative (available only upon request) provided more of the project details that should have been included in Appendix C (posted online and publically available). In addition, it would have been useful to see a check-list or table within Appendix C that indicated which of the project goals, eligible activities, and project priorities (included in Appendix B) each project fulfilled.

Furthermore, according the Treasure Guidance, projects related to Natural Resources are required to be based on "Best Available Science". Nowhere in the Project Summary or Narrative was a description of the science used to select, evaluate, or review the projects. The inclusion of Best Available Science should cross-cut several sections of each Project Description, including project need, purpose, benefit, high-level milestones, and measures of success. Additional details on Treasury's specific requirements regarding Best Available Science can be found on Page 30 of "RESTORE Act Direct Component Guidance and Application to Receive Federal Financial Assistance" (within Section 5.0 DIRECT COMPONENT APPLICATION FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS). If you need assistance in locating this information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Bayou Drive:

Additional details and project specifics should be included in the Project Summary of Appendix C, as well as the Narrative. For instance, as noted above, there is no indication that Best Available Science has been used to evaluate the need for the project. What species of exotics are currently present at the site? Was a survey done to indicate the percent cover, abundance, and distribution? Are there studies to support that removal of exotics and planting of natives will improve fish and wildlife habitat? In addition, there are no high-level milestones (related to the "restoration objectives" vice the "project engineering phases"). Similarly, the MYIP should include specific measures of success

¹NWF supports the use of Direct Component funds for creation of artificial reefs as an eligible activity related to mitigation of damage to fish; promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast region, including recreational fishing; and promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast region, that also have been developed in coordination with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Artificial Reef Program. Our support for Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef Project is contingent on endorsement by the FWC Artificial Reef Program.

that would indicate restoration of natural resources. In general, measures of success should be closely tied to the eligibility, as well as the priorities the project is intended to address. Examples of measures of success could include such measures as percent of exotics removed, increase in abundance and distribution of natural vegetation, percent increase in fish or wildlife, and/or increase in use by anglers or birders.

Hernando Beach Reef Project:

As with the Bayou Drive project, additional details should be included in the Project Summary of Appendix C, as well as the Narrative covering Best Available Science, high-level milestones, and measures of success. In addition, the published project description lacks a lot of detail relevant to the evaluation of the project. For instance, specifics on water depth, existing substrate type, and proximity to other habitat types would be useful, as well as inclusion of information related to partners and status of permits. From speaking with artificial reef volunteers in Hernando County, I learned that this project was part of a large area management zone, that permits had been applied for through Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE), and the Florida Fish and Wildlife (FWC) Artificial Reef program staff are actively involved in Hernando County's artificial reef program. This is all relevant information that should have been included in the Project Summary and Narrative.

NWF agrees that the Hernando Beach Reef Project provides an opportunity to fulfill several RESTORE Act eligible activities, including Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife, and natural resources, Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast region, including recreational fishing, and Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast region. However, we do not feel that construction of artificial reefs falls under "Restoration/protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region" (given that artificial reefs are not natural habitat). We ask that you remove "restoration of natural resources" as an applicable activity

Linda Pederson Park:

As with the Bayou Drive project, additional details should be included in the Project Summary of Appendix C, as well as the Narrative covering Best Available Science, high-level milestones, and measures of success. I am personally familiar with the park and have paddled and snorkeled in Jenkins Creek. The Narrative (only available upon request) provided much more detail than the Project Summary in Appendix C, including mentioning use of the area by West Indian (Florida) manatees. The spring and association run of Jenkins Creek serve as a winter refuge for Florida manatees. If this project results in increased use by paddlers and snorkelers during the winter months, we anticipate the County will careful monitor to ensure manatees seeking thermal refuge in the spring are not disturbed.

We applaud Hernando County for being leaders in the state and among the first to select projects and prepare a Draft MYIP. Given our experience with all 23 Gulf Coast Countles, we support¹ Projects selected by Hernando County but recommend significant improvements in the Process (and the Plan itself), before submitting to the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Assuming that additional RESTORE funds will be available upon the settlement of Clean Water Act Penalties to be paid by BP, we would encourage Hernando County to better advertise the availability of funds and find additional avenues for engaging the public in the future. As indicated above, NWF will be more than happy to assist with such efforts and provide for an even more robust and inclusive process.

Thank you very much for considering our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me to further discuss these comments, concerns, and recommendations.

Sincerely,

Jessica Koelsch
Florida Policy Specialist
National Wildlife Federation

