

GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT PROJECT PRE-PROPOSAL FORM

Project Name: Gulf County Self-Guided EcoTours

Submitting Entity: Dr. Jack Rink of Adventure Tours LLC

I. Please select one or more eligible activity that the project is classified under:

- Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region.
- Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife and natural resources.
- Implementation of a federally approved marine, coastal or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring.
- Workforce development and job creation.
- Improvements to or on State parks located in coastal areas affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.
- Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure.
- Coastal flood protection and related infrastructure.
- Planning assistance.
- Promotion of tourism and seafood in the Gulf Coast region. X**

II. Please provide an executive summary of the project. Describe/quantify the economic (jobs, infrastructure, tourism, etc.) and environmental benefits (habitat, quality, knowledge, long-term sustainability, etc.).

This project, called Gulf County Self-Guided EcoTours, aims to increase tourism in Gulf County by producing a software application that runs on I-Pad (Apple Product) and various other microcomputer tablet platforms that are Windows based. The subject matter of the software application are the natural resources in Gulf County associated with public land holdings including Buffer Preserve Lands, County Parks and State Parks and the adjoining National Wildlife Refuge at St. Vincent Island. The operational mode of the software would be self-guided tours with photographic, text, audio and video content that are icon-driven, along with detailed maps of the region and tour areas. For example a user can select a plant, bird, or ecosystem icon to view information about those subjects on a given tour. Moreover it will identify scenic locations through an icon that the user can visit to take particularly beautiful pictures. It will also be possible for visitors to contribute new photographs and commentary on the internet, creating an interactive environment for users.

The economic benefits would be realized through increased patronage of all local businesses utilized by visitors, and the creation of new businesses to serve the increased number of visitors to the county. This project would foster eco-tourism, a segment of the market involving people who value visiting and preserving natural resources. It is a growing sector of the economy. The software would serve to increase the utilization of public land thereby making it a vital economic resource.

The long-term environmental benefits are very large and would arise from the educational use of the self-guided tour content. This content would teach at different targeted age-levels (e.g. elementary school age, teenager, young adult, retiree etc.), the value of preserving our natural resources so that they are perpetually available to later generations. This includes appropriate preservation of land, water, wildlife sectors, in the context of responsible development. This project emphasizes the value of public land as an economic resource to the local economy. This approach would reflect well on Gulf County itself, with it potentially becoming a model community for tourism of public lands in the State of Florida.

III. Please provide a cost summary/budget. Detail any matching/cooperative funds available for use, and any cooperative support from governmental or other agencies.

The allocation of financial resources would be divided into three expense areas:

- 1) salary for a computer software writer
- 2) salary for a field researcher to generate guided tour content
- 3) supplies and computers

Description of Item	Each	Expense	Comment
Salary Software Writer	1	\$125,000	Annual Salary
Salary Field Researcher and Data Entry	1	\$30,000	Half-Annual Salary
Portable Computer and External Monitor	1	\$1,600	
Office Supplies	1	\$700	
I Pad	1	\$800	
Windows Tablet	1	\$500	
Total		\$158,600	

Additional Resources

Personal financial contributions of office space, telephone, utilities etc. would be contributed by applicant. Past personal financial investments in pilot software are further contributions.

IV. Please provide a timeline for project completion. Explain the technical and environmental feasibility (including any permitting considerations) of the project.

Activity	Begin Date	End Date
Writing software for I-Pad	June 2013	May 2014
Collecting content in the field (visiting and documenting tour sites)	June 2013	December 2013
Purchasing I-Pad and Windows Tablet for Field Testing	June 2014	
Testing software in the field (at tour sites)	June 2014	Dec 2014

No permits are required to collect content on public land.

V. Please provide the qualifications of the Submitting Entity, the financial feasibility/sustainability and the economic feasibility and sustainability of the project (probability of success, etc.).

Dr. Jack Rink is a resident of Gulf County since 2009 and has been a university educator for 20 years. He is a professional geoscientist who has published about 125 research articles including a number about the local Florida coastal geology and archaeology. These articles appeared in international journals, are available upon request, and highlights of the findings are listed below.

- History of formation of the barrier islands and land forms extending from the northern tip of St. Joseph Peninsula to the west end of Dog Island.
- History of formation of the mainland from Port St. Joe through to 13 Mile.
- Timing of the formation of the Florida Peninsula as it emerged from the ocean, and the formation of the mainland and barrier islands on the Atlantic Coast.

His interdisciplinary work on archaeology, the magnetic navigational abilities of sea turtles, and the activity of ants in the subterranean realms demonstrate the social science, biological and natural history dimensions of his professional work. He has worked extensively with local state agencies and federal agencies in his professional research, which involved numerous permitting stages.

He spent personal financial resources in 2012 to create a Windows-based self guided tour software focused on public land sites along the shores of St. Joseph Bay and began the software testing in January 2013. He has also built a reference library for the identification of all forms of wildlife in Gulf County and the classification of Florida ecosystems. It also includes copies of the most recent land management planning documents for all state-owned public land holdings in Gulf County, which have been used to source information for the existing Windows-based software. This pilot software is already completed supports this current project proposal.

VI. Please provide the anticipated results of the project, and whether it is included in a City of Port St. Joe, City of Wewahitchka or Gulf County Comprehensive and Mitigation Plan?

This project proposal is not included in any comprehensive and or mitigation plan.

We expect that the software, which would be available for downloading on the internet, will be able to transform a person's I-Pad or Tablet into a passport highlighting tourism opportunities in Gulf County. Visitors will be able to take a virtual tour of many beautiful places in the educational context of the software. Young and old alike will be able to consider a visit having already learned about the diversity of local natural resources. When visitors arrive, they will already be oriented to the location, and be able to navigate our roads, bike paths and walking trails through maps included in the software. Incidentally the guided tour software would be independent of cell phone signal quality, as it does not require connection to the internet to obtain active tour content, which would be part of the download package.

An important spinoff of the technology is that it can be used to teach our own school children about local natural resources. In a sense, the technology is an educational tool, that can be used in multiple environments. With teachers and students having access to the content, virtual field trips can be taken in the classroom, but also guided tours can be experienced in the natural environment. This could greatly facilitate increased awareness of the fragility and beauty of the natural environment of Gulf County, and provide access to learning that will foster desire to protect the resources.

The anticipated financial results include increased spending at all recreational business venues and consumer travel businesses such as hotels, restaurants, convenience stores, marinas, food stores etc. We expect that the profile of the tourist attracted by the software to our county will include significant proportions of highly educated persons with children that have relatively high annual income.

Submitted By: Dr. Jack Rink (see separate attachment with signature on page)



Signature



Date

Adventure Tours Along Florida's Forgotten Coast Trail, LLC

Company Name

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Address

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Address

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Telephone Number

rinkwj@mcmaster.ca

E-mail Address (if applicable)

PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY AND PUBLIC ACCESS ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR
GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT APPLICANTS

I, Dr. Jack Rink the undersigned authority and/or representative of the entity Adventure Tours, LLC and/or the individual who has submitted the Gulf County RESTORE Act Proposal/Pre-Proposal titled Gulf County Self Guided Eco Tours hereby acknowledge, consent and accept the following representations that coincide with my/our submission for consideration, evaluation and possible recommendation and approval by the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners for funding from the RESTORE Act distribution that strictly complies with the guidelines and regulations set forth under the Restoration and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012:

1. I/We am the authorized representative of the application/pre-proposal referenced above.
2. I/We have thoroughly reviewed and familiarized myself and/or my entity on which I have submitted the application/pre-proposal on behalf of with the entirety of the Gulf County Public Records policy.
3. I/We have thoroughly reviewed and familiarized myself and/or my entity on which I have submitted the application/pre-proposal on behalf of with the entirety of the Florida Statute Chapter 119 which controls and permits public access to information.
4. I/We hereby acknowledge, consent and agree to the controlling policies and statutes above as well as the free and open exchange of any and all submissions provided hereunder this application/pre-proposal and all information exchanged hereafter including but not limited to further amendments to these proposals as well as surveys, studies, research, data production, books, drawings, property records, work papers, county owner lists, files, forms, reports, accounts, documents, manuals, handbooks, instructions, printouts relating in any manner for the production of the application. In addition, all papers, notes, data, reference material, documentation, programs, printouts, and all other media and forms of expression that in any way include, incorporate or reflect any confidential information of what ultimately shall become the Gulf County plans for use and application of the RESTORE Act funding.
5. I/We acknowledge, agree and fully consent to cooperate with the appointed Gulf County RESTORE ACT committee, county officials and staff as a continuing obligation and condition of final review for this RESTORE Act application/pre-proposal.
6. I/We have submitted this acknowledgment to Gulf County RESTORE Act Committee and the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners for the purpose and intent of receiving an evaluation, review and possible recommendations for anticipated funding from the Restoration and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012.

W. J. Rink
Signature of RESTORE Act Applicant

W. J. Rink
Printed Name

Date: Jan 16, 2013