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GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT PROJECT PRE-PROPOSAL FORM

Project Name: St. Joseph Bay Seagrass Buoys - Awareness and Outreach

Submitting Entity: Friends of the St Joseph Bay Preserves

- 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.
- 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 is requesting funds to replace, purchase and maintain the St. Joseph Bay Seagrass buoys in the southern portion of the bay and to produce an updated boater's guide with current information and locations. In 2008, thirteen buoys were placed in St. Joseph Bay to protect seagrass habitat and aid boaters in navigating the shallow waters of the bay near Presnell's Marina and Black's Island (see attachment). An informational guide illustrating the GPS locations of these buoys as well as education signage to be placed at local boat ramps was also produced. The St. Joseph Bay Aquatic Preserve was responsible for maintaining these buoys. Management activities at St. Joseph Bay Aquatic Preserve have been discontinued as of July 1, 2011 due to legislative budget cuts and therefore the buoys are no longer being maintained. Previous data has shown that these buoys have aided in the protection of the seagrass habitat in St. Joseph Bay in specific areas. Continued maintenance and replacement of these structures as needed, will provide

both economic and environmental benefits to Gulf County and to the valued resources in St. Joseph Bay. St. Joseph Bay is host to one of the richest and most abundant concentrations of marine grasses along the north Florida coast. Productivity in the region can be attributed to the saltmarsh and seagrasses that serve as nursery and foraging grounds for commercial and recreational fish and invertebrates, sea turtles, scallops and birds. Sport and shellfishing are the most active forms of tourism throughout the year and these activities along with many others in the bay support Gulf County's tourism industry. Many users of the bay may not be aware of how their daily activities impact the natural resources associated with St. Joseph Bay. Therefore, an education and outreach component is crucial to protecting the bay system from future impacts. The second part of this project includes the development of a St. Joseph Bay Boater's Guide that will include recent satellite imagery of the bay and its seagrass coverage, buoy locations, public access points, and other areas of interest. This guide will be developed by the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve (ANERR) staff in coordination with Gulf County and the tourist development council. Another component may include the development of an application ("app") that illustrates the map and buoy system.

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

Estimated Cost:

Float collar type seagrass can-buoys and hardware	\$5,500.00
Educational kiosks at local boat ramps (2 @ \$2,000)	\$4,000.00
Educational signage and map for kiosk (2@ \$1,000)	\$2,000.00
Reproduction and printing of boater's guides	\$10,000.00
Local volunteer/boat captain to maintain and file annual report (\$1000 annually for 5 years)	\$5,000.00

Total Cost.....\$26,500.00

Partnerships and cooperative support will be provided by the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve (ANERR), part of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas (CAMA). Additional support that may be forthcoming: Gulf County, including the Gulf County Tourist Development Council (TDC).

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

This project should be completed within a 12-month time period. In 1999, the ANERR received a permit number to place waterway markers in the bay. As a result, an annual report must be reported to FWC in regards to the condition of the buoys, maintenance actions taken, photos, etc. ANERR will continue to file annual reports provided by volunteers to continue to keep these markers in the bay unless this permit is transferred to the County. Buoys will continue to be maintained over the next five years. At this time an assessment will be conducted by volunteers to determine the success of the system and recommendations will be made to the county on future protection efforts/plans.

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.).

The Friends of the St Joseph Bay Preserves is a not-for-profit Citizen Support Organization (CSO) that has been in existence for over nine years. It was established to protect, preserve and support the St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve and the St Joseph Bay Aquatic Preserve. The Friends raise funds and provide volunteer services to help manage the Preserves and foster better understanding and enjoyment of the Buffer Preserve and the Bay. With a current membership of nearly 200 individuals and families, visitors during our two annual Bay Day events totaling over 700 each year, as well as the many research scientists, students, Scout groups, civic organizations, and other local and out-of-town "explorers" who spend time at the Preserves, the probability of success of this project is great. Donations to the Friends group, especially during the Bay Day events, will insure the feasibility and sustainability of this project. This project began in the bay in 2008 and has received positive feedback from the public as well as Gulf County. Previous data from the St. Joseph Bay Aquatic Preserve shows prop scar recovery in certain areas where buoys have been placed.

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?

St. Joseph Bay is designated as an Aquatic Preserve, Outstanding Florida Waterbody (OFW), Class II Shellfish Harvesting Area, and a Gulf of Mexico Ecological Management Site (GEM). This project will continue to provide protection to the bay's seagrass beds and will also protect boaters from running aground in shallow, seagrass areas. This project will provide education and outreach information to residents and visitor's on the value of the natural resources in the bay and how to enjoy these resources without adversely impacting the fragile ecosystem in the bay. An added benefit of the creation of the boater's guide is that it will illustrate public access areas, marinas, bathymetry, and other information recommended by the TDC to help visitors and residents enjoy their experience while exploring beautiful St. Joseph Bay.

The following Goal(s), Objective(s) and/or Policies included in the *Gulf County Comprehensive and Mitigation Plan* will be met, in part, by this project:

Chapter 5: Coastal Management Element

POLICY 1.1.5: *Gulf County will continue to promote a program of community awareness to prevent future disruptions and degradations of coastal resources.*

Chapter 6: Conservation Element

GOAL 1: *Protect, manage, and promote energy efficiency, greenhouse gas reduction and conserve the natural resources of Gulf County to ensure their continued best use for the current and future citizens of the County.*

OBJECTIVE 1.3: *Gulf County will strive to conserve, appropriately use, and protect the quality and quantity of current and projected water sources and waters that flow into estuarine waters or oceanic waters by implementing Policies 1.3.1 through 1.3.9.*

OBJECTIVE 1.4: *Gulf County will conserve, appropriately use, and protect its natural resources, including fisheries, wildlife, wildlife habitat, marine habitat, minerals, soils, and native vegetative communities by implementing Policies 1.4.1 through 1.4.11.*

POLICY 1.4.4: *Gulf County will cooperate with the Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, and the Northwest Florida Water Management District to provide the fullest protection to County, State, and Federally-owned areas identified in the conservation and recreation elements that have been set aside for the protection of natural resources and public recreation.*

Chapter 7: Recreation and Open Space Element

GOAL 1: *To provide recreational opportunities and open space for the current and future residents and visitors of Gulf County.*

Submitted By:



President, Board of Directors

2-26-13

Signature

Title

Date

Friends of the St Joseph Bay Preserves
Company Name

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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA
RESTORE ACT COMMITTEE (R.A.C.)
1000 CECIL G. COSTIN SR. BLVD., ROOM 312, PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA 32456
PHONE (850)229-6144 • FAX (850) 229-9252 • EMAIL: tkopinsky@gulfcounty-fl.gov

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

I, JOHN EHRMAN the undersigned authority and/or representative of the entity FRIEND OF SJTB PRESERVES and or the individual who has submitted the Gulf County RESTORE Act Proposal/Pre-Proposal titled ST JOSEPH BAY SEAGRASS BUDYS - AWARENESS + OUTREACH 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.



Signature of RESTORE Act Applicant

John Ehrman

Printed Name

Date: 2-28-2013