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GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT PROJECT PRE-PROPOSAL FORM

Project Name: **Snorkel Reef Deployment – Permitting & Deployment**

Submitting Entity: Gulf County Artificial Reef Association (To Be Formed)

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.
- 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.).

Permitting and Deployment of Snorkel Reef Systems in Gulf County Florida

This proposal is submitted in conjunction with a prior Pre-Proposal for the formation of a Gulf County Artificial Reef Association and is submitted for consideration prior to the actual formation of this organization.

This project plan is to obtain permits, matching funding and to construct artificial Snorkel Reefs in waters adjacent to Gulf County, Florida. These reefs will be fashioned with prefabricated materials as Ecosystem Reef modules. The permit area's and agencies are yet to be determined, and will be identified with the support of Florida DEP Resources. Similar Ecosystem Reefs are being deployed in South Alabama, Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.

This proposal will focus on potential sites which are currently devoid of natural habitat and resources. Placement can support tourism in offseasons, and also reduce some of the pressures of fishing / snorkeling and damage to natural habitats.

This Proposal – Funding for the Following :

- In Situ and GIS Surveys & Legal Research to Determine Potential Reef Sites
- Review of Existing Ecosystem Artificial Reef Construction – Defining Optimum Construction for Gulf County Waters
- Application for cooperative Grant Funding for the Reef Deployment
- Obtaining Permits for the Reef Deployment Sites

- Deployment of the Nearshore Artificial Reef Snorkel Sites

Economic : Visitors to Gulf County are documented as being more attuned to nature and its marvels than the average coastal visitor across the US. Artificial reefs enhance that experience. Reefs can be placed in shallow waters for snorkeling, diving and fishing, and in deeper waters for diving and fishing. This Project focuses on nearshore / shallow water reefs. Expansion of a Reef system can extend our constantly shorter return by extending the times of year for visiting Divers and Snorkelers. Divers & Snorkelers will have a reason to be in the waters off Gulf County beyond Scallop & Fishing seasons. These type visitors will come from worldwide – given careful enhancement of our natural resources.

Environmental : Establishment of new reef sites around Gulf County waters will enhance the reproductive sustainability for many of our local species – invertebrates, fish, turtles. The additional habitat provided begins to provide additional surface for reef development, insures cover, and develops the food chain in and around each reef structure. Habitat is the limiting factor for many of our coastal species. Reefs enhance that habitat. Increased habitat facilitates additional research, enjoyment of our coastal species, and even harvest potential for coastal species.

Of course – all artificial reefs in State of Florida waters must be permitted. Materials for artificial reefs will be completely compatible with their surroundings, mitigating concerns of any potential environmental damage. Newer reefs being deployed are constructed with materials completely consistent with their environment.

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

Proposed Cost Summary = \$88,000.

	Time Frame	Stage Cost
Evaluation of Permit Sites	+6 Months	\$30,000
Evaluation of Ecosystem Reef Construction	+6 Months	\$10,000
Application for Cooperative Grants	+12 Months	\$10,000
Application for Permits	+12 Months	\$20,000
Deployment of 85 Ecosystem Reef Modules	+24 Months	\$140,000
Planning Administration		\$5,000
Construction Administration		\$10,000
Post Deployment Monitoring & Reporting		\$30,000
Totals		\$255,000

Matching funds will be applied for thru the State DEP, private foundations and thru federal agencies. The newly formed GCARA will commit to additional and ongoing Grant Writing and Permit Applications given the chance to move forward.

This would be the first Reef Proposal organized under a Gulf County Artificial Reef Association. The total cost can be scaled based on funding available thru the Restore Act, and other sources of funds.

A Few Potential Funding Sources could include:

- FL FWC / DEP - \$80k / year is available for Counties
- SeaGrant – NWF ReefsMunson Foundation?
- Fish America
- NRDA Grant Applications (with County Support)

Friends of St Joseph Peninsula State Park
National Fish & Wildlife Commission
Memorial Reefs – full program being developed

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

This project can be completed within a 24 month period. Since the organization is starting anew – there will be some organizational delay at the onset, and the research to establish potential permit sites and acceptable reef construction methods – the first deployment should be expected within two years. After the deployment GCARA will commit to the necessary monitoring programs associated with Artificial Reef's in the State of Florida. This monitoring program will last for five years.

With such reefs there will be post deployment marketing which costs will be born by the GCARA. It would be expected that the GCARA will create a partnership with our Chamber and our TDC to properly promote and educate users on these Snorkel Reefs.

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 Gulf County Artificial Reef Association will be a 501c3 organization organized under the State of Florida. As modeled after the MBARA – the GCARA will become self sustaining with ongoing capital campaigns, retail & membership income, event income and grant funding.

There are regulations regarding the ongoing documentation and health of artificial reefs. The budget has a monitoring program for required activities and will continue for a 5 year period.

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?

The outcome of this project will enhance the local and visitor appreciation of Gulf County Natural Resources. With the support of our TDC – it would be expected that a GCARA and new Snorkel Reefs will attract new visitors to our community, and enhance our shoulder season opportunities. Increased Bed Tax revenues, Sales Tax revenues will occur. Many of these are first time visitors, who become repeat visitors, renters of our many vacation units across the county, visitors to our retail establishments and 2nd home vacationers.

Environmentally – there are documented studies which show that a strong artificial reef system enhances the marine population thru the creation of additional habitat. The encrusting species begin to populate an artificial reef, attracting grazers and predator species. These reefs play an important role in the development of juveniles of many species, providing both food sources and cover. Placement of such reefs will only enhance our native populations.

This project is not currently under consideration in either City or the County Comprehensive or Mitigation Plan; however, Gulf County has applied for funding for a NRDA funded County based offshore artificial reef deployment.

Submitted By: Gulf County Artificial Reef Association **(To Be Formed)**

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Blaylock", is written over a horizontal line.

Date : Feb 27, 2013

Address : P.O. Box 1285

Address : Port St. Joe, FL 32456

Telephone Number : 850.527.5498

E-mail Address (if applicable) : dblaylock@mindspring.com

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, Dewey Blaylock the undersigned authority and/or representative of the entity _____ and or the individual who has submitted the Gulf County RESTORE Act Proposal/Pre-Proposal titled NEARSHORE ARTIFICIAL REEF FOR SNORKELING 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.

Dewey Blaylock
Signature of RESTORE Act Applicant

Date: 2/27/13

Dewey Blaylock
Printed Name

GULF COUNTY ARTIFICIAL REEF ASSOCIATION