

#4/2

GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT PROJECT PRE-PROPOSAL FORM

Project Name: Money Bayou Land Acquisition and Kayak/Canoe Launch

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.).

Money Bayou is a tidal creek that flows through the St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve (SJBSBP) and empties directly into the Gulf of Mexico. The Money Bayou drainage basin occupies over 1,800 acres within the SJBSBP including hundreds of acres of emergent estuarine and freshwater marsh that grade into wet prairie interspersed with cypress strands and islands of pine flatwoods in a complex mosaic of habitats. The watershed of the creek is contained within the boundaries of the SJBSBP except for the final 1,800 feet of the creek as it runs toward the Gulf. The outlet of Money Bayou is a dynamic system, alternately open to the Gulf or closed by sands at the mouth of the creek at the beach. During periods of high freshwater flow the outlet opens and remains open until sands accumulate at the mouth of the creek temporarily blocking flow. Not only is this area important for the health of the surrounding natural systems and species, but it is also a popular recreational spot for the local community. Recreational fishing, crabbing and cast-netting for bait, bird watching, picnicking and general nature observation are enjoyed here regularly. Locals and tourists alike often stop near the State Road 30A Bridge to take in the sights and share an appreciation for the beach and marsh scenic setting. Money Bayou also has historical

significance as the first African-American owned beach resort. The beach front of the Money Bayou basin has remained relatively undeveloped until the last 10-20 years. While most of the surrounding beachfront have houses, the area over which the outlet currently follows to the Gulf is undeveloped, likely because of the unstable nature of the Money Bayou channel and because much of the site is wetland. The final stretch of Money Bayou is not currently protected and, despite seemingly large challenges to development, there have recently been plans to develop the identified parcels. These parcels (located in township 9 south, range 10 west, section 19, Cape San Blas Quadrangle) are currently owned by three separate landowners. A large part of these parcels are wetland, but six parcels do have some area of uplands. These parcels are imminently threatened by development unless the outlet of the bayou is brought into conservation ownership soon.

This proposal includes the acquisition of three to seven identified parcels that border the Money Bayou channel as it empties into the Gulf. The proposed project area includes the channel of Money Bayou, the surrounding estuarine intertidal wetlands, some upland pine flatwoods, an area of coastal dunes and .12 miles of Gulf of Mexico beachfront (see attachment). Upon acquisition the area will be cleaned up. A marsh overlook and bird observation area with two interpretive kiosks will be developed as well as a historical marker denoting the sites significance. In addition, a kayak/canoe launch will be installed with five parking spaces near the bridge over State Road 30A.

Project Benefits: Major benefits to acquiring and protecting these important parcels will include:

- Protection of the high quality onsite coastal wetlands all of which are nationally declining types
- Helping to insure the natural hydrological functioning of the outlet of Money Bayou, which is essential to protecting the ecological function of the extensive upstream estuarine wetlands, by preventing development that would likely interfere with the naturally-migrating channel of the bayou. The project area includes most of the area where the channel has migrated in the past.
- Protection of habitat for threatened and endangered species including nesting sea turtles, Piping and Snowy Plovers, and a contribution to maintaining habitat quality for Gulf Sturgeon.
- Protection of habitat for shorebirds, migratory birds and waterfowl as well as many other types of wildlife.
- Protection of fish habitat and nursery area for juvenile fish and crabs.
- Better management of recreational use of the site. Acquisition of the site will allow recreational use to continue but to be better managed for the coexistence of wildlife and human use.
- Ability to commemorate the history and cultural significance of the area as the first African-American owned beach resort.
- Facilitation of prescribed fire for rare plant species in the greater Money Bayou watershed.

Project Goal: To preserve in perpetuity the entire Money Bayou marsh system, to facilitate its best management, and to increase public appreciation of the ecological significance and historical legacy of this area.

Project Objectives:

- Acquire the seven parcels identified at the outlet of the system into the Gulf of Mexico and place under

SJBSBP management as an addition to the existing Preserve.

- Remove the accumulated debris on the acquired lands.
- Establish a marsh overlook and kayak/canoe launch site that will allow people to appreciate the northern wetland portion of the site and park safely.
- Install displays that will increase public appreciation of the ecological significance of Money Bayou, the greater Money Bayou marsh ecosystem, the wildlife and rare species of the site, the SJBSBP, and wetlands conservation.
- Construct a historical marker to commemorate the African-American history of the site.

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 Costs:

The project seeks to acquire a minimum of three and a maximum of seven parcels that border the Money Bayou channel.

All seven parcels: It is estimated that the total expenditure for this project, including the acquisition of the holdings of all three landowners will be \$1,203,843 or less. The expenditure for the land purchase portion of the project will be \$1,185,653 or less. Clean up of the site and development of improved recreational opportunities for the public and educational displays will be an additional \$18,190. With rapidly falling real estate values in this region it is very likely that the actual appraised value will be below this estimate. The Friends of St. Joseph Bay Preserves, Inc., CAMA and possibly Gulf County will contribute in-kind services related to improving public access and public education on the site, worth \$18,190. (The total for the acquisition of only three parcels (#3-5) and improvements would be \$98,190)

Total: \$1,203.843

This project has already received letters of support from the following partners; Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWMD), Gulf County, Coastal Bird Conservation Program and the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve (ANERR). Concurrent with the development of the marsh overlook bird observation site, and kayak/canoe launch, the Friends of St. Joseph Bay Preserves, Inc. will work with SJBSBP staff to develop informational displays designed to increase environmental awareness of the ecological processes and needs of rare species at this site. This will include the design and installation of two informative, educational displays and a historical marker at the marsh overlook site. Other possible partners may include the Gulf County Tourist Development Council (TDC), St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and Area chapters of the FL Native Plant Society (FNPS).

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

The estimated time for completion of this project is approximately 24 months. Should an award be received, the Friends will coordinate with DEP's Division of State Lands (DSL) to complete the acquisition and transfer the property to the SJBSBP.

- 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 to 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.

- IV. 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?

Acquisition of these parcels will ensure the long term preservation of the area and prevent the degradation that would be caused by its imminent development. 100% of the nationally decreasing coastal wetland on this site will be protected for perpetuity. The bridge over the Bayou currently is heavily used by fishermen and sightseers who stop to view the creek and marsh by parking directly along the road. Construction of this visitor use area with parking sites off the road will increase safety and draw attention to the educational displays on the Money Bayou ecology and wildlife.

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

3915 Highway C 30

Address

Port St Joe, FL 32456

Address

850-229-1787 Home: 850-229-2566

Telephone Number

ehrman.john@yahoo.com

E-mail Address (if applicable)

Figure 2. Money Bayou watershed and proposed lots for acquisition.



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: usopin@jg@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 FRIENDS OF ST. JOSEPH BAY PRESERVES and or the individual who has submitted the Gulf County RESTORE Act Proposal/Pre-Proposal titled Money Bayou Land and Kayak 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

Date: 2/28/13

JOHN EHRMAN

Printed Name