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GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT PROJECT PRE-PROPOSAL FORM

Project Name: Upgrade Visitor Center/Museum at the St Joseph Bay Buffer Preserve

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 will upgrade the Visitors Center/Nature Museum located in the main lodge building at the St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve. Currently, the nature displays and educational literature are placed in open book shelves or on tables and are subject to damage and/or theft. Glass display cases would provide protection for the exhibits and present a more professional appearance for the many visitors who stop by seeking information about the Buffer Preserve and St. Joe Bay, as well as Gulf County and the surrounding area. The new displays will educate the public and visitors on the biodiversity of the Preserve and how they can mitigate ecological damage to wildlife and natural resources, including unique native plants, through responsible stewardship of the environment. Audio-Visual monitors will provide narratives on what

one may encounter on a tour of the Preserve or in the Bay. The “new” Visitors Center/Museum will also serve as a starting point for visiting school children and Scouts preparing to explore the Preserve. Also included would be a portable exhibit/educational display board that can be transported to events such as the annual Scallop Festival in Port St. Joe, or on classroom visits to Gulf County schools.

The Buffer Preserve Visitors Center has served as an unofficial “Welcome” center to numerous out-of-state tourists as they travel toward the St. Joseph Peninsula/Cape San Blas and the State Park, or to Apalachicola. The facility also functions as a community center for meetings, training classes and lecture series by local organizations as well as Biologists and Researchers. This enhanced center will not only represent our area in a more welcoming and favorable light but also encourage more tourists to visit the many unique and beautiful sites we have throughout our County. The development and printing of educational and informational materials would also be an important component of this project.

In addition, this project will provide job opportunities for local carpenters, cabinet makers, and material suppliers who will be needed for the fabrication and installation of the display units.

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:

Display Cases (Material, labor, installation).....	\$35,000.00
Audio/Visual Display Monitor System.....	\$ 3,000.00
Develop/Print Educational and Informational Material.....	\$ 5,000.00
Portable Display Board System.....	<u>\$ 1,000.00</u>
Total Cost.....	\$44,000.00

Likely partners and other organizations offering cooperative support include, but are not limited to: Gulf County, including the Gulf County Tourist Development Council (TDC); St. Joseph Peninsula State Park; Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve (ANERR); Supporters of St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge; National Audubon Society; Florida Coastal Conservancy (FLCC)/SJP Turtle Patrol; The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC); Area chapters of the Florida 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 three (3) months depending on material availability. There are no permit considerations anticipated for this project

- 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?

The project, when completed, will provide visitors with the necessary knowledge to enjoy the beauty of the Preserves, both uplands and aquatic, while not adversely impacting the fragile ecosystem of both environments. Both young and old can learn how responsible stewardship of our natural resources can insure that they will survive for future generations to enjoy. An added benefit will be the dissemination of information about other sites for tourists to visit throughout our county and “Forgotten” coastal region.

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
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Port St Joe, FL 32456
Address

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Telephone Number

ehrman.john@yahoo.com
E-mail Address (if applicable)

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA
RESTORE ACT COMMITTEE (R.A.C.)
1000 CECH 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 FREINDS OF SJB PRESERVES and or the individual who has submitted the Gulf County RESTORE Act Proposal/Pre-Proposal titled UPGRADE VISITORS CTR MUSEUM AT SJB PRESERVES 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: 2-28-2013

John Ehrman

Printed Name