

GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT PROJECT PRE-PROPOSAL FORM

Project Name: Uplands Buffer Preserve Eco-tours and ADA Compliance

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 provide for improvements to the trails and tram/trailer accessibility throughout the uplands portion of the Buffer Preserve. Portions of the access road would be improved to provide for a more comfortable ride, in particular for the elderly and handicapped. A wheelchair accessible Tram-Trolley would provide access to the Uplands portion of the Preserve for those visitors and tourists who are handicapped or have impaired mobility. It would also include the development of an audio guided tour of the Preserve as well as updated trail guides, educational kiosks for Archaeological sites, and fauna/ flora signage throughout for plant and wildlife identification. Currently, the Observation Tower near the main lodge is not ADA compliant. An outdoor pan/zoom/tilt video camera mounted at the upper level of the Tower could provide a "bird's eye view" for those visitors and tourists who are unable to make the climb to the top of the tower. A secured but removable monitor could be located at the base of the tower or in the lodge visitor center to provide images from the video camera.

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

Estimate of costs:

Access Road Improvements (gravel, grading, and design).....	\$20,000.00
Handicapped Accessible Tram-Trolley.....	\$30,000.00
Video Camera and Monitor for Observation Tower.....	\$ 4,000.00
Audio Guide System.....	\$ 5,000.00
Educational Kiosks for Uplands Buffer site (2 @\$2000.00).....	\$ 4,000.00
Signage.....	<u>\$ 1,000.00</u>
 Total Cost.....	 \$64,000.00

Partnerships and cooperative support may be forthcoming from: 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 Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Office of Greenways and Trails; The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC); Area chapters of the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS); Florida Coastal Conservancy (FLCC).

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

There are no known technical or environmental challenges associated with any of the above mentioned components of this project. Building permits may be needed for kiosk construction, but their size may exclude them from that requirement. It is anticipated that the road repair work may take two (2) months, which will coincide with the lead time required for the Tram-Trolley delivery. Total project duration should not exceed four (4) months.

- 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 procured from the Tram-Trolley tours and audio tours, especially during the Bay Day events, will insure the feasibility and sustainability of this project.

- 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 will open up the St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve and Aquatic Preserve through increased accessibility, not only to the general hiking public, but also to those with impaired mobility. The handicapped accessible Tram and the Observation Tower Video Cam will enable our wheelchair visitors to see the beauty of the Bay and the Uplands from a new vantage point and appreciate the unique landscape and resources these Preserves offer.

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 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 1.4: *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.*

OBJECTIVE 1: *Gulf County will ensure that publicly-owned recreation facilities are physically accessible to all County residents by implementing Policies 1.1 through 1.4.*

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.)
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**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 SJB PRESERVES and or the individual who has submitted the Gulf County RESTORE Act Proposal/Pre-Proposal titled UPLANDS BUFFER PRESERVE ECO TOURS & ADA COMPLIANCE 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