

Gulf County RESTORE Act Multiyear Implementation Plan

Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment

Preamble

Gulf County, Florida is identified in the RESTORE Act of 2012 as a disproportionately affected county and will receive funding directly through the Direct Component Trust Fund. Before receiving funds, the County must develop and submit a Multiyear Implementation Plan (MYIP) to be reviewed and approved by Treasury. The MYIP takes a holistic planning approach, cross connecting a variety of categories including economy, environment, infrastructure, and quality of life. The first step in development of an MYIP is to conduct a comprehensive community Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment is meant to identify all of the critical issues facing Gulf County, as identified through various mechanisms that are relevant to the RESTORE Act.

The Needs Assessment matrix has been divided into four main categories: Economy, Environment, Infrastructure, and Community. Needs are placed into one of the four primary categories in the left column and additional categories the needs may represent are marked with “X”s in the right columns. For example, a need may be primarily represented as an infrastructure project, but may also have economic, environmental, and/or community benefits. Information for the Needs Assessment matrix was gathered through several public meetings and review of existing documents and information (see References).

The Community Needs Assessment will set the stage for identification of information gaps and development of selection criteria by which proposed projects will be evaluated. By taking a current inventory of critical community needs, the County can focus its RESTORE efforts where they are needed most. Submitted projects must address both a community need and be an eligible activity under the RESTORE Act.

RESTORE ACT ELIGIBLE ACTIVIES

RESTORE Act Citation	RESTORE Language	Equivalent Needs Assessment Topic
§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(I)	Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region.	Environment
§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(II)	Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife and natural resources.	Environment, Economy
§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(III)	Implementation of a federally approved marine, coastal, or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring.	Environment
§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(IV)	Workforce development and job creation.	Economy, Community
§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(V)	Improvements to or on State parks located in coastal areas affected by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill	Environment, Economy, Infrastructure, Community
§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(VI)	Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure	Environment, Economy, Infrastructure
§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(VII)	Coastal flood protection and related infrastructure	Environment, Economy, Infrastructure
§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(ii)(I)	Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast Region, including recreational fishing	Environment, Economy
§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(ii)(II)	Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast Region.	Environment, Economy

	Identified Need	Economy	Environment	Infrastructure	Community
Economy	Increase number of permanent full time residents	X			X
	Increase number of local jobs	X			X
	Port development	X		X	
	Provide economic diversification including promotion of clean industry, light manufacturing growth, marine commerce, watersports, and seafood processing	X			X
	Provide workforce development and training including industry focused training	X			X
	Increase tourism opportunities and destinations including ecotourism, cultural and historic tourism, year round tourism, and sports tourism	X			
	Update and unify branding initiatives	X			X
	Align wayfinding mediums with current initiatives	X		X	
	Improve or add coastal parks including dog parks, memorial parks, nature parks, and sports complexes	X		X	X
	Increase overnight stays	X			
	Enhance local property values	X			X
	Increase average trip spending value	X			
	Increase traffic flow in shops and restaurants	X			

	Identified Need	Economy	Environment	Infrastructure	Community
	Promote rural development incentives	X			X
	Update and market existing assets including the lighthouse, coastal parks, event venues, historic buildings, bikeways and walking trails, port, local businesses, arts and cultural venues, and recreational facilities	X		X	X
	Promote projects in the Apalachee Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	X			
Environment	Improve surface water quality		X		X
	Provide septic to sewer conversions		X	X	X
	Reduce nonpoint source pollution / stormwater runoff		X	X	
	Restore seagrasses		X		
	Provide habitat monitoring programs		X		
	Enhance marine habitats and fisheries	X	X		
	Increase scallops, oysters, estuarine and reef fish populations	X	X		X
	Install artificial reefs	X	X		
	Provide more vegetated riparian buffers and wetlands		X		
	Provide habitat protection		X		
	Provide dune walkovers		X		
	Prevent, reduce, or address shoreline erosion	X	X	X	

	Identified Need	Economy	Environment	Infrastructure	Community
	Promote the use of agricultural, Silvicultural, and rural BMP's		X		X
Infrastructure	Enhance emergency services			X	X
	Protect water resources	X	X	X	X
	Provide stormwater management and flooding controls		X	X	X
	Provide WWTP / sanitary sewer expansion and upgrades	X	X	X	X
	Provide dirt road paving and stabilization	X	X	X	X
	Increase public access to waterfront through means such as additional boat ramps, fishing piers, and increased beach parking	X	X	X	X
	Ensure an adequate and efficient transportation network including bikeways and trails	X	X	X	X
	Promote the use of the AN railway from Port St. Joe to CSX trunk in Chattahoochee	X		X	
	Provide technology upgrades such as Wi-Fi and broadband infrastructure	X		X	X
Community	Expand health care services for the elderly	X		X	X
	Provide more affordable housing	X		X	X

	Identified Need	Economy	Environment	Infrastructure	Community
	Increase professional development opportunities	X			X
	Increase availability of dependable child care				X
	Enhance youth recreation opportunities				X

*Community Needs may be non-RESTORE eligible activities, but may be if properly incorporated into overall project.

REFERENCES

1. Gulf County Restore Act Advisory Committee (RAC) meetings (2012, 2013, 2015)
2. Gulf County Economic Development Council meeting (June 2015)
3. Gulf County Capital Improvement Plan (2014)
4. Gulf County Comprehensive Plan (2011)
5. Apalachee Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2013)
6. St. Joseph Bay Buffer Preserve Management Plan (Draft, 2012)
7. St. Joseph Bay Aquatic Preserve Management Plan (2008)
8. St. Andrew Bay Surface Water Improvement Plan (1998)
9. St. Andrew / St. Joe Bay Community Based Watershed Management Plan, The Nature Conservancy (Draft, December 2014)
10. Apalachicola to St. Marks Community Based Watershed Management Plan, The Nature Conservancy (Draft, December 2014)
11. Port St. Joe Port Authority and Gulf County Chamber of Commerce. Strategic Opportunities for Port St. Joe's Emerging Port (2014)
12. Johnson, Jr., James H. and Catherine Wheeler McClain. Assessing the Competitiveness of Gulf County, Florida (2006)
13. www.cityofportstjoe.com
14. www.gulfcountyedc.com
15. www.portofportstjoe.com
16. www.visitgulf.com