# Gulf County RESTORE Act

# Project Submission Guidance Document

## RESTORE Act Overview

On April 20, 2010, the largest offshore oil spill in the United States occurred, exacerbating the effects of previous natural disasters.  Oil flowed unchecked for three months.  The cause was an explosion of the Deepwater Horizon, an oil rig drilling in the Gulf of Mexico.  Before the well was capped, millions of barrels of crude oil were released, closing tens of thousands of square miles of federal waters to fishing, and causing extensive damage to marine and wildlife habitats, and tourism.

On July 6, 2012, the President signed into law the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act (RESTORE Act). The Act established the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund in the U.S. Treasury Department.  Eighty percent of the civil penalties paid after July 6, 2012, under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act in connection with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill will be deposited into the Trust Fund and invested.  Under the Act, amounts in the Trust Fund will be available for programs, projects, and activities that restore and protect the environment and economy of the Gulf Coast region. Under the Act, Treasury will administer two grant programs, called the Direct Component and the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program.

## Gulf County RESTORE Act - Direct Component Allocations

The Gulf County RESTORE Act Advisory Committee (RAC) was established in 2012 to assist in the development of a plan for implementation of RESTORE Act funding to be received locally through the Direct Component Program.  As of July 2nd, 2015 Gulf County has been allocated a total of $18,408,942 in Direct Component Funds. Currently $2,846,929 is available to Gulf County for Year 1. However, before Gulf County can access these funds, the U.S. Treasury requires a Multiyear Implementation Plan (MYIP) to be submitted, which is the plan that outlines how these funds will be spent.

Gulf County's MYIP will be developed over a period of approximately 14 months, beginning May 2015 and wrapping up in August 2016. The County has hired Dewberry Engineers Inc. to assist the County staff, the RAC, and the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in development of the MYIP. Several public meetings have been held to date and the RAC and BOCC have approved a County Needs Assessment document and Project Selection Criteria which will be used in scoring eligible projects. The Adopted Needs Assessment and Adopted Selection Criteria with Scoring documents can be found at http://gulfcountyrestore.com.

The next step in the rigorous process of developing the MYIP is prioritizing a subset of eligible, locally supported projects on which to focus. The RAC is currently soliciting project proposals for potential inclusion in the MYIP. This document will guide eligible organizations through the project submission process.  The Project Portal will open on October 19th, 2015.

## Are You Eligible to Submit a Project?

Access to and management of federal funds is a highly complex and intricate process. The County must produce and maintain a detailed record of accounting procedures as it relates to the use of federal funds. Because of this and other factors, project submissions in Gulf County are limited to the following eligible entities listed and described in Table 1 below. Individuals and for profit businesses are not eligible to apply. If you have a project idea, you are encouraged to contact and collaborate with an eligible entity listed below.

| Eligible Entity | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Government / Instrumentalities | Local governments including counties, cities, and towns; Quasi government entities created by state statute or local authority such as regional planning councils, transportation authorities, water districts, or utility districts; Federal and state governments established and recognized by the U.S. Constitution and State Constitution and any legally established agencies thereof; Instrumentalities operated for public purpose including schools, hospitals, libraries, soil and water conservation districts, fire associations, etc. |
| Institutions of Higher Education | Any public or private educational institution that provides a bachelor's degree, 2 year degree, or 1 year program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation and is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association. |
| Non-Profit Organizations | An organization possessing a valid tax exempt status with the IRS, such as a 501(c)3 status. |

## What Types of Projects are Eligible for Funding?

In accordance with the RESTORE Act, Direct Component funds can be used for the following eligible activities:

- Restore and protect natural resources
- Mitigate damage to fish, wildlife and natural resources
- Implement Federally-approved conservation plans
- Workforce Development
- Improve State parks located in coastal areas affected by the spill
- Infrastructure projects for local economy
- Coastal flood protection
- Planning assistance
- Promotion of tourism
- Promote consumption of seafood for the Gulf

## What Type of Projects will Receive the Highest Scores?

Gulf County has recognized community needs within four unique categories: Environment, Economy, Infrastructure, and Community. Projects within one category may have benefits in one or more of the additional categories. Within each category, four to five individual criteria have been prioritized by the County. All proposed projects must also meet certain Programmatic Criteria including feasibility, a demonstration of public benefit and reasonable timing, partnerships and leveraging of additional funds, as well as sustainability and efficiency. The adopted priorities of the County (in no particular order) are:

- Habitat Conservation and Preservation  (5 points maximum)
- Habitat Restoration  (5 points maximum)
- Water Quality  (10 points maximum)
- Natural Systems Resiliency  (6 points maximum)
- Tourism and Tourism Opportunities  (5 points maximum)
- Recreational Fishing and Local Seafood  (5 points maximum)
- Job Creation  6 points maximum)
- Industry and Business Growth  (5 points maximum)
- Workforce Development  (5 points maximum)
- Port Development  (9 points maximum)
- Transportation Network Improvements  (6 points maximum)
- Essential Services  (7 points maximum)
- Disaster Resiliency  (4 points maximum)
- Cultural and Historic Resources  (2 points maximum)
- Community Health  (2 points maximum)
- Affordable Housing  (2 points maximum)
- Education and Public Outreach  (2 points maximum)
- Youth Opportunities and Childcare  (2 points maximum)
- Leverage Funds  (18 points maximum)

Each section contains several short-answer/essay style questions with associated word limits and maximum points possible. The points shown on each question represent the maximum points allocated to that question from the Project Selection Criteria that will be used in scoring each project. The maximum number of possible points for the priority criteria is 100 (Programmatic Criteria, 12 points; Environmental Criteria, 26 points; Economic Criteria, 26 points; Infrastructure Criteria, 26 points; Community Preferences, 10 points). An additional 18 points may be acquired in the Bonus Points section (Section D) for additional leveraging of external funds.

It is possible to receive partial points for any given question. Projects will be ranked comprehensively (according to the total points acquired across all criteria). Therefore, it is in your best interest to answer as many questions as possible. If a question does not pertain to your proposed project, enter "n/a" in the text box.

The full detailed description of the County's Project Selection Criteria can be found at http://gulfcountyrestore.com.

## How do I Submit a Project?

1. Verify you are an eligible entity.
2. Verify your project contains at least one of the eligible activities listed by the RESTORE Act.
3. The Project Portal can be accessed online by navigating to the Gulf County RESTORE website at http://gulfcountyrestore.com
4. The Project Portal will be open from **October 19th, 2015 to November 30th, 2015**. Click on the "Submit a Project" link located on the left-hand side of the Gulf County RESTORE home screen to begin. This link will redirect you to the Project Portal submission process.
5. Register and Create Username and Password. Password must contain:
   - a minimum of 1 lower case letter [a-z] and
   - a minimum of 1 upper case letter [A-Z] and
   - a minimum of 1 numeric character [0-9] and
   - a minimum of 1 special character: ~`!@#$%^&*()-_+={}[]|\;:"<>,./?
6. Log In: Enter Username and Password
7. Add a project:
   a. **Tab 1: Project and Title Location**
      i. Enter Project Title
      ii. Enter Project address; if address unknown, enter zip code and drag dot to location
      iii. Save location
      iv. Click on Project Form Tab when complete
   b. **Tab 2: Complete Project Details**
      i. Click on "Project Form" tab
      ii. Answer all questions following the instructions on the screen
      iii. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are required
      iv. If no response, enter N/A
      v. Click the "Save Details" button often as you work, so your progress will not be lost
   c. **Tab 3: Add attachments (Optional)**
      i. Add up to 3 attachments
      ii. Acceptable file type: PDF only
      iii. Name each attachment
      iv. File Size limit: 2 mb each
   d. **Tab 4: Project Submission**
      i. Congratulations! You have completed all steps and are now ready to submit your project, click the "Submit Project" button.
   e. **Editing Before Submission, Before Project Close Date**
      i. Navigate to: Home > Projects > My Projects
      ii. Click "View or Edit" button
   f. **Editing After Submission, Before Project Close Date**
      i. Navigate to: Home > Projects > My Projects
      ii. Click "View/Edit" for selected project
      iii. Click on Tab 4 Status

       iv.   Choose "Edit Application" button
       v.   Confirm in Pop Up Window
       vi.   The application is now editable
       vii.   You must resubmit it when finished

g. **Revoking Your Application**
       i.   Navigate to: Home > Projects > My Projects
       ii.   Click "View/Edit" for selected project
       iii.   Click on Tab 4 Status
       iv.   Click on "Delete Application" Please be aware that deleting your application will remove it and all its contents from the website. Once deleted, this information is not recoverable.

h. **Saving Your Application**
       i.   Click the printer icon, which is located below the status bar
       ii.   Click open to view your application in a pdf format
       iii.   Click save to download and save your application to your computer

**Please save a copy of your application.**

**All applications must be submitted by November 30th, 2015, no exceptions. You will not be able to edit your project after the submittal deadline.**

## Questions?

All documents and meeting information can be found on the Gulf County RESTORE website at http://gulfcountyrestore.com

For online technical inquiries, contact Stella Wilson at ewilson@dewberry.com or (850) 760-0331.

To contact a Gulf County representative, email Warren Yeager, RESTORE Coordinator, at wyeager@gulfcounty-fl.gov or call (850) 227-2396.