

FLORIDA GULF OF MEXICO RESTORATION

PROJECT SUBMITTAL FORM

Form Purpose and Instructions:

- To assist the project proposal and review process, please complete this Submittal Form. Completion of the Form will contribute to the appropriate information being completely and accurately submitted for each project.
- Take as much space as needed for each question, but please keep responses as focused as possible. It may assist you to review all the questions before addressing any one question.
- Please submit one Form per project, if you have multiple projects - please submit one Form for each project.
- Please submit completed Forms to Restoration.Projects@dep.state.fl.us. Once your Form is successfully submitted, you will receive a confirmation email from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Project Name:

Contact Information *(Include at least one name, phone number, email address, and organization name if applicable):*

Project Location *(Include a map, if possible, and the city, county, longitude/latitude, and watershed):*

Project Description *(Describe all aspects of the project):*

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed project is to complete the City of Niceville's existing plans for comprehensive stormwater management and surface water and habitat restoration to improve existing and maintain future surface water quality in Boggy Bayou, Choctawhatchee Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

The City is proposing the completion of projects which have been specifically identified as necessary components in its "Stormwater Management Needs Assessment", "Niceville Stormwater Master Plan", "The Stormwater Facilities Plan", and the completed Boggy Bayou Restoration Plan, 2007, prepared for the State of Florida. In addition, the City has also created a Stormwater Management Utility which provides planning and earmarked O & M revenues on an annual basis.

The City of Niceville's Programs have to-date completed four of the Stormwater Master Plan identified components and has nine additional itemized projects to fully implement its Master Plan.

The projects proposed for this funding are: Thirty-First Street, Hicks Branch, Evens Branch at Cypress, Evens Branch at Reynolds Ave., Evens Branch at Meigs St., Thomas Branch at Boxer Ave., Thomas Branch at McEwen St., Bolton Bayou outfall, and restoration of the Headwaters of Boggy Bayou.

The City's completed individual component projects are: Linden Avenue, Bayshore Place I, Bayshore Place II, and Turkey Creek "A".

Based on the above, it is hopefully clear that the City of Niceville has in place a comprehensive Stormwater Management Implementation Plan and Boggy Bayou Restoration Plan completely prepared and can begin the initiation of their phases within a few weeks of authorization.

This proposed project is to fully implement the City of Niceville's existing Stormwater Master Plan and Restoration Plan to insure the areas surface waters are maintained in a swimmable/fishable condition for its current and future residents, and to maintain its local and area-wide tourist based economy based on commercial fishing, sports fishing, and public recreation.

In summary, the City of Niceville is the only political entity in Okaloosa County to have a Stormwater Management Plan and a current surface water body restoration plan. Moreover, Niceville has implemented the only Stormwater Utility in the County. These efforts reflect the City's standing commitment to improve area water quality and to restore degraded habitat from years of sedimentation and neglect. The City has taken a full watershed approach and proposes to enhance all related environmental/water quality conditions in the northwestern segment of Choctawhatchee Bay.

With this approach and with assistance from this funding, the City of Niceville can substantially **RESTORE** the waters and related shorelines in Boggy Bayou and Choctawhatchee Bay. The City of Niceville truly believes that in Coastal Florida Environmental Protection and restoration is, in fact, Economic Development.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS:

The City of Niceville has a detailed cost estimate for the projects proposed in this submittal. This is as follows:

<u>Individual Master Plan Project</u>	<u>Engineering Cost Estimate</u>
1. 31st St. /First Baptist Church	\$ 370,000
2. Hicks Branch	2,899,000
3. Evens Branch @ Cypress Ave.	381,000
4. Evens Branch @ Reynolds Ave.	1,060,000
5. Evens Branch @ Meigs	688,000
6. Thomas Branch @ Boxer Ave	1,727,000
7. Thomas Branch @ McEwen	2,753,000
8. Bolton Bayou	<u>1,036,000</u>
Stormwater Total	\$10,914,000
9. Restoration Total	<u>\$ 1,600,000</u>
Total Program	\$12,514,000

To supplement the requested funds, the City of Niceville currently has \$1,057,650 in its Stormwater Management Trust Fund to contribute to this overall effort and an additional \$185,850 in its Stormwater Utility Account as well as \$113,000 which currently exists in the City's Stormwater Escrow Account. Moreover, Stormwater Utility Revenues of some \$40,000 per month (\$480,000 yearly) can also be dedicated to the overall program for operation and maintenance.

Given the above available matching funds, the Official Request by the City of Niceville is:

Sum of All Projects	\$12,514,000
Less City Stormwater Reserve	(1,057,650)
Less Escrow Funds	(113,000)
Less Utility Account Surplus	<u>(185,850)</u>
Total RESTORE Funds Requested	\$11,157,500

OTHER FUNDING:

The nature and extent of supporting or potential matching funds are included in the Section above. However, the City of Niceville has authorized stormwater improvements of \$429,000 in 2013. Total funding to date for Stormwater Master Plan Improvements in Niceville are:

City of Niceville 2007 - 2012	\$ 1,192,000
City of Niceville 2013	429,000
NWFWMD Grant 2007	<u>460,000</u>

Total Master Plan Implementation Funds
Stormwater Improvement Funds Spent To-Date \$ 2,081,000

Note: Fund totals do not include O & M costs supported by the City's Stormwater Utility Fees at approximately \$480,000 annually, or the expense of developing its Stormwater Master Plan or Boggy Bayou Restoration Plan.

TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY:

In the development of its Stormwater Plan, the City of Niceville has used most of the proven stormwater management technical alternatives for engineering applications recommended in its Master Plan. All completed projects have used a number of applications such as vaults, Bay savers, detention/retention ponds, trash racks, yard trash removal, land acquisition/buffers, and other proven techniques. Emphasis has been placed on cost effective techniques to optimize the use of the City's O & M funds.

With respect to Boggy Bayou Restoration, the City has contracted for extensive analysis and recommendations to restore the head waters of Boggy Bayou to a more productive and efficient micro ecosystem. Originally, it was proposed that years of sediment be removed from the area, but after extensive consultation with regulatory agencies, a less extensive Plan was adopted. The proposed technical applications now are to restore and/or construct habitat, create living shorelines, restore emergent grasses, remove exotic plants, provide facilities for native bird species, and improve the access for paddle boaters to and from Turkey Creek.

The proposed Restoration Plan (2007), as well as the full implementation of the City of Niceville's Stormwater Plan are both to assist in achieving the Goals of the Northwest Florida Water Management District's Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan for habitat restoration and the improved treatment of stormwater runoff in the Choctawhatchee Bay Watershed.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS:

Both the proposed City of Niceville Stormwater Master Plan and Boggy Bayou Restoration Plan have an enormous net positive environmental benefit. These benefits accrue in terms of water quality improvements in receiving waters, sediment reduction/removal, trash removal, habitat restoration/creation, living shoreline creation, improved resilience, and a community understanding of public efforts being implemented to improve the waters in their community. It is an important goal of the City to return Boggy Bayou to permanent swimmable/fishable and aquatic productive conditions.

With full implementation of the City's Stormwater Management Plan, almost all stormwater discharges from much of the NW Choctawhatchee Bay Watershed discharging into local surface waters will receive some level of treatment. Moreover, upland applications in the watershed to reduce the potential threats to water quality (fertilizers, oils, illegal dumping, yard waste, etc.) will also be a high priority for the City through its Code Enforcement efforts. Moreover, there are almost no adverse impacts from the proposed efforts other than very minor habitat modification during construction of projects.

With respect to the Boggy Bayou Head Waters Restoration, the Plan addresses years of uncontrolled sedimentation, removal of exotic species, loss of habitat, and reconstruction of the former living shoreline for both plant, fisheries and animal habitat.

Habitat restoration is also proposed along the northern shoreline by removing Chinese tallow trees (*Sapium sebiferum*) and, potentially, common reed (*Phragmites australis*). These areas would be replanted with sand cordgrass (*Spartina bakeri*) to enhance the bayou edge and develop specific habitat enhancements to create a living shoreline environment.

There were numerous casual observations of osprey foraging within the northern parts of Boggy Bayou. However, very little perch habitat is present along the primary feeding areas. As an additional habitat enhancement measure, an osprey nesting platform is proposed within the marsh island near the south center of the project.

This Restoration Plan is intended to provide a general course of action to meet the intended restoration goals for Boggy Bayou. The primary components include the removal of accreted sediments, exotic vegetation removal and replanting with appropriate vegetation, the creation of living shorelines and related structures, and osprey platform installation. These measures will restore and improve habitat, increase aquatic productivity, restore recreational opportunities, and enhance wildlife utilization within the northern end of Boggy Bayou. There should be no lasting environmental damage associated with restoration.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS:

In consideration of social and economic benefits associated with the Proposed Project, it must be noted that the citizens of Niceville have expressed their strong support for the City's stormwater improvement and management efforts. For example, during the creation of the City's Stormwater Utility (2006-2007), the City Council held three public hearings on the implementing ordinance. At none of the three hearings did a single citizen express any objection to the creation of the Stormwater Utility and Master Plan Program.

It is generally understood by the citizens of Niceville that improvements to their community such as stormwater, recreation facilities, libraries, etc. substantially enhance the quality of life in their community and have enormous contributions to their families and to their property values. Niceville was recently voted to be the best place in Florida to raise children. The City is acutely aware that enhancement of quality of life factors contribute to their economy.

In terms of specific employment as a result of this program, it is estimated that it would have an immediate impact on the area's construction industry. Additionally, better consistent water quality in the Bayou will likely serve as a catalyst for more water based recreation related employment, more tourism, and related commercial and residential construction.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE:

The construction of the suite of stormwater improvements will provide a reduction in peak run-off during a storm event reducing the potential impact of flooding. Additionally, flood reduction is a major component of the Stormwater Master Plan.

The Boggy Bayou Head Waters Restoration Plan is intended to establish new and restore old habitat to create a living shoreline compatible with local species and water quality considerations.

CONFLICTS OR COMPLEMENTS TO EXISTING EFFORTS:

The proposed program is not only consistent with existing water management plans but actually assists in implementing them. In fact, many of the components of the Niceville Stormwater Management Master Plan have been provided by Florida Natural Resource and Environmental Agencies.

The Niceville Stormwater Plan is supported by: Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection - Facilities Plan, NFWFMD Choctawhatchee Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan; and Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance, Choctawhatchee Bay Improvement Plan. Additionally, the City has received permits from all the regulatory agencies for the four stormwater projects completed and the one currently being advertised for bid.

COMPLIES WITH FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL AND TRIBAL LAW/REGULATIONS:

The City of Niceville's Stormwater Master Plan and Restoration Plan Improvements were designed to fully comply with all local, State and Federal laws and regulations. There is no expectation that any aspect of either Plan can not meet stringent permit requirements.

READINESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

The nine individual projects in this request have all previously been planned and programmed awaiting available funds. Each individual project has been included in an overall implementation strategy for completion. For each component, the City and its engineers have determined design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, and related costs. Most individual projects can be designed in 90 days, permitted in the next 120 days, bid in 45 days and provided a notice to proceed with construction in 15 days, for a total of 270 days. The City of Niceville should be able to begin construction on a comprehensive proposed implementation program within three one-year cycles.

To facilitate and expedite Program completion, the City is proposing to undertake three individual projects per year in order to begin construction on all nine projects by the end of three years. The three-year period to design, obtain right-of-way, permit and bid will allow the City staff, engineers, and various construction companies

adequate time to manage the entire process.

PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE:

The City of Niceville has conducted some nine public hearings on the scope and requirements of the Stormwater Master Plan implementation. It conducted three hearings on the creation of the Stormwater Utility, three hearings on the SRF Stormwater Facilities Plan, and at least three on the Utilities Fees. There has not been a significant objection to the program expressed at any of these public forums.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU WISH TO PROVIDE:

With respect to volume and electronic file transfers, the City of Niceville will not submit a complete package of supporting documentation. However, any of the following are available upon request:

1. Stormwater Management Needs Assessment
2. Stormwater Master Plan
3. SRF Stormwater Facilities Plan
4. Boggy Bayou Restoration Plan, 2007
5. Map of all stormwater improvement locations
6. Photos of Boggy Bayou Head Waters restoration needs
7. Individual Project Submittal Forms for each identified project in the City's Comprehensive Stormwater Program.

Cost Appendix Sheet	
Cost Item	Cost Estimate
Planning	
Planning Subtotal:	
Construction	
Construction Subtotal:	
Monitoring	
Monitoring Subtotal:	
Project Cost	
Subtotal:	
TOTAL:	

Estimated Costs by Year	
Year 1	
Year 2	
Year 3	
Year 4	
Year 5	
Year 6	