

Florida Gulf of Mexico Restoration
Project Submittal Form

Project Name:

Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan

Contact Information

Holly Greening, Director
Tampa Bay Estuary Program
hgreening@tbep.org
727-893-2765

Mark Alderson, Director
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program
mark@sbep.org
941-955-8085

Lisa Beever, Director
Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
lbeever@swfrpc.org
239-338-2556 ext 235

Project Location (include map, if possible, and the city, county, long/lat, and watershed)

The *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan* includes 55 coastal habitat restoration projects to restore coastal and near-shore habitats, located in 11 counties stretching from Levy County south to Collier County on Florida's west coast. Project locations are shown on Attachment 1. Information on the location of individual projects included in the *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan* (with city/county, latitude and longitude) is included in the individual project descriptions from the Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan (SWFRERP) in the FDEP database.

Project Description (describe all aspects of the project)

The *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan* directly supports the State's Priority Area 2 (Community resilience/living shorelines) and Priority Area 5 (Fish and wildlife habitat and management).

The *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan* includes 30 3-Year priority projects and 25 10-year projects (Attachment 2). Projects include:

- Freshwater wetland creation in coastal watersheds
- Coastal upland restoration, including longleaf pine restoration
- Marsh and mangrove restoration

- Exotic plant removal and replanting with native vegetation
- Large-scale restoration of a mosaic of habitat types, from tidal fresh oligohaline, marsh, mangrove and salt barrens (or salterns), and coastal shorelines
- Barrier island habitat restoration (from the Gulf to the bay)
- Springs and spring run restoration

Estimated Project Costs (describe the estimated costs of the project, including any assumptions for contingency and ongoing operations/maintenance. Identify other secured funding sources such as matching funds, in-kind contributions or state/federal dollars. In addition, if possible, complete and submit the Cost Appendix Sheet associated with this form):

Estimated needed total project costs for the 55 habitat restoration projects included in the *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan* is **\$85,360,554** (see page 31 of the SWFRERP). Individual project descriptions include estimates of matching funds and other contributions.

Of the 55 proposals, the SWFRERP identified 30 project priorities recommended for the first 3 years of the program. The requested amount of these projects in the first 3 years is \$39,162,555. However, SWFRERP further suggests a cap of \$10,000,000 placed on each individual component project, or a first 3 year funding request of \$36,162,555 (pages 2-3 in SWFRERP).

Other funding (indicate if the project is submitted for any potential funding or if it may be used to leverage additional funding, of so please describe the funding source (e.g. State/Federal Grants):

Additional funding from grants, municipalities and other funding sources is shown in the individual project descriptions included in the FDEP database from the SWFRERP.

Technical feasibility (describe the technologies involved and any relevant past experience or proven success with similar projects):

Individual project descriptions include technical approach (see database descriptions). Coastal habitat restoration techniques have been refined and adjusted over many years in Southwest Florida by the SWFWMD SWIM program and others, and environmental benefits are expected to meet or exceed estimated values.

Environmental Benefits (Describe the nature, magnitude, and timing of any environmental benefits attributable to the project. If possible, describe potential environmental performance measures [e.g. pollutant reduction]. Please address any potential environmental impacts associated with implementing or maintaining the project [e.g., loss of a habitat or conversion of habitat from one type to another during implementation]).

Environmental benefits resulting from the *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan* totals **9,186 acres** (6,931 in 3Yr Priority projects and 2,255 additional acres in

the 10 Yr projects), plus an addition 65,000 acres of exotic species maintenance (see Attachment 2). Individual project descriptions include habitat restored and additional information on each (see FDEP database for individual project descriptions).

Economic and Social Benefits (describe the economic and social benefits including those related to the project's improved ecosystem services and any estimates on jobs created or preserved).

Jobs created or preserved by the 30 Priority *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan* alone equals an estimated 272 jobs. Adding in the additional 10Yr Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration project jobs increases the total to **371 jobs created or preserved** by implementation of the *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan*.

Community Resilience (describe if the project assists Florida's ability to anticipate, withstand, or recover from hazards or threats [e.g. hurricane preparedness, establishing living shorelines]).

A number of the projects in the *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan* include dune restoration, mangrove and marsh restoration, and shoreline improvements (see Attachment 2), which will enhance Florida's ability to withstand hazards such as hurricanes and sea level rise.

Conflicts or Complements to Existing Efforts (describe any ongoing activities in the project implementation area, if the project is part of another plan, and why the project does or does not interfere with that work. Please consider how the project may complement existing local, regional, and state efforts/plans/objectives).

Coastal habitat restoration projects in the *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan* which occur within one or more of the National Estuary Program boundaries (see Map 5 of the SWFRERP, page 34) can assist in implementing the NEPs federally-approved Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans. The two Water Management Districts develop Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plans, of which many of the projects would assist in implementing. In addition, all of these projects are elements of the Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan, adopted on March 8, 2013.

Complies with Federal, State, Local and Tribal Laws/Regulations (describe any concerns or potential conflicts).

No concerns have been noted.

Readiness for Implementation (describe if the project has had any design or permitting work started or completed [attach permits or design work]. Please address any issues that may delay start or finish of the project).

Three projects in the *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan* have completed permits as of July 2012, but have not yet been fully implemented (page 30 in the SWFRERP). In addition, several other projects are in design and permitting phases (see individual project descriptions in the FDEP database). After rules are provided by the Treasury Department regarding RESTORE Act funding, more will be understood regarding definitions of ‘previously authorized projects’. At that point, the southwest Florida NEPs can assist the State in identifying such projects within the *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan*.

Public Acceptance (describe any known or potential public approval or opposition to the project).

All projects contained in the SWFRERP, including the 55 included in this *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan*, were reviewed and ranked through publicly-noticed meetings of a Work Group (January 28-29 and February 11, 2013), followed by a Joint NEP Management Board on Feb 20, 2013. The Joint NEP Policy Board, consisting of 39 elected officials, Water Management Governing Board members, and agency leads (listed on page 8 of the SWFRERP) approved the process and resulting plan on March 8, 2013. All meetings were noticed (1) in the Florida Administrative Register; (2) through direct notice to the three National Estuary Program Board members and all applicants; and (3) on the websites of the three NEPs.

Additional Information you may wish to provide (Please include any maps, designs, drawings, photos, or background resources that may assist in completely and accurately understanding the project):

Two documents are attached:

- Attachment 1: Map showing locations of the 55 projects comprising the *Southwest Florida Regional Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan*, including 3-Year and 10-Year projects.
- Attachment 2: A listing of the 55 projects included in the *Southwest Florida Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan* and the habitat restoration benefits provided by each project.

The Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan (SWFRERP), approved by the Joint NEP Policy Board members on March 8, 2013 has been previously provided to FDEP.