

Florida Gulf of Mexico Restoration
Project Submittal Form

Project Name:

Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring Plan

Contact Information

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

The *Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring Plan* includes 14 water quality monitoring programs to enhance understanding and tracking of water quality conditions in coastal waterbodies, located in 11 counties stretching from Levy County south to Collier County on Florida's west coast. Project locations are shown on the attached map (Attachment 1) and are included in the Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan (SWFRERP). Information on the location of individual projects included in the *Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring Plan* (with city/county, latitude and longitude) is included in the individual project descriptions from the SWFRERP in the FDEP database.

Project Description (describe all aspects of the project)

The *Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring Plan* directly supports tracking of the impacts from implementation of the State's Priority Area 1 (Stormwater/Wastewater Infrastructure projects); Priority Area 3 (Water quality projects); and Priority Area 4 (Implementation of agricultural best management practices).

The *Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring Plan* includes 14 priority projects (listed in Attachment 2), combined into one Regional Ambient Monitoring Program (RAMP). This Plan

proposes the establishment of a Regional Trust Fund for Biological and Water Resource Monitoring to support the following critical monitoring elements:

- Hydrologic (stream gage) monitoring
- Ambient water quality monitoring
- Atmospheric deposition monitoring
- Tidal creeks monitoring to support nutrient criteria development

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 cost of the establishment of the Regional Trust Fund for Biological and Water Resource Monitoring Program is **\$20,000,000**. Needed funds to support all projects included in the *Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring Plan* is **\$33,376,828** (see page 31 of the SWFRERP). Individual project descriptions include estimates of matching funds and other contributions.

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). Monitoring programs have been refined and continually adjusted over many years in Southwest Florida by the counties and cities implementing them.

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 Ambient Monitoring Plan* will enhance understanding and tracking of water quality conditions in coastal waterbodies, located in 11 counties stretching from Levy County south to Collier County on Florida's west coast. Individual project descriptions include 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 *Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring Plan* are estimated as **28 direct jobs**.

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]).

The ability to track and assess water quality response to hurricanes and other hazards or threats is critical to understanding and improving community resilience (see Attachment 2 and more detailed accounts in the FDEP database).

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).

Monitoring projects in the *Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring 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).

All projects in the *Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring Plan* can be implemented immediately. 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 Ambient Monitoring Plan*.

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

All projects contained in the Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan, including the 14 included in this *Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring 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 14 projects included in the *Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring Plan*.
- Attachment 2- A listing of the 14 projects included in the *Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring Plan*.

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.