

Florida Gulf of Mexico Restoration
Project Submittal Form

Project Name

Southwest Florida Regional Restoration of Reefs and Other Coastal Environments 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 Restoration of Reefs and Other Coastal Environments Plan* includes 19 projects to restore oyster and coral reefs and other coastal environments from Levy County 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 SW Florida Restoration of Reefs and Other Coastal Environments 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 Restoration of Reefs and Other Coastal Environments 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 Restoration of Reefs and Other Coastal Environments Plan* includes eight 3-Year and eleven 10-year projects. Projects include:

- Restore coastal bird sanctuaries
- Conserve and protect offshore environments
- Restore and protect coral reefs and other coastal environments
- Coordinate and expand existing Gulf monitoring efforts to track sentinel species and sites

- Minimize, and eliminate where possible, invasive species that impact the Gulf of Mexico.

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 19 projects to restore and replenish critical animal populations included in the *Southwest Florida Regional Restoration of Reefs and Other Coastal Environments Plan* is **\$78,354,474** (see page 31 of the SWFRERP). Individual project descriptions include estimates of matching funds and other contributions.

Of the 19 proposals, the SWFRERP identified 13 project priorities recommended for the first three years of the program. The requested amount of these projects in the first three years is **\$44,968,039**.

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). Restoration techniques for oysters and corals have been refined and adjusted over many years in Southwest Florida by the individual scientists, consortia and organizations, 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]).

These projects will promote sustainable resource management that focuses on actions to conserve and restore viable populations of living coastal and marine resources and their coastal and offshore environments.

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 thirteen priority projects within the *Southwest Florida Regional Restoration of Reefs and Other Coastal Environments Plan* equals an estimated 175 jobs. Adding in the additional 10-year projects, jobs increase to 220 **jobs created or preserved** by implementation of the *Southwest Florida Regional Restoration of Reefs and Other Coastal Environments 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 Restoration of Reefs and Other Coastal Environments Plan* include oyster restoration, barrier island protections, mangrove and marsh restoration, and shoreline improvements 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).

Restoration of reefs and other coastal environments projects 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 or conflicts 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).

No projects in the *Southwest Florida Restoration of Reefs and Other Coastal Environments Plan* have completed permits as of July 2012. 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 Restoration of Reefs and Other Coastal Environments Plan*.

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

All projects contained in the SWFRERP, including the 19 included in this *Southwest Florida Restoration of Reefs and Other Coastal Environments 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):

One document is attached:

- Attachment 1: Map showing locations of the eight projects comprising the *Southwest Florida Restoration of Reefs and Other Coastal Environments Plan*, including 3-Year and 10-Year projects.