

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:

Navarre Beach Sea Turtle Conservation Center, Inc. Visitor/Interpretive Center

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

Cathy S. Holmes, Project Director, 8668 Navarre Pkwy, #286, Navarre, FL 32566
850-565-0279; **info@navarrebeachseaturtles.org**

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

8740 Gulf Blvd., Navarre Beach, FL 32566, Santa Rosa County

GIS Coordinates - (X)-86.8607089062992, (Y)30.3819055280719 (See attached)

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

The Navarre Beach Sea Turtle Conservation Center (NBSTCC) is a non-profit (501©3) organization established in Navarre Beach, Florida. The NBSTCC's mission is the conservation and protection of threatened and endangered sea turtles through community education programs and partnered research.

The sustainability and conservation of Florida's coastal marine resources is paramount to this mission. The addition of an interpretive center will enhance the NBSTCC's ability to be an ambassador for conservation, public awareness education and ecotourism for Santa Rosa, Escambia and Okaloosa Counties. The design will include four additional large pools for non-releasable sea turtles. This feature will allow visitors to see "up close and personal" these fascinating creatures. The interpretive designs will focus on sea turtles and their habitat. Life-sized replicas of sea turtles with signage on their natural and life history, along with many interactive displays for all ages will educate our visitors on the importance of marine resource conservation and how the Gulf of Mexico and the health of all our oceans affects not only sea turtles, but all who live within its boundaries. Visitors will learn that they can make a difference and one individual action can create a ripple effect throughout the world.

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):*

Project will consist of a new 4,000 sq. ft. visitor/interpretive center and main exhibit pools; a large gift shop to defray annual operating costs; Additional parking, and re-routing of park traffic flow to ensure public safety when entering the facility. See attached view of facility for current road location.

Visitor/Interpretive Center With Gift Shop - \$1,552,500

4,000 sq. ft. visitor/interpretive center - \$800,000

Four (4) 22x26x5ft. deep exhibit pools - \$130,000; filtration \$240,000

Interpretive Signage/Interactive Display - \$232,500

Gift shop with display racks, merchandise cases, cash register, and resale items w/back stock - \$150,000

Additional Parking - \$85,000

Addition of 25 parking spaces, five (5) of which are handicap

Re-routing of Park Traffic - \$100,000

Includes modification of two (2) medians, asphaltting, new directional signage

Salary for the services of a permitted veterinarian (as needed basis, approximately 480 hours annually) 480hr x \$30/hr. = \$14,400; Salary for the services of a permitted rehabilitation coordinator to train all staff to facilitate staff being permitted by FWC to work with sea turtles at the facility. Using the estimate of 480hr x \$20/hr. = \$9600.00.

Total for both part-time salaries, annually **\$24,000.00 x 5 years = \$120,000**

Total - \$1,857,500

Matching Funds: District 4 Parks and Recreation - **\$165,000**

Additional Funding: Tourist Development Council - **\$60,000**

In-Kind Contributions and Donations: **\$140,358**

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

The NBSTCC has applied for the Gulf Seafood and Tourism Promotion Fund (\$250,000) (in partnership with the Navarre Beach Marine Sanctuary). The NBSTCC has submitted a Letter of Intent for the Pensacola Impact 100 grant, to be awarded in late 2013, which is a grant of \$104,500.

Technical Feasibility *(Describe the technologies involved and any relevant past experience or proven success with similar projects):*

Construction of the building to include specialized filtration equipment for the four (4) main pools. Sea turtle replicas including a large skeleton of an ancient sea turtle would be made by a company that has several years of experience in the area of interpretive signage. The NBSTCC sets a priority to work with local companies whenever possible. Filtration and pool design consultants have over 20 years combined experience. Interpretive project consultants have significant experience and have worked for the National Park Service in developing visitor centers.

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]):*

The Visitor/Interpretive Center will be considered a green facility. The NBSTCC's goal is to "lead by example" and be an environmentally responsible and resource-efficient facility. The Center will be designed to reduce its overall footprint on the environment by implementing the following actions if awarded:

- Water conservation by utilizing salt water wells located approximately 50 ft. underground for the main exhibit pools. We have also received approval from the Bureau of Ground Water Regulation, Northwest Florida Water Management District to pump water from Santa Rosa Sound for exhibit pools. We will install low flush toilets and motion activated hand washing sinks.
- Reducing waste by incorporating recycling programs, not only for the Center's refuse, but available for park visitors to use as well. Working with companies that provide minimal product packaging and high recyclable products. Employees at the Center will also use reusable and biodegradable supplies.
- Efficiently using energy through CFC or LED lighting, installing solar tubing and reducing air leakage through the building envelope; Using high-performance windows and extra insulation in walls, ceilings, and floors. The Center will also work with the local power company to incorporate the use of solar energy.
- Indoor environmental quality enhancement will be incorporated by using construction materials and interior finish products with zero or low volatile organic compounds (VOC) emissions, good for people and sea turtles.
- Control of moisture accumulation by ensuring a well sealed building, proper HVAC temperatures and good ventilation.

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):*

The NBSTCC has experienced overwhelming support from Santa Rosa and surrounding counties. Even though the NBSTCC is not officially open, approximately 29 people, on average, stop by daily to see the Center's progress. The NBSTCC has begun utilizing a Guest Log to accurately account for visitors and gather their information for future marketing efforts. An interpretive center would attract even more tourists to the area, to visit the NBSTCC and learn about sea turtle conservation efforts and how best to support the continued recovery of the species. Based on community projections, it is estimated that by 2014, approximately 25,000 out-of-town visitors will visit Navarre Beach with an estimated economic impact of \$2.5 million. The NBSTCC will be a focal point for these projected eco-tourism visitors by providing planned activities and educational awareness campaigns. The expansion of the Center with the proposed Interpretive Center could potentially double the number of eco-tourism visitors to Navarre Beach and the surrounding area. It is anticipated that at least five (5) jobs will be created over a period of two-three years. As expansion continues, an increase in job opportunities will also occur.

As an ambassador for conservation, public awareness education and ecotourism for Navarre Beach the NBSTCC will foster special and unique relationships between visitors, residents, and leaders of Santa Rosa, Escambia and Okaloosa Counties. Public awareness programs will include Let's Save Sea Turtles Camp; Public programs for school-aged children; Lecture series and outreach presentations. Programs requested by educators will be offered as an enhancement to their existing curriculum. We will also offer specialized programs for residents, visitors, and community leaders about the importance of sea turtle conservation and the preservation of the world's marine resources.

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]):*

N/A

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):*

Phase II fully complements and enhances efforts to educate the public on sea turtle and marine resource conservation. It supports the Center's mission in more than one way. The vision is to inspire students, individuals and leaders of the community to understand that one person can make a difference and to empower individuals to act locally and globally to protect coastal and marine resources throughout the world. This will be accomplished through the promotion of understanding, stewardship and conservation of Florida's coastal marine resources through research and public awareness programs. The Center will seek-out cooperative

research agreements with Florida Universities, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, US Fish and Wildlife, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, and sea turtle conservation organizations to further the efforts of preserving and protecting sea turtles.

Complies with Federal, State, Local, and Tribal Laws/Regulations *(Describe any concerns or potential conflicts):*

N/A

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):*

The NBSTCC was granted a lease to the current building on October 31, 2012. Phase I of the building expansion is in the final stages with construction commencing in Sep 2013.. This addition will include a main exhibit pool and stadium seating for 30 people and interactive & educational interpretative displays.

Public Acceptance *(Describe any known or potential public approval or opposition to the project):*

The Center has encountered no opposition to the current project. The community already attends hatching events and public presentations average 50-100 people; The Center consistently receives, on average of 10 per month, requests for presentations from schools, civic organizations, other non-profits, and businesses. The Center also is contacted on a regular basis, with offers of free vendor space at local festivals, charity events and community activities.

To underscore this support, the NBSTCC has been chosen to contribute items to a time capsule as part of the Viva Florida state-wide celebration. This honor was bestowed on the Center by the community as the community, through a vote, chose the Center to be included in the time capsule, which will be sealed in Sep 2013.

In Santa Rosa County alone, community support has been overwhelming. Articles in local newspapers, emails of support to the Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners, monetary support from individuals and soft marketing techniques (approx. \$15,000 in one month), and requests for volunteer opportunities. Additionally, commitment from District 4 Commissioner Jim Melvin, Parks and Recreation Fund, for \$165,000.00 in matching funds and \$60,000.00 from the Tourist Development Council shows strong support at the county level.

Residents and visitors email, call or just show up at the Center, wanting to know “how much longer” before the Center is fully open to the public. A small interpretive center and gift shop has been set-up to satisfy visitors’ spontaneous visits, seeking more information about the Center. This affords the Center an opportunity to educate on sea turtle conservation and experience a “ground up” view of where the Center is now and where it will be in the future.

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