

Florida Gulf of Mexico Restoration
Project Submittal Form

Project Name:

Southwest Florida Regional Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species 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 Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species Plan* includes 13 monitoring and assessment projects, located in 7 counties stretching from Hillsborough County south to Collier County on Florida's west coast. The projects span the Tampa Bay, Sarasota Bay, Charlotte Harbor and Rookery Bay watersheds. Information on the location of individual projects included in the *Southwest Florida Regional Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species Plan* (with city/county, latitude and longitude) is included in the individual project descriptions from the *Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan* in the FDEP database. Project locations are shown on Attachment 1.

Project Description (describe all aspects of the project)

The *Southwest Florida Regional Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species Plan* directly supports the State's Priority Area 5 (Fish and wildlife habitat and management).

The *Southwest Florida Regional Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species Plan* includes 13 restoration projects, 6 of which are priority projects (listed on page 23 of the SWFRERP). The 13 projects are designed to "coordinate and expand existing Gulf monitoring efforts to track sentinel species and sites," as specified in the December 2011 *Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy* and the January 2013 document, *The Path Forward to Restoring*

the Gulf Coast. Combined these projects will result in better understanding of status and trends of these critical resources. Projects include:

- Applied seagrass assessment within SW Florida
- Benthic habitat mapping of coastal ecosystems
- Snook and redfish water structure remediation
- Seagrass monitoring
- Benthic monitoring
- Coastal habitat assessment and resiliency to climate change

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 13 sentinel species assessment and monitoring projects included in the *Southwest Florida Regional Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species Plan* is **\$8,513,243** (see pages 39-40 of the 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 include funding from grants, municipalities and other funding sources. Individual project descriptions included estimated funds needed and for the total project, with the difference between these two being the other funding amounts.

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

Individual project descriptions include monitoring and scientific assessment approach (see database descriptions).

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 Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species Plan* include the ability to measure environmental response to other management and restoration activities, and to assess the effectiveness of such actions.

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 13 *Southwest Florida Regional Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species Plan* projects equal an estimated 80 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]).

Monitoring and assessing sentinel species, including seagrass, provides critical information in estimating community resilience resulting from management and restoration actions.

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).

Projects in the *Southwest Florida Regional Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species Plan* occur within one or more of the National Estuary Program boundaries 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).

This project helps to implement NEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans.

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 of the projects proposed within the *Southwest Florida Regional Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species 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 *Southwest Florida Regional Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species 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 13 included in this *Southwest Florida Regional Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species 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 SWFREERP) 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):

Attachment 1- Sentinel Species Plan. A map of projects included in the *Florida Regional Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species Plan*