

Destin Charter Boat Association



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Governor Scott,

My name is Captain Gary Jarvis and I have been selected by the Destin Charter Boat Association and Destin Fisherman's Co-operative to represent our fleet during this R.E.S.T.O.R.E. panel process. As stakeholders who totally rely in the health and well-being of the Gulf of Mexico, our fleet represented by the Destin Charter Boat Association or D.C.B.A., would like to express our thoughts concerning the priorities established through the Multi County and Gulf States R.E.S.T.O.R.E. process. We are aware that all projects from the recommendations that will come from the 23 Florida county R.E.S.T.O.R.E. panels will be analyzed and evaluated by you and your staff, so that is why we want to share with you some issues that the professional fishing businessmen in our area think are important. As the most affected user group from the Deepwater Horizon disaster it is our hope that there will be a serious focus of recommended projects that will have a direct effect on improving science and management of the fisheries that we so dearly rely on. The long term impact of the Deepwater Horizon disaster on Gulf fisheries is still unknown and that is why I am writing this letter to you with a list of recommendations that is important to the Commercial, Charter for Hire and private boat recreational anglers and businesses here in Okaloosa County.

Apart from fisheries concerns there is also a need to improve the long term outlook for the development and improvement of commerce into the Destin and Okaloosa County area. The professional fishing businesses of D.C.B.A. have a few requests to be considered that will best serve not only the fleet but all residents and visitors alike. Below are some projects that will meet the intended goals of restoration of the ecology of the Gulf of Mexico and its wet lands. They will also address the need for restoration of commerce to the coastal communities that were harmed by the effects of the Deepwater Horizon disaster. Our recommendations carry the hope and intent behind the R.E.S.T.O.R.E. Bill passed by Congress.

- 1) The stabilization of Moreno point of Destin Harbor, this repeated shoaling of the entrance into Destin Harbor has a tremendous negative effect on commerce in Okaloosa County. Not only commercial fishing and boating businesses rely on the free flow of vessel traffic into Destin harbor, but so do thousands of local Okaloosa County residence and out of state visitors who generate millions in business revenues driven by waterborne recreational opportunities. This project and funding could also be enhanced by a partnership and financial commitments from county and city leaders to assist in the total cost of this much needed project.
- 2) Long term funding for third party independent fishery data collection projects including participation in state and federal stock assessments using Florida marine research departments in our state and private university systems.

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- 3) Long term funding for purchase, operation and software development for electronic log books for the federally permitted and state licensed guide boats to gain accurate and timely fishery dependent data to establish trends, sustainability and accurate harvest of all Gulf species.
- 4) Project to assist the state in development of an electronic reporting system for private boat recreational anglers.
- 5) Establish habitat protection and mitigation areas to protect grass flats and shallows in Choctawhatchee Bay. I.e. No Prop zones, polling or electric motor areas. Develop a shallow water recreational interaction area in the Bay using a replica of a historical sunken ship and building a live oyster bar that would also serve as a juvenile fish habitat.
- 6) Financial enhancement of the present Okaloosa County reef building dept. to build nursery enhancement areas in the Choctawhatchee Bay and juvenile fish habitat in open state and federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico.
- 7) Also, develop a project that will involve the building of expansive unpublished reef areas for fish stock restoration using concrete or other approved and biologically safe materials. The building of more large published artificial reefs like old barges, ships, and aircraft both in state and federal waters to enhance recreational fishing and diving opportunities. These projects also will have a great impact on commerce in our area.

Sir, I thank you for taking the time to consider these ideas in our attempt to see that the funding of projects from the R.E.S.T.O.R.E. Bill make their way back into the Gulf of Mexico, its estuaries, and into the coastal communities that rely on them for commerce and recreational enjoyment. If you or your staff has any further questions or concerns of these recommendations please contact me. FWCC executive Director Nick Wiley has my contact information.

Capt. Gary Jarvis

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