

RESTORE Act Ecosystem Restoration Project Proposals
for consideration in the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council's Comprehensive Plan
2012

Contact Information: Brooke Elias, Sarasota County ESLAP, belias@scgov.net , (941) 861-5387					Date of Submittal: 1-7-13		
Name of Project: Land Acquisition – Lemon Bay Watershed					Org and Rank: Sarasota County #1		
Project Description: Protection of bay front estuarine, scrub and other natural habitats through acquisition of land (fee simple) and/or conservation easements on Lemon Bay, including: 1. Reduce sedimentation, nutrient load. 2. Protect habitat for listed species, including gopher tortoise and Florida Scrub Jay. 3. Extend 'Blueways' paddle trails, kayak landings.							
Project Location: Lemon Bay Basin							
Responsible Party: Sarasota County				Partners:			
NEP: CHNEP		Project Cost: \$1,950,000			Dollars Needed \$1,950,000		
Start: FY13				Completion: FY15			
Status of Project Design and Permitting: Land/ conservation easement acquisition is dependent on willing landowner agreeing to option contract for sale of project parcel(s).							
What Date or Year could Construction Feasibly Begin: NA							
Your Proposed Timing of Funding (given permits, phasing, staging, etc.)							
FY	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	Total
	Contact landowners; begin negotiations.	Execute Option Agreements; close on properties.	Re-contact remaining landowners.				
Quantify Environmental Results and How to Measure Them: Acquiring 50 acres on Lemon Bay would protect estuarine habitat along the coast as well adjacent scrub habitat for the endemic Florida Scrub-Jay. County environmental land stewardship programs already monitor Florida Scrub-Jays on a regular basis. Increased protected habitat acreage and future scrub-jay population monitoring will provide quantifiable measures.							
Economic Benefits (including ecosystem services): This project will benefit recreational opportunities, providing additional coastal waterfront for kayaking and canoeing for Sarasota County's existing "Blueways Trail" system. This will provide benefits for leisure sport and ecotourism businesses. Protecting natural bay front provides ecosystem services, including storm protection, floodwater capacity/ retention, and filtration of nutrients/ sediment draining into Lemon Bay.							
Estimated number of Jobs Created or Preserved: Jobs may be created through fishing and other eco-tourism opportunities.							

How much Habitat will be restored and conserved?: Up to 50 acres of natural habitat in the Lemon Bay basin could be protected, including estuarine and bay front shoreline. Appropriate scrub habitat protected would be managed and restored to optimize local Florida Scrub-Jay populations.
Quantify pollutant reductions: Habitat protection will reduce nutrient and metal pollutants in water discharged to the bay. Quantifying reductions may not be feasible on protected properties.
What living coastal/ marine resources will be improved and by how much?: Bay front estuarine habitat provides nesting and/ or foraging areas for several species of listed wading birds. Scrub and scrubby flatwoods habitat in upland areas just east of Lemon Bay provide habitat for the state-threatened gopher tortoise and federally-threatened Florida Scrub-Jay.
How will community resilience be enhanced? This project will provide coastal resilience to impacts from tropical storms. It will also enhance the quality of life for citizens to access and enjoy natural coastal waterfront, which is very rare in the state of Florida.
Additional Justification: Lemon Bay is designated an ‘Outstanding Florida Water’ and an ‘Aquatic Preserve.’ Acquiring land on Lemon Bay would protect estuarine habitat along the coast as well adjacent scrub habitat for the endemic Florida Scrub-Jay. Sarasota County’s Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program has acquired 61.51 acres along Lemon Bay since 2001 at a cost of \$5,156,319. Acquiring an additional 50 acres in this priority site would further protect the quality of the bay as well as estuarine and upland habitats.

Add any photos or maps that explain project: *See attached.*

