

POTENTIAL DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL RESTORATION PROJECTS: PROVIDING INFORMATION TO ASSIST WITH PROJECT ASSESSMENT

To help you propose projects to the State of Florida's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), we developed this project submission form. You are not required to complete this form to submit a project. However, completion of the form will help DEP gather the information required to completely and accurately evaluate a project against the selection and evaluation criteria. Where appropriate in the form, please provide references to any additional supporting information.

Project Name: *(Include project number from DEP's existing list of submitted projects, if applicable.)*

Gulf Coast Discovery Center

Location for Project Implementation: *(For example, city and county, GIS coordinates if known.)*

Navarre Beach Park - Navarre Beach, Santa Rosa County, FL - lat. 30.382797 long.-86.860828

Brief Project Narrative: *(Describe what the project will do.)*

The mission of NWFL Marine Education and Discovery of Gulf Ecosystems, Inc. is to promote the appreciation, conservation, and understanding of the marine ecosystem of coastal Florida through education, service and hands-on, feet-wet experiences. The mission is accomplished by supporting existing programs of the Navarre Beach Marine Science Station and expanding on those programs to a broader audience including visitors to Northwest Florida.

The project includes the construction of a 9000 sf, LEED certified, Marine Interpretive Center (Gulf Coast Discovery Center) and an Outdoor Visitor Pavilion/Classroom (Discovery Pavilion). The Discovery Pavilion will serve as a gathering place for marine education, sustainable seafood cooking demonstrations and lectures, conservation education and exploration of Navarre Beach through guided and self-guided tours. The Discovery Pavilion will also feature WTR-TV (Watch the Reef TV), a perfect view for visitors from strategically placed underwater video cameras on the Gulf reefs. WTR-TV will also be used as a tool to monitor the delicate marine life in the Gulf year-round.

The Discovery Center will serve as the Gateway to the Gulf and will feature exhibits of local marine habitats and species. The exhibit flow will begin with "beach habitat" exhibits promoting clean, safe beaches, removal of marine debris and the effect of debris on marine life and will culminate with a deep sea exhibit. The exhibits will feature hands-on learning aids that help participants learn about the many important species from plankton to whale sharks that rely on a healthy Gulf of Mexico. The lifespan of the proposed project is 30 years.

The Discovery Center will also serve as a community resource facility, displaying information about marine safety and conservation of Gulf ecosystems and will have a much needed wet lab space to further student-centered research projects of local school districts and universities throughout Northwest Florida.

Discovery Center programming will address on-going environmental issues, major impact such as the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and will be a hub for involving students, community members and visitors in environmental stewardship activities. Dune restoration efforts, beach clean-ups, ethical fishing labs, and water quality monitoring, giving participants a feeling of true responsibility and connection to the critical area they are protecting.

The Discovery Center estimates 50,000 visitors annually, with half as out-of-town visitors for a direct economic impact of \$5.7 million and new tourism development tax dollars of \$286,087. The new project will create four new full-time jobs, twelve new part-time jobs and 50 volunteer opportunities.

Estimated Project Costs: (Describe the costs of the project, including any assumptions for contingency and ongoing operations and maintenance. Identify other available funding sources such as matching funds, in kind contributions or state or federal dollars. If possible, attach a schedule of anticipated costs, by year, over the anticipated project life.)

Expense	Cost	In-Kind/Match	Grant Request	
Land for Expansion (see attached)	6,000,000.00	6,000,000.00		0.00
A/E Fees - Design Visitor Pavilion	7,500.00	7,500.00		0.00
Visitor Pavilion Construction 40'x70'	180,000.00		180,000.00	
Discovery Center - LEED A/E Design	183,000.00	3,500.00	179,500.00	
Discovery Center - LEED Cert Building w/ contingency incl.	2,800,000.00		2,800,000.00	
Supplies/Equipment				
✓ ATV-Aquarium supplies and cleaning equipment- Underwater video pods – 1 dell computer – 1 card scan for entry – video surveillance cameras	115,570.00		115,570.00	
Center/Pavilion Exhibit Design and Fabrication `5000sf x \$350 sf	1,750,000.00		1,750,000.00	
Center Furnishings and Fixtures				
✓ Turnstile/Office, Reception/Store	210,000.00		210,000.00	
Signage/Promotion				
✓ Marine, Bird, Directional, Discovery Ctr.	98,000.00		98,000.00	
Maintenance Annual – Aquariums – Cleaning – Marine Life – Exhibit - Building Operations Annual	90,000.00		90,000.00	
✓ FT: Aquarist – Science Educator – Coordinator — Project Manager/Development				
✓ PT: Reception – Store Associate – Tours - Events	350,000.00	69,000.00	281,000.00	
Specimens – Marine Specimens Annual	95,000.00	10,000.00	85,000.00	
Mobile Learning Lab – Mobile exhibit for off-site promotion at festivals, schools, libraries and other public venue	125,000.00		125,000.00	
Indirect Cost - 13%	768, 829.00		768,829.00	
Total	12,772,899.00	6,090,000.00	6,682,899.00	

Anticipated Project Outcome with Respect to Screening Criteria

S1. Technically and administratively feasible: *(Briefly describe the critical technologies involved and any relevant past experience with similar projects.)*

NWFL Marine EDGE has engaged a LEED certified architect, structural engineer and plans to use a construction consultant who has built structures along the Gulf Coast and is familiar with the unique conditions and requirements. Preliminary design is aesthetically pleasing and conforms to existing surroundings and structures. The construction and infrastructure project identified has been researched extensively and the business plan and model has been crafted to insure the project is technically and administratively feasible. All infrastructure will be constructed meeting all applicable codes and resource conservation and protection standards, and will be constructed by licensed, bonded professionals.

S2. Provides environmental benefits: *(Briefly describe the nature, magnitude, and timing of any environmental benefits attributable to the project and any potential environmental costs 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 that are expected to occur post implementation include:

- 1) The Gulf Coast Discovery Center will enhance protection of the Gulf ecosystem through environmental and marine education and will increase appreciation of the Gulf of Mexico and the need for protection of the valuable resource through hands-on feet wet activities.
- 2) The Gulf Coast Discovery Center will provide real-time information on environmental [conditions, impact](#), marine safety and give citizen scientists an opportunity to volunteer in restoration, [monitoring and data collecting](#) -projects.
- 3) The Gulf Coast Discovery Center will provide a venue for marine research, water quality monitoring and allow students to experience first-hand conservation and restoration activities.
- 4) The Gulf Coast Discovery Center will be built to LEED certified standards blending environmental, economic, and occupant-oriented performance benefits. The LEED certified building will cost less to operate and maintain; will be energy- and water-efficient; healthier and safer for occupants; and will be a physical demonstration of the values of NWFL EDGE. The LEED Certified Discovery Center will reduce energy costs by 20%, will be a healthier, more pleasant interior environment for workers, reduce stormwater runoff, [increase groundwater recharge, utilize sustainable transportation systems](#) and will support other societal benefits.

Environmental Costs:

There are not environmental costs currently anticipated.

S3. Does not conflict with any ongoing or planned response or remediation work: *(Briefly describe ongoing response activities in the project implementation area, if any, and why the project does or does not interfere with that work.)*

There are no ongoing response activities in the project implementation area.

S4. Complies with applicable and relevant federal, state, local, and tribal laws and regulations: *(No information is needed for this screening criteria.)*

When awarded funding, all applicable and relevant federal, state, local and tribal laws and regulations will be followed.

Anticipated Project Outcome with Respect to Evaluation Criteria

E1. Will restore, rehabilitate, or replace a natural resource or service¹ believed/demonstrated to have been injured as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill or associated response activities: *(Briefly describe the nature of any relationship between the new/improved resources or services and those adversely impacted by the oil spill.)*

The Gulf side of Navarre Beach was directly impacted by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. The project location is located on the sound side of Navarre Beach which was indirectly impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill as part of the watershed. Navarre Beach and Santa Rosa County was directly impacted due to lost recreational activities and resulting impact of lost visitor opportunities. Navarre Beach, the town of Navarre and Santa Rosa County were also directly impacted economically with business loss, loss of revenue and reduction in visitors to the Navarre Beach area. The Gulf Coast Discovery Center will be the only community and tourism attraction on Navarre Beach with an estimated 50,000 visitors annually and direct economic impact/restoration of \$5.7 million annually. The Gulf Coast Discovery Center and exhibits will replace lost recreational opportunities through enhanced visitor access to coastal natural resources.

E2. Is located in, or nearby, resources or services injured by the deepwater horizon spill: *(Briefly describe where the project would be implemented with respect to past/ongoing remediation work.)*

The project location is located on the sound side of Navarre Beach. The Gulf Side of Navarre Beach was directly impacted by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

E3. Is ready for implementation, e.g., design, permitting, and necessary impacts assessments have been completed: *(Briefly describe where in the permitting process the project stands along with an estimated date of when the project can be implemented if it is not currently ready.)*

The Discovery Center and Outdoor Pavilion are in the design phase. An architectural/engineering firm has begun work on drawings (*see attached rendering*). Land has been secured from [Santa Rosa](#) County in Navarre Beach Park.

The project design will be completed in June of 2013. Discussions have begun with a design build firm (affiliated with architect) who has done restoration work on existing structures in the Park to ensure the project permitting and construction time will be minimized. We anticipate project construction to be 12 months.

¹ In this form, "Services" (or "natural resource services") refers to the functions performed by a natural resource for the benefit of another natural resource and/or the public. Services can be "ecological services" – physical, chemical or biological functions that one natural resource provides for another (such as provision of food) – or "human services" – the use of natural resources used by humans that provide value to the public (such as hunting and fishing).

E4. Is cost effective: *(Briefly describe why you think the project is cost effective. Discuss whether this project is more cost effective than alternative projects which would provide similar resource or service benefits.)*

NWFL Marine EDGE has negotiated a fixed price fee with Architect which equates to 2% under traditional RUS rates.

The Discovery Center will be LEED certified and there is opportunity to provide energy efficient equipment and fixtures for the center with grant submission to the USDA REEP program.

The project is more cost effective than alternative projects due to:

- number of people served through the Discovery Center
- seed money to begin architectural drawings
- land donation valued at \$6 million which totals more almost half of the \$ 12,772,899 budget
- a conservative estimate of 50,000 unduplicated visitors annually equates to a total per person project cost of \$118 per person
- direct economic impact of \$5.7 million and new tourism development tax revenue of \$286,087
- new State tax revenue based on direct economic impact is anticipated to be \$342,000 annually

E5. Has a high potential for long-term success as demonstrated by incorporating established/reliable methods and technologies: *(Briefly describe if/how critical methods and technologies that will be used to implement the project could be considered reliable or proven.)*

A consultant was hired to complete a business plan and model for development. Revenue sources will be from admission, programs, cooperative research, contributions and grants. EDGE has researched Interpretive Centers that are of the size of the proposed Discovery Center and located in an area of similar demographics. The center's that were reviewed had approximately 50,000 visitors annually and budgets of \$2.5 - \$3.2 million. All had broad community support as well as programs that were an outgrowth of a school district.

E6. Is likely to provide benefits rapidly following implementation: *(Briefly describe the anticipated change in benefits anticipated over time.)*

If awarded funding through NRDA, the Discovery Center and Discovery Pavilion is expected to be complete in 15 months (remaining design work, permitting and construction). The Discovery Center will open in off-tourist season and expects about 25% of its expected 50,000 visitors in the off-season period with 75% targeted from April through August. Marketing to out-of-town visitors will begin in month nine of construction and will continue through the grand opening. It is anticipated that by end of year two of operations, the Discovery Center will reach or exceed its visitor estimate (e.g. Jensen Beach and Ponce Inlet maybe explain what these are?).

E7. Has a high likelihood of public acceptance: *(Briefly describe evidence to support the given answer based on surveys or results and assessments from past projects. Known or likely opposition to a project should be recognized.)*

- Focus Groups: NWFL Marine EDGE conducted in-person, focus groups with business people, parent groups, ecological groups, environmental groups, elected officials and students to determine the acceptance and need of the expansion project. Discussion items focused on the building location, the current Marine Science Station programs, expansion of programs and events, the opportunities for both community members and visitors and the potential to draw an estimated 50,000 visitors to the Discovery Center annually. Each group overwhelmingly supported the project.
- Research and Evaluation: NWFL Marine EDGE evaluated Interpretive Centers and Aquariums throughout the Southeast that were an outgrowth of an existing School District program. The evaluation was further narrowed to Interpretive Centers and Aquariums in areas that were similar demographically to Navarre, FL. Based on the evaluation, 50,000 visitors annually was a conservative estimate of visitors, all programs had a non-profit parent organization, all programs had a diverse revenue mix of grants, donations and program fees. All programs had been successful and had experienced growth over the past 10 years.
- Project Need: There are not any current destination attractions on Navarre Beach. Navarre Beach has three restaurant/bars, two convenience/gift stores and Navarre Beach Pier. Visitors come to the Navarre Beach Marine Science Station daily asking to participate in activities that are currently focused on K-College Students.
- Economic Restoration: The project is expected to have a \$5.7 million annual direct economic impact and new state revenue of \$342,000
- Tourism Restoration: The Gulf Coast Discovery Center is expected to be a hub of eco-tourism activities and will have a direct impact to the county of \$286,087 in new tourist development tax revenue and a boost in tourism of 18%. Early restoration funds would be used to develop The Gulf Coast Discovery Center along with interactive, state-of-the-art exhibits. The Gulf Coast Discovery Center and exhibits will replace lost recreational opportunities through enhanced visitor access to coastal natural resources.

WE WANT YOUR INPUT!

Submit this form via email to Rebecca Wintering at Rebecca.Wintering@dep.state.fl.us . If you have any questions or concerns about the process for submitting a project, please contact Rebecca Wintering at:

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A current summary of projects is accessible through the Florida DEP's website at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/projects.htm> (click on "View the list of restoration project ideas").