

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.)*

Wk-11 MASHES SANDS – BEACH RESTORATION

Contact Information:

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

Mashes Sands Beach, Wakulla County, Florida

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

Mashes Sands Beach is experiencing heavy erosion and degradation due to a recent tropical storm and other factors. This project will include beach restoration and vegetative renourishment. In addition, this project will stabilize and beautify the beach area making it more attractive to visitors, encouraging tourism, and stabilizing the environment for native vegetation, wildlife and marine life. The beach restoration project area is depicted in the attached Conceptual Master Plan for Mashes Sands Park.

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.)*

It is estimated that this project could cost \$1.63 million based on planning level cost estimates which are being used for estimation purposes. These costs were developed using costs from professional consultants volunteering their services, the 2008 feasibility study, and of costs for recent unrelated projects. A detailed cost breakdown is provided in an attached cost estimate table.

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.)*

Wakulla County has completed several similar projects in the past however, funding is extremely limited and so these types of projects have been more limited as of late. This project will include the restoration of approximately 4,200 feet of the area at Mashles Sands Park. The restoration will include completion of construction documents and permits to allow the County to solicit bids for construction contractors. These types of projects are very common to the County and we routinely deal with this process. The County has well-trained County staff that is capable of handling all aspects of these types of projects.

Due to compatibility issues with sand from previously evaluated offshore borrow sites and the need to minimize the fill template and the associated impacts to near shore hard bottom, the fill material selected would be sourced from a mine that will be approved by the regulatory agencies. The selected source will be acceptable to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Fill material will meet or exceed the mean grain size of the existing beach and will otherwise be beach compatible. In addition, the mean grain size sand used for this Project will result in greater performance for the project.

It is anticipated that construction will be performed outside of any nesting seasons which will limit potential impacts to wildlife and this will ease permitting and construction restrictions, and minimize costs incurred due to increased monitoring. Additionally, based on a review of comparable projects, as well as discussions with local contractors, it is estimated that the Project will take between sixteen (16) and twenty (20) weeks to complete. This schedule is based on deploying sand conveyor systems and transportation times. The required volume of fill material will be brought to the Project site via a truck haul operation. Trucks will arrive at the construction site via Mashles Sands Road (CR 372) which can accommodate these deliveries.

The purpose of the proposed beach nourishment is to re-establish a healthy beach that is adequate to protect the infrastructure from a 25-year storm event and to stabilize the beach while minimizing impacts to near shore hard bottom. This area was seriously eroded by the recent hurricane and tropical storm activity in the area between 2010 and 2012. The renourished beach will provide a natural buffer from storms to the upland park structures of Mashles Sands Park, as well as enhance the recreational and fish and wildlife values of the shoreline within the Project vicinity.

The proposed Project beach was severely eroded by the active hurricane and tropical storm activity in the area between 2010 and 2012. The current dry beach in the northern portion of the Project, south of the existing pier, has a relatively low profile.

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.)*

This project would stabilize beach erosion thereby providing native vegetation and wildlife a stable, healthy habitat. By improving the beach conditions, this would greatly improve the overall quality of the natural environment and the Mashles Sands Park and recreation area. In some areas, this project would be adding native plantings to further enhance the existing environmental features. Although not a component to this project, the County is also planning to use signing and a wayfinding/kiosk plan (partially already developed), which would serve as a means to help educate the public about the ecosystem and natural features of the area. In turn, this would help preserve the area's environmental conditions.

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 is no current or ongoing response or remediation work in this project area. Therefore, there will not be any interference.

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

N/A.

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.)*

Wakulla County, like the other 7 counties from Escambia County to Wakulla County, experienced negative perceptions leading to a decline in tourism, sports fisherman, and seafood sales. The County continues to experience some negative perceptions and concerns for the health and of its seafood, including that of the ecosystems/habitats required for local species to live and thrive. This was documented by significant reductions in visitors and as a result, surrounding businesses have been severely affected by this loss. Wakulla County's economy is heavily dependent on tourism and especially ecotourism since much of the County's land area is in public ownership. In short, people come here for the natural beauty and wildlife. This park also suffered during the period of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill from disuse and a lack of users. The County feels strongly that this Park and its precious resources will greatly benefit from the beach restoration that is proposed in this application. This project will allow the County to promote this facility as a destination and a local sense of pride.

There is also a new need for this park to be improved as a result of the successful construction of the Ochlockonee Bay Bike Trail which is fully constructed in this area. The southern terminus for this bike trail is at the Mashles Sands Park entrance and the original plan for this area was to include a trailhead facility in this location. This bike trail connects other parts of Wakulla County and the region to this park and the coastline. Since the bike trail will eventually be a part of the Capital City to Sea Loop Bike Trail, which will connect this area and as far west as Carrabelle to Tallahassee. Although not a part of this application, the County intends to add the trail amenities that are needed such as added parking, bathrooms and informational signage which will increase the use of the beach significantly. It is also intended that educational kiosks be installed to inform beach goers of the restoration project and its environmental benefits. This will further add to the educational aspect of this project as it is anticipated that school children will be many of the primary users of the bike trail and the Park.

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).

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.)*

This park and its natural resources are directly located in the impact area of the oil spill. The beach, the boat launch area marshlands and the natural sea grass areas are all directly located where known impacts were found. As a result, during and after the spill, there was a dramatic reduction in visitors to this area.

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.)*

Much in-kind work has been completed for this project by volunteers, County staff, and elected County officials. Some of the County's consultants volunteered to provide information and planning services to assist with visioning future improvements and to determine the planning-level costs for the project. The Conceptual Master Plan (enclosed) depicts much of this body of work. Currently, the County does not have the funding to move forward with the beach restoration project as outlined in this application. It is the hope of the County that funds from this application be used for engineering design, permitting and construction. Cost estimates for this project, as stated above were done through volunteers, a 2008 feasibility study, and costs for recent unrelated projects.

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.)*

This project is highly cost effective since this area represents one of the most high-profile beach access points in Wakulla County. Mashes Sands Park represents the County's attempt at ecosystem and environmental restoration since this area was originally intended for residential development. Due to the efforts of the County and through previous funding and grant opportunities, Wakulla County was able to make significant strides in restoring the area closer to its original condition. Much of the beach areas, wetlands, marsh areas and tributaries are in much better condition than they were some years ago. Efforts to improve access to the beaches and limited impervious surfaces have resulted in very low impact to the natural environment. This project is very cost effective since it will be partially maintained as a result of relatively low cost user fees, and low maintenance facilities. However, this area will have a very high benefit to the community as it will foster opportunities for interactions with the unique natural environment.

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.)*

Prior to the oil spill, this park was used widely by boaters, fisherman, and people using the board walks and beaches. As a result of the oil spill, much of those users went away. The beach restoration improvements will bring those users back and with the new bike trail and an increase in ecotourism, there will be a need to charge a user fee. There are many similar beach restoration projects that can be sited and many of these are located in Florida. These similar projects can be used for estimated project costs and the techniques that will be used for construction. This will be used to determine the type, amount and frequency of trucks that will be needed to transport sand, unit costs for the materials and the permitting requirements and engineering that will be needed. In summary, these types of beach restoration projects are very common in Florida and there are multiple contractors who would be expected to bid on such a project as well as suppliers of the sand material.

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

It is believed that this project would show immediate results and benefits to the economy of County as well as the environment. The County has a new and ongoing program of advertising and promoting the County as an ecotourism destination. Recently, the County produced the first smart phone app for use to promote the County's ecotourism and recreational facilities. This effort has resulted in increased visitors. The County expects that with the improvements to Mashers Sands Park, it will then have a new beach destination that will be a major attractor to the surrounding counties and the region. For the metropolitan area of Tallahassee which is to the north, the closest beach right now is nearly two hours away by car. This recreational and beach area would only be about 40 minutes by car. It is also believed that some would actually come by bike as a result of the construction of the new bike trail. This project would have a significant and immediate positive impact on Wakulla County and the surrounding region. It should also be noted that this beach restoration project is just one component of the overall plan for Mashers Sands Park. As depicted in the Conceptual Master Plan there are many other facility improvements that are ongoing which further emphasizes the need for this project.

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.)*

Through community visioning efforts and a community survey that was conducted, there is a high-level of support for this project. Beach restoration is a key component to the County's vision of creating the County as a National and International ecotourism location. The County desires to improve all aspects of its natural environment and the citizens of Wakulla County know that this is its greatest resource. It is believed that this project will greatly benefit the overall park and because of the immediate results to increasing visitors to the beach for the beach, wildlife and the total nature experience offered at Mashers Sands Beach area.

WE WANT YOUR INPUT!

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

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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").