

Florida Gulf of Mexico Natural Resource Restoration Plan

FWC Potential Projects

Proposed project or program title: **Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative (CWCI)**

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1) **Project description, including location**

Many species depend on Florida's coastal areas for all or part of their life cycle. These areas also are sites that many coastal residents and visitors enjoy for recreation. Pressures on coastal resources have led to the declining populations of many species such as shorebirds, sea turtles, and beach mice. An integrated approach that focuses on wildlife and habitat needs as well as socio-economic issues, and includes participation by partners and input from stakeholders is needed to address, in a balanced way, the range of activities that impact coastal wildlife.

The CWCI is an FWC-led multi-agency strategy which aims to develop such an integrated approach. The Initiative will address threats to coastal wildlife and habitats, while considering human interests and uses of Florida's coastal areas. The goal is a statewide, cooperative process to: protect coastal wildlife populations, conserve and manage coastal ecosystems, and achieve balance between conservation and opportunities for recreation, commercial activities, and responsible development. The CWCI will build a collaborative forum for local, state and federal government agencies, conservation groups, and coastal businesses to work together to address threats to coastal wildlife while still meeting their economic and public use goals. The structure, consisting of local working groups and a guiding team, will allow for "bought-in" solutions to current and emerging issues on both a local and statewide scale. To begin achieving these goals, the CWCI has used grant funding in the past for a coordinator to lead the external development of the CWCI, and two additional grants to address sea level rise and to coordinate the management of Critical Wildlife Areas. The Sea Level Rise program is managed jointly with the University of Florida's Sea Grant program to incorporate sea level rise response into the activities of both Sea Grant and the FWC. The Critical Wildlife Area program identifies and manages sites critical for congregating wildlife, primarily shorebirds, seabirds, and waterbirds, during all or part of their life cycle. The Florida Shorebird Alliance is a statewide program for monitoring and conserving shorebirds, currently staffed by 2 full time people. However, stewardship of important sites and outreach to the public and property owners (including for rooftop sites) is largely done by volunteers from partner organizations. All of these functions, including those handled in-house and by partners, will require greater support in order to expand them. Initiation of this project has proven that it is an effective conservation approach, but expansion is necessary to realize the full potential of its effectiveness. Relying on grant funding limits the ability to leverage long term partner resources and commitment; maintaining and funding the coordinator position and the additional programs for a longer period is critical to achieving the CWCI goals.

2) **Provide a range of costs and if necessary, break down into capital costs, operational, or monitoring.**

The total project cost is **\$13,673,900**. This includes operational costs (salaries, indirect costs associated with salaries, travel, training, office space, general expense, and meeting costs) and capital cost for a vehicle. See below for estimated costs.

CWCI Coordinator (\$825,685 Total- \$36,500 starting salary x 15 years (with 1% increase in salary per year), \$4,000 indirect costs x 15 years, \$3,000 vehicle use, \$4,000 office space and general expenses, and \$4,000 travel costs per year x 15 years)

CWA (Critical Wildlife Area) Biologist (\$871,193 Total- \$40,704 starting salary x 15 years (with 1% increase in salary per year), \$3,000 indirect costs x 15 years, \$3,000 vehicle use, \$4,000 for office space and general expense, and \$4,000 travel costs per year x 15 years)

SLRP (Sea Level Rise Planning) Coordinator (\$1,282,516 Total- \$60,369 starting salary x 15 years (with 1% increase in salary per year), \$9,000 indirect costs x 15 years, and \$4,000 travel costs per year x 15 years, \$3,000 for vehicle use x 15 years, \$4,000 for office space and general expenses)

Development of a volunteer-based shorebird monitoring organization through the Florida Shorebird Alliance (\$10,654,500 Total- \$649,000 salaries and fringe for 1 statewide coordinator, 5 regional coordinators, 5 technicians, 1 data analyst, and 1 applications development and system support staff, and \$40,000 expense x 15 years)

Vehicles (\$40,000)

3) Duration of project or program

The duration of this program would **15 years**.

4) Direct benefits to one of the following (pick the one that is the primary beneficiary)

- ☐ Restore and conserve habitat
- ☐ Restore water quality
- ☒ **Replenish and protect living coastal and marine resources**
- ☐ Enhance community resilience

This program would benefit all of the above areas, with the primary benefit being to replenish and protect living coastal and marine resources through enhanced conservation and management of coastal resources. CWA's protect areas critical for congregating wildlife, and this program includes components to manage CWA's to improve use by shorebirds and seabirds. Incorporating sea level rise planning into county comprehensive plans, Sea Grant programs, and FWC management planning will also enhance community resiliency.