

Florida Gulf of Mexico Natural Resource Restoration Plan

FWC Potential Projects

Proposed Project or Program: **Florida Panhandle Integrated Water Quality Monitoring Initiative**

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1) Project description, including location

Coastal systems in the Northwest region of Florida are greatly influenced from their freshwater inputs making watershed approaches to restoration critical for success. Increasing water quality in headwaters can improve the tropic level structure downstream and benefit a number of different species. Monitoring is essential for the State of Florida to protect human and ecosystem health, effectively manage its coastal resources and for efficient and safe use of those resources to ensure they exist for many generations. Water quality has been monitored for decades in some coastal bay systems in the Northwest Region of Florida and very little in others. Monitoring water quality is critical to making informed decisions on potential restoration projects that aim to improve existing conditions. This monitoring initiative will help to address a number of actions identified in Florida's State Wildlife Action Plan including groundwater withdrawal, harmful algal blooms, inadequate stormwater management, incompatible forestry practices, incompatible industrial operations, and nutrient loading-agriculture and urban.

This project will join together already existing efforts with new to form a Region-wide Monitoring Initiative. Monitoring will occur in Perdido (Bayou Marcus, Eleven Mile Creek, Perdido River and ADEM stations), Pensacola (Escambia River, Blackwater River, Yellow River, Escambia Bay, East Bay, and Pensacola Bay), Choctawhatchee (Choctawhatchee Bay, Alligator Lake, Allen Lake, Bass Lake, Big Redfish Lake, Campbell Lake, Deer Lake, Destin Beach, Draper Lake, Fort Walton Beach, Grayton Lake, Niceville, Okaloosa Beach/Gulf, Santa Rosa Beach, Turkey Creek, etc.), St. Andrew Bay (East Bay, West Bay, North Bay, St. Andrew Bay, Johnson Bayou, Lake Marin, Grand Lagoon, Crooked Creek, Burnt Mill Creek). The number of stations routinely monitored will be increased as well as the number of parameters examined to include biological monitoring and periodic legacy parameters (i.e. heavy metals, dioxins, hydrocarbons, and pharmaceuticals). This temporal and spatial monitoring initiative will aid current and future management efforts by identifying priority areas where resources would be most effectively allocated to address stressors that threaten our beautiful, unique ecosystems that many people and business rely on for their well-being.

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

Total Project: **\$11,000,000**

Cost includes: Personnel and fringe benefits, supplies, boat rentals, analytical charges, in- situ water quality monitoring and other necessary equipment.

3) Duration of project or program

The duration of the project is **10 years**. This could be funded in 3 year increments with an approximate cost of \$1,100,000 per year, if necessary.

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

- a. Restore and Conserve Habitat
- b. Restore Water Quality
- c. Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources

d. Enhance Community Resilience

- e. Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy