Public Input

Public participation is an important part of the RESTORE ACT project development process. The MYIP was adopted after review and consideration of meaningful input from the public. This input helped staff improve the MYIP by adding high level milestones, more details on public input and an explanation of how project success will be evaluated.

The general public was informed and given the opportunity to provide comment three ways:

1. Public meetings
2. County website
3. Print and broadcast media coverage

Public Outreach Overview

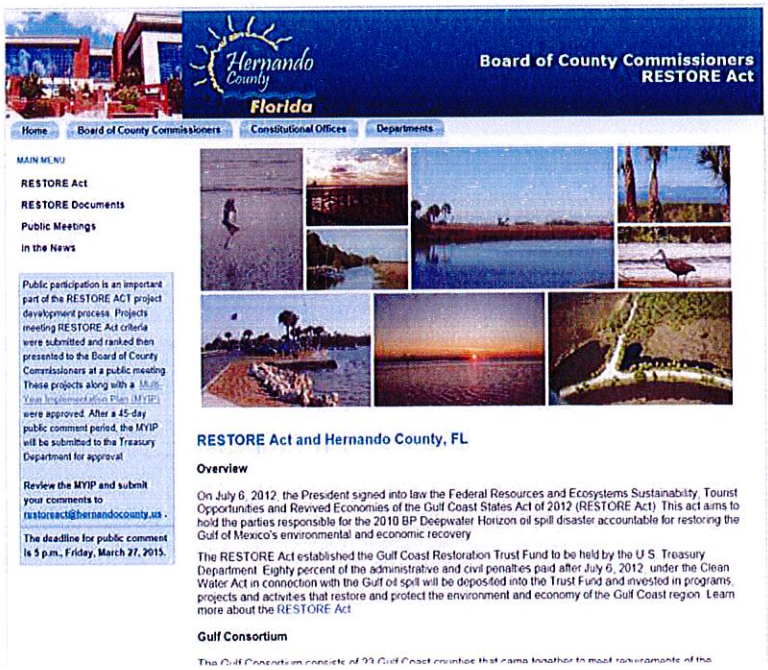
Method	Reach	Number of comments received
Website	Approximately 1,000	18
Eight public meetings	Approximately 200	5
Media coverage	3.4 million	4

Below is a complete list and details of public input opportunities

RESTORE Act webpage

www.hernandocounty.us/restoreact/

- This webpage provides an overview, documents, public meeting dates, news articles, helpful links and contact information. It also provides directions and an email address to where comments should be directed. A total of 18 comments were received via email.



Public Meetings

The following eight public meetings resulted in five comments from the public. All public meetings were broadcast live on the Hernando County Government Broadcast Channel.

September 25, 2012

- Approved Resolution 2012-124 and Interlocal Agreement relating to establishment of the Gulf Consortium.
- Public comment – Resident Dick Ross stated he firmly supports joining the Gulf Consortium adding that the shrimping industry was crippled after oil spill and suggested that funds from RESTORE Act be used to help shrimpers.

October 9, 2012

- Designated County Commissioner Wayne Dukes as Director and County Administrator Len Sossamon as alternate Direct to act as a representative for Consortium members.
- Public comment - none

December 4, 2012

- Workshop - recommended to the Board of County Commissioners that they consider the development of a portfolio of potential projects that would be eligible for funding.
- Public comment – Resident Hamilton Hanson spoke against using RESTORE Act monies because it's not in the constitution.

December 18, 2012

- Approved the RESTORE Act Estuary list for submittal to the Southwest Florida Water Management District for the development of a regional ecosystem restoration plan. Selected firm to provide services related to RESTORE Act funding.
- Public comment - none

October 14, 2014

- Reviewed a presentation outlining the RESTORE Act and the potential to receive funding for projects.
- Public comment - Resident Forrest Bennett from the Nature Coast Action Team provided comments and recommended to include on the project list invasive species management for Brazilan Peppertree, Lead Tree and Australian pine tree.

October 28, 2014

- Adopted staff's recommendation to approve the RESTORE Act Direct Component Project Guidelines and Ranking Criteria and authorized staff to continue efforts to solicit, rank, and present potential projects that meet criteria.
- Public comment - none

January 13, 2015

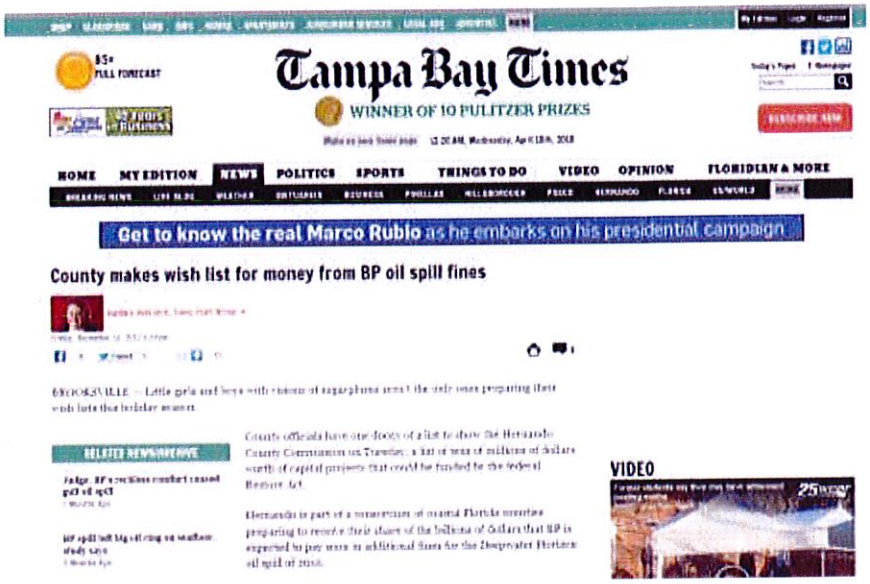
- Discussed RESTORE Act Direct Component Project Ranking. Approved staff's recommendation for the ranking and selected three projects (Bayou Drive Restoration; Shallow Water Reef project; and Linda Pedersen Park) for inclusion in the Multi-Year Implementation Plan.
- Public comment – Resident Chuck Gordon provided his support for the chosen projects and resident Judith Simpson commented that the list was diverse and comprehensive and that more money should be put toward these types of projects.

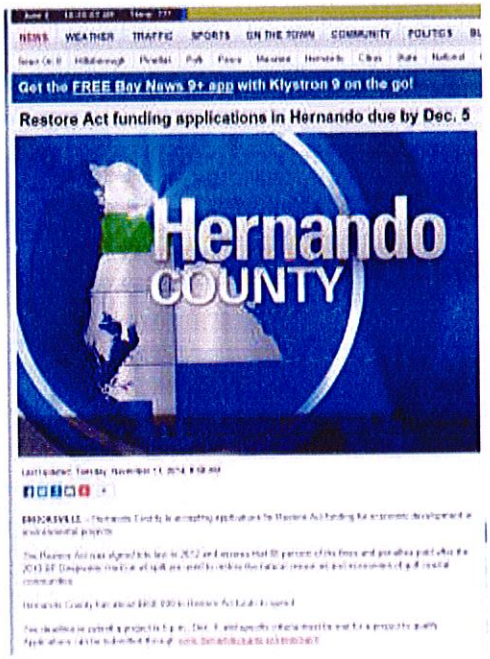
February 10, 2015

- Reviewed proposed RESTORE Act Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP) for Submittal to Treasury Department and started the 45-day public input period.
- Public comment - none

Media releases and news coverage

- Bay News 9 – Restore Act funding applications in Hernando due by Dec. 5
- Media release – RESTORE Act funding for Hernando County is imminent
- Media release – RESTORE Act ecosystem restoration project proposals
- Dredging Today – Hernando County: RESTORE Act project proposals
- Hernando Times – County makes wish list for money from BP oil spill
- Media release – Pubic input sought for RESTORE Act projects





Johnathan Walker

From: Jessica Koelsch <KoelschJ@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2014 2:49 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Timeline and Public Input

Congrats on making sure great progress with your Direct Component plans!! I have looked at the County-sponsored projects listed on the County website and see a few that I think would be good choices to include in the MYIP. I also notice that you are soliciting projects from the public. I am however not clear on the timeline, even after referring to the schedule online: http://co.hernando.fl.us/restoreact/index.php/restore-documents/8-timeline/file.

Specifically, what is the deadline for submitting projects? And when will all of the projects (County-sponsored and public-submitted) be evaluated (I saw the scoring criteria)? Furthermore, who will be doing the scoring? Although the numeric criteria are intended to be subjective, based on results of other "project reviews" (done by other counties or groups), scores for one project can vary widely, so the issue of WHO does the evaluation may be quite relevant.

I noticed a Feb 2015 timeframe for submitting your MYIP to Treasury, but depending on deadline for project submittal, as well as results of project ranking, there seems to be little time for the public to have 45 days to review before plan is submitted to Treasury. My understanding was that the MYIP was supposed to include the projects to be funded.

Thanks so much for addressing my questions. Please feel free to give me a call to discuss if that would be easier than emailing.

Best wishes,

Jessica Koelsch
Florida Policy Specialist
Gulf of Mexico Restoration
National Wildlife Federation
www.nwf.org
727.424.9957 c
850.332.0266 o

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Barbara Jannicelli <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 2:12 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 25, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Barbara Jannicelli
6305 Alderwood St
Spring Hill, FL 34606-3924

1

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Christine Cock <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 2:41 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 25, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Christine Cock
25099 Powell Rd
Brooksville, FL 34602-8189

2

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Michelle Thoemke <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 3:09 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 25, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Ms. Michelle Thoemke
3313 Grayton Dr
Spring Hill, FL 34609-2939

3

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of M Timmerman <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 4:39 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 25, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Ms. M Timmerman
7356 Mina Ave
Brooksville, FL 34613-5901

4

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Patricia Cooke <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 5:40 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 25, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I have lived with my family in Hernando County for over thirty years.
I know that growth and urban sprawl is going to occur, but I am hopeful that the most sensitive, unspoiled areas will be protected from development.

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Patricia Cooke
2263 Batten Rd
Brooksville, FL 34602-8325

5

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Shelley Driskell <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 10:14 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 25, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Ms. Shelley Driskell
5994 Avenue of The Palms
Weeki Wachee, FL 34607-1303

6

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Michele Ginouves <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2015 6:48 AM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 26, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Ms. Michele Ginouves
25373 Ladyhawk Ln
Brooksville, FL 34601-7887

7

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Melliny Lamberson <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2015 8:48 AM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 26, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Melliny Lamberson
184 Spring Lake Hwy
Brooksville, FL 34602-8201

8

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Ralph Gelso <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2015 11:48 AM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 26, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Mr. Ralph Gelso
9181 Scepter Ave
Brooksville, FL 34613-4931

9

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Yvonne Nelson <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2015 2:49 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 26, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Dr. Yvonne Nelson
7280 Flyway Dr
Spring Hill, FL 34607-2495

10

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Michael Wyatt <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 3:21 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 27, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely

Michael Wyatt

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael Wyatt
Sewell Ln
Spring Hill, FL 34608

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Matt Chamness <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 2:20 AM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 27, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Mr. Matt Chamness
9247 Spring Hill Dr
Spring Hill, FL 34608-6351

12

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Maria Forte <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Saturday, March 28, 2015 12:53 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 28, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Sincerely,

Ms. Maria Forte
2279 Portofino Pl Unit 2022
Palm Harbor, FL 34683-7738

13

Johnathan Walker

From: National Wildlife Federation Action Fund <info@nwa.org> on behalf of Richard Furr <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org>
Sent: Saturday, March 28, 2015 10:22 AM
To: restoreact
Subject: Thank you for restoration projects that benefit wildlife

Mar 28, 2015

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Hernando County

Dear Hernando County Board of County Commissioners County,

I care deeply about the wildlife and natural areas in Hernando County.
The 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a horrible tragedy, and it is imperative that we use the restoration funds resulting from the spill to improve the water quality and restore wildlife habitats locally, so we can repair the Gulf Coast as a whole.

Some of the highest priorities for our community are clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and improving natural habitats. The projects you selected--marsh restoration, shoreline improvements, and artificial reef construction--will benefit the environment, improve quality of life for locals, attract visitors and in turn boost our economy.

I support the projects that you have selected for this initial round of funding and I encourage you to take a similar approach when additional restoration funds become available.

Florida's beautiful Gulf Coast provides great recreational opportunities as well as critical habitat for a number of endangered species, including the endangered manatee.

Sincerely,

Mr. Richard Furr
9445 Midway St
Spring Hill, FL 34608-3437

14

Johnathan Walker

From: Michelle Erenberg <merenberg@oceanconservancy.org>
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 2:09 PM
To: restoreact
Subject: Comments Hernando County MYIP
Attachments: Comments Hernando MYIP-Florida Coalition_March2015.pdf

Dear Mr. Malmberg,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on Hernando County's Draft Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP).

Our collective organizations (Audubon Florida, Florida Wildlife Federation, National Wildlife Federation, Ocean Conservancy, and The Nature Conservancy) represent nearly 100,000 members and supporters along Florida's Gulf Coast, several of whom are Hernando County residents. Working together as a coalition as well as within our individual organizations and chapters, we have been advocating for Gulf restoration that is comprehensive, and targets watersheds for protection of coastal and marine resources.

On behalf of our organizations, I submit the attached comments.

Thank you for your efforts to create the county's MYIP and for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,
Michelle Erenberg

Ocean Conservancy

Michelle Erenberg
Policy Analyst
307 Tchoupitoulas St, Suite 300
New Orleans, LA 70130
O: 504.208.5818
merenberg@oceanconservancy.org
Web | Facebook | Twitter

Audubon FLORIDA | Florida Wildlife Federation | NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION | The Nature Conservancy Protecting nature. Preserving life. | Ocean Conservancy

March 27, 2015

Brian Malmberg, Assistant County Administrator/Director of Public Works
Hernando County Department of Public Works
1525 East Jefferson Street
Brooksville, FL 34601

Re: Comments on Hernando County's Draft Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP)

Dear Mr. Malmberg,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on Hernando County's Draft Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP).

Our collective organizations (Audubon Florida, Florida Wildlife Federation, National Wildlife Federation, Ocean Conservancy, and The Nature Conservancy) represent nearly 100,000 members and supporters along Florida's Gulf Coast, several of whom are Hernando County residents. Working together as a coalition as well as within our individual organizations and chapters, we have been advocating for Gulf restoration that is comprehensive, and targets watersheds for protection of coastal and marine resources. Our collaboration began with the crafting and passage of the RESTORE Act and is now focused on ensuring the best allocation of restoration funds.

In anticipation of the diverse perspectives on how to spend restoration funds, our groups collaborated to develop a framework, including comprehensive restoration principles and outcomes, designed to inform project selection and Multi-Year Implementation Plans (MYIP). We encourage Hernando County to consider these themes throughout the planning and implementation of both current and future restoration activities.

A successful MYIP should have four key project outcomes: environmental impact, fisheries management, wildlife resource enhancement and community resiliency.

The cornerstone of a strong MYIP should be careful consideration of **environmental impact**; we are pleased to see that the Hernando County MYIP has focused on this element. A MYIP should include projects that protect water quality and wildlife habitat, and provide the public with environmentally sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities. The Plan should promote restoration, health and sustainability of coastal habitats, fisheries, marine resources and vulnerable species. Projects included in the MYIP should work together to maximize environmental benefits. Most importantly, the plan should not include projects

that would result in further damage to the Gulf ecosystems. MYIPs should include regional projects that advance priorities toward achieving identified restoration goals that enhance watersheds and estuaries along the Gulf Coast. We applaud Hernando County for its participation and leadership in the Watershed Planning processes (working with The Nature Conservancy and National Wildlife Federation) and encourage the County to reference this "watershed frame" during plan development and refinement.

The MYIP should also consider the sustainability and health of its commercial and recreational fisheries, building in projects that protect and restore habitats and estuaries, and remove threats to fisheries such as marine debris and invasive species.

In addition, the MYIP should prioritize **wildlife resource enhancement** as a means to ensure healthier communities and a thriving nature-based economy. We applaud Hernando County for focusing on these enhancements in their MYIP.

Another key project outcome is enhanced **community resiliency.** We ask Hernando County to make investments in projects that will enhance resiliency by reducing the impact of hurricanes and other disasters. Restoring and protecting marshes, wetlands, reefs and other coastal habitats also mitigate storm surge, erosion and coastal flooding, further reducing the costs of insurance and disaster relief.

In order to efficiently and effectively achieve these outcomes, we encourage Hernando County to consider several guiding principles for project selection: science-based metrics and evaluation, phased approach to implementation, clear outcomes, local input/participation, leverage opportunities, and mutual project compatibility.

Employing the guiding principle of **science-based evaluation** is instrumental to proper project selection and plan development. Every project should be evaluated across a broad metrics of science-based criteria. In addition, project implementation should be monitored and subject to an ongoing review process to ensure short and long-term goals are being met, allocated funds are being spent responsibly and projects are performing and managed adaptively.

Furthermore, project descriptions should state clear, measurable and achievable ecological and community **outcomes**. Making these outcomes understood by the public and stakeholder groups, and providing opportunities for meaningful input into project selection and evaluation increases public confidence in the success of these projects and will elicit more public support.

Counties should consider ways to **leverage** resources across RESTORE funding allocations and as a match for other local, state and federal funding sources, and we were pleased to see Hernando County identify some matching funds for its selected projects. Hernando County should also seek to achieve **mutual project compatibility** to ensure that discrete projects are not inadvertently working at odds with one another. Accordingly, it would be

beneficial for an panel of resource and economic managers to provide oversight and ensure project designs avoid unintended impacts to key resources that are also restoration targets.

The ultimate success of the RESTORE Act rests on selecting and implementing integrated ecological restoration projects, consistent with a state-wide plan, and rigorous application of criteria to ensure that only the best and most appropriate projects are funded. We encourage Hernando County to keep these themes in mind in planning and implementing current and future restoration activities.

We applaud Hernando County for being leaders in the state and among the first to select projects and prepare a Draft MYIP. We respectfully urge Hernando County to consider our comments and incorporate them as appropriate into both the current Draft MYIP, as well as in future MYIPs (which may be prepared as additional RESTORE Act funds become available). Moreover, we encourage Hernando County to move forward with implementing the proposed projects.

Thank you very much for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Audubon Florida
Florida Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Federation
Ocean Conservancy
The Nature Conservancy

Johnathan Walker

From: Jessica Koelsch <KoelschJ@nwf.org>
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 11:30 PM
To: restoreact
Cc: Virginia Singer; Len Sossamon
Subject: RE: Comments on Hernando County MYIP
Attachments: Comments on MYIP Hernando Revised.docx

Brian,

Earlier this evening I submitted comments on Hernando County's MYIP, including comments related to Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef Project. Shortly after submitting these comments, I had a conversation with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Artificial Reef Program Staff indicating that while they are in fact working with Hernando County on the creation of new artificial reefs, the proposed Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef Project was not among the projects that they were actively partnering on. FWC staff indicated they may have some concerns about the shallow water reefs, but did not have enough information on the proposed project to say with certainly.

As indicated in the comments I submitted earlier this evening, I was under the impression that FWC was an existing partner on the proposed shallow water reef project. Apparently, I may have been mistaken, based on my conversations with them late this afternoon. NWF's support for the Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef Project is contingent upon endorsement by the FWC Artificial Reef program. If FWC is not able to endorse this project, NWF encourages you to work with them to modify the project in a manner to which they can endorse it.

Given this development, I wish to slightly revise the comments I submitted earlier this today. Please consider the attached comments to replace the version submitted previously. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,
Jessica Koelsch

From: Jessica Koelsch
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 4:00 PM
To: 'restoreact@hernandocounty.us'
Cc: 'Virginia Singer'; 'Len Sossamon'
Subject: Comments on Hernando County MYIP

Brian,

I apologize for missing you earlier this week when you were on leave, but I was very happy to meet with Virginia Singer in your absence and go over some of my comments and recommendations for your MYIP. I understand that Hernando County did not have a great deal of public participation throughout the process, and offered to help in that capacity with any future RESTORE efforts.

Based on my comments (both attached, and discussed in my meeting with Virginia), I anticipate that you may be making some revisions to your MYIP before submitting it to Treasury. I am more than happy to review your revised MYIP. I would ask that you post your revised MYIP, as well as the supporting documents that I discussed with Virginia (and include in my attached comments) on your website. I have already heard from at least one county in Southwest Florida who is starting to draft their MYIP and is looking at Hernando County's MYIP as a model. Given that other counties may be using your MYIP as a model, it is important to the success of Florida's overall restoration activities that Hernando County set a high standard for the others to emulate, and their final and complete MYIP is publically available.

Thank you so much for working with me and considering my comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or seeking clarification on any of my input. I am more than happy to help in any way I can as you prepare you MYIP to submit to Treasury.

Sincerely, Jessica

Jessica Koelsch
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March 27, 2015

Brian Malmberg, Assistant County Administrator/Director of Public Works
Hernando County Department of Public Works
1525 East Jefferson Street
Brooksville, FL 34601

Re: National Wildlife Federation's Comments on Hernando County's Draft Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP)

Dear Mr. Malmberg,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on Hernando County's draft Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP).

National Wildlife Federation (NWF) is the nation's largest conservation organization. We have four million members and supporters nationally, hundreds of whom reside in Hernando County. Working closely with our state partner Florida Wildlife Federation, we have been on the ground, lobbying for comprehensive Gulf restoration in the wake of the BP oil spill. Our work has been focused on long-lasting action, such as coastal and watershed protection. The work that began with the passage of the RESTORE Act is now directed towards supporting ecological restoration. We have been closely following as Florida's 23 Gulf Coast Counties consider projects to fund with their Direct Component funds available through the RESTORE Act, as they develop Multi-Year Implementation Plans (MYIP).

Working with a coalition of organizations in Florida, NWF and its partners crafted a restoration framework with project outcomes and guiding principles, which is outlined in a separate comment letter. We encourage Hernando County to keep these themes in mind while planning and implementing restoration activities.

In addition to these themes and principles, NWF has also carefully reviewed Hernando County's MYIP, and wishes to present comments and recommendations on two the two main components of the MYIP: **Process** and **Projects**.

Process:
In 2014, the U.S. Treasury Department issued their "Direct Component Guidance and Application to Receive Federal Financial Assistance". This Guidance provides critical context for ensuring effective process and describes the following:

> As a prerequisite under the RESTORE Act for requesting and receiving Direct Component funding for eligible activities, each applicant must submit a multiyear plan to cover a period of time during which projects could be undertaken with funds available from the Trust Fund...An applicant must use the form shown at Section 4.0 for its multiyear plans... The multiyear plan must include the Multiyear Implementation Matrix, a map showing the locations where the work will be performed, and the narrative description. An applicant must provide detail on planned activities in the multiyear plan, including the information required in the multiyear plan matrix and narrative in Section 4.0. The multiyear plan must be available for 45 days for public review and comment, in a manner calculated to obtain broad---based participation from individuals, businesses, Indian tribes, and non---profit organizations. If the applicant has developed a more detailed multiyear plan document in addition to the forms in Section 4.0, the document should be included as an attachment to the multiyear plan submission to Treasury.

We feel that while Hernando County may have met the minimum requirements outlined in the Treasury Guidance, and did have some of the elements available for public review and comment, the full suite of documents (including the Matrix and the Narrative) were only available by request, which is an area of concern. We respectfully offer input related to public process.

Website:
Although Hernando County established a website with information on the process (including Project Consideration Form, Ranking Criteria, Scoring Criteria Guide), we could not readily find information announcing public meetings, a list of projects submitted for consideration (or details on those proposed projects), names of the members of the "internal committee" created by the County, the final rankings of the submitted projects, or several other topics as described below.

The Hernando County RESTORE website (http://co.hernando.fl.us/restoreact/) states: "Public participation is an important part of the RESTORE ACT project development process" yet information to facilitate public participation is not readily available. As one example, the "Public Meeting" section of the RESTORE website is blank; no meetings are listed: http://co.hernando.fl.us/restoreact/index.php/public-meetings.

We were pleased to see the Scoring Criteria and Ranking Criteria were posted on-line, and also to see that project scoring will follow an objective evaluation process. It is important to the transparency and integrity of the process to clearly indicate evaluation methods.

Public Engagement:
Although the MYIP recognizes that projects must be selected based on "meaningful input from the public, including broad-based participation from individuals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations..." it is not clear how this was accomplished. No list of public meetings or other documentation was included, nor a list of what community members of groups were engaged.

As for soliciting proposals from the public, although a Project Consideration Form and Flier were both posted on the website (October 14, 2014), we understand that no projects were submitted by the public. Given that other Florida Counties have received numerous project submittals when advertised to the public, the lack of public submittals in Hernando County may be an indication that the announcement of the funding opportunity or the application were not advertised widely enough or readily available. Because there was so little public participation, we would have liked to see Hernando County explore other avenues or seek assistance for partners.

As future opportunities for public input on RESTORE Act related issues become available, NWF would be happy to help engage the community through public workshops, social media, and outreach to community groups. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Additional Information Omitted from Publically Available MYIP:
There were several elements that are required to be submitted to Treasury that were omitted from the MYIP available for public review and input.

According the U.S. Treasury Direct Component Guidance, the multiyear plan must include the Multiyear Implementation Matrix, a map showing the locations where the work will be performed, and the narrative description. We acknowledge that the published MYIP includes maps of the project locations, and well as brief project overviews and summaries. However, the Multiyear Implementation Matrix and Direct Component Multiyear Plan Narrative were not publically available (although those documents were available upon request). Given that the Guidance specifies the elements required for the MYIP, and all of those elements were not included in the document published on-line, the MYIP (published February 10, 2015) posted on the Hernando County website (http://co.hernando.fl.us/restoreact/index.php/restore-documents/12-2-10-2015-multi-year-implementation-plan/file) is incomplete and the Multiyear Implementation Matrix and Direct Component Multiyear Plan Narrative should be added.

As for reviewing the projects being considered for funding, the only information that we could locate describing projects being considered for inclusion in the MYIP, was a list of project titles contained within a presentation dated October 14, 2014:
http://co.hernando.fl.us/restoreact/index.php/restore-documents/4-restore-act-powerpoint/file.

Additional information on the proposed projects should have been readily available so that the public could more easily weigh in on their preferences; this could have been accomplished by posted a project summary on-line, or linking to the full proposals (which presumably was available to the internal review committee). We also recommend including a table/list on-line and/or in the MYIP including the following for all projects submitted for consideration:

- Project Title
- Brief Project Summary
- Project Location
- Project Cost (and match)
- Partners (if any)
- Final Project Rank

Project Goals and Hernando County Priorities:
An area where we feel Hernando County excelled in the MYIP Process is in the development and publication of their Direct Component Overview and Guidelines (Appendix A). We fully support the Goals and Priorities Hernando County identified (also listed in the Overview and Guidelines document). In addition, we support the inclusion of the Direct Component Scoring Criteria and Guide (Appendix B); as noted above, we support the objective project scoring and evaluation process for reviewing proposed projects.

Projects:

Although the MYIP process was not as transparent or accessible as it is for many of the other Florida coastal counties, we support[1] the projects selected by Hernando County for inclusion in their MYIP. All three projects have a direct connection back to the Gulf ecosystems that were directly impacted by the spill, will enhance nature-based tourism, and will in turn positively impact the local economy. Furthermore, two of the projects (Bayou Drive and Linda Pederson Park) address NWF's highest priority among the eligible activities: restoration/protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region.

The Gulf Coast's economy and way of life are deeply entwined with the land and the water. The fines and penalties from the Deepwater Horizon disaster have great potential to restore and protect the Gulf of Mexico's lands, waters, wildlife, communities, and economy. However, there is a risk that some of these funds could be spent unwisely—even squandered on projects that would harm the very places the money was intended to benefit. The public can and should insist that all recovery monies are spent in a science-driven, transparent process that ensures a healthy Gulf of Mexico for wildlife as well as for future generations.

Although we support[1] the projects that were selected, we respectfully offer the following comments and recommendations on the Project Overview and Summary (Appendix C), as well as the unpublished Direct Component Multiyear Plan Narrative.

Overall, the Multiyear Plan Narrative (available only upon request) provided more of the project details that should have been included in Appendix C (posted online and publically available). In addition, it would have been useful to see a check-list or table within Appendix C that indicated which of the project goals, eligible activities, and project priorities (included in Appendix B) each project fulfilled.

Furthermore, according the Treasure Guidance, projects related to Natural Resources are required to be based on "Best Available Science". Nowhere in the Project Summary or Narrative was a description of the science used to select, evaluate, or review the projects. The inclusion of Best Available Science should cross-cut several sections of each Project Description, including project need, purpose, benefit, high-level milestones, and measures of success. Additional details on Treasury's specific requirements regarding Best Available Science can be found on Page 30 of "RESTORE Act Direct Component Guidance and Application to Receive Federal Financial Assistance" (within Section 5.0 DIRECT COMPONENT APPLICATION FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS). If you need assistance in locating this information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Bayou Drive:
Additional details and project specifics should be included in the Project Summary of Appendix C, as well as the Narrative. For instance, as noted above, there is no indication that Best Available Science has been used to evaluate the need for the project. What species of exotics are currently present at the site? Was a survey done to indicate the percent cover, abundance, and distribution? Are there studies to support that removal of exotics and planting of natives will improve fish and wildlife habitat? In addition, there are no high-level milestones (related to the "restoration objectives" vice the "project engineering phases"). Similarly, the MYIP should include specific measures of success

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[1]NWF supports the use of Direct Component funds for creation of artificial reefs as an eligible activity related to mitigation of damage to fish; promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast region, including recreational fishing; and promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast region, that also have been developed in coordination with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Artificial Reef Program. Our support for Hernando Beach Shallow Water Reef Project is contingent on endorsement by the FWC Artificial Reef Program.

that would indicate restoration of natural resources. In general, measures of success should be closely tied to the eligibility, as well as the priorities the project is intended to address. Examples of measures of success could include such measures as percent of exotics removed, increase in abundance and distribution of natural vegetation, percent increase in fish or wildlife, and/or increase in use by anglers or birders.

Hernando Beach Reef Project:
As with the Bayou Drive project, additional details should be included in the Project Summary of Appendix C, as well as the Narrative covering Best Available Science, high-level milestones, and measures of success. In addition, the published project description lacks a lot of detail relevant to the evaluation of the project. For instance, specifics on water depth, existing substrate type, and proximity to other habitat types would be useful, as well as inclusion of information related to partners and status of permits. From speaking with artificial reef volunteers in Hernando County, I learned that this project was part of a large area management zone, that permits had been applied for through Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE), and the Florida Fish and Wildlife (FWC) Artificial Reef program staff are actively involved in Hernando County's artificial reef program. This is all relevant information that should have been included in the Project Summary and Narrative.

NWF agrees that the Hernando Beach Reef Project provides an opportunity to fulfill several RESTORE Act eligible activities, including Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife, and natural resources, Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast region, including recreational fishing, and Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast region. However, we do not feel that construction of artificial reefs falls under "Restoration/protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region" (given that artificial reefs are not natural habitat). We ask that you remove "restoration of natural resources" as an applicable activity

Linda Pederson Park:
As with the Bayou Drive project, additional details should be included in the Project Summary of Appendix C, as well as the Narrative covering Best Available Science, high-level milestones, and measures of success. I am personally familiar with the park and have paddled and snorkeled in Jenkins Creek. The Narrative (only available upon request) provided much more detail than the Project Summary in Appendix C, including mentioning use of the area by West Indian (Florida) manatees. The spring and association run of Jenkins Creek serve as a winter refuge for Florida manatees. If this project results in increased use by paddlers and snorkelers during the winter months, we anticipate the County will careful monitor to ensure manatees seeking thermal refuge in the spring are not disturbed.

We applaud Hernando County for being leaders in the state and among the first to select projects and prepare a Draft MYIP. Given our experience with all 23 Gulf Coast Counties, we support[1] **Projects** selected by Hernando County but recommend significant improvements in the **Process** (and the **Plan** itself), before submitting to the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Assuming that additional RESTORE funds will be available upon the settlement of Clean Water Act Penalties to be paid by BP, we would encourage Hernando County to better advertise the availability of funds and find additional avenues for engaging the public in the future. As indicated above, NWF will be more than happy to assist with such efforts and provide for an even more robust and inclusive process.

Thank you very much for considering our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me to further discuss these comments, concerns, and recommendations.

Sincerely,

Jessica Koelsch
Florida Policy Specialist
National Wildlife Federation