

Franklin County RESTORE Act Multiyear Implementation Plan

Community Needs Assessment v1.3

Preamble

Franklin County is a small coastal community located in northwest Florida and is home to 11,840 residents (2015 estimate). Situated along the Gulf Coast, Franklin County boasts 250 miles of shoreline; nearly 88% of land in the County is held by public entities (federal, state and local government). The Apalachicola Bay estuary is vitally important to the local community, where over 2,500 people are employed in the oyster industry. Apalachicola Bay supports an oyster fishery that historically has accounted for 90% of oysters sold in Florida and over 10% of oysters sold in the continental USA. In fall 2012, there was a sudden collapse in the Apalachicola Bay oyster fishery which led to significant underemployment of fishery workers in the community. A federal fisheries disaster declaration was granted; however, the community continues to face recovery issues both economically and environmentally.

Franklin County, Florida is identified in the RESTORE Act of 2012 as a disproportionately affected county and will receive \$4,182,784.68 in Year 1 funding through the Direct Component Trust Fund. Before receiving funds, the County must develop and submit a Multiyear Implementation Plan (MYIP) to be reviewed and approved by U.S. Treasury. The MYIP will focus on Year 1 funds only (Transocean and Anadarko settlements). Future funds deposited by BP will be considered in subsequent future updates to the MYIP.

The first step in development of the MYIP is to conduct a Community Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment is meant to identify the variety of critical issues facing Franklin County and will help establish the link between proposed project benefits and eligible activities. Assessing community needs will also set the stage for identification of information gaps and form the basis of selection criteria by which proposed projects will be evaluated. The Needs Assessment was compiled utilizing a variety of sources including public meeting discussions, adopted documents and plans, scientific articles and news articles. The Needs Assessment is divided into five categories corresponding with the RESTORE Act eligible activities.

Restoration & Protection of Natural Resources

- Protect and restore Apalachicola Bay
- Enhance marine/estuarine habitats and fisheries
- Increase oysters, estuarine and Gulf of Mexico reef fish populations
- Improve surface water quality
- Restore habitat – oyster reefs, seagrasses, marshes
- Reduce overfishing

Workforce Development & Job Creation

- Increase availability of local jobs
 - Construction; aquaculture
 - Minority employment
- Support existing industries including tourism, commercial seafood, and working waterfronts
- Expand types and number of industries
- Diversify economy
- Identify workforce gaps
- Development of industry focused local workforce, including workforce training
- Local higher education and vocational training opportunities
- Update and market existing assets:
 - Apalachicola Airport / Seaport
 - G & W Railway Line
 - Carabelle - Thompson Airport / Carabelle Seaport
 - Carabelle Industrial Park

Infrastructure Benefitting the Economy or Ecological Resources

- Provide stormwater management and flooding controls
- Provide technology access - Wifi / Broadband internet
- Reduce nonpoint source pollution / stormwater runoff
- Reduce sedimentation (unpaved roads)
- Navigable waterway access / dredge management

Coastal Flood Protection & Related Infrastructure

- Disaster planning, response and recovery
- Flood protection / mitigation
- Enhance emergency services

Tourism, Recreational Fishing & Seafood

- Increase tourism opportunities and destinations
 - ecotourism
 - cultural and historic tourism
 - year round tourism
 - bicycle trails
- Oyster recovery
- Install artificial reefs
- Catch monitoring
- Public waterfront access, including public parking
- Update and market local museums and/or parks

RESTORE ACT DIRECT COMPONENT ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Needs Category	RESTORE Act Eligible Activity	RESTORE Act Citation
Restoration & Protection of Natural Resources	Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of	§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(I)
	Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife and natural	§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(II)
	Implementation of a federally approved marine, coastal, or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring	§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(III)
	Improvements to or on State parks located in coastal areas affected by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill	§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(V)
Workforce Development and Job Creation	Workforce development and job creation	§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(IV)
Infrastructure Benefitting the Economy or Ecological Resources	Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy, including port infrastructure	§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(VI)
	Infrastructure projects benefitting ecological resources	§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(VI)
Coastal Flood Protection & Related Infrastructure	Coastal flood protection and related infrastructure	§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(i)(VII)
Tourism, Recreational Fishing & Seafood	Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast Region, including recreational fishing	§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(ii)(I)
	Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast Region.	§1603(3)(t)(1)(B)(ii)(II)

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