

GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT PROJECT PRE-PROPOSAL FORM

Project Name: **Gulf County Artificial Reef Association Formation**

Submitting Entity: **Gulf County Artificial Reef Association (To Be Formed)**

I. Please select one or more eligible activity that the project is classified under:

- Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region.
- Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife and natural resources.
- Implementation of a federally approved marine, coastal or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring.
- Workforce development and job creation.
- Improvements to or on State parks located in coastal areas affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.
- Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure.
- Coastal flood protection and related infrastructure.
- Promotion of tourism and seafood in the Gulf Coast region.

II. Please provide an executive summary of the project. Describe/quantify the economic (jobs, infrastructure, tourism, etc.) and environmental benefits (habitat, quality, knowledge, long-term sustainability, etc.).

This project is the formation of a Gulf County Artificial Reef Association and application of Grants for Reef Placement to the benefit of nearshore / offshore marine activities – encouraging visitors to Gulf County for longer durations.

Gulf County has been approached by the Mexico Beach Artificial Reef Association with the recommendation for a Reef Association to be formed in Gulf County. The base goal is not competitive with the MBARA – but to encourage acquisition of additional funding and placement locations for Artificial Reef's along our shared near shore coastlines.

Many of the coastal recreation participants of Gulf County have been members in the MBARA for years, and locals / visitors alike look forward to the annual Kingfish tournament near the end of August – for both the social gatherings and the fishing competition. This tournament is generally very well run, has great parties & sponsors and benefits the great reef programs managed by the MBARA.

Our Proposal – Startup Funding for the Following :

- Formation of Gulf County Artificial Reef Association – Legal Cost / Marketing for Board
- Development of Infrastructure for the GCARA – Web / Marketing / Outreach for Members
- Application for Grant Funding to Support the GCARA Activities
- Permitting Applications for GCARA
- Development of Fishing Programs for GCARA - Tournaments

Economic : Visitors to Gulf County are documented as being more attuned to nature and its marvels than the average coastal visitor across the US. Artificial reefs enhance that experience. Reefs can be placed in shallow waters for snorkeling, diving and fishing, and in deeper waters for diving and fishing. Expansion of a Reef system can extend our constantly shorter return on natural resources. Divers & Snorkelers will have a reason to be in the waters off Gulf County beyond Scallop & Fishing seasons. These type visitors will come from worldwide – given careful enhancement of our natural resources.

It is well documented regarding tourist Economic Opportunity exists for all the non summer months. Thru the MBARA – there is an established relationship bringing divers and fishermen to the community, and the well documented continued growth of the late summer tournament event. A Gulf County Artificial Reef Association can expand upon this current attraction for fishermen and divers with additional funding and site locations.

NEW : Gulf County will work toward the deployment of shallow water Snorkel Reefs. A large number of people come for our continual shrinking scallop season. Snorkel Reefs will provide access and attraction for visitors to enjoy our pristine waters OUTSIDE of Scallop Season.

Environmental : Establishment of new reef sites around Gulf County waters will enhance the reproductive sustainability for many of our local species – invertebrates, fish, turtles. The additional habitat provided begins to provide additional surface for reef development, insures cover, and develops the food chain in and around each reef structure. Habitat is the limiting factor for many of our coastal species. Reefs enhance that habitat. Increased habitat facilitates additional research, enjoyment of our coastal species, and even harvest potential for coastal species.

Of course – all artificial reefs in State of Florida waters must be permitted. Materials for artificial reefs will be completely compatible with their surroundings, mitigating concerns of any potential environmental damage. Newer reefs being deployed are constructed with materials completely consistent with their environment.

III. Please provide a cost summary/budget. Detail any matching/cooperative funds available for use, and any cooperative support from governmental or other agencies.

Proposed Cost Summary = \$47,000.

	Time Frame	Stage Cost
Formation of Gulf County Artificial Reef Association – Legal Cost / Board Formation	+2 Months	\$2,000
Development of Infrastructure for the GCARA – Web / Marketing / Outreach for Members	+4 Months	\$15,000
Preparing Permitting & Grant Applications for GCARA	+12 Months	\$10,000
Development of Fishing Programs & Marketing for 1 st GCARA – Tournaments	+6 Months	\$20,000
Totals		\$47,000

Matching funds will be applied for thru the State DEP, private foundations and thru federal agencies. The newly formed GCARA will commit to additional and ongoing Grant Writing and Permit Applications given the chance to move forward. Initial Reef deployments can be shared with MBARA, along with current permitted sites. MBARA has agreed to assist with this process. It is the intent of the GCARA to apply for matching funds thru other Oil Spill Settlement sources.

It also can be expected that some of the costs to bring this organization forward, including events will have local sponsors which stand to directly benefit from the tourist revenues produced, thus providing matching funds to defray to total expected above costs. The largest portion of the costs will be marketing to rapidly bring this organization to a recognized level of organization and participation to garner funds from sources mentioned below. It could be expected that over a longer period – this project will bring a high multiple of matching funds to any funds provided thru Gulf County Restore Act funding. It should be noted that Gulf County has submitted a NRDA proposal for the deployment of Artificial Reefs at a valuation of over \$1,000,000.

A Few Potential Funding Sources :

- FL FWC / DEP - \$80k / year is available for County's in FL
- SeaGrant – NWF ReefsMunson Foundation?
- Fish America
- Royal Caribbean Cruise Line
- NRDA Grant Applications (with County Support)
- National Fish & Wildlife Commission
- Memorial Reefs – full program being developed

IV. Please provide a timeline for project completion. Explain the technical and environmental feasibility (including any permitting considerations) of the project.

This project can be completed within a 12 month period. Beyond this period – the GCARA can become self sustaining with support from the fund raising activities, FL DEP and other matching fund and grant organizations. It would be expected that the GCARA will create a partnership with our Chamber and our TDC to develop a substantial Sustainable fishing tournament to occur in a timeframe which best matches the TDC goals of more visitors.

Grant Requests and Permits for the GCARA will be in constant application process. Deployment of Artificial Reefs requires annual assessment and reporting for maintenance issues and to answer research questions.

V. Please provide the qualifications of the Submitting Entity, the financial feasibility/sustainability and the economic feasibility and sustainability of the project (probability of success, etc.).

The Gulf County Artificial Reef Association **will** be a 501c3 organization organized under the State of Florida. As modeled after the MBARA – the GCARA will become self sustaining with ongoing capital campaigns, retail & membership income, event income and grant funding.

VI. Please provide the anticipated results of the project, and whether it is included in a City of Port St. Joe, City of Wewahitchka or Gulf County Comprehensive and Mitigation Plan?

The outcome of this project will enhance the local and visitor appreciation of Gulf County Natural Resources. With the support of our TDC – it would be expected that a GCARA will attract new visitors to our community, and enhance our shoulder season opportunities. Increased Bed Tax revenues, Sales Tax revenues will occur. Many of these are first time visitors, who become repeat visitors, renters of our many vacation units across the county, visitors to our retail establishments and 2nd home vacationers.

Environmentally – there are documented studies which show that a strong artificial reef system enhances the marine population thru the creation of additional habitat. The encrusting species begin to populate an artificial reef, attracting grazers and predator species. These reefs play an important role in the development of juveniles of many species, providing both food sources and cover. Placement of such reefs will only enhance our native populations.

This project is not currently under consideration in either City or the County Comprehensive or Mitigation Plan; however, Gulf County has applied for funding for a NRDA funded County based artificial reef deployment.

Submitted By: Gulf County Artificial Reef Association **(To Be Formed)**


Signature

Date : Feb 27, 2013

Address : P.O. Box 1285

Address : Port St Joe, FL 32457

Telephone Number : 850.527.5498

E-mail Address (if applicable) : dblaylock@mindspring.com

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA
RESTORE ACT COMMITTEE (R.A.C.)**

1000 CECIL G. COSTIN SR. BLVD., ROOM 312 , PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA 32456
PHONE (850)229-6144 • FAX (850) 229-9252 • EMAIL: tkopinsky@gulfcounty-fl.gov

**PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY AND PUBLIC ACCESS ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR
GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT APPLICANTS**

I, Dewey Blaylock the undersigned authority and/or representative of the entity _____ and or the individual who has submitted the Gulf County RESTORE Act Proposal/Pre-Proposal titled Gulf County Artificial Reef Azoo Formation hereby acknowledge, consent and accept the following representations that coincide with my/our submission for consideration, evaluation and possible recommendation and approval by the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners for funding from the RESTORE Act distribution that strictly complies with the guidelines and regulations set forth under the Restoration and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012:

1. I/We am the authorized representative of the application/pre-proposal referenced above.
2. I/We have thoroughly reviewed and familiarized myself and/or my entity on which I have submitted the application/pre-proposal on behalf of with the entirety of the Gulf County Public Records policy.
3. I/We have thoroughly reviewed and familiarized myself and/or my entity on which I have submitted the application/pre-proposal on behalf of with the entirety of the Florida Statute Chapter 119 which controls and permits public access to information.
4. I/We hereby acknowledge, consent and agree to the controlling policies and statutes above as well as the free and open exchange of any and all submissions provided hereunder this application/pre-proposal and all information exchanged hereafter including but not limited to further amendments to these proposals as well as surveys, studies, research, data production, books, drawings, property records, work papers, county owner lists, files, forms, reports, accounts, documents, manuals, handbooks, instructions, printouts relating in any manner for the production of the application. In addition, all papers, notes, data, reference material, documentation, programs, printouts, and all other media and forms of expression that in any way include, incorporate or reflect any confidential information of what ultimately shall become the Gulf County plans for use and application of the RESTORE Act funding.
5. I/We acknowledge, agree and fully consent to cooperate with the appointed Gulf County RESTORE ACT committee, county officials and staff as a continuing obligation and condition of final review for this RESTORE Act application/pre-proposal.
6. I/We have submitted this acknowledgment to Gulf County RESTORE Act Committee and the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners for the purpose and intent of receiving an evaluation, review and possible recommendations for anticipated funding from the Restoration and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012.

Wavy UK
Signature of RESTORE Act Applicant

Date: 2/27/13

Dewey Blaylock
Printed Name