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GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT PROJECT PRE-PROPOSAL FORM

Project Name: "We Breathe Water" branding initiative

Submitting Entity: Gulf County Tourist Development Council

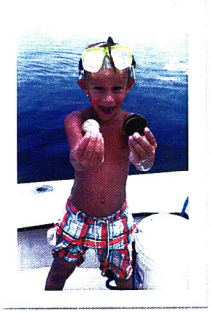
I. Please select one or more eligible activity that the project is classified under:

| **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.**
X **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.**
| **Planning assistance.**
X **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.).

In the late 1990's Gulf County was positioned to grow exponentially in the tourism category until a series of changes including the closing of the paper mill and two chemical plants resulted in a loss of nearly 800 jobs. Recently following this loss, and while the community was rebuilding, focusing on its tourism industry, Gulf County absorbed a series of drastic blows: Tropical Storm Alberto in 2006, Tropical Storms Fay, Gustav and Ike in 2008, the sharp and drastic fall of the economy in 2008 and 2009 and, just when there was hope and opportunity, the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill in 2010.

Today, while still rebounding, tourism is the anchor of economic development in Gulf County. And, while the area boasts beautiful, unspoiled beaches meandering along the gulf to the bay, and back to the gulf, our major tourism driver is our water. While the opportunity for growth in our infrastructure is vast, the opportunities we offer visitors reach far beyond the beach.



Recent Research Studies concluded Gulf County has tremendous opportunity to grow its tourism industry. Visitors perceive themselves as "explorers" and choose Gulf County for its quiet solitude, unhurried pace and abundance of water. The demographic of our visitor boasts a 60% female vs. 40% male consumer split, with a median household income of $75,000+. Our visitors are primarily driving to Gulf County from southeast markets, however there is strong trending from emerging markets throughout the mid-west. Visitors who come to Gulf County, emphatically know the differences between neighboring Mexico Beach, Panama City and Destin while interested parties who have not visited equate Gulf County with our neighbors

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which affords us great opportunity to change their perception and convert them to loyal visitors. Most Gulf County Visitors travel here more than two (2) times per year with a strong percentage returning three (3) or more times annually. More than 29% of those who travel to Gulf County more than twice annually bring boats or other "toys" that allow them to interact with our waters. The most common activities amongst visitors in Gulf County are water related.

The sense that this community wants to share the connection to the water is genuine. For a small, rural community Gulf County has 7 salt-water boat launch ramps for visitors and residents alike. Suffice it to say, we provide the access and the opportunity for visitors to interact with our water.

With additional dollars from the RESTORE Act funds, GCTDC would implement a program designed to engage visitors with our water before, during and after their trip to Gulf County. The program is branded "**We Breathe Water"** ...it's the one thing that is impossible for land-bound life forms, yet, it is the one thing *we do naturally*. Like the air that we breathe, water is essential to our growth, our brand and our livelihood.

From our standpoint, we watch the journey to the water as truck after truck hauling boat after boat is magnetically pulled to our water. We need to push our boundaries, look beyond what is normal and develop a program that is more than just a journey to the water. We propose a program that fosters a tribe and begins the creation of a culture with water as the single indispensable thing. It's a life within water. It's WATERBILITY.

Past marketing efforts have been anchored around the phrase "Florida's Forgotten Coast" which offers a sense of negativity and unimportance. Water is a major reason why visitors flock to Gulf County. No matter whether it's saltwater or freshwater .... no matter whether they are on the water, in the water, or looking at the water...we all breathe water in Gulf County. It only makes sense to take the single most poignant attribute of Gulf County and use it to lead our branding.

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

PROGRAM BUDGET, DESCRIPTION & TIMELINE

To implement the **"We Breathe Water"** program, GCTDC proposes developing a series of tools to better create a rallying cry. Knowing that increased visitation to Gulf County, increased visitor spending, providing qualified leads, and acquiring a long time, loyal visitor is the key to the program's success, the following two-phased approach is suggested, spanning through 2015, with the following estimated costs:

PHASE 1 (April 2013 – April 2014)

Project	**Cost**
Responsive Website/App	$100,000
Brand Collateral Development	$125,000
Digital Media (SEM & Interactive)	$500,000
SEM - $180,000	
Digital - $200,000	
eNewsletters - $120,000	
Print/OHH Media	$250,000
Integrated Social Media	$90,000
TOTAL PHASE 1	**$1,065,000**

PHASE 2 (April 2014 – April 2015)	**Cost**
Digital Media (SEM & Interactive)	$500,000
SEM - $180,000	
Digital - $200,000	
eNewsletters - $120,000	
Print/OHH Media	$250,000
Integrated Social Media	$90,000
TOTAL PHASE 2	**$840,000**

Should the GCTDC be awarded additional funding from the RESTORE Act, we will align our current marketing initiatives and funding with this overall branding initiative. In addition, as a VISIT FLORIDA Partner, the GCTDC may apply for a series of matching funds grants ranging from $2,500 to $5,000 during this time period. Also, the GCTDC constantly seeks strategic partnerships which will be a main component of the **"We Breathe Water"** branding initiatives.

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

Assuming funding is released by April 2013, the following schedule has been developed:

PHASE 1

Project	**Timing***
Responsive Website/App	August 2013
Brand Collateral Development	July 2013
Digital Media (SEM & Interactive)	April 2013 - April 2014
Print/OHH Media	August 2013 – Dec 2013
Integrated Social Media	April 2013 - April 2014

PHASE 2

Digital Media (SEM & Interactive)	April 2014 - April 2015
Print/OHH Media	August 2014 – Dec 2015
Integrated Social Media	April 2014 - April 2015

***Timing is based on assumption funds are awarded and released Apri1, 2013**

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 Tourist Development Council (GCTDC) is a division of Gulf County management developed exclusively to promote tourism and maintain the natural ecosystem of the beaches. Established in 1998, the GCTDC is funded by a $.04 bed tax absorbed by visitors. Three (3) of the 4 cents are geared to administration and marketing efforts, and one (1) cent is geared to beach nourishment.

The mission of the GCTDC is to promote all of Gulf County to visitors outside of a 60-mile radius, prompt them to travel here for more than one night and become fully engaged so they become long-term, loyal visitors. Our marketing and promotions budget for 2012 – 2013 is $200,000. To ensure our messaging and strategies are effective and unified, we create and implement all paid, owned, earned and shared media in-house. All of our strategic marketing initiatives focus on four (4) key factors:

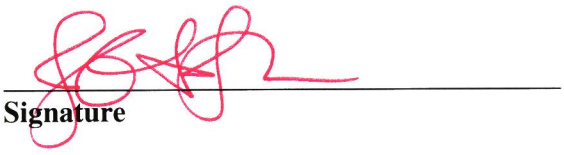
Increase Visitation to Gulf County
Increase Visitor Spending in Gulf County
Deliver Qualified Leads to Partners
Acquire Long Time, Loyal Visitors

Each of the above guidelines ensures measurability and accountability. If our analysis shows we are not garnering increased visitation, increased visitor spending, qualified leads, and the acquisition of long-time, loyal visitors, we are not successful.

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 results of the "We Breathe Water" branding initiatives should be reflected in growing bed tax revenues, increase in qualified leads, strong brand affinity and long-term growth in new and existing markets. Typically branding initiatives such as this take one (1) to three (3) years to saturate target markets and resonate with consumers. Our approach would be to develop a two-year plan using targeted mediums with clear, concise messaging aimed at reaching the consumer by 2014. Our goal is to see an increase in bed-tax revenues by Spring of 2014 and have continual growth on a year-round basis. This program aligns with City and County plans as Tourism growth is essential to the growth and stability of Gulf County Florida.

Submitted By:



Signature

1/15/13

Date

Gulf County Tourist Development Council
Company Name

150 Captain Fred's Place
Address

Port St. Joe, FL 32456
Address

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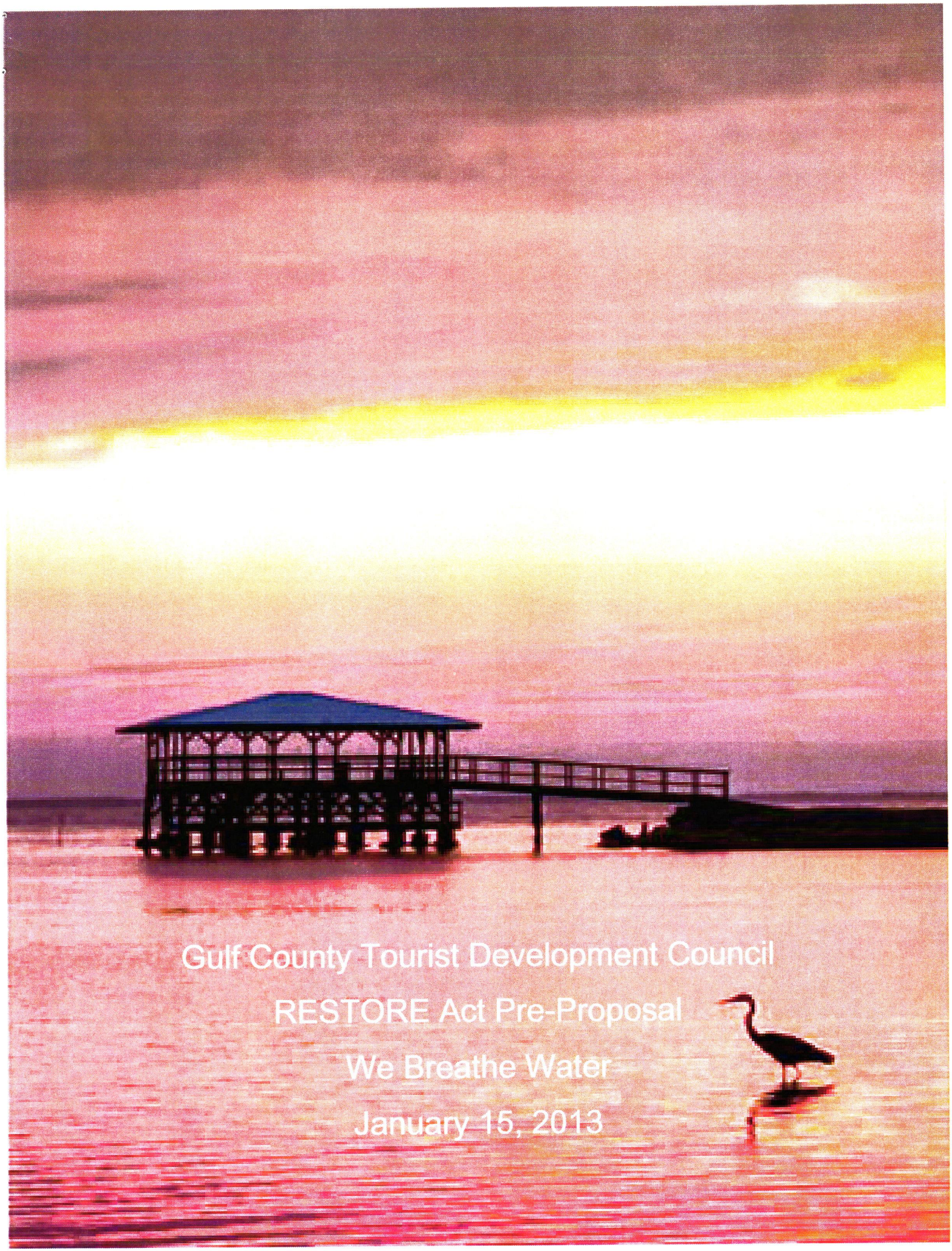
Telephone Number

jennifer@visitgulf.com
E-mail Address (if applicable)



Gulf County Tourist Development Council

RESTORE Act Pre-Proposal

We Breathe Water

January 15, 2013

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, Jennifer Jenkins the undersigned authority and/or representative of the entity Gulf County TDC and or the individual who has submitted the Gulf County RESTORE Act Proposal/Pre-Proposal, titled "We Breathe Water" 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.

Signature of RESTORE Act Applicant Date: 1/17/13

Jennifer Jenkins
Printed Name

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