

An Overview of the RESTORE ACT

What is the RESTORE ACT?

On April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon, an oil rig drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, exploded causing the largest offshore oil spill in the United States. Oil flowed unchecked for three months, and millions of barrels of crude oil were released before the well was capped. The disaster led to tens of thousands of square miles of federal waters closed to fishing, and caused extensive damage to marine and wildlife habitats and tourism.

The Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies (RESTORE) ACT established the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund to receive penalty dollars collected from responsible parties associated with the spill. Monies from the Fund will be used for programs, projects and activities that restore and protect the environment and economy of the Gulf Coast region. The State of Florida's allocation goes to 23 coastal counties for projects they choose.

How Will Funds Be Used In Escambia County?

The County currently has more than \$10 million allocated directly to our area, with additional funding expected to be received after the BP litigation settles. These funds are not able to be used until the County develops a Multi-Year Implementation Plan (currently in progress). Over the past two years, the RESTORE Advisory Committee has developed a list of needs in Escambia County to serve as a resource to develop the selection criteria for future projects that support environmental and economic restoration.

This is where YOU can take action! Anyone is welcome to submit a project once the project portal opens (expected in June 2015). The implementation and procurement process will occur after a list of projects are approved by the Board of County Commissioners and the U.S. Treasury. Projects submitted does not necessarily guarantee funding, and all submittals must be within the 11 eligible activities outlined within the RESTORE ACT.

How Can I Get Involved With the RESTORE Process?

There are many ways to get involved with the RESTORE process. The RESTORE Advisory Committee holds monthly meetings that are open to the public and give local residents the opportunity to participate in discussions, provide comments and learn more about ways they can support local community restoration efforts. Participating in workshops, surveys and community meetings are also a great way to stay involved. For questions about upcoming RESTORE meetings or related events, email restore@myescambia.com and follow @EscambiaRESTORE on Twitter.

