

# RESTORE – ESCAMBIA COUNTY

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.

### **RESTORE Direct Component (Pot 1)**

Escambia County currently has more than \$68 million allocated directly to our area from the Transocean and BP litigation settlements. 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 while the project portal is open (July 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015). The implementation and procurement process will occur after a list of projects is approved by the Board of County Commissioners and the U.S. Treasury. Projects submitted do not necessarily guarantee funding, and all submittals must be within the 11 eligible activities outlined within the RESTORE ACT.

The RESTORE Advisory Committee will begin evaluating projects beginning October 20, 2015 for the Transocean settlement of \$10.6 million dollars.

### **RESTORE Gulf Restoration Council (Pot 2)**

The Gulf Restoration Council is formed of representatives from the five Gulf States (Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas) and six federal agencies (Dept. of Commerce, Dept. of Agriculture, Dept. of the Army, Environmental Protection Agency, Dept. of Homeland Security, Dept. of Interior). The Council's strategy is to focus on four ecosystem restoration goals to facilitate long-term restoration:

- Restore and Conserve Habitat
- Restore Water Quality
- Replenish and protect living marine and coastal resources
- Enhance community resilience

To learn more about the Gulf Council, visit <http://restorethegulf.gov/>.

The following are projects funded by the Gulf Council in Escambia County:

- Pensacola Bay Living Shoreline - Phase 1 Planning - \$231,314
- Beach Haven – Joint Stormwater & Wastewater Improvement Project – Phase 2 - \$5,967,000
- Bayou Chico Contaminated Sediment Removal – Planning, Design, and Permitting - \$356,850

In addition, Escambia County was listed for a category 2 (likely to receive funding in the future) project.

- Pensacola Bay Living Shoreline - Phase 1 Implementation - \$1,564,636 (not currently included in the total below)

### **RESTORE Gulf Consortium (Pot 3)**

The Gulf Consortium was created to facilitate the allocation given to the state of Florida. It is comprised of Commissioners from the 23 Florida Gulf Coast Counties. Presently, Escambia County Commissioner Grover Robinson serves as chair for the Gulf Consortium. It is currently unknown how the Gulf Consortium will select and fund projects.

For more information on the Gulf Consortium visit their website at <http://www.fl-counties.com/advocacy/gulf-consortium>.

- ❖ In total, Escambia County is expected to receive \$75,719,059 million in RESTORE funding. Additional funding is possible in the future.