

**PINELLAS COUNTY RESTORE ACT WORKING GROUP CHARTER
TO DEVELOP A MULTIYEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

(Last Revision 01/08/14)

PURPOSE: The Working Group serves as an advisory body by providing input and recommendations to County staff for the RESTORE Act “Direct Component” set of projects and programs to be incorporated into the Pinellas County (County) Multiyear Implementation Plan (Plan). The projects and programs developed will meet RESTORE Act and County goals and priorities focused on the improvement, protection, and resilience of County and Gulf of Mexico ecosystems and the County’s economy.

RESOURCES AND APPROVALS: The projects implemented in the Plan will be funded through the “Direct Component” element of RESTORE Act funds to be distributed to Pinellas County according to rules and requirements established by the U.S. Department of Treasury (Treasury). The Plan developed by County staff, after consideration of Working Group input and recommendations, must receive Pinellas County Board of County Commissioner (BCC) approval prior to submittal to the Treasury.

IMPORTANCE: The RESTORE Act “Direct Component” funding source represents a unique once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to use a long-term source (≥10 years) of non-publicly derived funds to improve the County and Gulf coast environment and economy. This will allow projects without an established reoccurring funding source to be undertaken that otherwise might never occur. The thoughtful selection of the most appropriate projects and programs can significantly help sustain and improve ecosystems critical to Gulf health and help bolster and diversify the economy in the face of future environmental, climatic, and economic uncertainties. The careful and wise use of these funds may be pivotal to improving the resiliency of the region’s environmentally sensitive habitats and quality of life for Pinellas County residents and visitors for generations to come.

PARTICIPANT ROLES:

Sponsor: Pinellas County Board of County Commission (BCC) – will approve: 1) the Working Group composition, 2) the project goals and priorities, 3) the project selection and ranking process, 4) the final project selections and ranks, and 5) the final Plan for submittal to the U.S. Treasury. The BCC will also carry out other tasks and requirements as specified in the Treasury rules.

Conveners: County staff (Staff) led by Andy Squires, Environmental Services Manager – will organize and administer the collaborative Plan development process to: 1) clarify the purpose of the collaborative effort, 2) develop the composition and list of Working Group members, 3) secure County Administration and BCC support for a) project goals and priorities, b) the project selection and ranking process, c) the overall process to develop the Plan, and 4) develop the final set of ranked projects and/or programs and draft the final Plan for presentation to the BCC for their consideration and approval prior to public notice of the Plan and submittal to the Treasury.

Facilitator: Lindsay Cross, Tampa Bay Estuary Program, Environmental Science & Policy Manager – will help facilitate the process; the role includes: 1) facilitating the collaborative efforts and full potential of the Working Group, 2) providing processes, tools, techniques and structure to get work done efficiently, 3) helping design Working Group sessions, with direction from County staff, with a specific focus and intent, 4) keeping the sessions on track, 5) helping resolve conflict, and 6) drawing participation from everyone.

Working Group Members: Invited participants by the BCC that represent environmental and economic interests in Pinellas County. Members include staff from cities, non-governmental organizations, academia, regional agencies, and fishing and seafood industry. Members are expected to attend, prepare for, and actively participate in meetings, and abide by the “Sunshine” Law (Chapter 286, F.S.).

To the extent possible, Working Group recommendations to Staff will be determined by the consensus of Working Group members. Working Group members may submit projects and/or programs to the County to be considered for selection and ranking along with other proposals submitted to the County.

Members will collaboratively work, at a minimum, to provide input and recommendations to Staff on: 1) project goals and priorities, 2) the project selection and ranking process, and 3) the final set of ranked projects and/or programs to be integrated into the Plan. With prior notice and acceptance by Staff, members may send informed alternates in their place to meetings they are unable to attend.

MEETING CONDUCT:

1. Meetings will allow for public comments
2. Meetings will be facilitated
3. County staff will keep a record of meeting attendees, key issues raised, and actions requested. Comments from individual members will generally not be attributed and a verbatim record of the meeting will not be prepared
4. All cell phones will be on vibrate, silenced, or turned off during meetings
5. Others...?

MEETING GROUND RULES:

1. Keep discussions focused
2. Come prepared for each meeting
3. Speak one at a time – do not interrupt others
4. Allow every member the opportunity to speak
5. Wait to be recognized before speaking
6. Listen to -- and show respect for -- all opinions expressed
7. Share all relevant information openly and respectfully
8. Remain flexible, open minded, and actively participate in meetings
9. Focus on reaching the best decisions for the overall environmental and economic health of the County and Gulf of Mexico
10. Others...?

PERIODIC REVIEW OF CHARTER: This Charter will be subject to review and revision when deemed appropriate by County staff and/or the consensus of Working Group members.

TERM OF WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP: The Working Group is expected to continue meeting periodically as requested by County staff until a set of selected and ranked projects and/or programs for the initial Plan are approved by the BCC. Upon BCC approval of the set of ranked projects for the initial Plan, periodic meetings may be suspended until a Plan revision is deemed necessary as determined by Pinellas County. Membership is voluntary and a member may resign from the Working Group through written notification to the County. The County may also remove a member from the Working Group for missing three or more consecutive meetings. A meeting attended by a member’s alternate is not considered a missed meeting.