

**The Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived
Economies of the Gulf Coast Act of 2012 (RESTORE Act)
WORKING GROUP MEETING SUMMARY**

Team members from the RESTORE Act Working Group met on **January 08, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.** in the first of a series of meetings designed to bring together community members to provide input and recommendations for use of Direct Component RESTORE Act dollars by Pinellas County.

Meeting Attendees

Working Group:	
Mark Luther	USF College of Marine Science
David White	Gulf of Mexico Restoration Network and the National Wildlife Foundation
Elliot Shoberg,	Stormwater Utility Manager, Clearwater
Randy Runnels	FDEP, Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserves
Mark Rachal	Audubon Society and FL Coastal Island Sanctuaries
Ernst Peebles	USF College of Marine Science
Dennis O'Hern	Fishing Rights Alliance
Bob Minning,	Treasure Island Mayor and Barrier Islands BIG C representative
Bob McConnell	Tampa Bay Water
Cathy Harrelson	Gulf Restoration Network
Mark Hafen	USF School of Geosciences
Carlos Frey	City of St. Petersburg, Engineering & Capital Improvements
Elizabeth Fetherston	Ocean Conservancy
Frank Chivas	Baystar Restaurants
Peter Clark	Tampa Bay Watch
Mike Colby	Clearwater Marine Association & Gulf Charter Fishermans Association
Staff members present:	
Richard Coates	Director, Pinellas County Transportation and Stormwater Division
Kelly Levy	Pinellas County Natural Resources Section Manager
Andy Squires	Environmental Services Manager: Lead RESTORE Planning Manager
Liz Freeman	Strategic Planning and Initiatives
Libby Carnahan	UF/IFAS Extension Marine Agent
Mary Russell	Stormwater Section, Administrative Support
Facilitator:	
Lindsay Cross	Tampa Bay Estuary Program

Discussion of Agenda Items

1. Working Group and County staff members introduced themselves to one another.
2. Commissioner Susan Latvala brought a welcome message from the County Commission thanking members for their service to the community. Commissioner Latvala briefly discussed her service as the Vice Chairman of the Gulf Consortium which is comprised of 23 Gulf Coast Counties working in cooperation to restore the Gulf of Mexico.
3. The discussion of future meetings resulted in a preference for afternoon meetings between 2 and 5 pm with the 4th Wednesday of each month best for most members.
4. Introduction to RESTORE Act and draft Treasury Rules were presented by Andy Squires.
5. Public Comment: Although several members of the public were present there were no speakers from the audience.
6. Lindsay Cross facilitated a discussion of the draft Charter prepared by the County. It was moved by Elizabeth Fetherston and seconded by Peter Clark to accept the Working Group Charter with the following revisions: "improvement, protection, and resilience" to replace the word "restoration" in the first paragraph describing the Purpose of the Working Group. The motion was approved unanimously by a show of hands.
7. Lindsay Cross provided an introduction of the project selection and ranking matrix process used for the Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Project. Discussion followed with a general consensus that Pinellas projects should maximize leveraging dollars with matching grants through cooperative efforts of local agencies and organizations.
8. Draft goals and priorities for projects: Several themes emerged from an initial discussion around the submission process:
 - a. Use of the internet: to distribute work products of the team, accept submissions from the public, and communicate deadlines.
 - b. The leveraging of resources and regional projects should be emphasized. For example, consider SWFWMD, federal grants, and regional planning efforts, as well as regional coordination with the Spring Coast and Tampa Bay watershed programs.
 - c. Review process criteria: the level of detail expected to review projects, the criteria for contract awards to local vendors or service providers submitting projects, and economic development components were discussed.
 - d. Use of subcommittees: should they be established, how will "Sunshine" provisions apply, what subcommittees are needed?
9. Next steps: County staff will provide a summary of pertinent Comprehensive Plan Elements. The Working Group will review and comment on the draft County RESTORE act goals and priorities and consider incorporating the discussion points outlined above into the draft goals and priorities. Finally the group recognized the importance to establish a process to select and rank projects with Plan submitted to the Treasury by OCT 2014.

Action Items

1. Schedule future meetings: consensus around the fourth Thursday of the month.
2. Finalize Charter with revisions.
3. Arrange for someone from the County Attorney's office to brief Working Group team members on "Sunshine" provisions. Specific concerns included: consequences of inadvertently breaking the "Sunshine" Law provisions, how the public could participate or comment at Working Group meetings versus how they contribute at BCC meetings, and how Working Group members develop cooperative projects without violating the "Sunshine" Law.
4. Each member may provide County their designated alternate who can represent Working Group members when absent. Alternates should have the same affiliation as the member.

5. Share RESTORE Act economic restoration recovery project proposals with Working Group as mentioned by Bob Minning and developed by the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council.

The RESTORE Act Working Group meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

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