

**The Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived
Economies of the Gulf Coast Act of 2012
(RESTORE Act) Working Group Meeting Minutes**

RESTORE Act Working Group (WG) team members met on **March 5th, 2014** at 2:00 p.m. at 22211 US Hwy 19, N in Bldg. #1 in the third of a series of meetings facilitated by **Lindsay Cross** of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program designed to bring together community members to provide input and recommendations for the use of Direct Component RESTORE Act dollars by Pinellas County.

RESTORE Act Working Group Members:

present:	Frank Chivas	Baystar Restaurants
absent:	Peter Clark	Tampa Bay Watch
present:	Mike Colby	Clearwater Marine Association & Gulf Charter Fisherman's Assoc.
absent:	Libby Fetherston	Ocean Conservancy
present:	Carlos Frey	City of St. Petersburg, Engineering & Capital Improvements
present:	Cathy Harrelson	Gulf Restoration Network & Saint Petersburg Sustainability Council
withdrew:	Tracy Harris	
absent:	Mark Hafen	USF School of Geosciences
absent:	Mark Luther	USF College of Marine Science
present:	Bob McConnell	Tampa Bay Water
present:	Bob Minning	Mayor of Treasure Island & Barrier Islands BIG C representative
present:	Dennis O'Hern	Fishing Rights Alliance & FL Skin Divers Association
present:	Ernst Peebles	USF College of Marine Science
absent:	Mark Rachal	Audubon Society and FL Coastal Island Sanctuaries
present:	Randy Runnels	FDEP, Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserves under FL Coastal Office
present:	Elliot Shoberg	Stormwater Utility Manager, City of Clearwater
absent:	David White	National Wildlife Federation

Facilitator:

present:	Lindsay Cross	Tampa Bay Estuary Program
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Staff Members Present:

Andy Squires	Coastal & Freshwater Resources Manager: Lead RESTORE Planning Mgr.
Mary Russell	Pinellas County Natural Resources, Stormwater Management Administration
Debbie Chayet	Pinellas County Office of Management and Budget
Liz Freeman	Pinellas County Sustainable Planning and Development
Libby Carnahan	UF/IFAS Extension Marine Agent
Mike Meidel	Economic Development

Public Present:

Danny Taylor	Indian Rocks Beach
Curtis Franklin	Pasco County

Discussion of Agenda Items:

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS – Andy Squires

Andy Squires welcomed newcomers and Mike Meidel, Director, Pinellas County Economic Development and informed working group members of his participation in the Regional Planning Council's work to identify state-wide and/or regional projects that will qualify for "Pot 3" money.

2. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 5, 2014 MEETING SUMMARY – Lindsay Cross

It was moved by **Bob Minning** and seconded by **Ernst Peebles** to approve the meeting minutes from February 5, 2014 with one correction: David White is not with the Gulf of Mexico Restoration Network and he represents the National Wildlife Federation, not Foundation. The motion passed unanimously.

3. COUNTY ECONOMIC PROGRAM - Mike Meidel, Director, Pinellas County Economic Development

Mike Meidel briefed WG members on the priorities of Pinellas County's Economic Development Department and how they relate to the projects and/or businesses that may qualify for RESTORE funds. Key points included: 1) hardening the future economy by diversifying the local economy to ensure we are not so dependent on tourism and natural resources 2) continuing to further develop small businesses 3) establishing stormwater system infrastructure to better support redevelopment of properties in support of large businesses and/or large industrial developments and 4) assist community businesses in getting off septic systems.

With regard to small business development, the Economic Development Department proposes using \$300,000-\$400,000 of RESTORE Act funds to establish a revolving loan fund to supply local small businesses with operating capital fund loans not readily available to them through traditional bank loans due to lack of collateral. Mike estimates the \$300,000 to \$400,000 in seed money from RESTORE Act funds could be leveraged to provide between \$5,000,000 and \$10,000,000 in operating capital funding for local small businesses. Four of the 22 banks currently working with Economic Development on 504 loans have committed to using their Community Reinvestment money to match County funding for small businesses through this revolving fund loan. Moving forward, the Economic Development Department will be watching to see if such an idea is possible under RESTORE Act funding rules.

Team members asked a number of follow up questions regarding the logistics and details of the loan program, selection of loan recipients, the scoring of such a project among others, and what type of diversification the Economic Development Department is looking to encourage.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT – Lindsay Cross

Curtis Franklin, Pasco County RESTORE Chairperson commented on the trend around the Gulf to come up with a regional plan. The governor will choose six panel members to act as advisors for Governor Scott.

5. REVIEW OF COUNTY RESTORE GOALS & PROJECT CATEGORIES - Lindsay Cross

Lindsay Cross reviewed the draft of the County RESTORE goals and project categories with the recommended action of bringing them to the Board of County Commissioners for their consideration and adoption as the goals and project categories eligible to be considered for RESTORE Act funds. Final drafts will be shared with the working group team members before being presented to the Board of County Commissioners

6. DISCUSSION OF PROJECT SELECTION AND RANKING OPTIONS – Andy Squires

Andy Squires led a discussion of project selection and ranking options. The results of this discussion will be shared in writing through future meeting packets.

7. NEXT STEPS – Andy

Andy Squires solicited a group of volunteers to form a subcommittee to help draft a final set of priorities and selection and ranking criteria for presentation to the group. A subcommittee meeting was scheduled for March 19th, 2-4 p.m. WG subcommittee volunteers included: Dennis O'Hern, Elliot Shoberg, Cathy Harrelson, Randy Runnels, Bob McConnell, and tentatively if time allows - Ernest Peebles. Curtis Franklin also agreed to attend. The March 26th full WG meeting was cancelled.

The WG asked to see scoring and criteria information from Polk County. Andy agreed to e-mail the Polk County information to the WG.

The meeting adjourned at 4:37 p.m.