

**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 **May 28th, 2014** at 2:00 p.m. at 22211 US Hwy 19, N in Bldg. #1 in the fifth 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:

absent:	Frank Chivas	Baystar Restaurants
absent:	Peter Clark	Tampa Bay Watch
absent::	Mike Colby	Clearwater Marine Association & Gulf Charter Fisherman's Assoc.
present:	Libby Fetherston	Ocean Conservancy
present:	Carlos Frey	City of St. Petersburg, Engineering & Capital Improvements
present:	Cathy Harrelson	Gulf Restoration Network & Saint Petersburg Sustainability Council
present:	Mark Hafen	USF School of Geosciences
absent:	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
absent:	Ernst Peebles	USF College of Marine Science
present:	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
present:	David White	National Wildlife Federation

Facilator:

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

Kelli Levy	Natural Resources Section Manager
David McCrea	Assistant County Attorney
Debbie Chayet	Office of Management and Budget

Public Present:

none

Discussion and Summary of Agenda Items

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS – Kelli Levy

2. APPROVAL OF APRIL 23, 2014 MEETING SUMMARY – Lindsay Cross

For Item 5 of the April 23rd meeting summary, add the sentence “The motion passed unanimously.” Motion was made by Dennis O'Hern to approve with the noted correction. Motion seconded by David White. The motion passed unanimously.

3. OVERVIEW OF U.S. TREASURY RULES FOR DIRECT COMPONENT – Dave McCrea, Assistant County Attorney

David McCrea walked through a nine-page presentation distributed to the attendees that covered main points about the RESTORE Act of 2012. The presentation covered funding pots, fund allocations, eligible activities, and the draft U.S. Treasury rules. A discussion ensued with the following comments:

- There was overall concern expressed about purely economic or tourism projects.
- The County needs to know about claims that were made and paid out to ensure entities do not apply for money they have already received.
- Question – who is ultimately responsible for paying a grant back if an audit deems the project was ineligible? Answer – Dependent on the Treasury Rules.
- Grantees would need to meet procurement rules and audit requirements which would likely be similar to what most local governments have in place. There was concern that small businesses or non-profits could not meet this requirement.
- Grantees will be subject to the same policies and requirements the County is subject to. Those requirements would be passed along in the agreements.
- Question – Would the grants be reimbursable or do they just give you the grant money? Answer – It is dependent on the Treasury Rules.
- Question - Would NEPA provisions be required? Dave McCrea's interpretation was that it would be required; but the Treasury could waive it or trigger it based on a dollar amount.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT – Lindsay Cross

None were made.

5. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF PINELLAS COUNTY RESTORE ACT DIRECT COMPONENT PROJECT SUBMITTAL DOCUMENT - Lindsay Cross, Kelli Levy

Recommended revisions were discussed and were incorporated into a revised draft of the submittal document. They included: clarification of a public review and comment period for the Multiyear Action Plan, additional text clarifying how the selection and ranking process was developed, that RESTORE Act funding can be matched with other federal funding sources, and the need to ask applicants about operation and maintenance costs of submitted projects.

Action Recommended: Approve the Pinellas County RESTORE Act Direct Component Project Submittal document and recommend the document be incorporated into a County RESTORE Act submittal website as online submittal forms or forms to be downloaded and returned to the County.

Motion was made by Libby Featherston to approve the Action and seconded by Cathy Harrelson with the additional recommendation that Pinellas County incorporate NEPA procedures in the planning and public comment process. Motion passed unanimously.

6. PROJECT SUBMITTAL PERIOD – Lindsay Cross
a. County staff recommends a 3-month submittal period

The Working Group favored this time period but no formal action was taken.

Comments: Selection process – concerned that the County alone would be deciding what projects to fund. Response – The County envisions a team of individuals from both within and outside the County organization participating in the ranking and selection process.

7. NEXT STEPS – Kelli Levy

Prior to adjourning, other recommendations were expressed by the Working Group:

- Ensure there is “meaningful public participation.” It was suggested that an information public meeting be held at the beginning of the project submission process.
- Think about advertising and marketing and a roll-out strategy for the process. Possibly contact Brighthouse or Knology for advertising opportunities. Identify networks such as seafood restaurants, fishing groups, and local radio stations. Encourage a commissioner to write an editorial for the Tampa Bay Times.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.