

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

RESTORE Act Working Group (WG) team members met on **May 27th, 2015** at 2:00 p.m. at 22211 US Hwy 19, N in Bldg. #1 in the seventh of a series of meetings facilitated by **Lindsay Cross** of 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:	Libby Fetherston	Ocean Conservancy
absent:	Carlos Frey	City of St. Petersburg, Engineering & Capital Improvements
present:	Cathy Harrelson	Saint Petersburg Sustainability Council
present:	Mark Hafen	USF School of Geosciences
present:	Bob McConnell	Tampa Bay Water
present:	Bob Minning	Mayor of Treasure Island & Barrier Islands BIG C representative
absent:	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
present:	Jessica Koelsch	National Wildlife Federation
present:	Mike Colby	Clearwater Marine Association

Facilitator:

present: Lindsay Cross Tampa Bay Estuary Program

Pinellas County Staff Members Present:

Andy Squires	Natural Resources, Coastal & Freshwater Resources Section Manager
Kelli Levy	Natural Resources Division Manager
Chris Moore	Planning
Sue Myers	Natural Resources
Brandy Carter	Natural Resources
Mary Scott Hardwick	Intergovernmental Liaison
Brendan Mackesey	Assistant County Attorney

Public Present:

Dr. Bob Weisberg	University of South Florida College of Marine Science
Dana Gaydos	Gaydos Hydro Services

Discussion and Summary of Agenda Items

Meeting Objectives: Hear presentations for the proposed Multiyear Implementation Plan (MYIP) projects, and review and recommend staff seek County Commission approval to place the draft MYIP out for a 45-day public review.

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS – Andy Squires

Andy welcomed the attendees and each attendee introduced themselves and their affiliation.

2. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 22nd, 2014 MEETING SUMMARY – Lindsay Cross

Mike Colby mentioned Charles Mangio's idea regarding shallow and deepwater reefs and questioned why it hasn't been pursued. Andy Squires responded that the idea had to be placed to the side due to other Solid Waste work demands. Charles Mangio is with Pinellas County Solid Waste.

A motion to approve the summary of the October 22nd, 2014 meeting was moved for approval by Bob Minning and seconded by Cathy Harrelson. The motion passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT – Lindsay Cross

Dana Gaydos requested that counties pool Direct Component RESTORE Act funds together to fund one big project. No other public comments were made.

4. SUMMARY OF PROJECTS INCLUDED IN PROPOSED DRAFT MYIP

PRESENTATION 1 – Dr. Bob Weisberg: COMPS Project & Nowcast/Forecast Model Project

Dr. Bob Weisberg from USF presented on COMPS (Coastal Ocean Monitoring and Predictions System) for Pass-a-grille channel observations and a high resolution estuary circulation nowcast/forecast model for Tampa Bay and the surrounding vicinity. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Weisberg outlined the specifics of these two programs, what they would accomplish, and their costs. At the end of the presentation, Dr. Weisberg answered questions by Mike Colby, Bob Minning, Jessica Koelsch, Cathy Harrelson, Randy Runnels, Ernst Peebles and Bob McConnell.

PRESENTATION 2 – Chris Moore: Assessment of Vulnerability to the Impacts of Sea Level Rise & Infrastructure Resiliency Plan

Chris Moore from Pinellas County's Planning department, through a PowerPoint presentation, presented the Project, a model to identify at risk and critical infrastructure subject to sea level rise and inundation threats. He pointed out that reliable infrastructure is the foundation of a strong economy and community. Chris expounded on specific phases and timelines of the project. After the presentation, Chris responded to questions from Randy Runnels, Bob McConnell, Cathy Harrelson, Dr. Bob Weisberg, and Mike Colby. Kelli Levy commented that this effort is being coordinated with the Regional Climate Science Advisory Committee and the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council as part of the overall climate change planning efforts.

PRESENTATION 3 – Andy Squires: Ft. De Soto Park Dune Walkovers

Andy Squires from Pinellas County's Natural Resources Division presented a short PowerPoint presentation on the proposed Ft. De Soto Park Dune Walkovers. He explained that this proposed project was to construct dune walkovers along a 1.5 mile stretch of the Ft. De Soto beachfront. Andy explained the various project components and expected project benefits that will help preserve and protect the dune system. Andy responded to questions from Ernst Peebles, Jessica Koelsch and Mike Colby. Lindsay Cross commented that the County would seek to use the funds most efficiently through strategic selection of the locations of the boardwalks and by shortening the lengths, when possible and appropriate.

5. REVIEW OF DRAFT MYIP

Andy Squires reviewed the draft Multiyear Implementation Plan with the group. Lindsay Cross noted that staff is seeking action to "recommend that County staff bring the draft MYIP to the County Commission for approval to be put out for a 45-day public review and comment period." Ernst Peebles noted a needed correction on Page 1 to show that the Florida Institute of Oceanography will receive Florida's "0.5%" funding of RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Research Grants. Ernst also noted he had a few minor suggestion revisions to the document that he will provide to Andy after the meeting. Jessica motioned that the Working Group approve the recommended action with the noted change on page 1 and any minor revisions resulting from Dr. Peebles suggestions to Andy following the meeting. Cathy Harrelson seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously. Jessica Koelsch and Lindsay Cross commended Andy on an excellent and thorough MYIP that should be used as a model by other counties.

6. RESTORE ACT UPDATES

Andy Squires reviewed the latest news on the British Petroleum (BP) trial, including appeals from both BP and Federal prosecutors. He mentioned that due to the pending appeals and possible future appeals, the availability of additional RESTORE funds being added to the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust fund could drag on for several months if not longer. Brendan Mackesey from the Pinellas County Attorney's Office mentioned that things could be tied up for a while, potentially as long as two to four years.

8. NEXT STEPS

Andy Squires announced that he intends on seeking Commission approval of the draft MYIP at the June 23rd County Commission meeting that will begin at 2:00 p.m. Once the MYIP is approved by the U.S. Treasury, and with help from the project applicants, Andy will complete project-specific grant applications for submitted to the Treasury. If all goes well, Andy anticipates projects could begin in early 2016 once Treasury grants have been secured.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:10 p.m.