

RESOLUTION No. **3321**

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BAY COUNTY, FLORIDA EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE GULF OF MEXICO ESTUARY PROGRAM THAT WILL ESTABLISH ONE OR MORE ESTUARY PROGRAMS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT, RESTORATION, AND PROTECTION OF SIX NORTHWEST FLORIDA ESTUARIES; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, Gulf of Mexico estuaries and their associated natural resources provide boating, fishing, hunting, tourism, and other outdoor recreational and economic opportunities for citizens and visitors of Florida; and

WHEREAS, mismanagement of Gulf of Mexico estuaries may exacerbate flooding and property loss, negatively impact water quality and estuarine habitat, negatively affect the local economy and tourism, and threaten the health, safety and welfare of Florida's citizens and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the State of Florida are seeking funding to "stand up" and establish Estuary Programs in one or more Northwest Florida Estuaries, including Perdido, Pensacola, Escambia, Choctawhatchee, St. Andrew, and Apalachicola, in order to comprehensively coordinate the management and improvement of these estuaries and their natural resources; and

WHEREAS, elected officials, local, state and federal government staffs, the Nature Conservancy, citizens, academia, and other stakeholders from the Northwest Florida Estuaries have been actively participating in meetings for the past two years to identify and coordinate estuary management issues and efforts; and

WHEREAS, all involved stakeholders support the establishment of Estuary Programs for the six Northwest Florida Estuaries in order to comprehensively manage and improve water quality, habitat, natural resources, and economic benefits.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BAY COUNTY THAT:

1. That the Board of County Commissioners finds the above recitals to be true and correct and incorporate them herein by reference.
2. That the Bay County Board of County Commissioners hereby expresses its support for the Gulf of Mexico Estuary Program (EPA\_RESTORE\_003\_008\_Cat1) that will establish one or more Estuary Programs for the comprehensive management, restoration and protection of six Northwest Florida Estuaries, including Perdido, Pensacola, Escambia, Choctawhatchee, St. Andrew, and Apalachicola.
3. That the Bay County Board of County Commissioners requests that the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council allocate funding in the Initial Funded Priorities List for two or more of the estuaries in Northwest Florida.
4. That the Bay County Board of County Commissioners requests that the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council designate the St. Andrew Bay system as a Gulf of Mexico Estuary Program on the Initial Funded Priorities List.

5. That this resolution shall be effective upon adoption.

6. That the Clerk shall forward a copy of this Resolution to Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council Chair and Secretary of the Department of Commerce Penny Pritzker in Washington, DC; Florida Governor Rick Scott in Tallahassee, FL; Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council Executive Director Justin R. Ehrenwerth in New Orleans, LA; USEPA Secretary Gina McCarthy in Washington, DC; USEPA Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water Ken Kopocis in Washington, DC; Secretary Jonathan P. Steverson of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in Tallahassee; Director Shawn Hamilton of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Northwest District in Pensacola; and Executive Director Brett Cyphers of the Northwest Florida Water Management District in Havana.

DONE AND ADOPTED by the Bay County Board of County Commissioners this 15<sup>th</sup> day of September 2015.

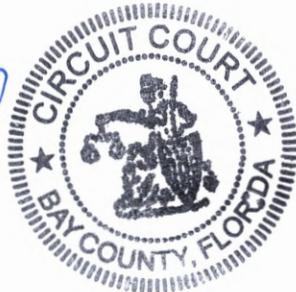


BAY COUNTY

Guy M. Tunnell, Chairman

ATTEST:

Bill Kinsaul, County Clerk



Approved as to form:

County Attorney