

Goals and Objectives of the Bay County Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund Multi-Year Implementation Plan

Overall Goal: Use RESTORE funds to enhance economic development, job creation, the environment and public infrastructure to improve the quality of life and environment for Bay County citizens and visitors.

GENERAL STRATEGY: View the environment of the Gulf and St. Andrew Bay and its system as intertwined with and vital to Bay County's economy and quality of life which, if not maintained in a healthy condition, can cause missed opportunities for new industry, loss of existing industry, tourism and defense-related jobs, loss of natural resource-based jobs, reduction in property values, increased costs of providing infrastructure services, and decline of the community in general.

1. Economic Development and Job Creation

GOAL: Support the long-term viability, diversity, and sustainability of the economy of Bay County.

Objective 1.1: Diversify the economy in areas of aerospace, medical technology, logistics, and advanced manufacturing, tourism development projects and defense.

Objective 1.2: Provide or contribute to infrastructure to attract new and technology-based industry - e.g. high-tech infrastructure, hangars/facilities, industrial sites

Objective 1.3: Support efforts that expand economic benefits from the airport

Objective 1.4: Provide in-demand job training and align training infrastructure resources for those jobs that are in the community or are anticipated

Objective 1.5: Establish a flexible workforce development fund able to rapidly respond to specific job-training needs

Objective 1.6: Develop and promote additional facilities, attractions, ecotourism opportunities, cultural and heritage resources, and other tourism amenities to foster tourism and economic development

Objective 1.7: Support recreation (including improved beach and water access), public transportation (including bike lanes), and opportunities for wage improvements that enhance the quality of life of Bay County residents and visitors.

Objective 1.8: Conserve and protect those natural resources that form the basis of the tourist industry.

Objective 1.9: Promote recreational Gulf fishing by establishing artificial reefs, highlighting recreational fish species that have fewer catch restrictions, and emphasizing the activity and enjoyment of fishing rather than particular fish species

Objective 1.10: Support community resilience planning for locally owned businesses to assist continuity of operations planning for post man-made or natural disasters.

2. Environment

GOAL: Ensure that the quality of environmental resources of the Gulf and St. Andrew Bay and its system is maintained or improved.

Objective 2.1: Improve and protect the St. Andrew Bay watershed water quality and watershed condition taking into consideration the recommendations and priorities in the St. Andrew Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan, the St. Andrew Bay Stormwater Management Plan (2009), and the Northwest Florida Water Management District Gulf restoration projects list, as well as the priority recommendations of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and fishery strategies.

Objective 2.2: Improve and protect the water quality of the St. Andrew Bay, its watershed, coastal lakes, and the Gulf near-shore waters by advancing acquisition of lands and restoration of wetlands and uplands in proximity to the Bay

Objective 2.3: Protect seagrass beds by partnering with organizations to institute a public awareness program to inform residents and visitors about the value and potential threats to seagrass beds

Objective 2.4: Increase awareness of the beach and near-shore areas as wildlife habitat

Objective 2.5: Support acquisition and active management of properties important to coastal conservation lands in order to protect the natural resources

Objective 2.6: Preserve and restore dune systems and living shorelines, including oyster reefs, seagrass beds and marshes, to improve estuarine habitat and water quality, reduce shoreline erosion, increase coastal resilience and minimize the potential damage to life and property caused by coastal storms

Objective 2.7: Support projects that contribute to the protection and recovery of protected species listed by the state or federal government and that improve the flexibility of local infrastructure management, development, and business operations.

Objective 2.8: Support a sustainable approach to long-term collection of water quality and other important environmental data that can be used as indicators of ecosystem health and recovery and provide information for use in adaptive management.

3. Public Infrastructure

For this plan, public infrastructure is defined as man-made infrastructure owned by the public and/or for public use. Environmental infrastructure, such as wetlands, the seagrass beds, and other habitats, are included in the Environment section.

GOAL: Provide the public infrastructure necessary to protect and enhance the environment, strengthen and diversify the economy, and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors

Objective 3.1: Maintain water quality in Deer Point Lake, the local potable water supply, at current levels or better through conservation land acquisition, septic tank removal, stabilization of unpaved roads and fertilizer application education

Objective 3.2: Stabilize unpaved roads in Bay County to reduce nutrient and sedimentation input into the St. Andrew Bay system; prioritize efforts based on proximity to water bodies and other factors, including guidance in the St. Andrew Bay SWIM plan.

Objective 3.3: Maintain and improve the water quality of the Gulf and the St. Andrew Bay system by upgrading sewage treatment facilities to advanced wastewater treatment levels or greater

Objective 3.4: Facilitate replacement of septic tanks with centralized wastewater treatment, prioritizing efforts based on factors including proximity to the bay system, density of septic tanks, age and condition of septic tanks, and soils.

Objective 3.5: Maintain and improve the water quality of the Gulf and the St. Andrew Bay system by installing or upgrading stormwater treatment facilities, using the St. Andrew Bay Stormwater Management Plan (2009) and the SWIM plan for guidance and with emphasis on multi-jurisdictional approaches.

Objective 3.6: Promote low impact development (LID) practices

Objective 3.7: Increase coastal resilience and protect key public assets from coastal flooding

Objective 3.8: Support the Port Authority's efforts to add Port capacity and increase trade, including land acquisition for facilities, expansion of port related infrastructure, continued development of the Intermodal Distribution Center, maintaining and expanding deepwater access, and the capacity to provide alternative fuels