

Bay County RESTORE Act Direct Component Proposals 2014-2015

Proj #	Bay PRP 2014-022
Project Name	Bay County East Pass Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
Project Proposer, affiliation, web site	Ken Schnell BOCC www.baycountyfl.gov
Project Description	The proposed project is to re-open East Pass along the path of the historic channel linking St Andrew Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. Creating additional sand dunes with the spoil material to enhance habitat for the Choctawhatchee Beach Mouse and create a barrier making it more difficult for predators to reach the mice on Shell Island. The additional beach will also enhance nesting habitat for endangered sea turtles and will make ideal habitat for the piping prower.
Proj. Size (acres)	
Economic	The proposed project will benefit essential fish habitat which will result in benefits to commercial and recreational fishing. The additional pass will also provide an alternate route from St. Andrews bay to the Gulf which will ease the congestion in the St. Andrews Bay Entrance Channel.
Environmental	Benefits include improved water quality and clarity for 4,000 or more acres of St Andrew Bay between Shell Island and Tyndall AFB which will benefit seagrasses in the area. The proposed project will also enhance habitat for an endangered beach mouse, sea turtles, and the piping plover.
Social	Citizens and environmental organizations have been petitioning the County to reopen the East Pass. Clean water, improve fishing habitat and increased recreational boating opportunities are important social benefits to the residents of Bay County and many visitors to the area.
Other	Opening the historic East Pass will also eliminate another land access point to Tyndall Air Force Base which will improve the security of the installation.
Project Location	The project is located approximately seven miles east of the St. Andrews Bay Entrance Channel (harbor entrance) in the historical pass location between St Andrew Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.
Est total project cost	\$1,000,000
Amount requested	\$1,000,000
Describe what funds will be used for	The requested funds will be used for an environmental impact statement and inlet management plan which are required before design and permitting can begin in accordance with recommendations from the Army Corps of Engineers.
Long term funding needed? Source? Availability?	The EIS and IBMP plans are Phase I of the project with Phase II engineering design and permitting estimate at \$2,000,000 and Phase III construction estimated at \$15,000,000. At this time future funding has not been secured; however, the conclusions of the EIS may lead to additional federal funds
Est yrs completion	3-6
Matching \$ available?	
Match source? Secured?	
Amount match secured	
% proj cost from match	
Partners anticipated?	Yes
Partner names	U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and Tyndall Air Force Base

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Funds request other source?	
If yes, name source, decision date	
Proj fully funded by other source?	
FULL PROPOSAL FORM	
Project number (proposal)	Bay PRP 2014-022
Submittal date proposal	2/5/2015
Project name (proposal)	Bay County East Pass Project Environmental Impact Study
Applicant name	Ken Schnell, P.E. Public Works Director
Project description (proposal)	Conduct an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) and Inlet and Beach Management Plan (IBMP) for a proposed project to re-open the East Pass along the path of the historic channel linking St. Andrew Bay to the Gulf of Mexico. Due to the sensitive location and the size of the proposed project, conducting an EIP and IBMP are required to address required compliance with all Federal and State agencies regulation with the goal to produce a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document in accordance with Presidents Council of Environmental Quality Rules and Regulations. In addition, an Inlet and Beach Management Plan for FDEP's Bureau of Beaches and Coastal Systems. These plans are required by the Corp of Engineers and FDEP as the first steps in the initiative to re-open the historical East Pass.
Project location description	The historic East Pass is located approximately seven (7) miles east of St. Andrews Bay Entrance Channel (harbor entrance) located in St. Andrew Bay fronting the Gulf of Mexico. Shell Island, Parcel Number: 26397-000-000 United States Air Force, Department of Defense See Aerial Map.

<p>1. Restore nat res</p>	<p>The proposed project will benefit Essential Fish Habitat by restoring water quality and clarity for 4,000 acres of St. Andrew Bay located between Shell Island and Tyndall Air Force Base. Seagrasses are extremely important components of the St. Andrew Bay ecosystem and will benefit from the proposed project. Their relative scarcity and declining acreage makes it ever more important to protect the existing seagrass beds. Seagrass beds provide spawning, feeding, nursery, and protective habitat for a wide range of aquatic organisms including many of recreational and commercial value. Although estimates vary widely, up to 98 percent of the total commercial fisheries catch in the gulf is made up of species that are dependent on estuaries during some part of their life cycle. Up to 90 percent of the fisheries value is estuarine dependent. Many commercially and recreationally important species spend all or part of their lives in estuaries, especially salt march and seagrass habitat. It is well known that growth and distribution of sea grasses are dependent on a variety of environmental factors with light and water clarity having the greatest influence. In addition, benefits from the proposed project include enhancing habitat for endangered species including the Choctawhatchee Beach Mouse, sea turtles and the piping plover. Creating additional sand dunes from the spoil material will enhance habitat for the Choctawhatchee Beach Mouse. Beach expansion will create additional habitat for nesting sea turtles and provide a protective barrier to the sand dunes. The separation of Shell Island from the mainland would also have beneficial impact on the Choctawhatchee Beach Mouse and sea turtles by reducing access to the island by predators. The re-opening he pass will restore suitable habitat for wintering piping plover.</p>
<p>2. Mitigate</p>	<p>The improved water quality will provide benefits for the hundreds of acres of submerged sea grass beds located along the shoreline of Shell Island and Tyndall. The improved water clarity will afford greater sunlight reaching the sea grass beds that will benefit the grass beds growth. In conjunction with the improved sea grass beds and water quality the entire marine habitat will improve. From fish, shell-fish,marine vertebrates especially the many small marine fish and shell-fish that use the protection and cover of a healthy sea grass beds for a nursery area. Even the water birds and birds that wade into the shoal grass beds will benefit from the improved water quality and grass beds.</p>
<p>3. Implement plan</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>4. Workforce/Jobs</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>5. Improve state park</p>	<p>St. Andrew State Park is located on the Gulf of Mexico, Grand Lagoon and owns property on both sides of the St. Andrews Bay Entrance Channel. The State Park owns approximately 2 miles of Shell Island along St. Andrew Bay to the east. The proposed re-opening of the historic East Pass would provide improved water quality all along the Bay-side of Shell Island therefore improving the water quality and marine habitat for the associated State Park.</p>
<p>6. Infrastructure</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>7. Flood protect</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>8. Planning</p>	<p>n/a</p>

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9. Promote tourism	The some 4,000 acres that would receive water quality and marine habitat improvements from the re-opening of the East Pass is prime boating, recreational fishing and swimming tourism area. The Bay side of Shell Island is the most visited area of all the St. Andrew Bay area and the opening of the East Pass will provide additional recreational boating opportunities.
10. Promote seafood	n/a
1.1 Diversify	n/a
1.2 Infrastruc	n/a
1.3 Airport	n/a
1.4 Job train	n/a
1.5 Workforce dev	n/a
1.6 Facil tourism/econ dev	n/a
1.7 Rec, transport, wage	n/a
1.8 Protect nat res	The some 4,000 acres that would receive water quality and marine habitat improvements from the re-opening of the East Pass is prime boating, recreational fishing and swimming tourism area. The Bay side of Shell Island is the most visited area of all the St. Andrew Bay area.
1.9 Promote fishing	n/a
1.10 Commun resil	n/a
2.1 Protect SAB	One of the goals of the St. Andrew Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan is to protect and restore the natural ecological diversity, productivity, and ecological functions of the St. Andrew Bay watershed to include specifically the assessment and restoration of East Pass closure (p.15). This project is the first step in attaining the goal of opening the historical East Pass.
2.2 Improv wtr qual	n/a
2.3 Protect seagrass	n/a
2.4 Wildl hab	n/a
2.5 Acq lands	n/a

<p>2.6 Preserve dunes, shore</p>	<p>The environmental benefits resulting from the proposed project include improved water quality and clarity for 4,000 or more acres of St Andrew Bay between Shell Island and Tyndall AFB. Seagrasses are extremely important components of the St Andrew Bay ecosystem and will benefit from the proposed project. Their relative scarcity and declining acreage makes it ever more important to protect the existing seagrass beds. Seagrass beds provide spawning, feeding, nursery, and protective habitat for a wide range of aquatic organisms including many of recreational and commercial value. Although estimates vary widely, up to 98 percent of the total commercial fisheries catch in the gulf is made up of species that are dependent on estuaries during some part of their life cycle. Up to 90 percent of the fisheries value is estuarine dependent. Many commercially and recreationally important species spend all or part of their lives in estuaries, especially salt march and seagrass habitat. It is well known that growth and distribution of sea grasses are dependent on a variety of environmental factors with light and water clarity having the greatest influence. The proposed project will benefit Essential Fish Habitat by restoring water quality and clarity for 4,000 or more acres of this portion of St. Andrew Bay. In addition, benefits from the proposed project include enhancing habitat for endangered species including the Choctawhatchee Beach Mouse, sea turtles and the piping plover. Creating additional sand dunes from the spoil material will enhance habitat for the Choctawhatchee Beach Mouse. Beach expansion will create additional habitat for nesting sea turtles and provide a protective barrier to the sand dunes. The separation of Shell Island from the mainland would also have beneficial impact on the Choctawhatchee Beach Mouse and sea turtles by reducing access to the island by predators. The re-opening the pass will restore suitable habitat for wintering piping plover</p>
<p>2.7 Protected spp</p>	<p>As mentioned in 2.6 above, the project include protection and recovery of endangered species including the Choctawhatchee Beach Mouse, sea turtles and the piping plover.</p>
<p>2.8 Water data</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>3.1 Deer Pt Lk wtr qual</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>3.2 Stabil roads</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>3.3 Sewer AWT</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>3.4 Septic to central</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>3.5 Stormwtr</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>3.6 LID</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>3.7 Coast resil</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>3.8 Support port</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Budget justification</p>	<p>The funds requested (\$1,000,000) are to accomplish the first phase (Environmental Impact Study and Inlet and Beach Management Plan) of the proposed re-opening of the historical East Pass.</p>
<p>Ongoing costs</p>	<p>none at this time.</p>

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Objective and measures	Due to the sensitive location and the size of the proposed project, conducting an EIP and IBMP are required to address required compliance with all Federal and State agencies regulation with the goal to produce a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA document in accordance with Presidents Council of Environmental Quality Rules and Regulations. In addition, a Inlet and Beach Management Plan for FDEP's Bureau of Beaches and Coastal Systems. These plans are the first steps in the initiative to re-open the historical East Pass. After completion of the first phase, the project could proceed with the engineering design and permitting of the project to include securing funding for the construction.
Nat Res Proj	Yes
Best Avail Science	The development of the EIS will use best available science in its development to include the development of the hydrodynamic model of the dual inlet system proposed. In addition, the study will incorporate review of cooperating agencies.
Env issues	Due to the sensitive location and the size of the proposed project, the purpose of the EIP and IBMP is to address required compliance with all Federal and State agencies regulation as identified in the Restore Act Environmental Checklist with the goal to produce a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA document in accordance with Presidents Council of Environmental Quality Rules and Regulations. In addition, a Inlet and Beach Management Plan for FDEP's Bureau of Beaches and Coastal Systems. These plans are the first steps in the initiative to re-open the historical East Pass.
Econ Dev proj?	
Econ Dev description	
Job Creation?	
Describe how jobs created	
No. jobs created	
No. jobs created Yr 1	
No. jobs created Yr 2	
No. jobs created Yr 3	
Avg wage	
Total proj cost	
Complement. proj descr.	n/a
Proj readiness descr	The project is ready to start when funds become available.
Permits required?	
Permits status	
Land acq?	
Acquire fee simple?	
Acquire easement?	
Fee and easement descri	
Terms of easement	
Entity to hold title	
Easement acres	
Fee simple acres	

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Appraisal avail?	
Appraised value	
Title opinon avail?	
Material risks	The EIS is being developed to address any possible material risk of the project to include regulatory permitting risks and ecological risks that may affect the project.
Likelihood of success	Based on the experimental pass opening in 2001, the RMA testing and observation showed that the opening of the pass provided improved water quality and clarity in addition improvements to submerged grass bed quality.
Contract out work?	Yes
Contracting strategy	It is proposed to partner with the Mobile Corps of Engineer Office (COE) for the execution of the work. This would be a team partnership between the COE, FDEP and the county with the performance of the EIS study performed by the COE. This provides the best opportunity for agency cooperation and future possible federal construction funding. The county's will act as owner and monitor the progress through periodic monthly meetings. Once funding is available, It is estimated to take 3 to 6 months to complete the contractual agreement with the COE and then an additional 24 to 36 months to perform the actual EIS study.
Applic manage proj?	
L 1. Proposed mgr	Bay County Engineering Division
L 2. Mgr agreed?	Yes
L 3.Mgr experience	Bay County's engineering division has professional staff with over 20 years of experience in the execution and management of both state and federal grants.
L 4. Post proj maint	The requirements for the future maintenance is unkown at this time.
L 5. Mgmt approach	The county as owner will be responsible for the procurement and execution of contractual obligation with the COE. In addition, the county will be responsible for the monitoring of the contract so that it can be executed in a timely fashion.
Outreach descr	none at this time