

Bay County RESTORE Act Direct Component Proposals 2014-2015

Proj #	Bay PRP 2014-027
Project Name	Gulf World Marine Institute Marine Animal Stranding, Rehabilitation and Necropsy Facility
Project Proposer, affiliation, web site	Ron Hardy, Gulf World Marine Institute, Inc. 501(c) 3 organization/ Gulf World Marine Park, Inc gulfworldmarineinstitute.org
Project Description	Construction of a new facility to enhance and expand existing response and rehabilitation capabilities and new public education and research programs for stranded marine animals (turtles and mammals) and other marine life in Bay County and the eastern Gulf of Mexico.
Proj. Size (acres)	1.3
Economic	Gulf World Marine Park, Inc (GWMP) has been providing marine entertainment and education programs to visitors of Bay County for generations. Over 125,000 visitors spent \$6.5 million last year, supporting 80 employees. Visitation, jobs and salary expected to significantly increase with new facility.
Environmental	GWMP has been involved in marine animal recovery since 1970 and is considered a leading exhibit and rehabilitation facility in the nation, responding to cold stunned turtles and dolphins following BP spill (Unusual Mortality Events). New Center will allow expanded UME response and other programs.
Social	New Rescue Center will provide 7,000 sq ft of science, research and education space, not just for sea turtles and marine mammals, but all marine life, particularly recreational and commercial fishery. Social benefits of better understanding and helping marine life is unmeasurable, but significant.
Other	GWMP helped establish the 501(c)3 GW Marine Institute in 2012 to better focus and separate rehab efforts and apply for federal, state and foundation grants to support and expand efforts. Bay County RESTORE funding will allow us to leverage and match ROI to build/operate a World Class Rehab Facility.
Project Location	15412 Front Beach Road, Panama City Beach, Florida
Est total project cost	\$2,821,000
Amount requested	\$750,000
Describe what funds will be used for	100% dedicated to construction of new Rescue Facility. Over \$1.6 million already received for equipment, supplies, land and some staffing. Remainder will be provided by other grants, including potential RESTORE, and private funding opportunities.
Long term funding needed? Source? Availability?	Continuing OMB costs and any improvements/ expansions would be the responsibility of the GWMI and other state, federal, private funding partners. Using the requested funds as match will allow leveraging and potential phasing of Center activities.
Est yrs completion	0-2
Matching \$ available?	Yes
Match source? Secured?	State, federal and local grant programs, other RESTORE related NFWF, NRDA, NOAA funding, NGO and private institutions related to marine research, education and rehab . Besides NFWF and some direct BP support for equipment and supplies, no match has been secured for the new Rescue Center.
Amount match secured	\$1,026,000

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% proj cost from match	50
Partners anticipated?	Yes
Partner names	NMFS, FWC, USFWS, U of F, Auburn, GWMI, local TDC/ EDC.
Funds request other source?	
If yes, name source, decision date	
Proj fully funded by other source?	
FULL PROPOSAL FORM	
Project number (proposal)	Bay PRP 2014-027
Submittal date proposal	2/7/2015
Project name (proposal)	Gulf World Marine Institute Marine Animal Stranding, Rehabilitation and Necropsy Facility
Applicant name	Ron Hardy, Gulf World Marine Institute, Inc.
Project description (proposal)	Construction of a new facility to enhance and expand existing response and rehabilitation capabilities and new public education and research programs for stranded marine animals (turtles and mammals) and other marine life in Bay County and the eastern Gulf of Mexico.
Project location description	15412 Front Beach Road, Panama City Beach, Florida (Detailed map of project site and artist rendering available upon request)
1. Restore nat res	Gulf World Marine Institute (GWMI) is responsible through National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to help with the protection of endangered and protected species by conducting rescue, rehabilitation and release of stranded Sea Turtles and Marine Mammals. GWMI service area (from Ft. Walton Beach to St. Marks, Florida) has one of the highest incidence of marine animal stranding in North America. We also support and implement public information programs that help with the understanding and support of protection of these marine animals in the wild. An important part of our program is to inform locals and visitors to our area the importance of respecting and protecting the habitat of these marine animals, which support so much other sea life. We work with and have a very good relationship with the local and state-wide sea turtle nesting program as well as other environmental monitoring and protection programs.
2. Mitigate	Marine animals, particularly dolphins and sea turtles, were one of the major species negatively impacted and documented to have been significantly harmed during and following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Gulf World and the GWMI were heavily involved in responding to this Unusual Mortality Event (UME) and mitigating damages to these animal's populations. Through construction and operation of the new Gulf World Marine Institute Marine Animal Stranding, Rehabilitation and Necropsy Facility we will be able to better respond and document mitigation of future UME's in our service area and throughout the northern Gulf of Mexico.

<p>3. Implement plan</p>	<p>We hold permits and/or letters of authorization to gather information about sick, injured or dead Marine Animals that is provided to NMFS and FWC. This information helps inform and forms the basis for their comprehensive conservation management plans. Cetaceans, and particularly Dolphins, are a sentinel for Ocean Health. For many years dolphins and sea turtles have been used to monitor the overall environmental health of the Gulf, and St. Andrews Bay in particular. For example, bottle nose dolphins are used to measure air quality problems in some estuaries due their susceptibility to respiratory ailments and lesions from hydrocarbon and other air/ water pollutants. These top predators are also keystone species and an integral link in the marine ecosystem. If problems start occurring in their local populations, there is likely something wrong in the ecosystem. Our job is to monitor the many miles of shoreline that we have been assigned for stranded and sick animals. Our staff and many volunteers are the eyes and ears when it comes to reporting issues that adversely affect these marine animals and the federal and state agency coastal conservation management plans developed for the recovery of these protected species, depend on our data.</p>
<p>4. Workforce/Jobs</p>	<p>Our project is a "bricks and mortar" project, thus providing many short-term, but locally significant construction jobs to the local construction industry. In addition, our paid staff at the new facility will include Veterinarian and Veterinarian assistants, Administration staff, including Director and Assistant Director, as well as office, maintenance and response and educational/ outreach personal. We will also use a staff of trained, local volunteers. Some of the researchers using the new facility at GWMI, will also require hiring local people to help accomplish their mission. We already except many interns from local schools and universities. Many of these interns may return for jobs at GWMI or other similar opportunities here and beyond. Our students can chose to expand their knowledge and on the job training by picking one of the following internships - Animal Care and Animal Training Intern, Veterinary Intern, Marine Animal Education Intern and Stranding Response Intern. We do a good job with workforce development and the industry hires a very high percentage of those finishing our programs. This project will allow us to increase the number of students and expand our programs.</p>
<p>5. Improve state park</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>6. Infrastructure</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>7. Flood protect</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>8. Planning</p>	<p>NA</p>

<p>9. Promote tourism</p>	<p>As one of Bay County's leading iconic family-attractions, Gulf World Marine Park is a major player in the promotion of Gulf Coast Regional tourism, bringing visitors from around the state, nationally and internationally. We will promote the new institute facility as the perfect place to come and learn more about Dolphins and Turtles and the issues that face them in their natural habitat, and see first hand how they are properly handled and rehabilitated. The public will also be enlightened how they can help. The new facility will become an attraction of it's own and will be a fun place to learn and promote environmental responsibility while observing our marine animals in their natural habitat. The facility will be free to the public and open on a regular schedule. The institute will develop, provide and distribute environmental literature to organizations and the general public as requested and/ or contracted by governmental agencies, schools, foundations and other non-profit organizations. This literature includes recommendations to the public on participating in other marine related activities locally, including the fun and enjoyment of recreational fishing and boating. We are always available to give public presentations for community clubs and other interested groups.</p>
<p>10. Promote seafood</p>	<p>Gulf World has a reef habitat that features specimens from our local Gulf waters, many of local commercial and recreational value. The institute will provide kiosks of the reef and other Gulf habitats, and the educational script that identifies the different fish species, their characteristics, habitats and habits, and their availability to be caught or purchased locally for consumption. We suggest that our visitors try our local seafood while they are in town - where the fish are fresh and delicious, or elsewhere while visiting the Gulf of Mexico. Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf in a sustainable way, in partnership with the Fresh from Florida campaign, will be a central them of the institute, in concert with our our marine animal conservation and protection programs.</p> <p>A good example of our commitment to this theme is the dedication of funds, recently received from the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation, to create an educational pamphlet on sustainable seafood (Seafood Watch) along the Florida Gulf coast, focusing on the Florida panhandle. This information will allow locals as well as visitors to the area to know which fish are available for consumption to promote conservation of our local marine species. Similar partnerships are possible through the institute and soon to be constructed facility.</p>

<p>1.1 Diversify</p>	<p>GWMI is a leader in marine animal medical technology. The Veterinary staff at Gulf World and GWMI are some of the better equipped and trained in the US for rehabilitating and maintaining the health of marine animals. Medical technology advancements for marine animal health care can be transferred to human health. State-of-the-art equipment and qualified staff allow us to perform procedures that others can not. Through our networking with other medical staff and researchers, we will become well known and sought out for these innovations by Universities and Research Facilities from throughout the United States, to improve upon and develop new diagnostic and medical procedures. Just recently, working with Auburn University, the first diagnostic test ever for Mucormycosis - a highly contagious pathogen resulting in 99% mortality rate for Dolphins in the wild as well as in human care, was developed through our facility. Another GWMI innovation in 2014 was when we secured a state-of-the-art, 25 watt CO2 surgical laser, the first one in the country to be used with animals. With this new equipment and technology GWMI is now able to remove fibropapilloma growths from sea turtles, a virus related disease which can be very debilitating and potentially fatal. Just recently our medical staff successfully birthed an artificially inseminated dolphin at our facility, a first for Gulf World. We also will work with VISIT Florida, local Tourism Development officials and other local businesses to help develop programs that will encourage more visitors to come to Bay County to enjoy and learn about our programs and facilities and the natural wild dolphin populations. This will create a positive image for our community's environmental responsibility and economic vitality and diversity.</p>
<p>1.2 Infrastruc</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>1.3 Airport</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>1.4 Job train</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>1.5 Workforce dev</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>1.6 Facil tourism/econ dev</p>	<p>Our project will create a new facility that will be available to the public, at no charge, to learn about responsible ecotourism available in Bay County and give them the opportunities to learn more about the efforts to rescue, rehabilitate and release sick and injured beached marine animals. Because of the movie Dolphin Tale 1 and , particularly, Dolphin Tale 2, that featured a good portrayal of the issues of rescuing and working with stranded marine animals, the publics interest in this process has risen dramatically. The large, female dolphin that was portrayed in both movies, "Panama", stranded in Panama City and was rehabilitated here at Gulf World. NMFS determined her non-releasable and we transferred her to the Clearwater Marine Science Center.</p>
<p>1.7 Rec, transport, wage</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>1.8 Protect nat res</p>	<p>Our mission and the objective of GWMI is, and always has been, to "Conserve and Protect" our natural resources, with a specific emphasis to rehabilitate and restore healthy populations of Federally Protected Species (Dolphins) and Federally listed Endangered and Threatened Species (Sea Turtles). We work closely with other natural resource conservation organizations to help in support their missions. A recent example is our relationship with FWC and local organization in the "Bad to Feed" programs in our area.</p>

<p>1.9 Promote fishing</p>	<p>As stated earlier, the Reef Aquarium at Gulf World is built around Northern Gulf species, where we display and highlight local fish and promote recreational fishing. With the new GWMI facility, we will display and highlight native species of special interest (i.e., fewer catch restrictions) and promote the fun and responsible recreational fishing for catch and release species and sustainable seafood. Our objective is to also raise guest’s awareness of non-native or invasive species and the negative impacts they have on the marine environment. A good example is the invasive of lionfish in the Gulf of Mexico, and what divers can do to help report and reduce them.</p>
<p>1.10 Commun resil</p>	<p>NA - However, the new GWMI facility will be designed and built as an example of resiliency planning on the coast and may highlight operations and planning examples for post man-made disasters (like hurricanes and climate change) by Bay County and other local communities as an educational component.</p>
<p>2.1 Protect SAB</p>	<p>NA - However GWMI may be a partner in some of these efforts as mentioned above.</p>
<p>2.2 Improv wtr qual</p>	<p>NA - However GWMI may be a partner in some of these efforts as mentioned above.</p>
<p>2.3 Protect seagrass</p>	<p>Our public awareness programs, now and at the new facility, will specifically address the importance of sea grass beds and how important it is to protect them. We will also make residents and visitors aware of the consequence if we do not protect them. All our public awareness programs, now and in the future, are used in our visits to classrooms in the public schools and other organizations as well.</p>
<p>2.4 Wildl hab</p>	<p>Our Gulf Coast beaches are a great resource to our many communities along the Panhandle. The wildlife habitats seen along our coast are also vital to the essence of our coastal heritage. This stated, The GWMI educates and promotes conservation and protection of our shorelines on various educational events and outreaches. One program that GWMI is currently implementing in the school system is educating students on the need and results of protecting local Perdido Key beach mice and their surrounding habitats (i.e. sand dunes/sea oats) to the species. The Institute also collaborates with local marine environmental agencies (NMFS Panama City Lab, FWC state-wide and locally, Panama City Beach Turtle Watch and others) to participate in World Oceans Day every year. This event emphasizes on how important our oceans and coastal habitats are and how to become more involved in protecting this resource. Our new facility will allow us the opportunity to provide greater public awareness programs, with displays and kiosks to educate the public on beach mice conservation, avoid the feeding and harassment of wild dolphins and other wildlife, and other positive conservation messages for beach and near-shore wildlife habitats.</p>
<p>2.5 Acq lands</p>	<p>NA - However GWMI may provide support in these efforts through our educational programs as mentioned above.</p>
<p>2.6 Preserve dunes, shore</p>	<p>NA - However GWMI may provide support in these efforts through our educational programs as mentioned above.</p>

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<p>2.7 Protected spp</p>	<p>The heart of our mission is to work closely with state and federal agencies to protect endangered and threatened sea turtles as well as protected marine mammals. The stranding team is on call around the clock to respond to the aid of these animals. We also support projects, such as the construction of the GWMI, that accommodate for the protection and recovery of protected listed species in their development of infrastructure and business on the coast.</p>
<p>2.8 Water data</p>	<p>As mentioned previously, Dolphins are a sentinel for Ocean Health. Data that we collect from both live and deceased dolphins and other marine animals is an invaluable indicator of the general health of the ecosystem. NMFS and FWC says that the stranding networks data is a very important element in their federally and state required management plans, and can be used in the adaptive management of these plans. The water quality and other environmental data we collect daily from the Gulf could be provided to others in a long term monitoring program.</p>
<p>3.1 Deer Pt Lk wtr qual</p>	<p>NA -However GWMI may provide support in these efforts through our educational programs.</p>
<p>3.2 Stabil roads</p>	<p>NA - However GWMI may provide support in these efforts through our educational programs.</p>
<p>3.3 Sewer AWT</p>	<p>NA - However GWMI may provide support in these efforts through our educational and water collection programs (see 2.8 above).</p>
<p>3.4 Septic to central</p>	<p>NA - However GWMI may provide support in these efforts through our educational programs.</p>
<p>3.5 Stormwtr</p>	<p>NA - However GWMI may provide support in these efforts through our educational programs.</p>
<p>3.6 LID</p>	<p>Our new facility will be designed and constructed using Low Impact Development Practices.</p>
<p>3.7 Coast resil</p>	<p>NA - As mentioned previously GWMI may provide support in these efforts through our educational programs.</p>
<p>3.8 Support port</p>	<p>NA - However GWMI may provide support in these efforts through our educational programs.</p>
<p>Budget justification</p>	<p>One hundred percent of the \$750,000 received from this grant will be used for construction. We will use our own funds for operation, maintenance and future improvements. Support to help with the other \$500,000 for construction will be solicited from other sources, including other RESTORE funds (Gulf Council and Consortium), federal and state, and local source grant programs. If that effort is not successful, Gulf World Marine Park Inc. will provide an additional \$250,000 if needed. Gulf World Marine Institute, as a non-profit environmental education and research facility, will raise funds for the other \$250,000 and Gulf World Marine Park Inc. will guarantee any short fall, if necessary, in the fund raising program.</p>
<p>Ongoing costs</p>	<p>As stated above, no operational cost will be borne by Bay County. We will receive some operational funds from small grants, reimbursements for work done on other projects, donations and other fund-raising activities. Gulf World Marine Park has always guaranteed the operational expenses for its operations and the GWMI stranding program and will continue to supplement whatever shortfall that might occur.</p>

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Objective and measures	The overall objective of the project is to build an operational building for the Institute's work that allows us to increase the amount of assistants we can give to NMFS and FWC and the Research Community needs in meeting their objectives. Part of the construction is a necropsy facility, that is very sorely needed now, because of the extreme need and limited facilities now available along the Gulf coast. Especially for Unusual Mortality Events mentioned earlier.
Nat Res Proj	Yes
Best Avail Science	<p>Programs to recover, rehabilitate, release and protect marine animals (dolphins and sea turtles) used by GWMI utilize the the best available science, peer reviewed, and statistically valid data and information.</p> <p>Risks and uncertainties in activities and techniques are closely monitored and enforced by NMFS and FWC.</p>
Env issues	We see no issues in review of the Treasury's RESTORE Environmental Checklist.
Econ Dev proj?	Yes
Econ Dev description	<p>Construction of Research facilities will provide jobs and support the local construction industry. Visiting public and researchers will provide opportunities for other local businesses in supporting and catering to there specific needs.</p> <p>Because of the new and unique nature of the GWMI programs, there is not specific data on projected attendance and participation that can be provided at this time for a formal economic impact analysis of the proposed project, but can be researched and provided if required.</p>
Job Creation?	Yes
Describe how jobs created	Short term jobs with the construction of the building. Long term jobs with the operations of the rehabilitation, research and education facility.
No. jobs created	90
No. jobs created Yr 1	80
No. jobs created Yr 2	8
No. jobs created Yr 3	2
Avg wage	\$31,000
Total proj cost	\$2,600,000
Complement. proj descr.	None to our knowledge, except as described above for supporting program partnership or educational promotion or deemed complimentary by the Bay County RESTORE Act Advisory Committee and County Commission.
Proj readiness descr	Once project is approved and funded, we will only need to complete the construction drawings and secure a building permit from City of Panama City Beach to begin construction. This should not take more than 90 to 120 days and construction should be completed within one year.
Permits required?	Yes
Permits status	City of Panama City Beach. Will file as soon as we are notified that we were approved for the grant. No state or federal permits required, to our knowledge.
Land acq?	
Acquire fee simple?	
Acquire easement?	Yes

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Fee and easement descri	Long term Lease. The property is owned by Gulf World, Inc. The non-profit Gulf World Marine Institute will have a long term lease to build and operate a Rescue and Rehabilitate Center. This lease area will include the new structure, parking and the area housing all the existing rehabilitation pools and ancillary equipment.
Terms of easement	Lease will be for the number of years that will satisfy the requirements of Bay County and/or the Treasury Department.
Entity to hold title	Gulf World Marine Park, Inc
Easement acres	0.08
Fee simple acres	0
Appraisal avail?	
Appraised value	
Title opinon avail?	
Material risks	There are no material risks associated with this project that we are aware of.
Likelihood of success	There is a 100% likelihood of project accomplishing its main purpose of providing a new Marine Animal Response and Restoration facility with research and educational outreach capabilities, if funded through this grant proposal. Gulf World, Inc has been in successful business operation in Bay County for 45 years. Gulf World and GWMI have been very successful in accomplishing their respective duties and missions assigned to us by NMFS and FWC for many years as well. This grant and constructed facility will allow us to assume many more responsibilities for these agencies programs, especially with the necropsy center. The project, which will allow GWMI staff to conduct medical treatment, research and necropsy on site, as well as educational and outreach activities at their own facility, will definitely accomplish its purpose. Currently, with all the travel time and expense to other locations for these needed facilities, the team is extremely limited and unnecessary expenses incurred.
Contract out work?	Yes
Contracting strategy	The construction of the building will be contracted out. The building process will be monitored very closely and we will insure all the proper documentation will be filed and approved during construction.
Applic manage proj?	Yes
L 1. Proposed mgr	Ron Hardy, President Gulf World Marine Institute. CPA John Juchniewicz, Carr, Riggs, Ingram, Inc
L 2. Mgr agreed?	Yes
L 3.Mgr experience	Ron Hardy, project manger has owned and operated Gulf World Marine Park for 30 years where he has managed several federal grants. The largest was a Federal Prescott Grant from NMFS for \$100,000 and another for \$90,000. The managing and required reporting was his responsibility. He owned Hydrospace dive shop and supervised the construction of a new \$250,000 facility. In the year 1999 he received a USDA guaranteed construction loan for Gulf World Marine Park for \$5,000,000 and was responsible for construction supervision and all Government required reporting.

<p>L 4. Post proj maint</p>	<p>The GWMI organization has an active Board of Directors and management team. 90% of our needed equipment is in place and in use. Please remember this is an ongoing operation and we have animals in rehabilitation and on going research and education as we speak. This new building will allow the organization to expand our research and perform necropsy's on site instead of having to travel to other locations where these type facilities are available on an available and/ or pre-paid basis. Gulf World Inc and GWMI has demonstrated over their many years of operations to have the technical and fiscal aspects and organizational stability, both separately and collaborative, to maintain the project after completion.</p>
<p>L 5. Mgmt approach</p>	<p>This would be a typical approach and critical path outline we would follow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Pre-construction > Design > Developmental Order > Permitting > Construction oversight and final inspection <p>Construction Site Clearing/Prep Foundation Structure Dry-in Special Construction – Coolers/Freezers, etc. Finishes Utility Connections Finish Site Work Project Closeout C/O Move In/Occupy</p>
<p>Outreach descr</p>	<p>Our project is the construction of a new facility and we have been promoting to the public the importance of what we can accomplished with its completion. It will provide GWMI the capabilities to expand our staff and programs for our education and outreach mission. It will attract and excite both visitors and researchers from all over the country. We will continue to develop and provide programs and services to the visiting public, local for schools in Bay and surrounding counties, community clubs, etc. The new 55 seat auditorium will be available to provide special presentations and programs via Internet, video and power point on what we can all do to practice better environmental responsibility and conservation. There will also be workshops scheduled for training of volunteers and researchers that would be interested in helping with injured marine animals. Also, the will become a new favorite place for field trips from our local schools.</p>