

RESTORE ACT Direct Component Multiyear Plan Narrative

Department of the Treasury

OMB Approval No. 1505-0250

Directions: Use this form for the Initial Multiyear Plan and any subsequent amendments to an accepted Multiyear Plan. For amendments, include only new and/or materially modified activities.

Multiyear Plan Version (Initial or Amendment Number):	Amendment 004
Date of Initial Multiyear Plan Acceptance:	May 5, 2017
Date of Last Multiyear Plan Acceptance:	January 20, 2022

Eligible Applicant Name:	Bay County, FL/Bay County Board of County Commissioners
Name and Contact Information of the Person to be contacted (POC) on matters concerning this Multiyear Implementation Plan:	
POC Name:	Jim Muller
POC Title:	Bay County RESTORE Act Coordinator
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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

1. A description of each activity, including the need, purpose, objective(s), milestones and location. Include map showing the location of each activity.

Amendment #4 adds three new activities: seagrass impacts, waterbody impairments, and benthic communities projects.

Projects 2023-01, 02, and 03

These projects will be conducted by the St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program (SASJBEP). The projects were identified by the Estuary Program governance (committees, Management Council, Policy Board) through the planning process as next steps for protection and restoration of the bay resources. The projects directly relate to issue areas and recommended actions in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, being prepared in part with funds from Bay County's RESTORE Act Direct Component allocation. None of the new projects are funded under the current project.

2023-01 Protecting Seagrass in St Andrew Bay through reduction of direct and indirect impacts

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Seagrass is an integral habitat in St. Andrew Bay that provides important nursery habitat for recreational and commercial fish and shellfish (e.g., scallops) and helps trap sediments to keep the bay waters crystal clear.

Unfortunately, seagrass acreage and cover has declined because of changes in water quality, storm events, propeller scarring, and grazing. To conserve existing seagrass beds throughout the Bay, reducing indirect and direct impacts to seagrass is critical. Direct impacts include prop scars, which occur when boat propellers cut through the roots, stems and leaves of seagrass resulting in strips of unvegetated bottom throughout seagrass beds. Damage from prop scars can take years to recover and lead to declines in seagrass cover with repeated scarring. Nutrient loading and turbidity negatively impact seagrass by reducing the available light for seagrass leaves to photosynthesize, which promotes growth of epiphytes and algae, therefore reducing seagrass growth and survival.

The currently funded SASJBEP project is identifying desired actions through a planning process that have been prioritized for the Estuary Program and partners to take in order to realize our ultimate vision of "healthy, resilient bays and estuarine habitats that support native species, natural systems, recreation, fisheries and the economy, together with vibrant, resilient, and sustainable communities in the watershed that live in harmony with the needs of the estuary". One of the needs identified through the current planning process (currently active project) is to protect

seagrass habitat that is critical to meeting our vision and one of the primary threats identified is direct damage from boaters' props. The proposed project will implement the action identified that will increase protection by providing user friendly information on the bay that will guide safe navigation away from seagrass beds and inform users on the importance of these habitats.

The seagrass project will work to protect seagrass by providing information on safe navigation that will help alleviate repetitive injury to seagrasses, including current and past restoration projects fund by other sources. This will be a project focused on preventing damage to seagrasses by boaters following marked channels, recognizing shallow areas, the importance of seagrass for the environment and economic sustainability, and anchoring/safe motoring methods.

NEED:

The most recent seagrass assessments in St. Andrew Bay suggest a potential decline in seagrass cover and high density of propeller scars and a reduction in the sizes of seagrass beds.

PURPOSE:

This project will maintain and ultimately increase seagrass coverage by reducing the direct impacts to seagrass such as prop scars.

OBJECTIVES

Increase seagrass coverage by reducing direct and indirect impacts to seagrass beds including prop damage, nutrient loading, and turbidity. This would provide essential information such as sensitive areas, boating guidelines, etc. to help increase awareness of seagrass and better protect and preserve critical seagrass habitat that is essential habitat for scallops and many other species we depend on in the Bay.

MILESTONES

- i. Initiation of engagement with boat operators, both private and commercial operations, to disseminate information regarding the importance of seagrass and methods to protect this resources
- ii. Updated maps of seagrass cover and prop scars in the Bay by synthesizing existing information
- iii. Creation of maps with seagrass areas designated
- iv. Dissemination of information on responsible boating to protect seagrass
- v. Report on seagrass cover in the Bay

LOCATION:

St. Andrew Bay. See attached map.

2023-02 Identifying sources of waterbody impairments to determine effective actions to increase water quality of St. Andrew Bay

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

St. Andrew Bay is the lifeblood of our area, and it is critical for all community members to play an active role in the protection and restoration of this system for the enjoyment into future generations. In many coastal areas like our own, establishment of communities occurred slowly and prior to the understanding of potential impacts to the Bays. These areas are also under intense development that is occurring faster than infrastructure can be repaired and replaced, resulting in water quality issues. Currently, there are approximately 39 impaired waterbodies in the St. Andrew Bay Watershed that are primarily listed for levels of nutrients and bacteria. Understanding the source of these materials is critical to addressing the impacts and removing these waterbodies from the impaired waterbodies list while benefiting the natural resources. Identification of sources can be completed using stable isotope tracking for nutrient sources and microbial tracking methods to identify the source of microbes in the waterways.

The currently active SASJBEP project has identified data gaps in understanding the source of nutrients and bacteria that have been measured across St. Andrew Bay by St. Andrew Bay Watch as referenced in question #6 below. The measurements currently being taken only provide the total nitrogen and total fecal coliform count. The proposed project will dissect these measurements further by identifying the type of nitrogen and type of bacteria that can be

more indicative of the sources in these samples. This information can inform more detailed and directed management actions to address the source.

There is no overlap between this project and the St. Andrew Bay Watch water quality monitoring project being funded by RESTORE Act Spill Impact Component funds being provided through Bay County. The Bay Watch water quality monitoring program collects monthly water samples at 73 stations across the St. Andrew Bay system. These samples include water chemistry (salinity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity) as well as nutrients (total nitrogen and phosphorus) and fecal coliform. Nitrogen can come from several sources including fertilizer, sewage, septic tanks, and atmospheric. The Bay Watch project measures only the total nitrogen. The proposed project will determine the specific type of nitrogen. This will help indicate the source. This analysis can be used to inform more specific management actions. Similarly, there are several sources of fecal coliform, and the Bay Watch Program measured the concentration of all fecal coliform; the proposed project will identify the source (i.e. animal type) of the fecal coliform.

NEED:

In order to address the impaired waters and delist these waters, an understanding of the source of the impairment is critical to the strategic alignment of our limited resources, such as time and money, to actions that address the sources of impairment.

PURPOSE:

The St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program's mission is to bring representatives from multiple sectors together to identify projects that will be implemented to increase the health of the Bay. A research gap that has been identified by the stakeholders involved with the Estuary Program will be filled with the completion of the proposed project that will lead to identifying sources of impairment and recommendations for improvement.

OBJECTIVES

Determine primary sources of water quality impairments using a diverse set of tracking methods including microbial and stable isotope tracking to lead to the creation of focused action plans to reduce the number of waterbodies impaired by nutrients and bacteria. At the completion of this project we would know the source of impairment of each of the waterbodies and provide critical information for addressing the impairment through voluntary and proactive methods.

MILESTONES

- i. Selection of contractor/lab for sample analysis
- ii. Purchase of equipment required for sampling
- iii. Sampling of sediments in all impaired water bodies
- iv. Sampling for microbial sources
- v. Acquisition of results from contractor/lab
- vi. Synthesis of results into report with identification of sources and recommendations to address these sources

LOCATION:

St. Andrew Bay watershed

2023-03 Determining aquatic habitat quality using benthic communities as indicators to guide recommended actions to increase habitat quality in St. Andrew Bay

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Bottom-dwelling (benthic) estuarine ecosystems are critical components of the larger coastal system. Benthic communities are important in maintaining water quality and as food sources for many bottom-feeding organisms. They are also important indicators of environmental conditions as they are sensitive to pollutant exposure because many pollutants build up in sediments and these organisms tend to have limited mobility and therefore, high exposure. Examining benthic communities across the St. Andrew Bay would provide a picture of habitat quality and highlight areas of high pollutant loads based on the presence of species that are characteristic to the habitat. This assessment can

indicate potential pollutant loads that are not monitored through routine water quality sampling. Overall diversity of benthic communities can be an informative indicator of system health.

A data gap identified by the currently active SASJBEP project is to understand the habitat quality of St. Andrew Bay. Water quality provides part of the picture but examining the benthic (bottom-dwelling) communities can provide both a historic and current picture of habitat quality. This information combined with water quality can provide a more complete and informative picture on resource needs.

NEED:

Current assessment of benthic communities to determine areas of historic and current pollutant loads of substances beyond routine water quality parameters that accumulate in sediments.

PURPOSE:

The St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program is working with stakeholders from all sectors to restore and conserve our bay systems. The proposed project will provide the first ever comprehensive assessment of benthic communities as an indicator for habitat condition of the St. Andrew Bay that can inform recommended actions to improve habitat condition.

OBJECTIVES

Determine current condition of habitat quality by incorporating existing surface water quality data combined with an analysis of benthic communities. This will provide a current condition of the Bay system beyond just water quality while also identifying areas that have higher levels of pollution and potential sources as indicated by the benthic community present. This will allow us to determine recommended management actions to reduce the impacts entering the Bay.

MILESTONES

- i. Selection of contractor/lab/partner for sample analysis
- ii. Identification of sample sites across St. Andrew Bay
- iii. Benthic community analysis
- iv. Identification of areas of concerns based on taxa present in analysis
- v. Synthesis of data into a report that identifies areas of concern with recommended actions to address the potential pollutant sources

LOCATION:

St. Andrew Bay

2. How the applicant made the multiyear plan available for 45 days for public review and comment, in a manner calculated to obtain broad-based participation from individuals, businesses, Indian tribes, and non-profit organizations, such as through public meetings, presentations in languages other than English, and postings on the Internet. The applicant will need to submit documentation (e.g., a copy of public notices) to demonstrate that it made its multiyear plan available to the public for at least 45 days. In addition, describe how each activity in the multiyear plan was approved after consideration of all meaningful input from the public and submit documentation (e.g., a letter from the applicant's leadership approving submission of the multiyear plan to Treasury or a resolution approving the applicant's multiyear plan).

[At its March 21, 2023 meeting, the Bay County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) heard the proposed Multi-Year Implementation Plan amendment related to Project Aqua and the seagrass impacts, waterbody impairments, and benthic communities projects, conducted a public meeting, and opened a 45-day comment period, through May 5, 2023. A legal ad was published on the Bay County Public Notices web page (<https://publicnoticesbaycountyfl.gov/>) about the amendment and comment period and an email was sent to the more than 200 entities on the Bay County RESTORE Act interested parties list. The proposed amendment was available as an exhibit in the March 21 and May 16 BoCC agendas. The materials were also available for download from the County's RESTORE Act web pages. No public comments were made at the March 21 public hearing, and one comment was received during the comment period. A legal ad was posted to the Bay County Public Notices web page about the amendment and the May 16 BoCC public hearing.

On May 16, the proposed amendment was again brought before the Bay County Board of County Commissioners in a public hearing setting. Staff addressed the one public comment submitted during the public comment period. The Board made no revisions to the proposed plan amendment. In a 5-0 vote, the Board approved the amendment to Bay County's RESTORE Act Direct Component Plan and directed staff to submit the amendment to Treasury. Project Aqua was later removed from the amendment based on feedback from Treasury.

3. How each activity included in the applicant's multiyear plan narrative meets all the requirements under the RESTORE Act, including a description of how each activity is eligible for funding based on the geographic location of each activity and how each activity qualifies for at least one of the eligible activities under the RESTORE Act.

2023-01 Protecting Seagrass in St Andrew Bay through reduction of direct and indirect impacts: This project meets the eligible activity of restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coastal Region by increasing and preserving existing seagrass cover through reducing prop scarring that will improve water quality such as nutrient concentration and clarity.

2023-02 Identifying sources of waterbody impairments to determine effective actions to increase water quality of St. Andrew Bay: This project meets the eligible activity of restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coastal Region by providing recommendations on priority actions to increase water quality of the St. Andrew Bay Watershed waterways.

2023-03 Determining aquatic habitat quality using benthic communities as indicators to guide recommended actions to increase habitat quality in St. Andrew Bay: This project meets the eligible activity of restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coastal Region by identifying areas where pollutants are present in sediments based on the benthic communities. This will lead to recommended actions and informed restoration activities to reduce the negative impacts to St. Andrew Bay.

None of these projects are included in any claim for compensation paid out by the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund after the date of enactment of the RESTORE Act.

The project will be carried out in the St. Andrew Bay watershed, primarily in Bay County, FL, and will be within the Gulf Coast Region as defined in 31 CFR Part 34 -"Gulf Coast Region means: (1) In the Gulf Coast States, the coastal zones defined under section 304 of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 that border the Gulf of Mexico; (2) Land within the coastal zones described in paragraph (1) of this definition that is held in trust by, or the use of which is by law subject solely to the discretion of, the Federal Government or officers or agents of the Federal Government; (3) Any adjacent land, water, and watersheds, that are within 25 miles of the coastal zone described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this definition; and (4) All Federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico."

4. Criteria the applicant will use to evaluate the success of the activities included in the multiyear plan narrative in helping to restore and protect the Gulf Coast Region impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Success will be measured by:

2023-01 Protecting Seagrass in St Andrew Bay through reduction of direct and indirect impacts: Provide an interactive, web-based map for users to boat safely throughout the Bay and avoid seagrass areas and an updated report on seagrass trends in the Bay including restoration successes of partner led efforts.

2023-02 Identifying sources of waterbody impairments to determine effective actions to increase water quality of St. Andrew Bay: Completion of a report that synthesizes the results from the nutrient and microbial tracking with identification of sources that can be used to formulate recommendations and next steps to improve water quality of our waterways

2023-03 Determining aquatic habitat quality using benthic communities as indicators to guide recommended actions to increase habitat quality in St. Andrew Bay: The completion of this project will provide a report with results of benthic communities as indicators of habitat condition across the St. Andrew Bay watershed. The report will identify areas of poor, moderate and high condition that can be used to provide recommendations for restoration and

protection activities. This information will also be the first ever comprehensive benthic communities of the bay, which can also serve as the foundation for long-term monitoring to measure success overtime.

5. How the activities included in the multiyear plan narrative were prioritized and list the criteria used to establish the priorities.

No change in priorities compared to the approved initial Multi-Year Improvement Plan. This is an additional project.

6. If applicable, describe the amount and current status of funding from other sources (e.g., other RESTORE Act contribution, other third party contribution) and provide a description of the specific portion of the project to be funded by the RESTORE Act Direct Component.



Figure 2-2 St. Andrew Bay Watershed

St. Andrew Bay Watershed Map for seagrass, benthic communities, and waterbody impairments projects

RESTORE ACT Direct Component Multiyear Plan Matrix — Department of the Treasury						OMB Approval No. 1505-0250			
Applicant Name:		Bay County, FL, Board of County Commissioners							
1. MULTIYEAR PLAN VERSION (INITIAL OR AMENDMENT NUMBER):		Amendment 004		2a. DATE OF INITIAL MULTIYEAR PLAN ACCEPTANCE (mm/dd/yyyy):		5/5/2017		2b. DATE OF LAST MULTIYEAR PLAN ACCEPTANCE:	
3. CUMULATIVE DIRECT COMPONENT ALLOCATION AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION TO APPLICANT:				\$20,715,904.46		4. TOTAL ALLOCATIONS PLUS KNOWN FUNDS NOT YET DEPOSITED IN TRUST FUND FOR DIRECT COMPONENT:		\$42,225,440.32	
5. Primary Direct Component Eligible Activity Further Described in Application (Static Field)	6. Activity Title (Static Field)	7. Location (Static Field)	8. Estimated Total Funding Contributions For Proposed Activity(ies)(refer to Instructions)				9. Proposed Start Date mm/dd/yyyy	10. Proposed End Date mm/dd/yyyy	11. Status (refer to Instructions)
			8a. Direct Component Contribution	8b. Other RESTORE Act Contribution	8c. Other Third Party Contribution	8d. Total Contribution			
Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure	2014-026 Bay Technology Initiative	Bay County, FL	\$1,133,000		\$500,000	\$1,633,000	grant approval + 1 mo 09/15/2017	grant approval + 2 years 09/15/2019	Initial MYP Activity
Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure	2014-004 North Bay Wastewater Collection System Improvements	Bay County, FL	\$1,760,000		\$4,250,000	\$6,010,000	grant approval + 1 mo 09/15/2017	grant approval + 3 years 09/15/2020	Initial MYP Activity - Activity funded at \$1,500,000 Direct Component and \$6,000,000 of Other Third Party Contribution.
Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast Region, including recreational fishing	2014-001 Restoring Bay County's Recreational Fishing Industry through Artificial Reef Construction and Promotion	Bay County, FL and nearshore Bay County	\$441,976		\$150,740	\$592,716	grant approval + 1 mo 09/15/2017	grant approval + 1 year 09/15/2018	Initial MYP Activity - activity funded at \$441,976
Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure	2014-028 Porter Park Improvements 2014	Lynn Haven, FL in Bay County, FL	\$509,850		\$424,500	\$934,350	grant approval + 1 mo 09/15/2017	grant approval + 2 years 09/15/2019	Initial MYP Activity - Activity modified in Amendment 1. Funded at \$501,480.00 Direct Component.
Planning assistance	2014-022 Bay County East Pass Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Inlet and Beach Mgmt Plan (IBMP)	Bay County, FL	\$1,210,000		\$0	\$1,210,000	grant approval + 1 mo 09/15/2017	grant approval + 5 years 09/15/2022	Initial MYP Activity - Activity funded at \$1,193,539.37 Direct Component
Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure	2014-041 Carl Gray Park Boat Ramp	Panama City, FL in Bay County, FL	\$566,500		\$302,010	\$868,510	grant approval + 1 mo 09/15/2017	grant approval + 24 years 09/30/2021	Initial MYP Activity - Activity funded at \$556,955.50; activity completed
Planning assistance	2014-016 Bay County Master Plan and Capital Improvement Strategic Plan Update (Stormwater)	Bay County, FL	\$362,997		\$0	\$362,997	grant approval + 1 mo 09/15/2017	grant approval + 3 years 09/15/2020	Initial MYP Activity - Activity funded at \$362,997
Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure	2014-017 AMIkids Panama City Marine Institute Dock Repair	Panama City, FL in Bay County, FL	\$279,697		\$0	\$279,697	grant approval + 1 mo 09/15/2017	grant approval + 1 year 09/15/2018	Initial MYP Activity - Activity funded at \$279,697; activity completed
Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure	2014-011 City of Panama City Beach and Bay County Continuous Outfall Sediment Reduction Projects	Panama City Beach, FL in Bay County, FL and Bay County, FL	\$1,133,000		\$100,000	\$1,233,000	grant approval + 1 mo 09/15/2017	grant approval + 2 years 09/15/2019	Initial MYP Activity

Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure	Lynn Haven, FL in Bay County, FL						-934,350			Amendment #1 Deleted - Initial MYP Activity deleted in Amendment 1 - Project was completed with third party funding shown here (\$424,500) and an additional \$165,650 in third party funding			
Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure	Lynn Haven, FL in Bay County, FL							-509,850	-424,500	NA	NA		
Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure	Lynn Haven, FL in Bay County, FL									\$501,480	grant approval + 2 years		
Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region	2020-01 St. Andrew/St. Joe Bays Estuary Program	St. Andrew/St. Joe bays watershed, primarily Bay and Gulf counties, also Washington, Calhoun, Walton and Jackson counties								\$1,719,844	grant approval + 15 days	grant approval + 3 years	Amendment #2 Activity - Activity funded at \$720,000 Direct Component and \$622,363.00 of Other Third Party Contribution.
Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region	2021-01 East Bay Living Shoreline and Seagrass Project	East Bay of St. Andrew Bay								\$500,000	grant approval + 15 days	grant approval + 3 years	Amendment #3 - activity funded at \$500,000
Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region	2023-01 Protecting Seagrass in St Andrew Bay through reduction of direct and indirect impacts	St. Andrew Bay, Florida								\$300,000	grant approval + 15 days	grant approval + 3 years	Amendment #4 - new project
Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region	2023-02 Identifying sources of waterbody impairments to determine effective actions to increase water quality of St. Andrew Bay:	St. Andrew Bay, Florida								\$500,000	grant approval + 15 days	grant approval + 3 years	Amendment #4 - new project
Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region	2023-03 Determining aquatic habitat quality using benthic communities as indicators to guide recommended actions to increase habitat quality in St. Andrew Bay	St. Andrew Bay, Florida								\$500,000	grant approval + 15 days	grant approval + 3 years	Amendment #4 - new project
12. ESTIMATED TOTAL FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS FOR ACTIVITY(IES) (refer to Instructions)			\$9,908,650	\$0	\$6,302,594	\$14,911,244	Please note: Grant awards may reflect non-material changes in proposed dates and estimated funding.						
<p><small>According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1505-0250. Comments concerning the time required to complete this information collection, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information, should be directed to the Department of the Treasury, Office of Gulf Coast Restoration, 1500 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20220.</small></p>													