



About Florida's Gulf Consortium

Florida's Gulf Consortium is a public entity created in October 2012 by Inter-local Agreement among Florida's 23 Gulf Coast counties, from Escambia County in the western panhandle of Florida to Monroe County on the southern tip of Florida and the United States. Florida's 23 Gulf Coast counties formed the Consortium to meet requirements of the federal RESTORE Act, which was passed by the Congress and signed into law on July 6, 2012 by the President. The Gulf Consortium is responsible for developing a State Expenditure Plan for economic and environmental recovery of Florida's Gulf coast following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

To enhance restoration, avoid duplication and effectively utilize available resources, Florida's local governments are working in partnership with the State of Florida and the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council to develop and implement coordinated and consistent restoration plans to fully recover the Gulf of Mexico.

2013 Federal Action Agenda

The long-awaited proposed RESTORE Act rules were published by the U. S. Treasury on September 6, 2013. Comments must be filed with Treasury on or before November 5, 2013. While informative, the proposed rules were vague on issues directly impacting the Consortium and the 23 Gulf Coast counties. Of particular concern are the following:

- **Plan Development Costs.** The rules do not provide a clear path for the Consortium to be paid for the development of Florida's State Expenditure Plan as required by the RESTORE Act. Under clear provision in the rules, the federal Council and the 23 Florida counties can be paid up-front for its Comprehensive Plan development costs.
- **Implementation of the State Expenditure Plan.** The rules do not clearly identify the Consortium as the entity in Florida responsible for the implementation of the State Expenditure Plan. Under the Consortium's Memorandum of Understanding with the Governor, the Consortium is responsible for implementing the Plan. The rules should definitively identify the Consortium as being responsible for implementing Florida's State Expenditure Plan.
- **Counties Plan Requirements.** The rules seem to mandate that each county's multi-year plan must include milestones, projected completion dates of each activity and evaluation mechanisms. In contrast, the RESTORE Act says these are discretionary components of a county's plan. The rules directive converts these discretionary items into expensive responsibilities.

**For more information: Doug Darling, Interim Manager, 850.922.4300 ddarling@fl-counties.com
<http://www.fl-counties.com/florida-gulf-consortium/>**