

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners
From: Doc Kokol, Director, Office of Strategic Initiatives
Date: February 11, 2015
Subject: Gulf Oil Spill Restoration Report

Purpose:

Staff will provide Commissioners with a review of restoration activities related to the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, including the recent proposed Consent Decree to resolve remaining claims against BP.

Summary:

With the announcement in July 2015 of an agreement in principle with BP to resolve remaining claims brought by the Federal and the five Gulf State governments against it for losses sustained to the economy and environment as a result of the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill, along with a proposed Consent Decree filed in federal court in October 2015, the full scope of restoration can begin to be understood. If the Federal court approves the settlement, Florida stands to receive at least an additional \$580 million for Natural Resource Damages (NRD) and \$572 million in Clean Water Act (CWA) civil penalties to be distributed pursuant to the RESTORE Act, in addition to \$2 billion for the State's economic claim.

These funds would be in addition to existing sources of restoration funding, including \$10 million in water quality and land acquisition projects realized through a 2012 settlement with a non-operating investor in the oil lease; CWA penalties settled against Transocean to be distributed via RESTORE; \$100+ million planned for expenditure in Florida from BP-funded early restoration; and the \$356 million in criminal recoveries dedicated for use in the State through the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

FWC is partnered with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in leading the restoration planning and implementation for these funds. This role provides a means for furthering the agency mission while restoring and enhancing Gulf resources and public access to those resources through projects that have included, for example, improved management of Escriano Point Wildlife Management Area; additional oyster restoration efforts in Apalachicola Bay; assistance to landowners and local governments to improve lighting practices adjacent to sea turtle nesting beaches; expanded stewardship of beach-nesting bird habitat; and increased data collection to assess and better manage reef fish stocks.

Staff Recommendation:

This item is being presented for informational purposes and for any discussion or direction the Commission may have.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter: Kelly Samek, Gulf Restoration Coordinator