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Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Trustees Host Two Public Meetings in Florida

**Media Advisory from the Department of
Environmental Protection*

The *Deepwater Horizon* Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustees will hold two public meetings to solicit public comment on the Draft Programmatic and Phase III Early Restoration Plan and Draft Early Restoration Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Draft Phase III ERP/PEIS). The first meeting will take place Tuesday, January 28, at the Pensacola Bay Center, 201 E Gregory St., Pensacola, 32502, and the second meeting on Wednesday, January 29, at the Hilton Garden Inn, 1101 US Highway 231, Panama City, 32405. Both meetings will begin with an open house at 6:00 p.m. CST and the public meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The Draft Phase III ERP/PEIS describes the third and largest round of projects proposed to receive funding from the \$1 billion BP committed to Early Restoration in April 2011, along with a proposed programmatic plan and programmatic environmental impact statement for continuing early restoration.

The public comment period on the Draft Phase III ERP/PEIS extends until February 4. Visit www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov to download an electronic copy of the draft and to submit comments online. For more information on the State of Florida's oil spill recovery efforts visit www.deepwaterhorizonflorida.com

FAC Meets with U.S. Department of Interior, Congressional Members during Washington, DC Trip

The Florida Association of Counties traveled to Washington, DC on January 8 and 9 to advocate on

Important Dates

January 24, 2014

*Gulf Consortium Meeting
11:00 AM - 5:00 PM ET
Florida Department of
Environmental Protection:*

3900 Commonwealth
Boulevard
Carr Building, Room 170
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

*Conference Call Accessible
Dial-in Number:
(888)670-3525
Participant Passcode:
998 449 5298#*

March 28, 2014

*Gulf Consortium Meeting
Leon County, FL*

several county issues, including the RESTORE Act.

During the trip and on behalf of the Gulf Consortium, FAC Executive Director Chris Holley, FAC President Bryan Desloge and FAC Legislative Director Deena Reppen met with the U.S. Department of Interior, staff from the offices of Senator Bill Nelson, Senator Marco Rubio and U.S. Representative Jeff Miller, and Representatives Steve Southerland and Joe Garcia.

Discussions focused on the status of the U.S. Department of Treasury regulations for RESTORE Act implementation. FAC reiterated the desire for the rules to provide flexibility in the planning process and for reimbursement of incurred administrative and planning costs. FAC also discussed concerns over National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) compliance, and the need to specifically exclude the State Expenditure and Multi-Year Implementation Plans from NEPA requirements in the Treasury regulations.

FAC stressed a desire to finalize rules with as much clarity and detail as possible, and to acknowledge Florida's uniqueness in the RESTORE Act.

According to Congressional member offices, the U. S. Treasury Department is well versed in Florida's comments on the rules, which may be finalized in late February or early March. FAC reiterated the need for public comment and input where additional policy guidance is developed post-rule.

According to Council staff, Direct Component funds will be available upon completion of the Treasury regulations; funds for the Spill Impact Component will flow upon completion of both the Treasury and Council rules. Council rule discussions are underway with no timeframe identified for completion, as yet. Council Executive Director Justin Ehrenwerth will be attending the Gulf Consortium meeting on January 24 to provide information on the Council's work and to participate in the Consortium's visioning discussion for the State Expenditure Plan.

Nominations for Elected and Appointed Positions

The following Directors qualified for the Elected officers of the Gulf Consortium Executive Committee:

Chair:

Commissioner Grover Robinson, Escambia County

Vice Chair:

Commissioner Susan Latvala, Pinellas County

For Secretary/Treasurer:

Commissioner Warren Yeager, Gulf County

Next Friday's meeting includes an agenda item calling for self-nomination to the appointed positions on the Executive Committee and setting the qualifying deadline of February 21st. Thereafter, at a future public meeting, the Executive Committee will designate two directors to fill-out the five member Executive Committee.

Meeting with Mimi Drew, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) Staff

Chair Robinson and Consortium Staff met with Mimi Drew, DEP and FWCC Staff in December at the agreed upon quarterly coordination meeting. Topics discussed were:

- Treasury Regulations are expected to be finalized late Spring 2014
- Council Regulations are under development and expected late 2014
- Funding options for Consortium including:
 - Pot #1, if reimbursable
 - State Funding
 - Planning grant from Council, once Council Regulations are final
- Council progress on formula methodology for Spill Impact Component (Pot #3) - in 5 State negotiations
- Status of Governor's Appointees - working
- Thoughts on Consortium involvement in NFWF projects - FWCC developing process
- Technical Work Group agreed to have a member on RFP/ITN Evaluation Committee
- For future meetings, begin discussions on Plan Implementation Roles

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