

**RESTORE Act Advisory Board Accepting Project Applications**  
**By Kelly Shoemaker, Deputy County Administrator**  
**For 2/25/15**

In July of 2012, the President signed into law the “Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012,” known as the RESTORE Act, to establish a trust fund. The Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund is for 80 percent of the administrative and civil penalties from the parties responsible for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, to be made available to the affected states for eligible activities. Thirty-five percent of those funds (called direct funds) are allocated in equal shares to the five Gulf Coast states of Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida. Florida’s share is to be divided as follows: 75 percent to the eight counties that were disproportionately impacted (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, Franklin and Wakulla) and the rest (25 percent) to the 15 counties on the Gulf Coast, but less impacted.

Charlotte County is one of the 15 counties that will receive RESTORE Act funds for eligible activities, and the county’s share is estimated at \$723,903 in direct funds. RESTORE funds other than the direct component would be awarded through a competitive process.

Eligible activities for which these funds may be used are defined in the RESTORE Act, Section 1603(3). In general, eligible activities are programs, projects, and activities that restore and protect the environment and economy of the Gulf Coast. For example, restoration and protection of the ecosystems, beaches, and fisheries or mitigation of damage to fish and wildlife are eligible. Examples of eligible activities of the economy component include infrastructure projects that benefit the economy of ecological resources; promotion of tourism; and workforce development.

On Nov. 12, 2014 the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners adopted a resolution creating the Charlotte County RESTORE Act Advisory Board. Among the responsibilities of the advisory board are reviewing and ranking projects, and assisting with the development of a Multi-Year Implementation Plan that will include the approved projects. The Plan will be submitted to the Department of Treasury for approval to be considered for RESTORE funding as the funds are released and made available through competitive grants.

Applications were accepted through Nov. 25 and members were chosen that had experience in environmental science or advocacy; coastal resource management; marine sciences; finance, accounting/grants management; tourism; or economic development. The first meeting was held Jan. 7, 2015. The RESTORE Act Advisory Board is now accepting applications for project funding requests. Applications are available online – visit [www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov) and click “RESTORE Act Funding Application” in the Hot Topics list. Paper copies are available in Administration at 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte. Application deadline: 5:00 p.m. Friday, April 17, 2015. For more information, call 941.743.1944.

**Registration Extended for Government Academy**

The registration deadline has been extended to March 6 for the next Charlotte County Government Academy, to be held in a series of four half-day workshops scheduled for 8:00 a.m. to noon and 1:30 to 5:00 p.m. on March 11 and 18 (new dates!) in locations throughout the county. Charlotte County Government Academy provides opportunities to share and learn about the various departments under the Board of County Commissioners. Registration forms available in county buildings or online [www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov). To sign up by phone call 941.623.1092.