DRAFT RESTORATION PLAN I AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PUBLIC MEETING

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL NATURAL RESOURCE DAMAGE

ASSESSMENT

DATE: OCTOBER 2, 2018

REPORTER: KRISTIN ELAINE RUBASH

PLACE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL

PROTECTION

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	MS. AMES: All right. So my name is Leslie
3	Ames. I'm a deputy of staff at DEP and the current
4	chair of the Florida Trustee Implementation Group.
5	It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all here
6	tonight on behalf of the trustees. I'd especially
7	like to recognize Commissioner Ashbrook, who's here
8	representing the City of Port St. Joe. The
9	success of these projects are largely driven by
10	collaboration with and support from our
11	stakeholders, including, you know, private citizens,
12	local government, and our NGO, so we'd like to thank
13	you all for being here and participating in this
14	process and we look forward to your input. I am
15	going to turn it over to Jim Reynolds, who is with
16	DEP's Deepwater Horizon Program, who will be your
17	facilitator for this evening. Thank you.
18	MR. REYNOLDS: Good evening. My name is Jim
19	Reynolds and I'll be the facilitator for tonight's
20	Florida Restoration Plan public meeting. It looks
21	like everybody's found a seat and if you'll just
22	make sure your cellphones are silenced, that would
23	be great. If you have to have a conversation,
24	please take it out in the hall or well, this room
25	seems pretty quiet, so you might want to take it in

the hall. We're here tonight to hear from you. 1 We have a court reporter here to make sure your words 2 are accurately captured. As you came in, you were 3 asked to fill out a blue card. If you didn't fill 4 5 out a blue card, please raise your hand. We'll give you a blue card and you can fill it out. That's how 6 7 we keep an accurate record of who's here. If you'd like to make a public comment tonight and you have 8 9 not completed a blue card, please do it. If you marked "no" and think you don't want to make a 10 comment, but you change your mind, you can raise 11 12 your hand. We'll come by and there are few enough people that we'll probably just give you your blue 13 card to change it to a "yes," but, if not, you can 14 15 fill out a whole new blue card and mark "yes". 16 has anyone not filled out a blue card? All right. 17 Now, that we've got that out of the way, here's the format for tonight: There are two parts, much like 18 19 other NRDA meetings in the State of Florida. First is a presentation, which will provide you with more 20 detail on the NRDA plan here in Florida and the 21 draft plan. The second, and most important, part of 22 23 tonight's meeting will provide you with an opportunity to come forward and give your comments. 24 Please think about what it is you'd like the Florida 25

Trustee Implementation Group or Florida, TIG, to 1 Whether it's from, as an individual, or 2 representative of an organization. If you leave 3 tonight and later decide you'd like to submit a 4 5 comment, you can do so until October 26. There are multiple ways to get your comment into the public 6 7 record. You can come up and do it verbally during the upcoming comment portion of tonight's meeting. 8 You can take one of these forms and mail it in. 9 10 can go online to the Department of Interior's online PEPC (phonetic) system and electronically submit 11 12 your comments or you can give us your formal written testimony will help you get it into the record. 13 Finally, you'll see the project factsheet handouts 14 and, on upcoming slides, we give you a web address 15 16 you can go through to submit your comments and the 17 P.O. Box where you can mail in your written comments. Now, I'd like to call Dianne Ingram from 18 19 the Department of the Interior, or DOI. She is a 20 member of the Florida TIG and DOI's representative. 21 MS. INGRAM: Good evening. I'd like to thank 22 all of you for taking time out of your busy schedule 23 to attend this very important meeting. 24 evening, we will be talking about the Natural Resource Damages Assessment, more commonly referred 25

Page 7 to as "NRDA." NRDA is a scientific assessment of 1 2 the natural resource injuries caused by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, both environmental and lost 3 recreational use of Gulf resources. As part of the 4 5 NRDA process, trustees also undertake restoration planning and implementation of their selected 6 7 projects. During tonight's presentation, we will talk a little about the NRDA process, but what we 8 are here to primarily talk about tonight is 9 10 Florida's draft restoration plan. This will include an overview of the proposed projects and, after we 11 12 conclude the presentation, you'll have an opportunity to make comments on the draft plan and 13 the proposed projects. The NRDA process is a 14 15 mandatory legal process based on the Oil Pollution 16 Act that the federal agencies and affected states 17 implement after an oil spill. It is a process the 18 natural resource trustees' agencies use to assess 19 the degree to which natural resources and the 20 services they provide may have been injured by an 21 oil spill and spill response activities. They then determine how to compensate the public through on-22 23 the-ground restoration activities. The goal is to 24 restore injured resources to the condition they would have been in had the spill not occurred and 25

Page 8 provide compensation for interim losses of resources 1 2 and resource services. NRDA is the process used by the trustees to develop the public's claims for 3 natural resource damages against the parties 4 5 responsible for a spill and to seek restoration or compensation for the harm done to natural resources 6 7 and the services provided by those resources. we say, "injury," we not only mean environmental 8 9 injuries caused by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill 10 and associated response activities, but also the injuries which affected public use and enjoyment of 11 12 many of the natural resources across the Gulf. 13 Therefore, it is important to remember that NRDA not only assesses ecological injury, but also loss of 14 recreational use of those resources because of the 15 16 spill, so the NRDA process includes an assessment of 17 the injury, restoration planning, generally to determine what's needed to be done to restore the 18 19 natural resources, determining the cost of those 20 needed restoration activities, and, finally, 21 assessing and seeking monetary damages from the polluter to pay for restoration. You may already 22 23 know about the settlement agreement with BP. 24 settlement includes \$8.8 billion in damages to be paid by BP over 15 years to address the natural 25

resource damages and loss of use caused by the BP 1 2 oil spill. The \$8.8 billion includes approximately \$1 billion already committed for early restoration. 3 We are still obligated to complete the actions we 4 5 committed during earlier restoration, even as we are planning for final restoration. In conjunction with 6 7 the BP settlement, the NRDA trustees also prepared a Programmatic Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan 8 9 that we call the "PDARP" that presented the trustees 10 oil spill injury assessment and considered the environmental impacts of proposed restoration 11 12 alternatives. The PDARP was programmatic in nature and the draft plan we are considering tonight 13 contains specific restoration projects that are 14 15 consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in 16 the PDARP for resorting natural resources and the 17 services they provide that were injured from the oil The total allocation for restoration funds 18 19 from the BP settlement is approximately \$680 million, which is spread over the five restoration 20 goals. Showed in dark blue is the restore and 21 22 conserve habitat goal, \$38 million. In orange is 23 restore water quality, \$335 million. In green is 24 replenish and protect living coastal and marine resources, \$93 million. In red is provide an 25

enhanced recreational opportunities, \$184 million, 1 2 and in light blue, monitoring and adaptive management and administrative oversight of \$30 3 million. Here's another way to look at the funding. 4 5 These numbers come from the PDARP that was mentioned earlier and that's the guiding document for the Deep 6 7 Water Horizon spill restoration. Again, the total Florida allocation for restoration funds from the BP 8 settlement is \$680 million, including just over \$144 9 10 million allocated to 32 early restoration projects already underway. I'd like to draw your attention 11 12 to the four restoration goals outlined in red and the nine restoration types outlined in yellow to 13 which these restoration funds are allocated in the 14 15 Florida restoration area. We have selected projects 16 within four of these restoration types outlined in 17 yellow for funding in the restoration plan, which you'll hear more about from the other speakers 18 19 tonight. Also, the \$30 million in administrative and monitoring funds is not shown on this slide. 20 21 This graphic shows the post-settlement structure of 22 the trustee counsel. The trustee counsel now serves 23 in an oversight role. The settlement and legal 24 documents associated with it established restoration areas, one for each state, and one for each the open 25

Page 11 ocean and region wide. To get the work done for 1 2 each restoration area, teams were set up and these teams are called, "trustee implementation groups," 3 or "TIGs." For example the Florida restoration area 4 5 has a Florida TIG. The work of developing individual restoration projects now falls on these 6 7 The Florida Trustee Implementation Group is TIGs. composed of the agencies shown on the screen. 8 9 Representatives from these agencies work together to 10 ensure that the pre- and post-settlement restoration goals of the trustees are met and representatives 11 12 from each agency are here tonight. In order to put the projects on the ground and conduct restoration, 13 we selected discrete projects to put in a 14 15 restoration plan for the public to understand and to 16 comment on. Here's an overview of the planning 17 milestones followed by the Florida TIG to develop the draft restoration plan. In August 2016, we 18 19 began with a public webinar that introduced you to 20 the newly formed Florida TIG. In November of 2016, 21 we released a call for project ideas. In September 22 2017, we issued a notice of intent to conduct 23 restoration planning and then we screened 1,393 project ideas that were submitted to the project 24 idea portal. We would like to thank everyone who 25

submitted a project idea as every project being 1 considered tonight was from a project idea submitted 2 through either the State of Florida's or the NRDA 3 4 trustees' online portals. We used the list of 5 project eligibility criteria to screen the 1,300 projects down to a reasonable number for further 6 7 evaluation and these are a nexus to injury from the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, meets Oil Pollution 8 Act criteria, which I'll show you here in a minute. 9 10 The project was not previously completed or fully funded, and sufficient information for evaluation is 11 12 available. Habitat projects on federally managed lands restoration type should occur on Gulf Islands 13 National Seashore or Saint Vincent National Wildlife 14 15 Refuge. The screening process is discussed in more 16 detail in the draft plan. After the initial 17 screening, we used these six Oil Pollution Act criteria to further screen down the number of 18 19 projects: Cost effectiveness, meets goals and objectives of the PDARP, likelihood of success, 20 21 avoids collateral injury, benefits resources, and health and safety. We then did one final screening 22 23 using these four criteria developed by the Florida TIG. After going through the project eligibility 24 screening criteria, the OPA criteria, and then these 25

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additional screening steps, the initial 1,300

2 project ideas were whittled down to 32 project

3 alternatives discussed in the draft plan. The next

4 speakers will talk more about those projects that

5 met these criteria. That's it for the NRDA

6 background part of the agenda. I'd like to call Ben

7 Frater to the podium to get us on for the next part

8 of the agenda. Ben is the Deepwater Horizon

9 Assistant Restoration Manager for the Department of

10 the Interior. He will kick off the discussion on

11 the draft restoration plan and habitat projects on

12 federally managed lands specifically.

MR. FRATER: Thank you, Dianne. Good evening, everyone. The screening process that Dianne outlined resulted in the 32 project alternative we evaluated in the plan with 24 being preferred or recommended for funding. These include both fully developed projects and also simple planning and design projects, noted as P&D projects. The funds for these P&D projects will support activities like planning, feasibility, design, engineering, and/or permitting activities only. The nine actions relate to construction or other restoration implementation activities. The intent of these P&D projects is to provide the Florida TIG and the public with greater

clarity of the future related to a full projects 1 cost and predicted benefits. The TIG is likely to 2 select and include these future projects in a future 3 4 restoration plan. The restoration types addressed 5 by the projects were those noted in our call for projects and our notice of intent to conduct 6 7 restoration plan. The habitat projects on federally managed lands restoration type began with 14 project 8 9 ideas. The screening process resulted in six 10 projects evaluated in this plan, with four being preferred, again, meaning they are proposed for 11 12 planning. The water quality and nutrient reduction restoration types began the screening process with 13 14 813 projects. Because both restoration types fall 15 under the same water quality restoration goal, these 16 project ideas were screened together. The screening process resulted in three nutrient reduction 17 18 projects evaluated in the plan with two preferred 19 and 12 water quality projects evaluated in the plan with nine preferred. The total estimated cost for 20 21 these 24 -- I'm sorry. The Florida TIG began the screening process for the provided enhanced 22 23 recreational use opportunities with 556 projects. That screening process resulted in 11 projects 24 evaluated in the plan with nine being preferred. 25

Page 15 The total estimated cost for these 24 preferred 1 2 projects is \$62 million. When we look at the amount of funds already allocated to early restoration and 3 the funding proposed for this restoration plan, it 4 still leaves over \$444 million for future 5 restoration plans. If you have already read the 6 7 draft plan, and I hope you all have, you noted that the projects are grouped both by restoration type 8 9 and watershed. We have tried to make the plan 10 easier to read through the use of a numbering format, icons, and colors to note projects that fall 11 12 within a certain restoration type. For example, projects with a habitation projects on federally 13 managed lands restoration type are denoted with an 14 FM numbering scheme, the use of blue color, and have 15 16 a sea oat as the icon. Many of the maps in the 17 plans include watershed boundaries since projects in chapter 4, which is the environmental analysis 18 19 chapter, were grouped and evaluated within 20 watersheds. The projects span from the Perdido River on the border with Alabama down to the 21 Charlotte Harbor. Early restoration projects in 22 23 Florida were limited to the panhandle where the 24 majority of impacts from the spill occurred. However, there were still impacts outside of the 25

Page 16 panhandle and this plan addresses some of that 1 2 injury. I will now talk about the preferred projects in the draft plan associated with the 3 4 restoration type known as "habitat projects on 5 federally managed lands." The Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and response activities caused extensive 6 7 injuries to wetlands, coastal and near-shore habitats on federally managed lands across the 8 9 northern Gulf of Mexico. In Florida, the spill oiled 1,800 acres along 80 miles of federally 10 managed beach and shoreline. As some of you will 11 12 recall, the oil remediation activities occurred primarily at night and disturbed all types of 13 animals that lived there, whether they were 14 nocturnally active or simply trying to sleep. 15 federal lands were designated by the U.S. Congress 16 17 to be managed and maintained in such a way that would preserve their unique characteristics in 18 19 perpetuity. This restoration type was created 20 specifically to address the nature and character of 21 this injury to federal lands, which has left them in 22 a deficit. Injuries from oiling and response-23 related activities occurred within Saint Vincent 24 National Wildlife Refuge and on the Florida units of Gulf Islands National Seashore and that is why 25

Page 17 they're the two federal lands addressed in this 1 2 The numbering of the projects match what is plan. in the plan. Some may seem out of sequence in these 3 slides because we are discussing only the preferred 4 5 projects and not those projects that are not being proposed for funding at this time. The four 6 7 preferred projects for this restoration type are intended to improve the injured habitats on these 8 federally lands through predator control, invasive 9 plant control, and other stewardship activities. 10 The P&D project will evaluate impacts of lighting on 11 12 shoreline habitat of Gulf Islands and develop a 13 strategy to address those lighting issues. Implementation of the strategy might be funded in a 14 15 future restoration plan. The total estimated cost 16 for these four preferred habitat projects on 17 federally managed lands is \$2.7 million. I would now like to ask Phil Coram to the podium. Phil is 18 19 the Deepwater Horizon program administrator for the Florida Department of Environmental protection. 20 will continue discussion of the draft restoration 21 plan, specifically the water quality, nutrient 22 23 reduction, and recreational use projects. 24 MR. CORAM: Thank you, Ben. I have the task of giving an overview of the 20 preferred projects 25

under the nutrient reduction, water quality, and 1 2 recreational use restoration types. Now that I've learned to move the slides forward, I'll continue 3 with my presentation. You've seen a map like this 4 5 before and we color code the restoration types, have a numbering scheme, and we have icons, so, for 6 7 nutrient reduction and water quality, we have the gold color. We use "NR" for nutrient reduction, and 8 9 we use "WQ" for water quality, and we have a plant 10 as an icon for nutrient reduction, and a water droplet for water quality projects. It's been 11 12 noted, you know, these projects can go all the way from the border with Alabama, over in Escambia 13 County, all the way down to Charlotte Harbor. I'm 14 15 having no luck with the -- there we go. So we're 16 going to first talk about nutrient reduction 17 projects. And so, you know, the health of the Gulf of Mexico depends on healthy estuaries. Healthy 18 19 estuaries depend on the quality of the water that 20 drains the lands leading to those estuaries and so, 21 when you look at the land use across the five Gulf coast states, 80 percent of that is in private 22 23 ownership. Much of those lands in private ownership 24 are either in agricultural or forestry land uses. Those types of land uses contribute both nutrients 25

and sediments to our estuaries. While they are 1 2 certainly not the sole contributor of nutrients and sediments and -- but, however, in certain 3 watersheds, they can be a significant contributor of 4 5 both nutrients and sediments. So we've picked out these two projects for funding under the initial 6 7 restoration plan. The United States Department of Agriculture will be our implementing trustee and 8 9 they'll work with private landowners to develop what 10 are called "conservation plans" to be implemented on those land uses. If you closely look, you'll see 11 12 different estimated costs for those two projects and that's because of the different sub-basins within 13 these watersheds where these activities will be 14 concentrated. So the USDA looked at the sub-basins 15 16 in these two watersheds and picked out the ones that 17 would give us the most bang for the buck as far as nutrient reduction and sediment reductions. In the 18 19 case of the Pensacola/Perdido Bay watershed, it's focusing on two sub-basins, one called Sandy Hollow-20 21 Pine Barren Creek, the other one called Moore Creek. In the Suwannee River, it will be focusing on three 22 sub-basins in the lower Suwannee River watershed: 23 24 Long Pond, Long Pond Slough, and Manatee Springs. What is unique about the lower Suwannee project is 25

it complements another Deepwater Horizon funding 1 2 project that's being funded through the Restore Council, which is similarly funding agricultural 3 best management practices, but in the middle 4 5 Suwannee basin, so these two projects should complement each other very well. The total 6 7 estimated cost of these two projects is around \$5 million. Let's go to water quality next. As those 8 9 of us who live in Florida are acutely aware, right 10 now, water quality is a linchpin to a healthy environment, a good quality of life, and a healthy 11 12 economy, so poor water quality leads to beach closures. It leads to fish kills. It leads to 13 folks not going to hotels, or going to other 14 15 resorts, so it's important that we maintain our 16 water quality. So we've picked out projects that 17 hopefully will improve water quality across the Gulf coast of Florida. So I'd like to briefly describe 18 19 these projects. The first four are located in the 20 greater Pensacola Bay system. We have heavily invested in Pensacola Bay under all of the funding 21 22 sources available through the Deepwater Horizon 23 spill. That's because Escambia County was the 24 county most affected in Florida by the oil spill. So the first project is at Carpenter Creek. 25

Page 21 storm water project. It is in the urban watershed 1 2 in the City of Pensacola up near the headwaters. will involve constructing a storm water facility and 3 improvements to wetlands around that storm water 4 5 facility. The second one is the Pensacola Beach reclaimed water system. This project will help to 6 7 eliminate the last remaining domestic wastewater discharge into the Pensacola Bay system and it will 8 9 do that by expanding the existing reclaimed water system on the beach to make reclaimed water 10 available to both residential and commercial 11 12 properties. Rattlesnake Bluff is a sediment 13 reduction project along Rattlesnake Bluff Road on Eglin Air Force Base that's adjacent to the Yellow 14 15 River, so it will look at reducing sediment loadings 16 from about 13 stream crossings that flow into the 17 Yellow River. We also have a Pensacola Bay unpaved road initiative. Based on work done by the Water 18 19 Management District, who updated their surface water management plans, it is clear that sediment from 20 unpaved roads is a major stressor to the watersheds 21 22 in the panhandle. We are currently working on a 23 similar project in Choctawhatchee Bay that is being 24 funded through NFWF (phonetic) Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, but this is a, you know, planning and 25

Page 22 design initiative. Hopefully, in the future, we'll 1 2 actually be able to do real sediment implementation projects. So those are the four in the greater 3 Pensacola Bay system. Our next project is a very 4 5 small hydrologic restoration project in Walton County on Alligator Lake, which is a coastal dune 6 7 lake. It has an obstruction that prevents the tidal exchange from the Gulf of Mexico up into Alligator 8 Lake, so this will involve removing that 9 10 obstruction. This is probably the last remaining obstruction on the coastal dune lakes in the 11 12 panhandle, so we're very fortunate to be able to do that project. Our other water quality projects 13 involve a storm water treatment facility in the City 14 of Port St. Joe. It will treat a 280-acre sub-15 16 basin in the city that currently discharges to 17 Patton Bayou in Saint Joseph's Bay. It will also involve providing funding for the city for a master 18 19 storm water plan. Our next project is a septic to 20 sewer project. It is complementing existing work 21 done by the Northwest Florida Water Management District that funded the initial connections of 22 23 residences in this subdivision. This project will 24 fund the remaining 110 residences to eliminate their septic tanks and connect to city sewer. If you look 25

at a map of this area, this subdivision is directly 1 2 up gradient from Carrabelle Beach. The Department of Health samples Carrabelle Beach on about a twice-3 per-month basis and we see exceedances of the 4 5 bacteriological water quality standard to Carrabelle Beach. We're hoping, through implementation of this 6 7 project, we can reduce the number of time Carrabelle Beach sees an exceedance of those bacteriological 8 water quality standards. The last two projects are 9 10 planning and design projects for hydrologic restoration activities, one at the lower Suwannee 11 12 National Wildlife Refuge. The other one is down in the Charlotte Flatwoods area, specifically looking 13 at improving hydrologic characteristics on what's 14 15 called "Yucca Pens," which is a water wildlife management area. I'm going to now talk about the 16 17 recreational use projects and the plan. This is actually a picture of a coastal dune lake and you'll 18 19 see some canoes there, folks about ready to enjoy that coastal dune lake. So we have nine preferred 20 21 projects. Again, this is the map. All these projects are located in the panhandle. We use the 22 23 REC as the numbering system, red as the color, and 24 we have a swimmer as the icon for these projects in the plan. So I'd like to talk a little bit about 25

each one of these projects. Again, more information 1 2 on all the projects we've talked about are in the factsheet or in the draft plan itself. The first 3 project is the Perdido River paddle trail. We would 4 5 like to thank our project partners, which include the Northwest Florida Water Management District, 6 7 Escambia County, and the Nature Conservancy because they are providing lands under which this project 8 will be constructed and it involves construction of 9 10 camping areas, essentially elevated camping sites with screened enclosures and composting toilets. 11 12 They're not luxurious, but we do believe it will assist those folks who like to take their canoes or 13 kayaks and so this project complements existing 14 sites on the Alabama side of the river, so folks 15 16 will now be able to take their canoes and kayaks all 17 the way from the state line, leisurely paddle down the river, camp for several days, and then go all 18 19 the way down to Perdido Bay, so, again, we'd like to 20 thank our partners on this project. The next one is 21 a companion project to the water quality project I talked about, Property Creek. And so, under this 22 23 project, Escambia County would put recreational use 24 of manatees surrounding that storm water facility. There will be a paddle craft lodge, there'll be a 25

trail, there'll be an elevated boardwalk. 1 2 there'll be some educational signage that tells the water story all the way from the top of this urban 3 strain all the way down to Pensacola Bay, so we're 4 5 very excited about that project. We also have a recreational use project on Gulf Islands National 6 7 Seashore, what's called "Okaloosa Unit." It's actually near Fort Walton Beach and this little 8 project will rehab the park amenities that are 9 10 currently there, rehab the boat ramp, the restrooms, the fishing piers, the picnic pavilions, and the RV 11 12 sites. Our most expensive, at least from an estimated cost, is Joe's Bayou recreational area 13 improvements. This is in the City of Destin. 14 15 be an adjunct to Mattie Kelly Park in the City of Destin. It has a whole list of amenities: fishing 16 17 piers, restrooms, paddle launches, trails, boardwalks, improvements to the existing boat ramp. 18 19 It also has some ecological improvements, including 20 restoration of freshwater wetlands, and saltwater, 21 and we'll also be working on a living shoreline along the shoreline of this area. These are our 22 23 other recreational use projects. Three of them 24 occur at state parks -- actually, four occur at 25 state parks, but at the three state parks listed

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there, the first ones, it will involve your typical 1 2 amenities. It's going to improve access to these parks. It's going to improve the parking areas to 3 make it easier for folks to get in and out. They'll 4 5 include boardwalks, and trails, and observation platforms, and new restrooms, and tram pavilions, 6 7 and fishing piers, and paddle launches, things to improve the public's use and enjoyment of those 8 9 state parks. The last two projects are trail 10 projects. One occurs at the state park from Cape Sandblast on the St. Joe Peninsula. Currently 11 12 along State Road 30A, there is a shared use trail 13 all along 30A. It currently stops right at the state park. This project would expand that shared 14 15 use path through the park so folks can, you know, 16 walk or bicycle all along 30A and through the state 17 park. Our last one is a walking trail down on Saint Mark's National Wildlife Refuge. It's an intended 18 19 to complete the Florida National Scenic Trail. Did 20 I get that right, Ben? 21 MR. FRATER: Yes. 22 MR. CORAM: Very good. So that's a quick 23 overview of the recreational use projects and I'm

facilitate the public comment portion of this

now going to turn it over back to Jim Reynolds to

1 meeting.

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MR. REYNOLDS: You get me twice. So here are the next steps: We'll be holding a public webinar on October 10 from 1:30 to 4:00 eastern. It will provide you with another opportunity to see this presentation, ask questions, and submit comments through the comment or chat box feature of the webinar. The public comment period for the draft Florida Restoration Plan will close on October 26. 2018. Florida TIG will review and consider all comments received and finalize the plan. Projects selected by the Of TIG in the final plan will then proceed to implementation. You'll see this slide about 13 more times and then we have about 14 or 15 other slides besides that. As a reminder, we're here tonight to hear your feedback on the proposed projects included in the draft plan. There are multiple ways to provide comment. You can provide comments on the record during tonight's public comment hearing. We're recording this meeting for the court reporter to capture all formal comments during tonight's public comment period. You can submit a comment using the comment or chat box feature at the public webinar on October 10. You can submit a written comment tonight or submit

Page 28 written comments by mail. Comments may also be 1 2 submitted electronically via the website listed on this slide and on the project factsheets. 3 important to note that all comments must be received 4 5 by October 26, 2018. These avenues for public comment will be covered again before we conclude 6 7 tonight's meeting. Now, for the fun part. I'd like to introduce members of our listening table for both 8 9 federal and state trustee representatives. We've 10 got Leslie Ames with Florida Department of 11 Environmental Protection. We've got Gareth Leonard 12 with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. We've got Dianne Ingram with U.S. 13 Department of the Interior. We've got Amy Newbold 14 15 with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. We've 16 got Ben Battle with U.S. Department of Agriculture, 17 and we've got Laurie Rounds with NOA, also known as National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. 18 19 While they're getting settled, I'd like to remind 20 everyone that, while you're making verbal comments, 21 we will not be responding to the comments tonight. We will take all of the comments into consideration 22 23 and will respond to the comments in the final plan. 24 To make a verbal comment tonight, you need to let us know before coming forward. Is there anyone who 25

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Page 29 would like to get your name on the list who did not 1 2 say "yes" when you signed in? All call individual up two at a time. Actually, I won't do that because 3 I've got to -- it looks like we'll have a third, so 4 5 I'll call you one at a time. FEMALE PUBLIC SPEAKER: Anybody else want to 6 7 change your minds? 8 MR. REYNOLDS: When I call your name, please 9 come up. I don't think we need to limit speakers to 10 three minutes. However, please do be respectful of everyone's time. Some people have come long 11 12 distances and may have long distances to drive back, so if we decide it's going over long, we'll provide 13 a reminder. So, first up, Matt Posner. 14 15 MR. POSNER: Good evening. My name is Matt 16 Posner. I'm the Restore Program manager for Escambia County and, first, I would like to thank 17 the board members for holding a -- this open house 18 19 and public comment period this evening. Escambia County is very supportive of all the projects within 20

watershed. I'm here this evening representing
Escambia County District 2 commissioner, Doug
Underhill. Ha cannot not be here tonight, but I'm
here to read this letter into the record on behalf

the Perdido Bay watershed and the Pensacola Bay

Page 30 1 of him and this is in reference to project FM 1, the 2 Gulf Islands National Seashore beneficial use objections at Pensacola Pass. "Dear Deepwater 3 4 Horizon Oil Spill Florida Trustee Implementation 5 Group: The Pensacola Pass navigational inlet is a critical component of the county's military, 6 7 commercial, and recreational infrastructure. However, the artificial deepening and maintenance of 8 9 the pass contributes significantly to beach erosion within Gulf Islands National Seashore at both the 10 Fort Pickens and Johnson Beach by altering the 11 12 natural littoral drift of sand and trapping it 13 within the pass. The resulting impacts degrade wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and 14 the storm protection afforded to Pensacola Naval Air 15 16 Station. Consistent with Florida Statute 161.143, 17 Escambia County, with our partners, is working to develop and maintain a sediment budget for Pensacola 18 19 Pass through the creation of an inlet management 20 The primary goal of the plan is to accurately predict the volume of sand that will need to be 21 22 regularly dredged over time from Pensacola Pass and 23 further assure that these beach quality sands are 24 beneficially used through near-shore placement on adjacent eroding beaches rather than wasted in 25

Page 31 1 offshore disposal area. Escambia County's in 2 receipt of a grant through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for \$311,250 with a local 3 commitment of \$103,750 to provide additional data 4 5 analysis that can assist with Gulf Islands National Seashore project. Escambia County developed the 6 7 Perdido Key Habitat Conservation plan with technical assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 8 and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation 9 Commission. A component of the HCP relies on 10 healthy populations of Perdido Key beach mice within 11 12 the Johnson Beach Unit of Gulf Islands National Seashore as well as other large public areas, such 13 as Perdido Key State Park and Gulf State Park in 14 Alabama. After Hurricane Ivan in 2004, the only 15 documented population of beach mice was in -- was 16 17 within Johnson Beach immediately adjacent to Pensacola Pass. The proposed NRDA project will help 18 19 maintain the integrity and natural succession of habitats on the Key. Escambia County has a long 20 21 history of supporting actions to mitigate unnatural impacts to the sediment budget and restoring natural 22 23 habitats on our barrier islands. Directly in regard 24 to project FM 1, the goal of the project will be to restore the natural sand budget for the Johnson 25

Beach Unit of Gulf Islands National Seashore and 1 2 thereby improve recreational and wildlife habitats within the unit. This project will benefit 3 designated critical habitat units within Gulf 4 5 Islands National Seashore for both the Perdido Key beach mouse and loggerhead sea turtle. Additional 6 7 state and federally listed species are anticipated to benefit including other nesting marine turtles 8 and shore birds. The increase of sand will 9 10 facilitate natural processes, such as dune building and over wash of soil, maintaining the integrity to 11 12 the island. For planning purposes, it is reasonable to expect a sediment budget of approximately 100,000 13 cubic yards per year and will need to be addressed 14 15 by The Army Corps of Engineer Inlet Maintenance 16 Program. Based on recent activities by the Corps, 17 it is anticipated that a project would be executed by 2021 involving between 500,000 and 600,000 cubic 18 19 yards of sand. Although the actual date of the next 20 Army Corps maintenance dredge is not currently known, it is certain that it will occur in the next 21 couple years. A NRDA status change to preferred 22 23 with an allocation of \$250,000 for phase 1 fine and 24 permitting activities to begin the required archeological surveys, based on habitat surveys, and 25

Page 33 to develop a mutually agreeable implementation plan 1 2 between the Corps and Gulf Islands National Seashore. This information will be utilized by the 3 4 Corps as part of the special conditions for the 5 pyramid package for the project. Funding for phase 2 construction could be allocated for an out year, 6 with further coordination with the Corps. 7 request is not intended to modify the trustees' 8 existing ranking of projects under consideration. 9 10 It is intended to highlight there are planning steps that need to be undertaken early on the ensure a 11 12 successful project when construction funding becomes 13 available in upcoming years. If you have any 14 questions, please feel free to contact Timothy Day 15 at (850) 595-1144. Best regards, Doug Underhill, Commissioner, District 2." 16 17 MR. REYNOLDS: Thank you. Number 2, Jessica 18 Bibza. MS. BIBZA: Hi, there. Good evening. 19 Jessica Bibza with the National Wildlife Federation 20 21 and I really want to applaud this initial restoration plan for Florida as being an impressive 22 23 suite of projects. I'm pleased about the water 24 quality and nutrient reduction projects in Pensacola Bay. The fact that you screened 1,400 projects to 25

Page 34 come up with 32 alternatives and 24 preferred is 1 2 ever more impressive. It's a lot of projects to go through. Within the restoration categories, we're 3 especially pleased to see two National Wildlife 4 5 Federation priority projects addressed in this plan: Carpenter's Creek, which was selected. Two projects 6 7 in Carpenter's Creek were selected and MK Ranch, which was not selected as preferred, but we 8 9 definitely support its consideration in other rounds of NRDA funding or for other funding sources. 10 According to the draft plan that MK Ranch was not 11 preferred, because the likelihood of success was 12 contingent on the acquisition of the Lake Wimico 13 parcel. That's another project that we actually --14 is one of our priorities, so, in our mind, it's 15 16 going to be a two for one when Lake Wimico gets done 17 because, then, hopefully, that will pay for the work and open the door for MK Ranch restoration as well. 18 19 We really -- National Wildlife Federation really 20 appreciates the opportunity for public input and the 21 development of the restoration plans, including the solicitation for project ideas through the portals 22 23 and meetings such as this. Likewise, I think this -24 - we feel that the state trustees, FWC, and DEP have done a terrific job of communicating with National 25

Page 35 1 Wildlife Federation and other NGOs, really listening 2 to our input with regard to priority projects and so forth. However, I think that there may be better 3 opportunities for coordination with the community as 4 5 a whole. I mean, there was kind of a long time between those initial announcements and the final 6 release of this plan and I think a lot of members of 7 the public that don't have such access to the 8 decision makers are kind of left in limbo, wondering 9 what's going on. In addition, there are probably 10 opportunities for better coordination and maybe even 11 12 potential leveraging of opportunities if the project sponsors engage more closely with local communities 13 as projects are being developed. Counties, cities, 14 15 local groups, they might have valuable input that could be built into projects sooner rather than 16 17 later and I think we heard very similar comments to that when we met in Gulfport, Mississippi earlier 18 19 this summer. You know, so I think -- and I -- it 20 varies across projects. For example, WQ 1, the 21 Carpenter Creek headwater quality project to be 22 implemented by DP has ten partners listed -- ten 23 local partners and that's great, but maybe some of the other projects, not so much. FM 1 in Gulf 24 Island National Seashore, the beneficial use 25

Page 36 project, which although was not selected, it only 1 2 listed two other federal partners and no local partners and as we heard, you know, I think local 3 4 governments might have some -- and community groups 5 might have some input. Likewise, the nutrient reduction projects didn't list any partners in -- at 6 7 least in the summary project description. apologize. I haven't been through all 500 page and 8 maybe there are other partners listed in there and I 9 10 haven't gotten to those yet. Also, since there's such a small audience, I think I'm just going to 11 12 keep talking, not too long. Don't worry. I also am really encouraged and, again, I haven't been through 13 the whole document and maybe it's articulated in 14 15 there, but really encouraged by TIG to consider the impacts of future sea level rise and flooding on 16 17 these projects. I think resilience is a really important issue. The REC 6, R-E-C 6, project, Joe's 18 19 Bayou, I'm glad to see that's going to include 20 living shoreline elements and would really like to 21 see more projects that incorporate green infrastructure and considering resilience in their 22 23 design and implementation. Thank you. 24 MR. REYNOLDS: Thank you. Walter Ernest. 25 MR. ERNEST: My name is Walter Ernest.

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director of operations for the Pelican Coast 1 2 Conservancy. We're a regional land trust. We operate in the Gulf states, but I want to encourage 3 the trustees to reach out to the Florida Association 4 5 of Land Trust and the Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation. Both of these groups could be 6 7 instrumental in providing technical advice on future land conservations projects. I know there were not 8 9 any in this round, but, hopefully, future rounds 10 NRDA will have land conservation projects in them. Other states have done this. I know Alabama did 11 12 this. You know, one of the things about land conservation, why it's important, land conservation 13 14 is restoration. When you look at water quality and 15 nutrient reduction, one of the best ways you can do 16 it is with creating or repairing a corridor, like the Perdido River, for instance. There's been a 17 great deal of conserved properties, but there's 18 19 still a lot of privately owned timberlands on the Perdido River that you could place conservation 20 easements on with the intention of creating or 21 repairing a corridor on the Florida side and then 22 23 work with your Alabama partners to do the same thing on the Alabama side. Also, from -- for public use 24 for -- you all did a great job with increasing 25

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recreational opportunities, but, you know, land 1 2 conservation can be utilized for public use, you know. Oftentimes, you may have a boat ramp, but you 3 had to buy this parcel and you got this gorgeous 4 5 wetland that adjoins the public launch. There you go. You have a piece of conserved property, but I 6 7 just want to reiterate the importance of land conservation. In the State of Florida, the land 8 9 trusts do work closely together through the Florida Association of Land Trusts. Tom Kay is the 10 president of that. He's the director of the Alachua 11 12 Conservation Trust in Gainesville and he would probably be here tonight, but they're all in 13 14 Sarasota at some kind of state meeting for two days, 15 but they could be a great partner and if any of you ever need to reach out to me, feel free to as well. 16 17 Thank you. 18

MR. REYNOLDS: Thank you. Susan Cerulean.

MS. CERULEAN: Hi. I'm a retired wildlife biologist and a nature writer for Florida and I'm here specifically to support habitat project FM 6 on Saint Vincent National Wildlife Refuge. As a retired person, I spend many volunteer days a month doing sea turtle patrol and shore bird monitoring on the refuge. I get out in the field much more than I

Page 39 ever did as an administrator and, with climate 1 2 change and with oil spill threats, with all the things that are threatening -- particularly on our 3 4 refuge, snowy plovers and loggerhead sea turtles, 5 anything we can do to reduce the burden of threat to these animals will increase the likelihood that 6 7 they'll be here in the future and so the thought of getting rid of feral hogs, which would love to -- do 8 9 love to eat sea turtle eggs and snowy plover chicks, is really important to our refuge as an undisturbed 10 barrier island coast and a true refuge for these 11 12 species, so I'm glad to see that there and thank you 13 for doing that. MR. REYNOLDS: That's the four I have. 14 Would 15 anyone else like to make a comment tonight? 16 We'll catch you. 17 MS. BAUMAN: Yeah. I'll come down. 18 MR. REYNOLDS: You know the rules. 19 MS. BAUMAN: I do. I'm Janet Bauman with the 20 Nature Conservancy and I wanted to thank the Florida 21 TIG for selecting a great slate or projects and we're particularly thankful that the Perdido paddle 22 trail was selected and Rattlesnake Bluff. 23 24 Rattlesnake Bluff is a piece that was really a long time in coming that's a result of some work our 25

Page 40 scientists tested and identified water bodies that 1 2 were highly impacted with sediments across the panhandle, so this is sort of the fruit of that 3 4 labor that happened many years ago and I just wanted 5 to suggest, in terms of water quality, you know, there are a number of water quality projects, both 6 7 nutrient reduction and sediment reduction and think it would be really helpful, in terms of talking 8 about monitoring and adaptive management, to compare 9 the nutrient reduction that's achieved to State 10 TMDLs or B map so that one can see the difference 11 12 that the particular project is making or not making in terms of meeting the actual B map, if there's one 13 there, or a TMDL and I realize sometimes, you know, 14 15 it may -- the impact may be minimal, but sometimes 16 it may be significant. I think that's certainly 17 something that the public and the regulatory agencies would like to see. Thank you. 18 19 MR. REYNOLDS: Thank you. These are already filled out --20 21 MS. PHILLIPS: Oh, okay. MR. REYNOLDS: -- by other people. 22 23 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. 24 MR. REYNOLDS: Anybody else? 25 MS. PHILLIPS: Can I change my card?

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1 member of the public.

2 MR. REYNOLDS: Since we don't have the benefit 3 of the card, you'll have to introduce yourself.

MS. PHILLIPS: My name is Cindy Phillips and I'm a member of the public and I would just like to add something to the comment that was said earlier about the public kind of being left in limbo or in the dark. Because the DEP has a nice events calendar on their website, I would just add that this event was not actually added to the calendar, so it would be helpful in the future if you're having an open house or a public meeting that it's actually put on the DEP calendar. Thank you.

MR. REYNOLDS: Would any of the remaining six people like to -- I assume that's a no. All right. Once again, October 26, it's the deadline for comments. It's the last time you're going to hear me say this. www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov is the website. I also want to remind you about the handouts, which are over there on the tables. There's good information on those handouts, including all the ways you can submit comments. Please, if you didn't get a set of handouts, go grab a set. Again, you can make comments tonight verbally, which I think we're done with, provide

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        written comments, or submit comments online. You
        can mail your comments to the address on the screen
 2
        or you can go through the website that's listed on
 3
        the screen and on the handouts to make your comments
 4
        through October 26. Thank you all for your
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        attendance and participation. I'm now formally
 6
        going to close the meeting.
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               (PUBLIC HEARING CONCLUDED AT 7:29 P.M.)
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    STATE OF FLORIDA)
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    COUNTY OF ORANGE)
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          I, KRISTIN ELAINE RUBASH , Court Reporter and
 6
    Notary Public for the State of Florida at Large, do
7
    hereby certify that I was authorized to and did report
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    the foregoing proceeding and that said transcript is a
    true record of the testimony given by the witness.
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          I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not of counsel for,
    related to, or employed by any of the parties or
13
    attorneys involved herein, nor am I financially
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    interested in said action.
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    Submitted on: October 12, 2018.
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                    KRISTIN ELAINE RUBASH
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                    Court Reporter, Notary Public
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