

Gulf State Park Enhancement Project

Phase III Proposed Early Restoration Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Gulf State Park Enhancement Project would provide ecologically-sensitive enhancements to Gulf State Park, a 6,150-acre park located in Baldwin County, Alabama and operated by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The project consists of five components:

Rebuilding the Gulf State Park Lodge and Conference Center as a “green” overnight stay and meeting facility that will improve public access to the park’s beaches, trails, freshwater ecosystems and other natural resources, as well as serve as a model of resilient, environmentally friendly coastal development. The reconstruction will occur within the footprint of the original lodge and conference center.

Ecological Restoration and Enhancement of Degraded Dune Habitat to restore approximately 50 acres of dunes in the park through creation of sand movement corridors at strategic locations to allow for the natural buildup of dunes behind the man-made berm. Additionally, native vegetative plantings, including sea oats, sand oats, or seaside bluestem would be utilized to stabilize dunes and promote increased dune coverage.

Building an Interpretive Center which would include meeting space and classrooms as well as indoor and outdoor exhibits devoted to promoting better public understanding of the valuable natural resource services provided by Alabama’s coastal ecosystems.

Building a Research and Education Center adjacent to the existing nature center in the park to expand the park’s research and education programs and which would include classrooms and laboratories to support a year-round program of K-12 environmental education.

Visitor Enhancements which improve the visitor experience by expanding walking, cycling, or running opportunities in the park through the construction of

approximately 9.5 miles of new trails and approximately 3.5 miles of enhancements to existing park trails.

The *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill, and the associated response activities, resulted in the loss of millions of beach, boating, and fishing trips along the Alabama Gulf Coast. This project is designed to partially compensate for these losses by improving the public’s access and enjoyment of the Gulf State Park’s natural resources, enhancing public understanding of Alabama’s valuable coastal ecosystems, and restoring degraded dune habitat in the park.

ESTIMATED COST

The estimated amount of early restoration funding proposed for this project, including all five components, is \$85.5 million.



Existing trails at Gulf State Park will be improved by enhancements that may include overlooks, interpretive kiosks, or rest areas.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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The proposed project consists of five components, one of which is the restoration of approximately 50 acres of degraded dune habitat in the park.

