

## RESTORE Act

Following the *Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill* of April 2010 in which 11 workers lost their lives in the explosion and 200 million gallons of oil gushed unabated into the Gulf of Mexico for three months, the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) and a group of lobbyists advocated at the onset to assist the eight (8) most impacted “disproportionate” counties. As lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C. increased, FAC had included 15 “non-disproportionately,” or less affected, Gulf counties. Collier County is one of those 15.

Since July 2012, County Commissioners and staff of Gulf coastal counties from Monroe to Escambia have been meeting monthly to address the RESTORE Act, which was sponsored by Senators Bill Nelson and Marco Rubio, and passed as an amendment in the federal Transportation Bill that was approved by the U.S. Congress, then signed by President Barack Obama in July 2012.

Passage of the RESTORE Act – which means Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 – may translate into millions of dollars for Gulf counties impacted by the oil tragedy and its repercussions.

FAC officials have no expectations when the proceeds from the Clean Water Act penalties will benefit the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund which then will be allocated to the following:

- From the 35 percent “county” pot, funds will be split equally among Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. The funding could be anywhere from about \$5 million to more than \$20 million for Collier County. Local projects will be submitted and the County Commission will approve projects for allocations.
- Re the 30 percent pot of money, the “federal” allocation, the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council will implement a recovery plan.
- The Consortium comprised of Commissioners directs the “state” pot of funding which is also 30 percent distribution. These funds are competitive and go to each of the 23 Gulf Coast counties based on projects reviewed by federal-state Council.

Collier County joined the Consortium when it approved the Interlocal Agreement at the Jan. 8 Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting. Commission Vice Chair Tom Henning is BCC *Consortium Representative* and Commissioner Donna Fiala is the *Alternate*.

\* Natural Resources Restoration & Protection \* Beach Renourishment \* Tourism Promotion \* Job Creation

\* National Estuary Management Plans \* Infrastructure Projects \* Coastal Flood Protection

