

TRIUMPH GULF COAST, INC. PRE-APPLICATION FORM

Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. (“Triumph Gulf Coast”) has created a pre-application process to provide initial consideration of potential ideas for projects or programs that may seek an award of funding. Applicants are required to participate in the pre-application process. Notwithstanding the response from Triumph Gulf Coast on the pre-application form, an Applicant may still elect to submit an Application.

APPLICANT INFORMATION:

Name of Individual/Entity/Organization: St. Marks Refuge Association, Inc.

Brief Description of Background of Individual/Entity/Organization: The St. Marks Refuge Association, Inc. is a 501.c.3 non-profit charitable organization established in 1987 that supports the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in all aspects of its mission. There are currently 13 members of the Board of Directors, and over 500 dues paying members.

Contact Information:

Primary Contact Information: Thomas M. Baird

Title: Vice-President – St. Marks Refuge Association, Inc.

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 368, St. Marks, FL 32355

Telephone Number: 850-491-6074

Email Address: tbaird01@comcast.net

Website: www.stmarksrefuge.org

Names of co-applicants, partners or other entities, organizations that will have a role in the proposed project or program: Partners: St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, Florida Division of Historical Resources

REQUIRED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In a maximum of three (3) pages, please describe the proposed project or program, including (i) the amount of funds being sought from Triumph Gulf Coast; (ii) the amount and identity of other sources of funds for the proposed project or program; (iii) the location of the project or program; (iv) summary description of the proposed program, including how the program will be transformational and promote economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties, and (v) a summary timeline for the proposed project or program. (See attached.)

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This pre-application process will **not** result in an award of funding by Triumph Gulf Coast. Rather, this process is designed to facilitate submission of ideas for potential projects or programs before the Applicant expends time and/or resources to complete a full Application. All Applicants for funding are required to complete an Application, which will be scored, and then considered for award in the discretion of Triumph Gulf Coast Board.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

ST. MARKS LIGHTHOUSE RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION

Project Goals: Repair and protect the lighthouse and keeper's quarters from further deterioration and neglect; preserve the integrity of the structure as a National Historic Site; preserve the history of the lighthouse for future generations; and create an economic asset to Wakulla Co. by increasing tourism.

Amount of Funds Requested: \$300,000

Location of Project: The St. Marks Lighthouse is located on the 70,000 acre St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in Wakulla County adjacent to the City of St. Marks.

Local and statewide interests addressed: This project will attract significant numbers of visitors to Wakulla Co. and the entire Big Bend area and help preserve Florida's maritime heritage. Visitors will require gas, food and lodging and will increase attendance at nearby historic sites and state parks, generating a significant economic return on investment.

Measurable Outcomes: Once restored, and open to the public, it is estimated that 36,000 - 40,000 additional visitors will come to the lighthouse each year based on comparable Florida panhandle lighthouses. Each \$1 spent on St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge entrance fees is multiplied 10 times in the community according to a 2010 USFWS study. The Refuge currently hosts 300,000 visitors per year. With the 10 to 1 multiplier, an additional 40,000 visitors times \$5 current entrance fees, generates \$2,000,000 in tourism dollars within Wakulla County. This then continues year after year. An investment for restorations is repaid many times over in increased tourism and related expenditures in the community.

Direct Economic Impact: Based on the most recent study conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (2010), there is a 10:1 multiplier for the community. For every dollar spent on refuge entrance fees translates to ten dollars spent in the community as visitors purchase gas, food, lodging, souvenirs, and increase attendance at nearby historic sites and state parks, generating a significant economic return on investment for the region.

The St. Marks NWR hosts over 300,000 visitors per year, including tourists from every state in the Union and significant numbers of foreign visitors. With forethought and planning, and the support and assistance of lighthouse enthusiasts and preservationists, we are creating a one-of-a-kind destination that will attract visitors to the St. Marks Light Station. Based on the success of similar restoration projects, the lighthouse – once open to the public - is projected to bring in conservatively 36,000 to 40,000 new paying visitors each year.

Self-Sustaining: Revenue generated from admission fees (\$2 per adult) will make the lighthouse self-sustaining. It is estimated that at least \$80,000/year will be earned by the restored lighthouse in admission fees, which will be sufficient for maintenance, upkeep and repair into the future. By restoring this historic treasure, we will create an economic asset for Wakulla County, generate revenue to preserve this iconic structure, and protect our cultural and natural history for generations to come.

Matching Funds: This project has significant local and regional support. Matching funds secured thus far by category include:

1. Donations from individual private donors total = \$82,000

2. Donations from corporations and organizations = \$31,900
 3. State funds = \$550,000 from DHR in 2016; State funds = \$50,000 from DHR in 2017.
- This all totals \$713,900 either spent on completed projects or designated for current projects.

In-kind services have been provided by: Ring Power, Wilderness Graphics, Cason Engineering & Demolition, LLC, Wakulla Sign Co., Capelouto Termite & Pest Control.

Current Threats to the Property: Due to years of neglect while under U.S. Coast Guard ownership, the St. Marks Light Station experienced severe deterioration. Under Coast Guard control the lighthouse received only incidental and inadequate maintenance to the point that the structure is in critical need of stabilization. Deterioration has also created a dire safety situation in parts of the structure. Using funds provided by the Florida Lighthouse Association, the St. Marks Refuge Association, Inc. contracted for a condition assessment conducted by Kenneth Smith Architects, Inc. and Atlantic Engineering Services of Jacksonville. The March 2014 report cited extensive deteriorating wood beams, rusting fasteners, severe termite damage, lead-based paint and asbestos tiles. Conditions include a deteriorating roof in need of replacement, the need for climate control, electrical upgrades, new windows in the tower and keeper's quarters, new shutters, restoration of the exterior finish and painting. Extensive wood replacement will be required. Because of severe corrosion, the metal lantern room was the first priority to stabilize. Salt air and humidity had damaged the lantern room, railing and fittings. Rust jacking was pulling parts of the structure apart. In some cases, new cast iron fittings were fabricated. That project was completed in September 2016. Major restoration of the lighthouse and keeper's quarters is currently underway under management of Rippee Construction of Tallahassee. This phase is scheduled to be completed by June of 2018.

Current Project Description: However, to allow the public to utilize the site, museum displays must be researched, designed, fabricated and installed. There is great demand for public visitation and tours at St. Marks Lighthouse. Efforts to restore the lighthouse and keeper's house and open the interior of the keeper's quarters and parts of the lighthouse for public visitation are underway. However, funds are limited and the most critical aspects of the restoration are being prioritized.

The keeper's house will provide an excellent facility for public visitation, lighthouse exhibits and interpretation. The planned lighthouse museum will exhibit historic displays to illustrate early life and changes at the lighthouse and light station. Small groups of visitors will be allowed into the lighthouse to climb.

There are no water lines or sewer connections at the lighthouse. The nearest toilets are two miles distant at Tower Pond Trail Head and seven miles distant at the Refuge Visitor Center. Potable water is not available at either location. Due to the large number of current visitors to the lighthouse location and the increased numbers of visitors projected to tour the restored lighthouse and museum, toilet facilities available on site are critical.

There are five distinct elements in this application: Reconstruct the historic privy to provide toilet facilities on-site for staff and visitors, reconstruct the historic cistern to provide a needed source of water on-site, replace the guttering system, reconstruct the historic site-defining fencing for security, and research, design and install museum exhibits and signage to interpret the history of the lighthouse.

The toilets, cistern, and fencing are reconstructions, but historically accurate reconstructions with a much needed and practical use. The need for toilets on site is self-explanatory. The reconstructed cistern will provide water for cleaning, mopping floors, lavatories in the restrooms,

fire suppression and landscape irrigation. During periods of insufficient rain, the Wildlife Refuge has a tanker truck as part of their fire-fighting equipment and can be used to fill the cistern when necessary. Having handicapped accessible toilets and a functioning cistern will add to visitor comfort and overall value to the visitor experience. The character-defining historic fencing will add security to the light station when not open for public tours and unifies the complex.

To provide accessible access to the Keepers Quarters/Museum and the proposed restroom facility, a 185', ADA compliant Ramp/boardwalk is planned with funds secured through a DHR Small Matching Grant. The ramp/boardwalk will take visitors from the existing parking lot to the North end of the front porch and connect to the proposed reconstructed toilet facility. Current estimates are that the privy will need a capacity of @21,000 users per year. This is well within the capacity for small composting toilets with similar use patterns, such as at other National Wildlife Refuges and state parks.

Being able to tour the lighthouse museum will help present and future generations understand and appreciate the region's historical development, Florida's maritime heritage, and key events in Florida history.

Historic Significance of the Site: The St. Marks Lighthouse is the oldest lighthouse on the Gulf Coast, and the second oldest in Florida, standing sentinel for nearly 175 years. The tower withstood war, erosion, fire, and numerous hurricanes, serving soldiers during the Civil War and saving the lives of mariners guiding vessels to the mouth of the St. Marks River. The structure consists of the light keeper's house attached to the 80 foot tower, both resting on a 12 foot thick limestone base. According to local legend the limestone blocks are from the ruins of old Fort San Marcos de Apalachee. The St. Marks Lighthouse is one of the few towers with an attached structure—the keeper's house. Together, they today serve as an iconic symbol of the region. The Union blockaded Apalachee Bay during the Civil War and burned the lighthouse stairs to keep it from being used as a lookout post by Confederates. In March 1865 a fleet of 16 ships landed around 1,000 Union troops near the lighthouse prior to their defeat at Natural Bridge on March 6. After the war the tower and keeper's house were rebuilt and the lamp relit on January 8, 1867. The fourth-order Fresnel lens was re-installed. Later repairs were undertaken to the house and tower and the porch, still extant, was added. The light station transitioned from the U.S. Lighthouse Service to the U.S. Coast Guard in 1939 and to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2013. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. Further historical detail is available in the Florida Master Site File or at www.stmarksrefuge.org Click Lighthouse on the left column.

Timeline: With Triumph Gulf Coast support, these elements can begin as soon as funds are available or at the latest, July 2018 and be completed by June 2019.



March 15, 2018

Mr. Don Gaetz, Chairman
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.
Post Office Box 12007
Tallahassee, FL 32317

Dear Chairman Gaetz:

On behalf of the Wakulla County Tourism Development Council I am writing this letter in support of Triumph funding for the St. Marks Refuge Association's project for the restoration and preservation of the St. Marks Lighthouse.

This project proposes to create an economic asset to Wakulla Co. by increasing tourism by restoring the historic lighthouse and the keeper's quarters, preserving the integrity of the structure as a National Historic Site, and making it available for public access and information.

The St. Marks Lighthouse restoration project will generate \$2,000,000 in tourism dollars within Wakulla County per year based on the USFWS estimates of each \$1 spent on St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge entrance fees is multiplied by 10 times in the community. Separate lighthouse entrance fees are estimated to earn \$80,000 per year making this project self-sustaining. Almost \$800,000 has been raised in matching funds demonstrating broad commitment for this project.

Consideration by the Gulf Coast Triumph, Inc. Board to fund this project is greatly appreciated.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John", is written over a horizontal line. Below the line, the text "Chairman" and "Tourism Development Council" is printed.

Chairman
Tourism Development Council

Cc: Tom Baird, St. Marks Refuge Association