

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.

St. Marks ADA Compliant Kayak Canoe Launch

The City of St. Marks (“St. Marks”) is a small, rural fishing community located in Wakulla County, roughly 18 miles south of Tallahassee in Florida’s Big Bend region where the state’s Gulf of Mexico coastline changes from a north-south direction to an east-west direction. With a total area of 1.9 square miles and a population of just 293 residents, St. Marks is the only town on the St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers, which are recognized as Outstanding Florida Waterways. St. Marks has officially been designated as a Waterfronts Florida Program Community. The small community is also home to the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge Center and the historic St. Marks Lighthouse, operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Uplands forests, forested swamps, fresh and brackish water marshes and a pristine salt water estuary ecosystem compose this unique area of Florida’s Gulf Coast, making the refuge a favorite for birders and outdoor enthusiasts alike.

Despite its small size and population, St. Marks has a long history and environmental legacy as a “port” town. Although St. Marks was incorporated in 1833, St. Marks is reportedly the 3rd oldest settlement in North America. The founding date of the settlement, by the Spanish, probably occurred on the feast day of the patron saint, St. Marks, as that name was applied to both the town and the river sometime in the early 1500’s. The completion of the 20-mile Tallahassee-St. Marks Railroad line in 1837 was Florida’s first, conceived and financed by area of farmers and businesses to aid in transporting cotton crops and timber to the port at St. Marks. The railroad operated until 1983. The former railroad line was converted to the first Rails-to-Trails bike pathway in Florida and terminates in downtown St. Marks at the St. Marks River’s northern bank.

The St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers provide miles of shoreline that provide the public with ample recreation and leisure opportunities. The City of St. Marks proposes the construction of an **ADA compliant Kayak & Canoe Launch to be installed adjacent to the existing public boat ramp** located along the St. Marks River and what will be the second in the County. The accessible floating kayak launch facility promoting active living and will provide an opportunity for all its citizens, disabled residents and visitors to transfer independently into kayaks and canoes to begin their journey up or down the St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers.

“The St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers provide is an amazing natural resource located right here in our backyard that is an asset to be explored; and, one that is truly opened to the public, regardless of physical limitations. It is a beautiful thing to offer river access to all residents and visitors of Wakulla County.” – City Manager, Zoe Mansfield, St. Marks.

The project will enhance recreational opportunities in the area by creating a universally accessible launch allowing persons with disabilities, the elderly, recovering patients low-impact access to the coastal Gulf of Mexico and the St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers. It will expand recreational activities to more persons who are currently limited by the existing

facilities offered in the region. The project will utilize the already existing City of St. Marks Boat Landing's pilings and floating docks to connect the ADA Compliant transfer platform including ADA compliant gangways, rails and launch rollway. The primary costs associated with this project will be for the prefabricated floating dock, launch, gangways and rails; the City of St. Marks public works personnel will provide cost share / in-kind costs in the form of labor hours for the installation and access from the parking area to the proposed kayak and canoe launch. The total funds requested for this project is \$ 65,000.



