

I. Applicant and Proposal Information Summary Sheet

Council Member: State of Alabama		Point of Contact: Hank Burch
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Project Identification		
Project Title: Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) Gulf-wide Restoration Coordination and Support		
State(s): TX/LA/MS/AL/FL	County/City/Region: Gulf Region	
General Location: <i>Projects <u>must</u> be located within the Gulf Coast Region as defined in RESTORE Act. (attach map or photos, if applicable)</i>		
Gulf-wide		
Project Description		
RESTORE Goals: <i>Identify all RESTORE Act goals this project supports. Place a P for Primary Goal, and S for secondary goals.</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Restore and Conserve Habitat	<input type="checkbox"/> Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	
<input type="checkbox"/> Restore Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Enhance Community Resilience	
<input type="checkbox"/> Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy		
RESTORE Objectives: <i>Identify all RESTORE Act objectives this project supports. Place a P for Primary Objective, and S for secondary objectives.</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Restore, Enhance, and Protect Habitats	<input type="checkbox"/> Promote Community Resilience	
<input type="checkbox"/> Restore, Improve, and Protect Water Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education	
<input type="checkbox"/> Protect and Restore Living Coastal and Marine Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Improve Science-Based Decision-Making Processes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Restore and Enhance Natural Processes and Shorelines		
RESTORE Priorities: <i>Identify all RESTORE Act priorities that this project supports.</i>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Priority 1: Projects that are projected to make the greatest contribution ...		
<input type="checkbox"/> Priority 2: Large-scale projects and programs that are projected to substantially contribute to restoring...		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Priority 3: Projects contained in existing Gulf Coast State comprehensive plans for the restoration ...		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Priority 4: Projects that restore long-term resiliency of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries ...		
RESTORE Commitments: <i>Identify all RESTORE Comprehensive Plan commitments that this project supports.</i>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commitment to Science-based Decision Making		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commitment to Regional Ecosystem-based Approach to Restoration		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commitment to Engagement, Inclusion, and Transparency		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commitment to Leverage Resources and Partnerships		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commitment to Delivering Results and Measuring Impacts		
RESTORE Proposal Type and Phases: <i>Please identify which type and phase best suits this proposal.</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technical Assistance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Program		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implementation
Project Cost and Duration		
Project Cost Estimate:		Project Timing Estimate:
Total:	<u>\$8,262,500.00</u>	Date Anticipated to Start: <u>Upon Award</u>
General Coordination - \$2,887,500		Time to Completion: <u>5</u> years
HCRT RSM/BU - \$5,925,000		Anticipated Project Lifespan: <u>5</u> years

II. Executive Summary

Alabama proposes to utilize RESTORE funding to sustain and insure stable future funding for the well-established gulf-wide coordination efforts of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA).

Established by the Governors of the five Gulf States in 2004, GOMA is a regional partnership that includes State and Federal agencies, academia, business & industry, non-governmental conservation organizations, and private citizens. The work of GOMA strongly parallels the efforts of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (RESTORE Council) to address comprehensive Gulf-wide ecosystem restoration following the Deepwater Horizon (DWH) oil spill. Funding is specifically sought to support two ongoing efforts of GOMA: 1) general coordination and 2) the efforts of GOMA's Habitat Conservation and Restoration Team (HCRT).

Component 1: GOMA Coordination

The proposed project provides programmatic support for GOMA's collaborative partnership to facilitate coordination and enhance benefits of restoration-related activities among the various agencies, organizations, resource managers, scientists, consultants, and industry experts in the region. The GOMA proposes to conduct the coordination through its priority issue teams (PITs) that are well-established and in direct alignment with the goals of RESTORE Council's Comprehensive Plan. Coordination provided by the GOMA will establish the necessary foundational steps to ensure that restoration projects/programs conducted in the Gulf are being coordinated with maximum efficiency. Through GOMA's PITs and its larger partner network, entities involved in restoration activities will be better informed and able to make project implementation decisions with the maximum available information regarding ongoing efforts in the Gulf Coast Region. As a result, priorities can be aligned, duplication of efforts will be minimized, and leveraging opportunities can be identified at an early stage of project/program identification and design. Further, the GOMA proposes to utilize project funds to complete and sustain the "DWH Project Tracker," a centralized directory of projects funded by Deepwater Horizon based restoration sources. Currently under development, this tool provides a comprehensive picture of the location, type, cost, funding sources, and scope of all DWH restoration projects (see beta version of site at www.dwhprojecttracker.org).

Implementation: The GOMA proposes to utilize its established structure and PITs to implement ongoing regional coordination for the next five years through regular team conference calls, periodic and annual meetings, document creation and sharing, and project tracking (e.g DWH Project Tracker).

Component 2: GOMA-HCRT Regional Sediment Management (RSM) and Beneficial Use of Dredged Materials (BU) Program

GOMA's Habitat Conservation and Restoration Team (HCRT) proposes to implement a RSM and BU program to support small-scale beneficial use projects in all the Gulf States while also enhancing the implementation of an existing community-based, small-scale restoration program. Over the past 10 years, the HCRT has effectively engaged the 5 Gulf States and their federal, NGO and other partners in advancing RSM and the BU of dredged materials to address

habitat restoration across the Gulf. These efforts have resulted in the publication of a number of RSM/BU related documents and plans (See VIII- Reference List).

Additionally, through a recent grant from the Environmental Protection Agency's Gulf of Mexico Program (GOMP), the HCRT provided support to the Gulf of Mexico Foundation's Gulf Community Restoration Program (GCRP). The GCRP is an existing, proven partnership of the 5 Gulf States, the Gulf of Mexico Foundation (GMF), EPA-GOMP, NOAA, US Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners. Over the years, the GCRP has funded many habitat restoration projects across all 5 Gulf States. By supporting this existing partnership, the HCRT provided funding for on-the-ground projects across the Gulf of Mexico.

To further enhance these existing successful programs, the HCRT is proposing to implement an RSM/BU program and an associated community-based, small-scale restoration program, as well as an RSM/BU data management program as follows:

- RSM/BU Implementation Support - The HCRT will provide financial support to small-scale RSM/BU projects across around the Gulf by providing funds to facilitate the implementation of BU projects, specifically those associated with habitat restoration.
- Small-Scale Habitat Restoration - The HCRT proposes to build upon the existing GCRP to support small scale estuarine restoration projects around the Gulf, specifically those that have a BU component.
- RSM/BU Data Management - The HCRT will support the establishment of an online geospatial decision support tool (DST) to inform local and regional BU and habitat restoration projects.

Implementation: Since the inception of both the GCRP and the HCRT, the Gulf of Mexico Foundation has served as the program facilitator. The HCRT proposes that the GMF continue to be a partner in this project and will utilize its existing GCRP framework to request project proposals under each program component. The HCRT state leads will be fully engaged on all decision making, especially the allocation of project funds.

Measures of Success: Project deliverables will include continued effective and efficient Gulf-wide coordination of restoration projects; completion and ongoing operation of DWH Project Tracker; development of RSM and/or BU studies, plans, and similar documents which lead to the implementation of small-scale RSM/BU projects around the Gulf; continuation of the GCRP program to provide funding for the successful implementation of community-based estuarine restoration projects around the Gulf; and creation and maintenance of a geospatial decision support tool (DST) that will inform local and regional BU and habitat restoration projects.

Uncertainties and risks associated with the project or program: GOMA and its HCRT have a 10-year record of successfully supporting and implementing projects and programs in the Gulf. As such, there are few uncertainties and risks associated with continuation of these efforts.

III. Proposal Narrative

GOMA HISTORY AND OVERVIEW:

The GOMA is a Regional Ocean Partnership that includes State and Federal agencies, academia, business and industry, NGOs, and private citizens, including local advisory councils and diversity ambassadors, working to promote the ecological and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico region. The concept of regional collaboration for the Gulf of Mexico was initially developed in 2004 because the Governors of the five Gulf States recognized that collaborative partnerships are necessary to promote a healthy regional ecosystem and thus healthy economies. Through State and Federal leadership, GOMA has been able to develop a course of actions designed to achieve this goal in ways that no single entity could achieve alone.

In 2006, GOMA released the first *Governors' Action Plan*, unveiling the six issues that were priorities for all stakeholders in the region. In 2009, GOMA partners developed a more aggressive *Governors' Action Plan II*, identifying specific objectives for each of those issues. After 10 years of successfully addressing priority issues in the region, GOMA recently re-evaluated and confirmed those priority issues to be:

- Water Resources
- Habitat Resources
- Wildlife and Fisheries
- Data and Monitoring
- Education and Engagement
- Community Resilience

To address the ecological health and economic sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico, it is imperative to carry out the individual components of priority issues on an ecosystem basis and identify and leverage resources to do so. GOMA has proven it provides the mechanism to bring the appropriate stakeholders together to address those priority issues and challenges affecting the Gulf. Therefore, GOMA is organized into six Priority Issue Teams (PITs) that address the challenges of priority alignment and resource leveraging on a regional, ecosystem scale.

GOMA PRIORITY ISSUE TEAMS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

There are six unique Priority Issue Teams, which are composed of region-wide partners that collaborate on a regular basis to achieve the individual PIT objectives. The current teams are briefly described below and a full description can be found in Section IX.

1. *Habitat Conservation and Restoration Team* (HCRT), which focuses on regional sediment management (RSM), Beneficial Use (BU) of dredge material; Living Shorelines; Habitat Status & Trends; Sea-Level Rise/Climate Change; and Conservation, Restoration & Resiliency Planning.
2. *Water Quality Team* targets issues of Hypoxia / Nutrient Reduction; Harmful Algal Blooms; Impaired & Non-impaired Waters; Pathogens; Mercury; Freshwater In-Flows; and Marine Debris.
3. *Wildlife and Fisheries Team* evaluates vulnerable species, conducts associated modeling,

assists LCCs with information on species conservation strategies, and conducts various studies on fish and wildlife populations.

4. *Coastal Community Resilience Team* focuses on adaptation and planning for coastal hazards, community resilience evaluation, and resilience tools and communications.
5. *Data and Monitoring Team* supports data collection, monitoring, and access and sharing of data.
6. *Outreach and Engagement Team* coordinates and conducts all manner of education and outreach efforts throughout the Gulf Region in order to maximize public awareness and involvement.

To date, this type of PIT coordination has proven to be highly successful. The accomplishments listed below are just a few tangible results of broad and continuous participation of PIT team members:

- *StormSmart Coasts*, a networking forum for resilience tools for coastal communities (<http://stormsmartcoasts.org/>).
- *Coastal Community Resilience Index and Training* to train local community planners to identify community strengths and weaknesses so that they can be better prepared for natural hazards as well as sea-level rise and climate changes (<http://masgc.org/page.asp?id=591>);
- *GOMAportal* is a Gulf of Mexico geospatial data repository, which consists of a Federal Geographic Data Committee compliant metadata catalog that allows users to perform spatial and text searches (<http://gomaportal.org>).
- *The Gulf Regional Sediment Management Master Plan* is a collection of products intended to guide more effective management of sediment resources in the Gulf for habitat conservation and restoration as well as coastal community resilience. The GRSMMP technical framework is published in the Journal of Coastal Research.
- *Gulf of Mexico Mapping Master Plan* is a comprehensive plan to collaboratively acquire data on the physical characteristics of the Gulf region, particularly elevation, shoreline, and surface data.
- *Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge Data Platform* provides future spatial scenarios and reports of SLR, storm surge, community resilience and conservation indicators that can be visualized in the tool or interactively at one of its companion sites, such as the Restoration and Resilience Decision Support Tool of the Conservancy, and SLAMM View.
- *Harmful Algal Bloom Tool* A prediction warning system to forecast the occurrence of harmful algal blooms has been developed with widespread applicability to tourism and fisheries.
- Gulf Coast communities are more resilient to natural hazard events thanks to a tool developed by Alliance partners that helps communities raise their community rating, thereby realizing lower insurance costs for businesses and individuals.
- Upstream partners are engaged to reduce nutrients, providing important solutions to hypoxic events occurrences in the Gulf of Mexico.

GULF OF MEXICO RESEARCH INITIATIVE (GoMRI)

In addition, in 2010, GOMA was selected to administer the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative, a \$500 million oil-spill research program. Utilizing an independent Research Board to select research projects, GOMA has awarded over \$175 million through the GoMRI program to date, expanding research capacity of the Gulf region exponentially. As a result of GoMRI, the research institutions in the Gulf of Mexico will hold the world's expertise on oil spill science at the end of the 10-year program.

RESTORE Component 1: GOMA COORDINATION

Project introduction and background

The proposed project provides programmatic support for the Gulf of Mexico Alliance's (GOMA) collaborative partnership in order to facilitate coordination and enhance benefits of restoration-related activities among the various agencies, organizations, resource managers, scientists, consultants, and industry experts in the region. Many agencies and organizations throughout the region implement restoration projects as a core mission and coordination is necessary in order to achieve maximum efficiency and avoid duplication.

Similarly, while RESTORE Act duties and responsibilities are highly coordinated by the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (RESTORE Council), the GOMA provides the venue for on-the-ground resource managers, scientists, consultants, and industry experts to communicate and collaborate on a regular basis regarding the restoration activities that are being conducted by RESTORE Council members and its many regional partners.

The GOMA proposes to conduct the restoration project and program coordination through its priority issue teams (PITs) which are well-established, have a proven track record, and are already in direct alignment with the Goals of the RESTORE Council's Comprehensive Plan. Coordination provided by the GOMA would establish the necessary foundational steps to ensure that restoration projects/programs conducted in the Gulf are being coordinated to maximum efficiency. Through GOMA's PITs and its larger partner network, entities involved in restoration activities will be better informed and able to make project implementation decisions based upon the most current information available regarding anticipated and on-going efforts in the Gulf Coast Region. As a result, priorities can be aligned, ideas can be shared, duplication of efforts will be minimized, science based questions can be explored, lessons learned can be shared, and leveraging opportunities will be identified at an early stage of project/program identification, planning and design.

The goal of GOMA has consistently been to maintain an effective communication and collaboration network among agencies and organizations performing restoration activities across the Gulf of Mexico, whether as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill or other non-oil spill related efforts. Specifically in relation to this proposed project, the GOMA's objectives are to:

- Coordinate, encourage, facilitate and enhance communication among GOMA partners, which include most RESTORE Council members, as well as numerous other entities in the Gulf Coast Region.
- Reduce duplication in planning and execution of restoration projects and restoration related efforts and initiatives.
- Reduce likelihood of unintended impacts across project/program implementation through improving availability and consolidation of information as to restoration activities.
- Enhance leveraging of funding opportunities and technical expertise.
- Streamline implementation efforts by identifying and sharing techniques, lessons learned and project monitoring results.
- Incorporate best available science to support likelihood of project success and to inform future science based decision making.
- Complete development of and maintain an online tool cataloging information as to ongoing restoration activities to further overall transparency and foster engagement of the public, in addition to informing decision makers who are identifying, planning and implementing restoration projects and programs.

As a vital aspect of this coordination effort, the GOMA seeks funding to complete and maintain its DWH Project Tracker, a centralized directory of projects funded by Deepwater Horizon based restoration sources. It provides a comprehensive picture of the location, type, cost, funding sources, and scope of these restoration projects. Each snapshot includes a brief project description, a point of contact, and a link to access detailed project information. Furthermore, users can search the map for restoration projects and generate custom reports tailored to their needs. Currently in development, an early version of the DWH Project Tracker is accessible from the Gulf Restoration page of the GOMA's website www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org or www.dwhprojecttracker.org.

The development team for the DWH Project Tracker is unique and highly qualified. In addition to GOMA's unique ability to facilitate collaboration across the Gulf, The Trust for Public Land and Ducks Unlimited serve as key partners by providing technical experts in geospatial analysis and financial database management for the DWH Project Tracker.

Benefits of GOMA DWH Project Tracker:

- *Ability to Continually Identify and Coordinate Restoration Efforts.* Interaction among the GOMA members who also participate in RESTORE, NRDA, NFWF and other restoration efforts ensure that complete and up-to-date information will be gathered and synthesized on an ongoing basis with maximum efficiency due to utilization of the long established PIT structure of the GOMA.
- *Availability of Comprehensive Information.* As detailed previously, the DWH Project Tracker provides online access to projects being implemented as a result of Deepwater Horizon oil spill restoration proceeds and contains useful information about the location, cost, funding source, etc., as to restoration activities.

- *Interactive and Customizable Format.* Users can search the map for restoration projects and generate custom reports tailored to their needs.
- *Strategic Planning.* Reliable geospatial information of restoration projects helps agencies and organizations quickly assess where and how to focus their efforts for maximum ecological and economic benefit.
- *Collaboration/Leveraging.* A readily accessible map of projects facilitates collaboration and enable leveraging among agencies, organizations, and restoration funding sources.
- *Transparency.* An easy-to-navigate online web portal makes it easy for anyone to see which projects are being implemented, where, and why.

GOMA Coordination: Implementation Methodology

The GOMA proposes to utilize its established structure and priority issue teams (PITs) to implement the regional restoration coordination. This includes regular team conference calls, annual meetings, and project tracking. Additionally, the DWH Project Tracker portion of the project will be overseen by the existing development team. This includes GOMA, The Trust for Public Land and Ducks Unlimited, who provide the team technical experts in geospatial analysis and financial database management for the project.

Monitoring and adaptive management of the project or program

The GOMA will oversee and monitor the progress of all project aspects, including assuring that project deliverables, contractual obligations, recordkeeping requirements and accounting measures are fully met. Additionally, the GOMA will oversee the completion and maintenance of the DWH Project Tracker, assuring that the Tracker is fully functional. If unforeseen circumstances arise with any aspects of the projects, adaptive management will be used to address these issues and achieve successful project completion.

Measures of success for the proposed project or program

The outcomes resulting from the coordination proposed herein by the GOMA include a network of industry experts and resource managers that communicates regularly about anticipated restoration projects/programs, ongoing updates as to project/program implementation status, best available science to inform project prioritization/planning/design, and various other regional initiatives that may impact or inform restoration. Furthermore, this proposed project will provide an online project tracking tool that is available to the public.

Risks and uncertainties of the proposed activities

The core mission of the GOMA is to facilitate communication, reduce duplication, and enhance leveraging opportunities for the ecological and economic health of the Gulf. Because it has been providing this type of collaboration since 2004, it is in a unique position to coordinate such a collaborative network through its well-established structure that is in direct alignment with the program goals of the RESTORE Council's Comprehensive Plan. Accordingly, given the GOMA's record of successfully supporting and implementing similar programs, there are few uncertainties and risks associated with this project.

Proposal project/program benefits

Through the PITs and the larger partner network as a whole, agencies and organizations involved in restoration activities will be better informed and able to make project implementation decisions with the maximum available information regarding on-going efforts in the region. As a result, priorities can be aligned, activities can be planned with minimal duplication, and leveraging opportunities can be identified.

Outreach and education opportunities

The GOMA will actively engage its Outreach and Engagement Priority Issue Team to promote and distribute work products generated as part of this program. The GOMA Outreach and Engagement team involves a network of talented professionals throughout the Gulf Region who have a proven record of success. Recent accomplishments of the Outreach and Engagement Team include:

- **Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (CELCs)** have been established at aquaria and coastal science centers in all 5 Gulf States and Veracruz, Mexico. CELCs are hands-on learning stations that give very specific educational opportunities to visitors related to the six GOMA priorities.
- **K-12 Investments** - The Gulf of Mexico Alliance awarded \$19,700 to the Environmental Education Association of Alabama for the project From the Mountains to the Gulf: Helping Teachers Make Connections. Twenty teachers will be recruited to participate in a workshop where they will follow the headwaters in north Alabama to the Gulf to study the water, geology and ecology of the state.
- **Smart Yard/Healthy Gulf** - A public education campaign designed to reduce fertilizers entering local waters by helping people make responsible lawn fertilizer decisions. GOMA's EE team partnered with Nutrients team to develop and implement.
- **Ecosystem Services Videos in English and Spanish** - To increase awareness and understanding of ocean ecosystem services, GOMA's Ecosystems Integration and Assessment and Environmental Education teams joined forces in the development of learning tools easily comprehensible by and accessible to educators and the general public alike.
- **Coastal Training Program** - A unique regional collaboration designed to deliver relevant information to key stakeholders on issues related to the ecological and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico. Recent workshops include GIS, Sea-Level Rise for Citizens, and Practitioners Forums for Restoration Using Beneficial Use Techniques.
- **Harmful Algal Bloom Primer** - Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Primer that details what HABs are, what causes them, and other factors concerning the "how's, why's and where's" related to HABs in the Gulf. GOMA's EE Team partnered with WQ team to develop, print and distribute.
- **"Gulf of Mexico Minute" Podcasts** – a series of 50 audio broadcasts approximately 1:30 minutes in length designed to promote stewardship of Gulf resources, improve water quality, and build resilience for citizens of the region.
- **PR Team** – a subset of the EE Team, GOMA's PR team prepares all public and media pieces that are distributed approximately 4-5 times per year. Examples include All Hands announcements, PIT project announcements, etc...
- **Website Team** – a subset of the EE Team, GOMA's website team consolidated all 5 of the disparate GOMA websites that had been built under various grants throughout the years into one, comprehensive and streamlined website, available here: www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org.

Leveraging of resources and partnership

The GOMA is a partnership of the 5 Gulf States, NOAA, EPA, USGS, Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies as well as numerous NGO partners. All of these partners provide staff and resources to make GOMA successful. The requested RESTORE funding will be leveraged against funding provided to GOMA from its Gulf State members and to the resources made available by other state, local federal and NGO partners.

RESTORE Component 2: GOMA-HCRT RSM and BU PROGRAM

Project introduction and background

Over the past 10 years, the GOMA HCRT has effectively engaged the 5 Gulf States, federal, NGO and other partners in advancing RSM and the BU of dredged materials to address habitat restoration across the Gulf. These efforts have resulted in the publication of the West Galveston Bay RSM Study, an updated Mississippi Beneficial Use Project Plan, an RSM Case Studies Report and the publication of the Technical Framework of the Gulf-Wide Regional Sediment Master Plan as a special edition of the Journal of Coastal Research.

<http://www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org/our-priorities/habitat-conservation-restoration/>

Additionally, through a grant from the EPA-Gulf of Mexico Program, the HCRT provided support to the GMF's existing Gulf Community Restoration Program (GCRP). The GCRP is a proven partnership of the 5 Gulf States, the Gulf of Mexico Foundation, NOAA, EPA-GOMP and other federal partners. Over the years, the GCRP has funded over 70 habitat restoration projects across all 5 Gulf States. By supporting this existing partnership, the HCRT assisted in funding additional on-the-ground restoration projects in the Gulf of Mexico, furthering the Gulf-wide restoration effort. <http://www.gulfmex.org/conservation-restoration/gulf-conservation-restoration-and-preservation/>

To enhance and build upon these successful programs, the HCRT is proposing to implement an RSM/BU program and an associated community-based, small-scale restoration program, as well as an online RSM/BU data management tool. Detailed components of the project are as follows:

1. ***RSM/BU Implementation Support*** - The HCRT will provide financial support to small scale RSM and BU projects across the Gulf. These funds will be provided to sub-grantees in order to facilitate BU associated with existing or proposed dredging projects, with an emphasis on supporting small state and locally sponsored projects which may not have the funding or resources to ordinarily conduct BU. These projects, while small-scale in size, will contribute to the larger Gulf-wide effort to implement BU for habitat restoration. Funding may provide support for planning, field studies and investigations, and regulatory compliance. Funding may also provide support for implementation of project for which all permits and authorizations have been obtained. An annual request for proposals will be issued, with proposal review and project selection being conducted by the HCRT Core Committee, in accordance with established procedures. Selected

projects will then be funded through contractual agreements.

2. *Small-Scale Habitat Restoration* – Building upon the existing GCRP Partnership, the HCRT proposes to continue to support small scale estuarine restoration projects around the Gulf, especially, but not limited to, those associated the beneficial use of dredged materials. An emphasis will be placed on small scale local and community based projects. These small scale projects are necessary to further the larger Gulf-wide restoration effort but often encounter difficulty in competition for funding. All projects will be required to have an education and outreach component as well as an adequate monitoring plan. An annual request for proposals will be issued, with proposal review and project selection being conducted by the HCRT Core Committee and its GCRP partners, in accordance with established procedures. Selected projects will then be funded through contractual agreements.
3. *RSM/BU Data Management* - During the course of its RSM/BU efforts, sediment source data management has repeatedly been identified as a Gulf-wide issue. Therefore, the HCRT has identified a long-term goal of establishing a geospatial decision support tool (DST) that can inform local and regional BU and habitat restoration projects. The HCRT will assist in the process of establishing such a tool. The HCRT will partner with the GOMA Ecosystems Assessment and Integration (EIA) Priority Issue Team and the Harte Research Institute to take advantage of previous efforts in data management to create, populate and host the DST (for an example, see the established GOMAportal at <http://gomaportal.org/geoportal/catalog/main/home.page>).

Implementation methodology:

The GOMA HCRT Core Committee, consisting of the 5 Gulf State Leads, federal co-leads (NOAA and EPA), a representative from the USACE, and the Gulf of Mexico Foundation (GMF), will serve as the project administration committee. For the past 10 years, the GMF has served the HCRT as a facilitator and program administrator, assisting with the issuance of requests for proposals, developing contracts and overseeing HCRT funded projects. Additionally, the GMF has a proven track record of administering the existing GCRP program, funding over 70 projects of since 2001. Therefore, the Committee may utilize existing GMF frameworks to request and select projects and/or contractors under each program component. The Committee, will actively oversee projects to insure project deliverables, Scopes of Service and contractual requirements are met.

Monitoring and adaptive management of the project or program:

- *RSM/BU Implementation Support*: Funded projects will be actively monitored and overseen by the HCRT to insure Scopes of Service and contractual performance measures are met. The HCRT will actively work with project proponents to assure that any proposed changes in project plans are fully vetted and consistent with the overall program goals and provide any needed changes in contractual agreements.
- *Small-Scale Habitat Restoration*: Funded projects will be actively monitored and overseen

by the HCRT to insure restoration objectives, Scopes of Service and contractual performance measures are met. The HCRT will actively work with project proponents to assure that any proposed changes in project plans are fully vetted and consistent with the overall program goals and provide any needed changes in contractual agreements.

- ***RSM/BU Data Management:*** the GMF and the HCRT will be actively involved with the development, creation and maintenance of the RSM/BU. geospatial decision support tool (DST). The HCRT will actively work with project partners to insure that overall program goals and objectives are met.

Measures of success for the proposed project or program:

- ***RSM/BU Implementation Support:*** A successful program will result in the development of RSM and/or BU studies, plans, and similar documents which lead to the implementation of small-scale RSM/BU projects around the Gulf.
- ***Small-Scale Habitat Restoration:*** A successful program will result in building upon proven success of GCRP program by funding additional and enhanced implementation of community-based estuarine restoration projects around the Gulf.
- ***RSM/BU Data Management:*** A successful program will result in the creation and maintenance of a geospatial decision support tool (DST) that can inform local and regional BU and habitat restoration projects.

Risks and uncertainties of the proposed activities:

Given the GOMA-HRCT's long history of successfully supporting similar programs, there are few uncertainties and risks associated with this program. To date, the GOMA-HCRT has funded a number of RSM/BU studies and plans as well as preparing the Gulf Wide Region Sediment Management Plan Technical Framework. These work products may be found at:

<http://www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org/tools-and-resources/tools/#habitat>

The RSM/BU program proposed will further and build on these past successful efforts. Additionally, since its inception, the GCRP has funded over 70 successful habitat restoration projects. The proposed program will be a continuation of these successful efforts. Details of the GCRP can be found at: <http://www.gulfmex.org/conservation-restoration/gulf-conservation-restoration-and-preservation/>

Outreach and education opportunities:

The GOMA will actively engage its Outreach and Engagement PIT, the other GOMA PITs and its partners to promote and distribute work products generated as part of this program. Accomplishments of this team are highlighted in the previous section on GOMA coordination.

Leveraging of resources and partnerships:

The GOMA is a partnership of the 5 Gulf States, NOAA, EPA, USGS, Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies as well as numerous NGO partners. All of these partners provide staff and resources to make GOMA successful. The requested RESTORE funding will be leveraged against funding provided to GOMA from its Gulf State members and to the resources made available by

other state, local federal and NGO partners

Proposal project/program benefits:

This project will benefit the RESTORE Council by coordinating activities relative to the trust resources managed by Council members. The state and federal members of GOMA are reflective of the makeup of the RESTORE Council membership, which suggests tremendous opportunities for synergy. Further the project will provide funding to local communities to fund smaller scale RSM/BU and habitat restoration projects which are essential to the larger Gulf-wide restoration effort but which generally are not large enough to successfully to compete for funding. It will also provide an RSM/BU decision support tool which can better inform decision makers and project planners around the Gulf.

IV. Location Information

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance was established in 2004 in partnership with the Governors of the 5 Coastal States of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. The GOMA is active throughout the Gulf Region, as defined by the RESTORE Act.

V. High-Level Budget Narrative

TOTAL Project Budget REQUEST: \$8,262,500.00

Component 1: GOMA COORDINATION:

Project Component	Cost Per Year	Cost for 5 years
Program Management and Coordination	\$100,000.00	\$500,000.00
Regional Meetings	\$100,000.00	\$500,000.00
DWH Project Tracker	\$25,000.00	\$125,000.00
Priority Issue Team(s) Support:		
- Habitat Restoration (HCRT)	\$50,000.00	\$250,000.00
- Water Quality	\$50,000.00	\$250,000.00
- Wildlife and Fisheries	\$50,000.00	\$250,000.00
- Community Resilience	\$50,000.00	\$250,000.00
- Data & Monitoring	\$50,000.00	\$250,000.00
- Outreach & Engagement	\$50,000.00	\$250,000.00
Indirect (10%)	\$52,500.00	\$262,500.00
Total	\$577,500.00	\$2,887,500.00

Component 2: GOMA-HCRT PROGRAM

Program Component	Annual Budget
RSM/BU Project Implementation Support Program	\$500,000.00
Regional Sediment Management/Beneficial Use Project Data Management Program	\$135,000.00
Small-Scale Habitat Restoration through the Existing GMF/GEMS-CRP Partnership	\$400,000.00
Program Management and Coordination	\$150,000.00
Total 1 Year Budget:	\$1,185,000.00
Total 5 Year Budget Request:	\$5,925,000.00

VI. Environmental Compliance Checklist

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council Environmental Compliance Checklist

Please check all federal and state environmental compliance and permit requirements as appropriate to the proposed project/program

Environmental Compliance Type	Yes	No	Applied For	N/A
Federal				
National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA)				X
Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)				X
Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act				X
Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA)				X
NEPA – Categorical Exclusion				X
NEPA – Environmental Assessment				X
NEPA – Environmental Impact Statement				X
Clean Water Act – 404 – Individual Permit (USACOE)				X
Clean Water Act – 404 – General Permit(USACOE)				X
Clean Water Act – 404 – Letters of Permission(USACOE)				X
Clean Water Act – 401 – WQ certification				X
Clean Water Act – 402 – NPDES				X
Rivers and Harbors Act – Section 10 (USACOE)				X
Endangered Species Act – Section 7 – Informal and Formal Consultation (NMFS, USFWS)				X
Endangered Species Act – Section 7 - Biological Assessment (BOEM,USACOE)				X
Endangered Species Act – Section 7 – Biological Opinion (NMFS, USFWS)				X
Endangered Species Act – Section 7 – Permit for Take (NMFS, USFWS)				X
Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) – Consultation (NMFS)				X
Marine Mammal Protection Act – Incidental Take Permit (106) (NMFS, USFWS)				X
Migratory Bird Treaty Act (USFWS)				X
Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act – Consultation and Planning (USFWS)				X
Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act – Section 103 permit (NMFS)				X
BOEM Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act – Section 8 OCS Lands Sand permit				X
NHPA Section 106 – Consultation and Planning ACHP, SHPO(s), and/or THPO(s)				X
NHPA Section 106 – Memorandum of Agreement/Programmatic Agreement				X
Tribal Consultation (Government to Government)				X
Coastal Barriers Resource Act – CBRS (Consultation)				X
State				X
As Applicable per State				X

VII. Data / Information sharing plan

The data/information sharing plan should include descriptions of the following:

- a. Types of environmental data and information that will be created during the course of the project (if applicable): During this project, environmental data concerning sediment resources, sediment management, habitat restoration and similar data will be gathered. This data may be generated by other sources and then referenced in the Regional Sediment Management/Beneficial Use Project Data Management Program DST or it may be generated as part of projects funded under the RSM/BU Support Program or the GCRP program. Individual sub-projects funded under this project will also be required to submit a Data/Information Sharing Plan as part of their contractual obligations.
- b. Standards to be used for data/metadata format and content: FGDC or the current federally mandated metadata format will be utilized.
- c. Policies addressing data stewardship and preservation: All data generated by this program will be made stored in or linked to the RSM/BU DST, the GCRP website or the DWH Project Tracker. Data may also be housed by sub-project proponents, as applicable.
- d. Procedures for providing access, sharing, and security: All data generated by this program will be made available through the RSM/BU DST, the GCRP website, the DWH Project Tracker, or by direct request to the project proponent, as applicable.

VIII. Reference list of literature cited in the proposal

Gulf of Mexico Alliance. 2009. Governors' Action Plan II: For Healthy and Resilient Coasts. 36. http://www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org/pdfs/ap2_final2.pdf

HCRT funded projects and publications:

[Conservation Policy Studies](#) - A series of restoration and conservation studies including [A Comparison of Mexico/U.S. Policy, Law & Management, Recommendations and Issues for the Federal Standard, Increasing Restoration and Conservation on Private Lands, and Analysis of Policy and Regulatory Programs that Provide Protection to Coastal Habitats.](#)

[Sea Level Rise Modeling](#) - Sea level rise modeling of the following areas: Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Florida; Ten Thousand Islands NWR in Florida; Lower Suwannee NWR in Florida; San Bernard NWR in Texas; Big Boggy NWR in Texas; Sandhill Crane NWR in Mississippi; and Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Mississippi.

[Sea Level Rise, Storm Surge, and Conservation Analysis](#) - An assessment of potential impacts to coastal habitat with sea level rise combined with storm surge for Jefferson County and Galveston Bay, Texas.

[Gulf Regional Sediment Management Master Plan](#) - A collection of products intended to guide more effective management of sediment resources in the Gulf for habitat restoration as well as coastal community resilience.

[Sediment Management Case Studies](#) - A collection of 12 case studies for the Gulf Regional Sediment Management Master Plan, including dredge projects, federal navigation projects and others.

[Study of Ecosystem Services Provided by Marsh Habitat in Galveston Bay](#) - (PDF, 8.7MB) A report identifying the service flows for marsh habitat in the Galveston area, then overlaying sea level rise projections under various scenarios and time frames providing resource managers and local officials information to base development and conservation decisions upon.

IX. Other Supporting Documents

1. GOMA Member Agencies/Organizations



Gulf of Mexico Alliance Partnership Network and Regional Initiatives

<p>State Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AL Dept of Cons and Natural Resources • AL Dept of Environmental Management • AL Department of Public Health • AL Geological Survey • FL Dept of Environmental Protection • FL Fish and Wildlife Cons Commission • FL Department of Health • FL Dept of Ag and Consumer Services • South Florida Water Mgmt District • SW Florida Water Management District • Suwannee River Water Mgmt District • Northwest Florida Water Mgmt District • LA Coastal Prot & Restoration Authority • LA Department of Education • LA Department of Environmental Quality • LA Department of Natural Resources • LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries • LA Governor's Office • MS Dept of Environmental Quality • MS Department of Marine Resources • TX Commission on Env Quality • TX General Land Office • TX Parks and Wildlife Department <p>Federal Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council on Environmental Quality • Nat'l Aero and Space Administration • National Science Foundation • U.S. Department of Agriculture • U.S. Department of Defense - (incl. Navy and Army Corps of Engineers) • U.S. Dept of Commerce - NOAA • U.S. Department of Energy • U.S. Department of Interior • U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services • U.S. Department of State • U.S. Department of Transportation • U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • U.S. Geologic Survey 	<p>NGO Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • America's WETLAND Foundation • Coastal America • Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers • Coastal States Organization • Dauphin Island Sea Lab • Florida Institute of Oceanography • Gulf Business Coalition • Gulf Coast Research Laboratory • GCOOS Regional Association • Gulf of Mexico Fishery Mgmt Council • Gulf of Mexico Research Plan • Gulf of Mexico Foundation • Harte Research Institute • Nat Estuarine Research Reserve System • Institute for Marine Mammal Studies • National Estuary Program • National Marine Sanctuaries • Sea Grant College Program • NatureServe • Northern Gulf Institute • The Nature Conservancy • Texas State Aquarium <p>Business Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shell Exploration & Production • ExxonMobile • Mid-Continent Oil & Gas • Mississippi Power Company • Sherwin Alumina • Compass Media • Ocean Explorers • Florida Coast Charters <p>Regional Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gulf Hypoxia Task Force • Gulf Coast Ecosystem Rest Task Force • GCC for the National Ocean Council • Gulf Research Initiative • Gulf of Mexico Unv Research Collaborative • Gulf Coast Regional Vulnerability Assmt
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2. GOMA Priority Issue Team Summaries (Provided by GOMA)

1) Habitat Conservation & Restoration Team

The GOMA HCRT's priority is to provide a collaborative venue for promoting habitat restoration by easing funding, policy, and technical hurdles that hinder program and project development. Focus areas that guide our efforts include:

Regional Sediment Management (RSM)/Beneficial Use (BU)

- Regional RSM gap analysis
- Develop state-specific data and tools
- Access BOEM Gulf floor data
- RSM/BU pilot Dredging studies and demo projects
- Gulf Needs & Capacity study
- Economic Benefits of Sediments study
- RSM/BU Practitioners' Forums
- RSM/BU Technical Workshops

Living Shorelines

- Technical bulletins
- Development of site suitability model

Habitat Status & Trends

- Practitioners Forums on past SAV and emergent wetland assessments
- Mangrove and other priority habitat assessment

Sea-Level Rise/Climate Change

- Capacities and outputs comparison between existing models
- Stakeholder advising of use of tools for project selection and design
- Technical improvements to SLAMM
- SLAMM-based secondary analyses of inland migration and surge

Conservation, Restoration & Resiliency Planning

- Develop stakeholder consensus for regional and local priority datasets on drivers and response actions for delivery to data management portals
- Team-specific delivery of priority datasets to GOMAportal and geospatial portal managers
- Develop stakeholder consensus for CR&R planning tool enhancement to maximize utility of dataset delivery
- Implement planning tool development strategy
- Practitioners Forums on application of science-based criteria for identifying and prioritizing projects
- Develop metrics to measure regional restoration effectiveness

2) Water Quality Team

The GOMA Water Quality PIT is also providing a collaborative approach to build and evaluate tools needed to ensure healthy beaches and safe seafood, as well as to reduce excess nutrients and restore coastal waters negatively impacted by nutrients. Focus areas that guide our efforts include:

Hypoxia / Nutrient Reduction

- Implement regional nutrient characterization studies to evaluate ecosystem responses
- Develop tools for better characterization of nutrients in coastal waters
- Regional nutrient criteria development
- Nutrient reduction pilot testing
- Continue population of hypoxia data portal

Harmful Algal Blooms

- HABs detection & monitoring
- HABs economics

Impaired & Non-impaired Waters

- Protection & restoration addressing top 25 offenders

Pathogens

- Improve the understanding of waterborne, disease-causing pathogens
- Microbial Source Tracking
- Identification of Fecal Sources

Mercury

- Identify sources of mercury in Gulf fishery resources, understand its presence in the Gulf food web, and develop the ability to reduce the human health risk of exposure to it

Freshwater In-Flows

- Study the quality and quantity of freshwater inflows to determine if a region-wide approach is appropriate
- Timing of the flows

Marine Debris

3) Wildlife and Fisheries Team

A new priority for GOMA is to provide collaboration opportunities for the various wildlife and fisheries resource organizations to support a region-wide approach to management. The new Wildlife and Fisheries PIT will focus areas that will guide our efforts:

- Evaluate vulnerable species as next step of the Coastal Vulnerability Assessment;
- Conduct associated modeling
- Assist LCCs with information for species conservation strategies
- Regional assessment of species extinction list
- Conduct hot spot analysis using species distribution maps
- Studies for species-habitat and species-species interactions

4) Coastal Community Resilience Team

To address the various challenges of living and working in the Gulf region, the GOMA Resiliency PIT provides a venue for collaboration to those organizations whose mission it is to enhance the capacity of human and natural systems to adapt to and recover from coastal hazards. Much work has already been accomplished, but the focus areas that

guide our efforts include:

Adaptation & Planning

- Sustainable Development
- Urban/Land Use Planning
- Insurance
- Post-Disaster Redevelopment
- Cultural Heritage

Communications & Tools

- Homeowner Handbooks
- Clean & Resilient Marinas
- StormSmart Coast-MYCoast
- Coastal Health and Resource Management (CHARM)

Resilience Evaluation

- Resilience Indices
- Vulnerability Gaps

5) Outreach & Engagement Team

The GOMA Outreach and Engagement team involves a network of talented professionals who facilitate existing programs that:

- Teach citizens the importance of restoring natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, coastal wetlands, and the Gulf Coast Region economy.
- Employ the best available science, integrating peer-reviewed and publicly available data into educational activities and lessons.
- Promote the significance of tourism and seafood by educating the present and future workforce on the monetary value of sustained natural systems and resources.
- Directly support Gulf coast regional schools and learning environments, by supplementing K-12 curriculum with cross-disciplined concepts and issues, relevant to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education around the Gulf of Mexico.
- Engage Gulf Coast Region citizens in meaningful, hands-on experiences that connect coastal communities with underlying mechanisms of the Gulf's natural systems and foster environmental stewardship.
- Provide up-to-date scientific information and skill-building opportunities to coastal decision-makers through targeted training opportunities, technical assistance, and outreach.
- Communicate actions and results to multiple stakeholders through varied media.

6) Data and Monitoring Team

To allow for a comprehensive view of available scientific information about regional issues of concern, GOMA's Data and Monitoring PIT will continue the collaborative

work formerly under the Ecosystems Integration & Assessment team. This new team will focus on:

Observations & Monitoring

- Coordinate inventory of existing monitoring activities
- Promote protocols and standards for observations and monitoring
- Identify data gaps
- Keep a master map/dashboard of Gulf monitoring

Data Access & Acquisition

- Populate GOMAportal
- Provide access to data/web services
- Master Mapping Plan
- Catalog of models and conceptual models
- Assist in development of and maintain tools created by other PITs
- Examples: NUT Toolbox
- RSM/BU Decision Support Tool
- Microbial Source Tracking database
- Complete and implement the DMAC's Data Standards Guide

Ecosystem Health

- Gather information to inform ecosystem health
- Develop a Gulf Report Card



ELIGIBILITY REVIEW

Bucket 2 – Council Selected Restoration Component

PROPOSAL TITLE

Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) Gulf-wide Restoration Coordination and Support

PROPOSAL NUMBER

AL-2

LOCATION

Gulfwide

SPONSOR(S)

Alabama

TYPE OF FUNDING REQUESTED (Planning, Technical Assistance, Implementation)

Planning/Technical Assistance/Implementation

REVIEWED BY:

Bethany Carl Kraft/ Ben Scaggs

DATE:

11-18-14

1. Does the project aim to restore and/or protect natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitat, beaches, coastal wetlands and economy of the Gulf Coast Region?

YES NO

Notes:

Proposal seeks funding to sustain and ensure stable future funding for the well-established gulf-wide coordination efforts of GOMA.

2. Is the proposal a project?

YES NO

If yes, is the proposed activity a discrete project or group of projects where the full scope of the restoration or protection activity has been defined?

YES NO

Notes:

3. Is the proposal a program?

YES NO

If yes, does the proposed activity establish a program where the program manager will solicit, evaluate, select, and carry out discrete projects that best meet the program's restoration objectives and evaluation criteria?

YES NO

Notes:

4. Is the project within the Gulf Coast Region of the respective Gulf States?

YES NO

If no, do project benefits accrue in the Gulf Coast Region?

YES NO

Notes:



Eligibility Determination

ELIGIBLE

Additional Information

[Empty box for additional information]

Proposal Submission Requirements

1. Is the project submission overall layout complete? *Check if included and formatted correctly.*

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A. Summary sheet | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | F. Environmental compliance checklist | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Executive summary | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | G. Data/Information sharing plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Proposal narrative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | H. Reference list | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Location information | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | I. Other | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| E. High level budget narrative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |

If any items are NOT included - please list and provide details

[Empty box for listing missing items and details]

2. Are all proposal components presented within the specified page limits (if applicable)?

YES NO

Notes: