

## **State of Mississippi**

### **Strategic Land Protection, Conservation, and Enhancement of Priority Gulf Coast Landscapes**

This proposal aims to address the focus areas of habitat and water quality, by foundationally investing in strategic land protection, conservation and enhancement on priority Gulf Coast landscapes. This proposal's objectives are the following:

1. Protect priority lands, through fee-simple and conservation easement programs throughout the Gulf of Mexico.
2. Establish a Gulf-wide conservation enrollment assistance program that provides funds to assist with due diligence and monitoring support for voluntary donations of fee simple or conservation easements.
3. Create a strategic conservation landscape assessment framework for future land acquisition prioritization through collaborative conservation planning and design.
4. Utilize monitoring to understand effects of land conservation on habitat characteristics.
5. Undertake education and outreach activities to describe the values of land protection for habitat, water quality improvement and for securing the future of the Gulf of Mexico.

These five objectives integrate across the Gulf to promote foundational and sustainable mechanisms for restoring the Gulf of Mexico. This Gulf-wide proposal, will utilize several mechanisms to protect, conserve, and enhance habitat across the Gulf. Multiple integrative objectives will lead to priority area protection, strategic, multi-agency, foundational planning for further securing the Gulf of Mexico, and help understand the impact of land conservation efforts on the habitat characteristics of the ecosystem. Though focused on acquiring land from willing sellers using two methods of fee simple acquisition and conservation easements, this proposal will also look to invest in paying for due diligence for land trusts across the Gulf to increase acreage enrolled. This proposal also significantly invests in outreach and education through the respective SeaGrants towards connecting habitat conservation and water quality. Requested funding amount: \$103,467,437.