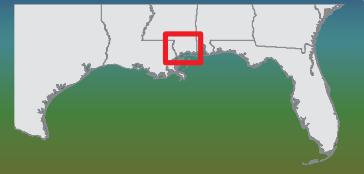




Gulf Coast
Ecosystem
Restoration
Council

Mississippi Sound Watershed

Strategic Land Protection, Conservation, and Enhancement
of Priority Gulf Coast Landscapes
(MS_RESTORE_001_002_Cat1)



Project Name: Strategic Land Protection, Conservation, and Enhancement of Priority Gulf Coast Landscapes – Planning & Implementation

Cost: Category 1: \$15,500,000

Responsible Council Member: State of Mississippi

Partnering Council Members: Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Agriculture

Project Details: The components of the Strategic Land Protection, Conservation, and Enhancement of Priority Lands project within Mississippi include planning, strategy development, environmental compliance, and, where appropriate, acquisition of eligible properties. Priority areas for planning and environmental compliance for potential acquisitions include: Graveline Bay and Pascagoula/Escatawpa River systems (Jackson County); Turkey Creek, Wolf River (Harrison County); and Hancock County Marsh (Hancock County). Initial priority areas for acquisition were chosen by engaging state agency leads (Mississippi Department of Marine Resources as well as the Secretary of the State) and overlapping those priorities with several other vision and strategy documents, including the conservation vision of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation, to create priority state acquisitions. Three focal areas are prioritized where the applicable environmental laws have been addressed: 1) Gulf Islands National Seashore; 2) the Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge complex; and 3) the upper reaches of the Tuxachanie/Tchoutacabouffa River in the De Soto National Forest.

Activities: Environmentally compliant land acquisition will occur in the upper reaches of the Tuxachanie/Tchoutacabouffa River in the DeSoto National Forest, Grand Bay, and Gulf Island National Seashore. Lands will be acquired from willing sellers using two methods: fee simple acquisition and conservation easements. The lands to be purchased will be carefully selected and acquired, using federal standards, at fair market value unless landowners specifically prefer to do a bargain sale or donation. The expenditure of funds under the project will be based upon availability of prioritized, potential acquisition parcels. When available, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, as the State Trustee, will actively leverage funding opportunities to maximize the purpose of all acquisitions.

Environmental Benefits: Areas acquired will be placed in conservation for perpetuity. Ecological benefits will change as the system is restored but could include water quality and quantity improvements, biodiversity enhancements, increased habitat connectivity and reduced edge effects. Several hundred acres are anticipated to be acquired whether by acquisition or easement.

Duration: This project is expected to take five years to complete.

More information on these activities can be found in Appendix E. Mississippi Sound; Unique Identifier: MS_RESTORE_001_002_Cat1.



Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

Mississippi Sound Watershed

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

 Landscape Conservation

Cost: Category 1: \$15,500,000

Sponsor: State of Mississippi

Project Status: Planning and Implementation

Purpose: The project will plan, develop strategy, and permit eligible properties according to priorities of the MS state agencies and overlapping priorities, as well as leveraging, with several other partners and programs such as the Coastal Preserves Program, existing Secretary of the State properties, federal lands, and areas held in conservation easements by private non-governmental organization partners. Currently, three focal areas that meet all applicable environmental laws and priorities are:

- 1) Gulf Islands National Seashore with the National Park Service;
- 2) the Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge complex; and
- 3) the upper reaches of the Tuxachemie/Tchouacouaffa River in the De Soit National Forest.



Map Date: November 16, 2015

Gulf of Mexico

Mississippi Sound