

2017 Funded Priorities List: Comprehensive Plan Commitment & Planning Support

Background

After the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council) adopted its initial Funded Priorities List (FPL) in 2015, it engaged in a thorough review of the process used to create the first FPL. Feedback from the public focused on improving coordination and public engagement efforts. The majority of the responses suggested the Council consider more planning and collaboration with other funding sources, experts, and the public to leverage ideas, resources and expertise (including, but not limited to, best available science) in future project and program selection.

A major challenge to Gulf-wide ecosystem restoration is coordinating efforts within each state, among Council members, among stakeholders within the Gulf region, and across funding streams. Currently, no designated funding stream exists to support Council member efforts to plan and coordinate restoration activities under the Council-Selected Restoration Component (or “Bucket 2”). Historically, Council members have had to rely upon general, tax-generated or appropriated funds to support their involvement in Bucket 2, including FPL development and the Comprehensive Plan update. The funds proposed to be approved in this draft FPL would provide Council members with funding from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill settlement.

Comprehensive Plan Commitment & Planning Support Awards

The Council is proposing to provide its members with Comprehensive Plan Commitment and Planning Support (CPS) funding awards to enhance collaboration, coordination, public engagement and use of best available science needed to make efficient use of Gulf restoration funds resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. These awards will support the Council’s commitment to a coordinated approach to ecosystem restoration, as called for in the **Comprehensive Plan Update 2016: Restoring the Gulf Coast’s Ecosystem and Economy**. The CPS awards would be available to Council members for activities directly related to Bucket 2 of the RESTORE Act, in support of planning for large-scale restoration and conservation. Under the RESTORE Act, only RESTORE Council members may apply for Bucket 2 funds.



Purpose of Commitment & Planning Support

Provide the Council members with funding to enhance collaboration, coordination, public engagement and use of best available science.

Support the Council’s commitment to a coordinated approach to ecosystem restoration, as called for in the Comprehensive Plan Update 2016: Restoring the Gulf Coast’s Ecosystem and Economy.



Commitment & Planning Support

Comprehensive Plan Commitment & Planning Support Awards

The Council members are the five Gulf states (Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas) and six federal agencies (US Department of Agriculture, US Department of Commerce, US Department of Interior, US Environmental Protection Agency, US Army, and US Coast Guard). Each Council member could apply for a maximum of \$500,000 per year for the first three years, then a maximum of \$300,000 per year for the following two years. Included in the fourth year of this proposal is a recommendation to assess activities outlined in the CPS awards and determine the need to continue to fund such activities beyond the initial five-year period.

The funds from the resolution of civil claims against BP and other responsible parties for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill will be available in annual installments over the next 15 years. Investing in planning, collaboration, and related activities will assist the Council with developing an overarching coordinated strategy for providing resources in support of long-term Gulf restoration. This proposed investment in CPS awards represents approximately 1.44% of the total settlement funds allocated to Bucket 2, not including the portion of interest that will be accrued and allocated to Bucket 2 over time.

The Council believes investing a portion of money in planning will yield greater ecosystem benefits in the future. The goal is to ensure future funding decisions incorporate existing plans, while including areas that may benefit from this work. The intent is to enhance collaboration and coordination among partners to identify and support ideas emerging from planning efforts. The Council hopes to build upon existing restoration plans and address gaps to meet goals and objectives set forth in the Council's Comprehensive Plan. Council members may begin applying for CPS awards and funds in the fall of 2017 and more information about specific CPS activities will be available at that time. The Council looks forward to hearing from the public during the July 13 through August 14, 2017 public comment period on this proposal. For more information about the RESTORE Council, please visit www.RestoreTheGulf.gov.

How to Comment

You may submit public comments on the 2017 Draft Funded Priorities List: Comprehensive Commitment and Planning Support by one of the following methods:

Electronic Website Submission: www.RestoreTheGulf.gov

Email: frcomments@restorethegulf.gov

Mail/Commercial Delivery to:

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council
Attention: Draft FPL Comments
Hale Boggs Federal Building
500 Poydras Street, Suite 1117
New Orleans, LA 70130

For Additional Information:

Please send questions by email to RestoreCouncil@restorethegulf.gov, or contact Keala J. Hughes at (504) 717-7235.

Commitments in the Comprehensive Plan

Regional Ecosystem-based Approach to Restoration

Leveraging Resources & Partnerships

Engagement, Inclusion, & Transparency

Science-Based Decision-Making

Delivering Results & Measuring Impacts

For More Information Go to www.RestoreTheGulf.gov or scan the QR code below.

