

# Draft 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update

*Restoring the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem and Economy*



## Draft 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update: Overview



The Gulf Coast ecosystem is vital to our Nation and our economy, providing abundant seafood, extraordinary beaches and recreational activities, and a rich cultural heritage, as well as valuable energy resources. Its waters and coasts are home to one of the most diverse environments in the world—including over 15,000 species of sea life. Much of this value is built upon the Gulf Coast environment and the many benefits it provides.

Following the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill, Congress passed the [Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012](#) (RESTORE Act or Act). The Act called for a regional approach to restoring the long-term health of the valuable natural ecosystems and economy of the Gulf Coast region.

The RESTORE Act also established the [Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council](#) (Council) to administer a portion of civil settlement funds recovered in connection with the oil spill. The Council is responsible for developing a Comprehensive Plan to guide a coordinated, regionwide effort to restore, protect and revitalize the Gulf Coast.

The RESTORE Council is seeking public comment on the draft 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update: Restoring the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem and Economy ([2022 Comprehensive Plan Update](#)). This is the second update to the 2013 Initial Comprehensive Plan: Restoring the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem and Economy ([2013 Initial Comprehensive Plan](#)).

In the [draft 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update](#), the Council continues to build upon its commitments to ensure that the Gulf's natural resources are sustainable and available for future generations. The Gulf restoration funds available now and in the future represent an unprecedented opportunity and responsibility for the Council and all the stakeholders in the Gulf Coast region.

## Request for Public Comment

The ongoing involvement of the people who live, work, and play in the Gulf Coast region is critical to ensuring that these monies are used wisely and effectively. The Council thanks all who previously supported and participated in the Council's work. Your input continues to be essential as the Council moves forward with its mission to restore the Gulf.

Beginning **April 21, 2022**, the draft 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update is available for a 46-day public review and comment period. The deadline for submitting public comments is **11:59 pm MT on June 6, 2022**. During this time frame, the RESTORE Council is providing an overview of the draft document via live public webinars. The webinar recording and guidance on providing public comment are provided on the Council's website, [www.restorethegulf.gov](http://www.restorethegulf.gov).

# What is New in this 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update?

This [2022 Comprehensive Plan Update](#) provides the public with updates to the strategic guidance that the Council established to effectively administer its roles and responsibilities. Additionally, it summarizes progress the Council has made to date on its goals, objectives, and commitments as outlined in the first update, the [2016 Comprehensive Plan Update](#). The update includes the effectiveness of the use of general planning funds in meeting the stated commitments.

This update is intended to continue to refine and guide Council decisions by:

- Ensuring consistency with the Priority Criteria referenced in the RESTORE Act
- Reinforcing the Council's goals, objectives, and commitments
- Recommitting to the Council's Funding Strategy, including the Council's vision for ecosystem restoration
- Continuing collaboration among Council members and partner ecosystem restoration and protection programs
- Ensuring that the Council's decisions are informed by the best available science
- Communicating benefits of past funding decisions and describing how lessons learned from past actions inform future decisions
- Improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of Council actions

## Council Funding Strategy Vision Statement

A clear and concise vision statement helps direct and shape future funding decisions. The Council believes that its vision statement for the Funding Strategy should include reference to both the desired environmental outcomes and the processes used to accomplish them. In these processes the Council will build upon the tremendous restoration experience, scientific expertise, and other capabilities of its diverse membership of state and federal agencies.

The Council sought to capture this sentiment, as well as other key elements, as it developed the following vision statement:

***A healthy and productive Gulf ecosystem achieved through collaboration on strategic restoration projects and programs.***

## Goals of the Comprehensive Plan

In this [2022 Comprehensive Plan Update](#), the Council recommits to the goals and objectives set forth in the Initial Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive plan goals are:

- ***Restore and Conserve Habitat***  
Restore and conserve the health, diversity, and resilience of key coastal, estuarine and marine habitats.
- ***Restore Water Quality and Quantity***  
Restore and protect water quality and quantity of the Gulf Coast region's fresh, estuarine and marine waters.
- ***Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources***  
Restore and protect healthy, diverse and sustainable living coastal and marine resources.
- ***Enhance Community Resilience***  
Build upon and sustain communities with capacity to adapt to short- and long-term changes.
- ***Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy***  
Enhance the sustainability and resiliency of the Gulf economy.

## How Can I Learn More?

Visit <https://restorethegulf.gov> or Email us at [RestoreCouncil@restorethegulf.gov](mailto:RestoreCouncil@restorethegulf.gov).

For the most current news from the Council, subscribe to [RESTORE Eblast](#) email updates.