FUNDED PRIORITIES LIST 3B

Florida Water Quality Improvement Program

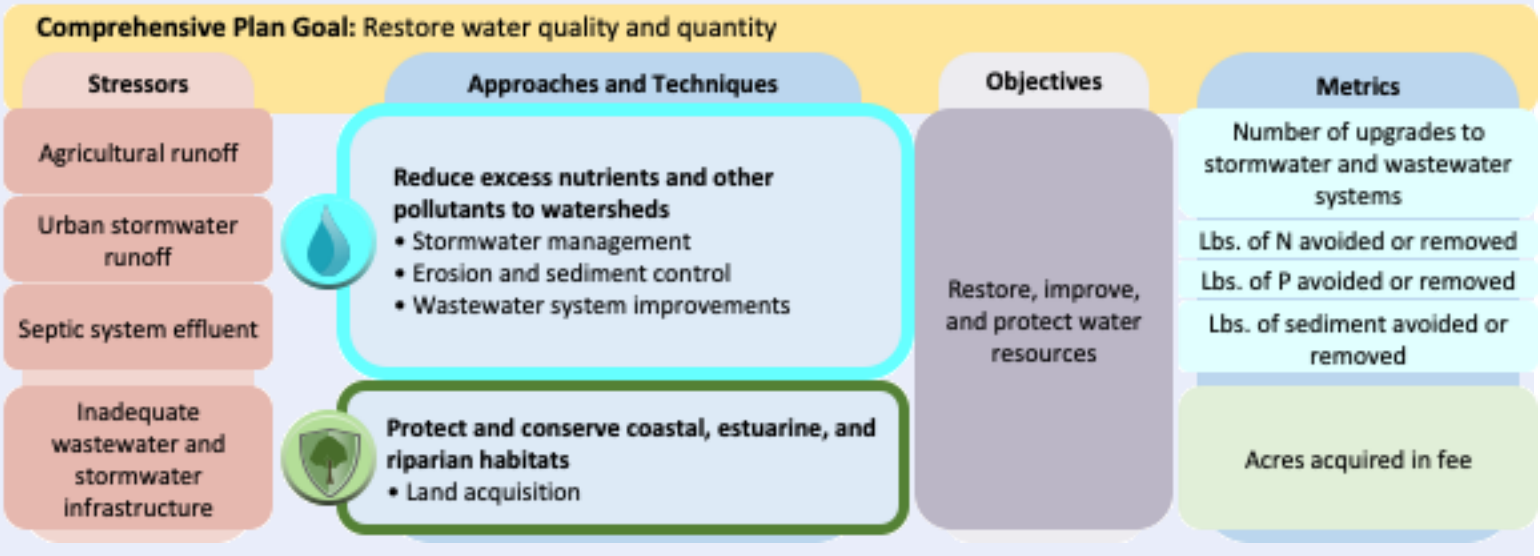
Funded Priorities List (FPL) 3b is part of a two-phase approach used by the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council) to respond to ecosystem needs and take advantage of important partnership opportunities to advance large-scale ecosystem restoration.

The Council has approved $6.75M in planning funds as FPL Category 1 for the *Florida Water Quality Improvement Program* (WQIP). In addition, the Council has included an implementation component for potential future funding as an FPL Category 2 activity, and has reserved $20.25M for this component, pending further review and a Council vote. The *WQIP* would utilize the Planning Framework techniques and approaches outlined in the figure below to address environmental stressors Florida. Florida, through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), is the sponsor of this program.

The *WQIP* will restore water quality and quantity throughout the Florida Gulf Coast by underwriting a suite of linked, high-priority water quality improvement projects, which may include stormwater treatment, wastewater reuse, septic tank abatement, sediment reduction, and land acquisition. Infrastructure projects to be funded under the WQIP are intended to address legacy pollution from existing causes which are typically the result of inadequate wastewater treatment (overreliance on septic systems), ineffective or lack of stormwater treatment and other nonpoint source runoff. WQIP is not intended to support new growth or development. The *WQIP* activities will result in environmental benefits such as fewer algal blooms, fish kills, beach closures, fish and shellfish consumption restrictions, healthier seagrass as well as other submerged aquatic vegetation and wildlife habitat, and improved recreational opportunities/experiences. The FDEP will use a screening process based on approved selection criteria to fund projects under the *WQIP*. The use of effective selection criteria is intended to lead to high-quality projects, which will enable the *WQIP* to significantly reduce pollutants to priority waters. The WQIP framework will allow for administration of project funding to target projects that deliver cumulative benefits to the Gulf and link environmental benefits between WQIP projects and other restoration projects in a watershed or region. Combining or leveraging projects within a geographic area contributes to large-scale water resource improvements while maximizing each dollar.

Program at a Glance

The *Florida Water Quality Improvement Program* applies Planning Framework approaches and techniques to support Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives. In support of the primary objective to *Restore, improve, and protect water resources*, stressors such as agricultural and urban stormwater runoff as well as septic system effluent (i.e., waste) will be addressed using the *Stormwater management*, *Erosion and sediment control*, and *Wastewater system improvements* techniques, while inadequate wastewater and stormwater infrastructure will be addressed using the *Land acquisition* technique. Success using stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, and wastewater system improvements to *Restore, improve, and protect water resources* may be tracked using number of upgrades to stormwater and wastewater systems and lbs. of nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment avoided or removed as metrics, while success using land acquisition may be tracked using acres acquired in fee.




Alabama
Georgia
Florida
Gulf of Mexico
Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council
Florida Gulf Coast
Florida Water Quality Improvement Program
Program boundary
0 30 60 120 Miles
0 30 60 120 Kilometers
N
Map Date: August 27, 2020
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