



2022 Annual Report to Congress

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council



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Fiscal Year 2022

Approved March 29, 2023

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1. Letter from the Executive Director

The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council) hereby submits its Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 2022) Annual Report to Congress. The Council was created by the *Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act* (RESTORE Act or Act) in 2012 as an independent federal agency charged with administering a portion of the civil settlements associated with the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. Consisting of the five Gulf Coast states and six federal agencies, the Council's mission is to implement a Comprehensive Plan for the ecological and economic recovery of the Gulf Coast.

The Council has oversight over the expenditure of 60% of the funds made available from the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund established by the RESTORE Act (Trust Fund). Under the Council-Selected Restoration Component of the RESTORE Act, 30% of available funding is administered for Gulfwide ecosystem restoration and protection according to the Comprehensive Plan developed by the Council through Funded Priorities Lists (FPLs). Another 30% is allocated to the States under the Spill Impact Component according to a [formula established by the Council through a regulation](#), and spent according to individual State Expenditure Plans (SEPs) to contribute to the overall economic and ecological recovery of the Gulf.

In FY 2022, the Council approved the [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)*. The 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 provides summary information regarding progress the Council has made to date on its goals, objectives, and commitments as outlined in the first update, *2016 Comprehensive Plan Update: Restoring the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem & Economy (2016 Comprehensive Plan Update)*, including the effectiveness of its use of general planning funds provided in the 2017 Commitment and Planning Support (CPS) FPL in meeting those commitments. The 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update supersedes the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update.

The RESTORE Act dedicated 80% of all Clean Water Act administrative and civil penalties arising from the *Deepwater Horizon* (DWH) oil spill to the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund (Trust Fund) and established the Council as an independent entity within the Federal government. The Council was formally established in 2012 with the mission of implementing a long-term, comprehensive plan for the ecological and economic recovery of the Gulf Coast region. The Council, consisting of the five Gulf Coast states (states) directly impacted by the DWH oil spill as well as six Federal agencies, is committed to working with Gulf communities and partners to invest in actions, projects, and programs that will ensure the long-term environmental health and economic prosperity of the Gulf Coast region. The Council approves projects and programs for the Council-Selected Restoration Component funding as set forth in Funded Priorities Lists (FPLs). The Council develops FPLs through collaboration among its members and with feedback from stakeholders across the Gulf. In FY 2022, the Council awarded more than \$147M through completion of 69 award actions (41 amendments and 23 new awards) to carry out projects and programs under the RESTORE Act, bringing the total amount awarded to \$657.7M: \$271.1M from the Council-Selected Restoration Component, and \$386.7M from the Spill Impact Component.

As the Council continues to work towards achieving the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan in order to advance its vision of a “healthy and productive Gulf ecosystem achieved through collaboration on strategic restoration projects and programs,” it emphasizes sound management of its funding and resources. This is evidenced by the Financial Statement Audit completed on November 15, 2022, that resulted in an unmodified opinion with no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and a finding that the financial statements presented the financial position of the Council fairly, in all material respects.

On behalf of the Council, I am pleased to submit the FY 2022 Annual Report to Congress outlining our progress over the past twelve months. The Council remains committed to maintaining active communication with Congress. Please contact us at any time with your thoughts, suggestions or questions. Thank you for your continued leadership and support in restoring the Gulf Coast region.



Mary S. Walker
Executive Director

2. Mission and Organization

The Council is charged by the RESTORE Act with helping to restore the ecosystem and economy of the Gulf Coast region by developing and overseeing Trust Fund expenditures in implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and approval of State Expenditure Plans (SEPs), and carrying out other responsibilities.

The Council includes the Governors of the States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, and the Secretaries of the U.S. Departments of the Interior, Army, Commerce, Agriculture, Homeland Security, and the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, who currently serves as the chair of the Council.

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council Members

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Chair)
Janet G. McCabe
Deputy Administrator

State of Alabama
Kay Ivey
Governor

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

State of Florida
Ron DeSantis
Governor

U.S. Department of the Army
Michael L. Connor
Secretary

State of Louisiana
John Bel Edwards
Governor

U.S. Department of Commerce
Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary

State of Mississippi
Tate Reeves
Governor

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Alejandro N. Mayorkas
Secretary

State of Texas
Greg Abbott
Governor

U.S. Department of the Interior
Deb Haaland
Secretary

3. Background on the RESTORE Act

The Gulf Coast environment was significantly injured by the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill as well as by past and ongoing human actions. Restoring an area as large and complex as the Gulf Coast region is a costly, multi-generational undertaking. Gulf habitats are also continually degraded and lost due to development, infrastructure, sea-level rise, altered riverine processes, ocean acidification, salinity changes and other human-caused factors. Water quality in the coastal and marine environments is degraded by upstream pollution and hydrologic alterations spanning multiple states and involving the watersheds of large and small rivers alike. Some of the region's environmental problems, such as wetland loss and hypoxia, span areas the size of some U.S. states. Hurricane frequency and intensity in the Gulf of Mexico is another key factor that must be considered as ecosystem restoration efforts move forward. These system stressors represent serious risks to the cultural, social, and economic benefits derived from the Gulf ecosystem.

On October 5, 2010, President Obama issued Executive Order 13554, which established the [Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force \(Task Force\)](#) "to coordinate intergovernmental responsibilities, planning, and exchange of information to better implement Gulf Coast ecosystem restoration and to facilitate appropriate accountability and support throughout the restoration process." The Task Force was an advisory body composed of senior officials from the five Gulf Coast states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, and eleven federal agencies and White House offices. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's former Administrator, Lisa P. Jackson, served as Chair of the Task Force, and the former Chair of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana, Garret Graves, served as Vice-chair.

The primary charge of the Task Force was to create a unified, strategic approach to restore the region's ecosystem. In December 2011, the Task Force members published the [Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy](#) (Strategy) and the [Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem Science Assessment and Needs](#) that articulated an overarching vision for restoration.

Signed into law in July 2012, the [RESTORE Act](#) (33 U.S.C §1321(t) and *note*) was enacted as an amendment to the *Federal Water Pollution Control Act* (Clean Water Act) and created the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council as well as the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund. Pursuant to the RESTORE Act, the Trust Fund receives 80% of the civil and administrative penalties assessed under the Clean Water Act resulting from the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. The Act imposed a one-year timeline for development of the Initial Comprehensive Plan: Restoring the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem and Economy ([2013 Initial Comprehensive Plan](#)) to describe how the Council would restore the ecosystem and the economy of the Gulf Coast region.

On January 3, 2013, the United States announced that Transocean Deepwater Inc. and related entities had agreed to pay \$1 billion (plus interest) in civil penalties for violating the Clean Water Act in relation to their conduct in the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. In accordance with that consent decree, Transocean has paid all three of its installments of civil penalties plus interest to the U.S. Department of Justice. The U.S. Department of Justice has transferred 80 percent of these funds to the Treasury Department for deposit into the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund (Trust Fund), totaling \$816M. On November 20, 2015, the federal court for the Eastern District Court of Louisiana ordered Anadarko Petroleum Corp. to pay a \$159.5M civil fine; of this amount, \$128M, including interest, has been deposited in the Trust Fund. Anadarko was the last defendant in the *Deepwater Horizon* spill Clean Water Act litigation.

On April 4, 2016, a federal court in New Orleans entered a consent decree resolving civil claims against BP arising from the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill ([United States vs. BPXP et al.](#)). The resolution of civil claim totals for entities held responsible for the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill will yield more than \$20 billion, the largest civil penalties ever awarded under any environmental statute, and the largest recovery of damages for injuries to natural resources of the United States. Of these penalties, the RESTORE Act will provide \$5.33 billion (80 percent of \$6.659 billion) to the Trust Fund, based on the following: \$1 billion (plus interest) in civil penalties from Transocean Deepwater Inc. and related entities for violating the Clean Water Act in relation to their conduct in the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill; \$159.5M from a civil fine paid by Anadarko Petroleum Corporation; and \$5.5 billion (plus interest) from BP Exploration and Production, Inc. (BP) for a Clean Water Act civil penalty under the April 4, 2016 consent decree, payable over a fifteen-year period at approximately \$91M per year through 2031 (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Allocation of the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund based on settlements with BP, Transocean and Anadarko; RESTORE Council oversight components are highlighted in green



3.1 Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives

The 2013 Initial Comprehensive Plan provided a framework to implement a coordinated, Gulf Coast region-wide restoration effort in a way that restores, protects, and revitalizes the Gulf Coast. This first Comprehensive Plan guided the Council’s actions to restore the Gulf Coast ecosystem and economy and it continues to evolve. The 2013 Initial Comprehensive Plan established the Council’s goals and objectives for the region and provides a process to fund restoration projects and programs as funds become available. The RESTORE Act requires the Council to update the Comprehensive Plan every five years. Accordingly, the Council updated its Initial Comprehensive Plan in 2016 and in 2022.

The [2022 Comprehensive Plan Update](#) provides a Ten-Year Funding Strategy which includes an overarching vision statement: *A healthy and productive Gulf ecosystem achieved through collaboration on*

strategic restoration projects and programs. Other elements of the Ten-Year Funding Strategy include a strategy for the support of large-scale projects and programs. The Council also refined and amplified its foundational commitments, with a strong emphasis on collaboration (among Council members and with other *Deepwater Horizon* funding streams), and on improving transparency and application of best available science in support of its decision-making processes. The 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update also continued its commitment to enhancing public engagement and the use of best available science to support a holistic approach to Gulf restoration. These commitments are intended to ensure that future Council investments provide the greatest possible ecological return.

Goals

To provide the overarching framework for an integrated and coordinated approach for region-wide Gulf Coast restoration and to help guide the collective actions at the local, state, Tribal, and federal levels, the Council adopted five goals. The [2016 Comprehensive Plan Update](#) added Water Quantity to the Water Quality goal.

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

The fifth goal focuses on reviving and supporting a sustainable Gulf economy. This goal pertains to expenditures by the Gulf Coast States authorized in the RESTORE Act under the Direct Component (administered by the Department of the Treasury) and the Spill Impact Component, and ensures that these investments can be considered in the context of comprehensive restoration. This goal does not apply to the Council-Selected Restoration Component.

To achieve all five goals, the Council supports ecosystem restoration that can enhance local communities by giving people desirable places to live, work, and play, while creating opportunities for new and existing businesses of all sizes, especially those dependent on natural resources. In addition, the Council will support ecosystem restoration that builds local workforce capacity.

The Council coordinates restoration activities under the Council-Selected Restoration Component and the Spill Impact Component to further its goals. While the Council does not have direct involvement in the activities undertaken by the States or local governments through the Direct Component (administered by the Treasury Department), the Council will strive, as appropriate, to coordinate its work with those activities. In addition, the Council actively coordinates with the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science Program (administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program).

Objectives

The Council selects and funds projects and programs that restore and protect the natural resources, ecosystems, water quality, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region. The objectives developed in the Comprehensive Plan include:

- **Restore, Enhance, and Protect Habitats** – Restore, enhance and protect the extent, functionality, resiliency, and sustainability of coastal, freshwater, estuarine, wildlife, and marine habitats.
- **Restore, Improve, and Protect Water Resources** – Restore, improve, and protect the Gulf Coast region’s fresh, estuarine, and marine water resources by reducing or treating nutrient and pollutant loading; and improving the management of freshwater flows, discharges to and withdrawals from critical systems.
- **Protect and Restore Living Coastal and Marine Resources** – Restore and protect healthy, diverse, and sustainable living coastal and marine resources including finfish, shellfish, birds, mammals, reptiles, coral, and deep benthic communities.
- **Restore and Enhance Natural Processes and Shorelines** – Restore and enhance ecosystem resilience, sustainability, and natural defenses through the restoration of natural coastal, estuarine, and riverine processes, and/or the restoration of natural shorelines.
- **Promote Community Resilience** – Build and sustain Gulf Coast communities’ capacity to adapt to short- and long-term natural and man-made hazards, particularly increased flood risks associated with sea-level rise and environmental stressors. Promote ecosystem restoration that enhances community resilience through the re-establishment of non-structural, natural buffers against storms and flooding.
- **Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education** – Promote and enhance natural resource stewardship through environmental education efforts that include formal and informal educational opportunities, professional development and training, communication, and actions for all ages.
- **Improve Science-Based Decision-Making Processes** – Improve science-based decision-making processes used by the Council.

3.2 Fiscal Year 2022 Significant Council Actions

The RESTORE Act (33 U.S.C. § 1321(t) and *note*) requires a Council vote for the following types of actions (referred to as “Significant Actions”) (33 U.S.C § 1321(t)(2)(C)(vi)):

1. Approval of the Comprehensive Plan and revisions and updates thereto;
2. Approval of State Expenditure Plans (SEPs) and revisions and updates thereto;
3. Approval of reports to Congress required by the Act;
4. Approval of transfers pursuant to 33 U.S.C. § 1321(t)(2)(E)(ii)(II); and
5. Other Significant Actions as determined by the Council (e.g., approval of the Council regulation establishing the formula required under 33 U.S.C. § 1321(t)(3)).

All Significant Actions of the Council, except approval of SEPs, require the affirmative vote of the Chairperson and three State members to be effective. Approval of a SEP or a SEP revision requires only the affirmative vote of the Chairperson together with certification that the SEP satisfies all applicable requirements of the RESTORE Act by the submitting State member. Following is a list of the Council's Significant Actions for FY 2022:

- 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update: Restoring the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem and Economy, September 14, 2022

Council-Selected Restoration Component

- 2022 FPL 3b Amendments- Expanding the Geographic Extent of the Texas Land Acquisition Program for Coastal Conservation, September 14, 2022

Spill Impact Component

- Louisiana State Expenditure Plan Amendment #2, March 17, 2022;
- Florida State Expenditure Plan Amendment #4, April 11, 2022;
- Mississippi State Expenditure Plan – 2021 Amendment; May 25, 2022; and
- Alabama State Expenditure Plan – 2022 Amendment, May 25, 2022.

Other

- 2021 Annual Report to Congress, February 1, 2022

3.3 Sub-Awards to Non-Governmental Organizations

The RESTORE Act requires that, for purposes of awards made under the Council-Selected Restoration Component, a State or federal award recipient may make a grant or subaward to or enter into a cooperative agreement with a non-governmental entity that equals or exceeds 10 percent of the total amount of the award provided to the State or federal award recipient only if certain notice requirements are met. The Council must provide notice in advance of each such proposed subaward during a fiscal year through the Federal Register and to specified Congressional Committees. In addition, the Council must include the name, purpose and amount of each qualifying subaward in its Annual Report to Congress. No awards met this criterion during FY 2022.

3.4 Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council Equity Action Plan

The Council prepared an Equity Action Plan in response to Executive Order 13985, "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, January 20, 2021" (EO). The Council's plan was approved by the Council on January 19, 2022, and is based on collaborative guidance and input from federal and state Council members.

The Council's [Equity Action Plan](#) includes a summary of activities initiated prior to the EO which align with and support the overall intent of the EO. The Equity Action Plan then sets forth specific actions the Council will take to advance the EO. These actions are grouped in two categories: public engagement and data analysis. Actions in the first group may help advance more inclusive public engagement with Council activities. Actions in the second group are intended to identify existing data and analytical tools that may help inform the Council with respect to how its investments relate to equity.

In response to the EO, the Council reviewed its existing policies and programs as they relate to equity, and identified additional actions that could be taken in support of the EO. The Council's August 2021 Equity Assessment provides the findings of this review along with the proposed additional actions. The actions identified in the Equity Assessment build on and enhance the Council's ongoing policies and programs that align with the EO. These ongoing activities are based on the Council's commitment to engagement, inclusion and transparency, and include:

- Addressing language barriers for communities impacted by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill;
- Providing live and recorded American Sign Language translation of stakeholder engagement;
- Funding environmental job training (including tribal youth and youth from other underserved communities);
- Broadening funding eligibility to projects benefiting federally-recognized Tribes;
- Investing in economically disadvantaged areas; and
- Providing individualized and targeted outreach to specific underserved communities and areas.

Pursuant to the EO, the Council's Equity Action Plan identifies two focus areas, public engagement and data analysis, and associated action items, that build on the ongoing activities discussed above. Descriptions of these action items are provided below, along with a brief discussion of the barriers and/or opportunities they seek to address.

Public Engagement: Broad and inclusive public input helps ensure that the Council selects the most effective ecosystem restoration projects and programs. The Council seeks to conduct public engagement activities that reach and serve an array of communities, including under-represented communities and stakeholders across the Gulf. To do this the Council must address varied challenges, including those associated with language barriers and the ability of stakeholders to participate in public meetings. To that end, the Council is committed to the following actions:

- Providing Spanish translations of major Council documents in addition to the ongoing Vietnamese translations. The Council will consider translating any other Council document into Spanish, Vietnamese and/or other languages upon request.
- Providing enhanced virtual access for recorded public webinars on the Council's website. To facilitate access by non-English speakers, the Council will provide Vietnamese and Spanish subtitles for recorded webinars and translated documents for public meetings. Building on the current Council practice of Vietnamese translations and webinars, this action was expanded to include Spanish translations in 2022.
- Developing and updating a list of publications and media outlets that serve or otherwise reach underserved communities. The list may be used, for example, to inform such communities of public comment opportunities offered by the Council and its members. The list was compiled in 2021 and will be updated periodically thereafter.

The Council remains open to considering other ways to enhance engagement with underserved stakeholders.

Data Analysis: There is an opportunity for the Council to better understand the relationship between its ecosystem investments and equity. To that end, the Council is exploring ways to advance the use of data to help the Council further address the EO.

In general, the Council tracks progress and ensures accountability with respect to its goals and objectives through interagency coordination and collaboration among the Council members. The Council members routinely meet to review and discuss all aspects of the Council’s work, including funding decisions, financial policies, scientific and technical considerations, public input, and federal policy such as the EO. The diverse expertise and perspectives offered by the Council members facilitate these reviews. The Council is using this same interagency approach for both the development and implementation of this Equity Action Plan. The Council members will periodically review progress toward the action items listed in this plan and, as appropriate, will recommend additional actions and/or adjustments to the existing activities in order to meet the associated equity objectives.

3.5 Domestic Preference

On January 14, 2022, the Council notified Congress of its initial assessment that in accordance with the provisions of the *Build America, Buy America Act* (Pub. L. 117-58 §§ 70901-70927) (BABAA), BABAA’s domestic preference requirements would not apply to Council expenditures. After further legal review throughout 2022, the Council confirmed this determination. The Council recognizes that supporting domestic manufacturing is in the nation’s best interest, and continues to encourage recipients of Council funding to establish a preference for the purchase, acquisition and use of domestically-produced products and materials to the greatest extent practicable.

4. Council-Selected Restoration Component

4.1 Background

Under the Council-Selected Restoration Component of the RESTORE Act, the Council administers 30% of the amounts in the Trust Fund. Pursuant to the Act, only Council members (state and federal) are eligible to submit proposals for funding. Council approval of funding requires the affirmative vote of at least three state members and the Chair. The other five federal members do not formally vote on Council funding. The Council uses Funded Priorities Lists (FPLs) that set forth approved projects and programs. The Council develops FPLs through collaboration among its members and with feedback from stakeholders across the Gulf.

Funds for approved FPL projects are disbursed to Council members via grants to state members and interagency agreements (IAAs) with federal members. As part of the grant and IAA process, all activities for which funding is sought are carefully reviewed to ensure consistency with the approved FPL and compliance with the RESTORE Act and all other applicable requirements, including compliance with all applicable federal environmental laws and the application of best available science criteria (BAS) as required by the Act and further defined by the Council.

As of the end of FY 2022, the Council has approved almost \$365M for Council-Selected Restoration Component activities, either through approval of, or amendments to, FPLs 1, 2 and 3 (referred to as 2020-21 FPL 3 or 2020-21 FPLs 3a and 3b). Of the approved funds, \$271M has been awarded to sponsoring members. Table 1 shows the breakdown of these funds for each approved FPL.

Table 1. Approved, budgeted, and awarded funds, by FPL, as of the end of FY 2022. Note: Approved and budgeted funds are distinct categories (see above). The total of the two reflects the amount included in each FPL.

FPL	Approved (approx.)	Budgeted (approx.)	Awarded
2015 Initial FPL	\$176M	\$9M	\$170.3M
2017 CPS FPL	\$21.1M	N/A	\$20.8M
2020-21 FPL 3	\$167M	\$293M	\$79.9M

RESTORE Act Priority Criteria

In selecting projects and programs under Bucket 2, the RESTORE Act requires that the Council give the highest priority to activities that address one or more of the following criteria:

- **Projects that are projected to make the greatest contribution to restoring and protecting** the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region, without regard to geographic location within the Gulf Coast region.
- **Large-scale projects and programs** that are projected to substantially contribute to restoring and protecting the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast ecosystem.
- **Projects contained in existing Gulf Coast State comprehensive plans** for the restoration and protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region.
- **Projects that restore long-term resiliency** of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands most impacted by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.

A foundational element of the 2013 Initial Comprehensive Plan was the inclusion of commitments to provide guidance for the Council’s path forward. Through the process of reviewing the Council’s work, including the process used to develop the [2015 Initial FPL](#), these commitments were refined and amplified in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update. In the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Council describes its progress toward its commitments thus far, and establishes a baseline that the Council will build upon. Further, the Council builds upon these commitments in the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update by highlighting the importance of efficient, effective, and transparent environmental compliance. While language regarding environmental compliance was included in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Council elevated this to a stand-alone commitment in the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update.

The Council’s six updated commitments are:

- Taking a regional ecosystem-based approach to restoration;
- Leveraging resources and partnerships;
- Maintaining and enhancing public engagement, inclusion, and transparency;
- Providing efficient, effective, and transparent environmental compliance;
- Applying science-based decision-making; and
- Delivering results and measuring impacts.

Council Funding Strategy

The [RESTORE Act](#) requires the Council to provide a description of the manner in which amounts projected to be made available to the Council from the Trust Fund will be allocated for the succeeding ten years (the “Ten-Year Funding Strategy”). In light of the ongoing litigation with BP and other responsible parties in 2013, the Council did not include a Ten-Year Funding strategy in the [2013 Initial Comprehensive Plan](#) due to the uncertainty regarding the amounts and timing of funds that might ultimately be available. With the final amounts and timing settled in April 2016, the Council was able to provide an initial Ten-Year Funding Strategy in the [2016 Comprehensive Plan Update](#). Recognizing that this strategy will remain relevant for the duration of its work to implement ecosystem restoration, the Council has updated the name of the strategy to the “Council Funding Strategy” (Funding Strategy).

In developing the Funding Strategy, the Council sought to accomplish the following:

- Ensure compliance with the RESTORE Act;
- Provide finer granularity regarding how the Council will address the goals and objectives over the next ten years and beyond;
- Provide increased certainty, predictability, and guidance for project and program planning;
- Maintain flexibility to adapt to new information such as environmental changes, scientific advances, and feedback on the effectiveness of past and ongoing on-the-ground restoration actions; and
- Build on lessons learned in the development of the Initial and subsequent FPLs.

To accomplish these objectives, the Funding Strategy consists of a vision statement, a discussion of the frequency of future FPLs, and enhancements to the Council’s commitments from previous iterations of the Comprehensive Plan. Specific projects and programs are identified in FPLs. In the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Council reflects on its progress over the past five years in implementing the Funding Strategy, and provides updates based upon lessons learned over this time period.

The Council recognizes that a clear and concise vision statement can help direct and shape future funding decisions. In the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Council recommitted to its vision statement:

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

The Council continues to believe 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 follows a multi-step process to award Council-Selected Restoration Component funds (Figure 2). This process ensures that all applicable laws (e.g., the RESTORE Act, environmental and federal grants management laws, and others) as well as Council policies and procedures are adhered to.

First, the Council includes activities (projects and programs) within an FPL, assigning each activity to one of two categories:

- **Approved** - Activities for which all applicable environmental laws have been addressed and for which the Council has formally approved funding via a vote.
- **Budgeted** - Activities that the Council considers to be worthy of potential future funding. The Council budgets funds for the given activities, pending future review and approval via a Council vote. Prior to approval, activities in this category must comply with all applicable environmental laws.

Generally, when activities are budgeted, the activity sponsor is required to submit additional documentation (e.g., federal permits, detailed scopes of work) before the Council will consider formal approval of the activity. The movement of an activity from budgeted to approved occurs via a Council vote to amend the FPL after the required documentation is submitted, the public has commented on the proposed action, and the Council has complied with all applicable environmental laws. A budgeted activity does not in itself constitute a formal Council commitment.

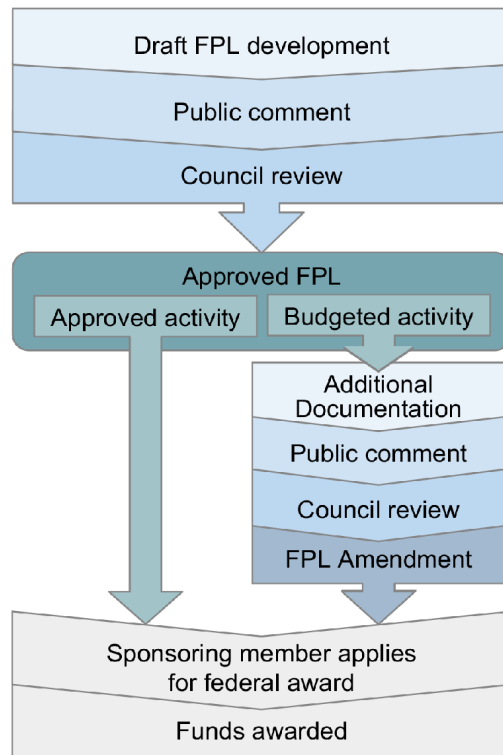


Figure 2. Differences in the process for awarding funds for approved vs. budgeted activities in an FPL. The additional steps for budgeted activities include Council review and approval of materials required for an FPL amendment to change a budgeted activity to an approved activity. These materials include all documents necessary for compliance with all applicable environmental laws. In some cases, additional project information (e.g., specific location information, scope of work, final engineering and design plans) may also be required. As part of approving an FPL amendment, the Council provides an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the proposed action.

FPL Categories

FPLs include activities in two categories. Category 1 activities are approved for Council-Selected Restoration Component 2 funding. Such approval requires a Council vote as set forth in the RESTORE Act. To be approved in Category 1, a project or program must have documentation demonstrating that all applicable environmental laws have been addressed. For example, a construction project would need documentation demonstrating compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and other applicable laws.

Category 2 activities are Council priorities for potential future funding but are not approved for funding. These are projects and/or programs that are not yet in a position to be approved by the Council but are considered worthy of potential future funding by the Council. As appropriate, the Council will review the activities in Category 2 to determine whether to: (1) move an activity to Category 1 and approve it for funding, (2) remove it from Category 2 and any further consideration, or (3) continue to include it in Category 2. In these reviews, the Council can consider feasibility; environmental compliance; and scientific, technical, policy and/or other related issues. A Council vote and FPL amendment are required to move an activity from Category 2 to Category 1, or to remove an activity from Category 2 and any further consideration.

Eligible Activities and Definitions

The Council considers proposals from members that address the planning or implementation phases, or both, of projects or programs. The definitions of these phases from the Council’s 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update are as follows:

- **Planning** – FPL submissions may include: planning and development of ecosystem restoration projects and programs; cost estimates; feasibility analysis; engineering and design; environmental compliance and permitting; scientific elements, including evaluation and establishment of monitoring requirements and methods to report outcomes and impacts; and public engagement.
- **Implementation** – FPL submissions may include: construction; public outreach and education; and measurement, evaluation, and reporting of outcomes and impacts of restoration activities.

In its Comprehensive Plan Updates, the Council has defined “activity,” “project,” and “program.” These definitions are applicable to proposals for Council-Selected Restoration Component funding. FPL proposals should indicate whether the proposed activity is a project or a program. If it is the latter, the activity should be consistent with the following definition of program.

- **Activity:** A general term that includes both projects and programs and may also be used to describe components of a project or program. For example, on the Initial FPL, all the funded projects and programs on the list could be referred to as restoration “activities.”
- **Project:** A single ecosystem restoration and/or conservation activity that cannot be separated into stand-alone sub-activities. A project may be “scalable,” meaning that its scope, size, and/or cost can be expanded or reduced as needed and appropriate. A project can be separated into a “planning” or “implementation” phase or can include both. One or more members can conduct a project. For example, a single project might restore marsh in a specific geographic location. Another example of a project might be the planning, engineering, and design required to advance a marsh restoration proposal to a construction-ready status. **Program:** A suite of intrinsically linked restoration and/or conservation activities that must be implemented together in order to achieve the desired outcome. A program should generally be covered by one unified Council environmental compliance review and have a common set of performance measures to effectively assess and measure outcomes. A program’s sub-activities may be related in terms of geography, environmental stressors, resources, restoration and/or protection activities, and more. A program can be separated into a “planning” or “implementation” phase or can include both. One or more members can conduct a program. For example, a single program might be a Gulfwide environmental monitoring effort.

4.2 Building on a Foundation of Collaboration, Experience, and Best Available Science

Building on the strong foundation established in the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy and other local, regional, state, and federal plans, the Council is taking an integrated and coordinated approach to Gulf Coast restoration. This approach strives to both restore the Gulf Coast region's environment and simultaneously revitalize the region's economy, because the Council recognizes that ecosystem restoration investments may also improve economic prosperity and quality of life, as well as the improving the resilient nature of coastal communities. In addition, this approach acknowledges that coordinated action with other partners is crucial to successfully restore and sustain the health of the Gulf Coast region.

The RESTORE Council is using a collaborative process to help ensure that Council-Selected Restoration Component funded projects and programs complement restoration being accomplished through other funding streams. The funding available through the Council, as well as the other DWH-related funding sources (including other components of the RESTORE Act, Natural Resource and Damage Assessment (DWH NRDA), and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (NFWF GEBF)), presents an unprecedented opportunity to restore Gulf ecosystem conditions and functions, representing one of the most substantial investments in landscape-level restoration in U.S. history. However, these funds will not be sufficient to fully address all the ecosystem restoration needs of the Gulf given the multiple stressors impacting the region, ranging from man-made sources like the DWH oil spill disaster, water quality/quantity issues and the annual offshore hypoxic zone, as well as naturally-occurring impacts including hurricanes. Due to these large-scale stressors and ever-changing conditions of these coastal environments, it is infeasible to restore the Gulf to conditions that were present at a specific time in the past. By working collaboratively among the Council members and with other DWH-related funding sources, as well as working with other federal and state funds, great progress can be made to increase the resiliency of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem against these stressors.

Commitment and Planning Support FPL (CPS FPL)

A review of the process used to develop the 2015 Initial FPL was conducted that included input from both Council members and the public. Following completion of this review, the Council developed the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update which further emphasized the Council's commitments to collaborate among members, potential funding partners, and the public; increase public engagement and transparency; and refine its best available science (BAS) practices.

To advance these commitments, the Council approved a second FPL in January 2018, referred to as the *2017 Commitment and Planning Support FPL* ([2017 CPS FPL](#)). Rather than funding specific restoration projects or programs, the 2017 CPS FPL dedicated funds over a five-year period (2018 through 2023) to help Council members meet 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update commitments and identify potential areas for future FPL proposal development. Council members have used 2017 CPS FPL funds to initiate and enhance collaborations and develop tools for exchanging ecosystem restoration and protection ideas for funding consideration in the next FPL. Council members have held meetings throughout the Gulf to discuss ecosystem restoration concepts and potential techniques to address environmental challenges and stressors. These activities were critical in the development of FPL 3a and 3b.

Commitment to Science-Based Decision-Making

Under the RESTORE Act, the Council is required to “undertake projects and programs, using the best available science that would restore and protect the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, coastal wetlands, and economy of the Gulf Coast.” The RESTORE Act defines BAS as science that “maximizes the quality, objectivity, and integrity of information, including statistical information; uses peer-reviewed and publicly available data; and clearly documents and communicates risks and uncertainties in the scientific basis for such projects.” The Council continues to engage in a variety of activities that promote the enhanced use of BAS at all stages of project/program development and implementation, and across Council programmatic activities.

Best Available Science Reviews

The Council’s Initial Funded Priorities List utilized voluntary, confidential and external mail-in reviews from scientific experts to ensure all proposals were developed using Best Available Science. In the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Council made clear its intention to explore different approaches for improving its science review process for Council-Selected Restoration Component funded projects and programs. To meet this commitment, Council staff developed an [updated BAS Review Process](#) that incorporated an internal BAS Proposal Review Panel in addition to external reviews. The internal science review panel’s collaborative review of all proposals as part of the FPL 3a and 3b review process offered increased opportunities to identify project interactions, synergies, benefits, and risks.

The updated BAS review process assisted the Council in 2021 in selecting projects for approval in FPL 3b that will maximize benefits and support a holistic approach to Gulf restoration.

Gulf Science Coordination

The Council has also furthered its commitment to science-based decision-making through continued science coordination across its member agencies and the larger Gulf of Mexico scientific community. As part of the 2015 Initial FPL Council Monitoring and Assessment Program (CMAP), the Council funded a Council Monitoring and Assessment Workgroup (CMAWG). This workgroup, composed of technical experts from each of the member agencies, supports the RESTORE Council in meeting its commitments to monitoring and adaptive management, and the use of BAS. Ongoing coordination around science and monitoring has already reaped tangible benefits such as alignment of overlapping tasks across entities, shared work products, and plans for future leveraging of shared resources. Because of these benefits, the Council decided to continue CMAWG beyond the CMAP award period, formalizing their work through the approval of the [Council Monitoring and Adaptive Management Guidelines](#) in 2020 and through [annual CMAWG Workplans](#).

In addition to internal science coordination through the CMAWG, in 2021 the Council also engaged in external Gulf science coordination. For example, the Council participates in the Gulf Restoration Science Programs Ad Hoc Coordination Forum. This forum, hosted by the RESTORE NOAA Science Program, provides a venue for all Gulf science and restoration programs to come together to work towards consistency in metrics and data management, share funding opportunities, and look for synergies across the academic and restoration communities in the Gulf.

Adaptive Management

Another element of the Council’s commitment to measuring and ensuring success is the application of adaptive management strategies (Figure 3). The purpose is to support meeting the Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives, both for individual activities as well as programmatically across watersheds or other geographically defined regions. By considering new information gained from monitoring and scientific advancements in its decision-making processes, the Council intends to fulfill its commitment to utilize adaptive management processes to enhance the benefits of its work.



Figure 3. The Council’s use of programmatic documents and processes and cyclical process for developing and approving Funded Priorities Lists allows for adaptive learning. In the Comprehensive Plan, members formulate and refine awareness of issues. Then, through collaboration, members frame options for addressing the issues. Planning is conducted to determine the priority actions that will be funded. From there, the actions are implemented and monitored to determine how the ecosystem responded. The cycle repeats, incorporating learned information into awareness for future decision-making.

At the programmatic scale, the Council’s structure and cyclical process for developing and approving FPLs allows for an adaptive approach to its Council-Selected Restoration Component funding decisions. For watersheds or other geographically defined areas, the Council utilizes its programmatic documents and processes to generally follow an adaptive process that may best support realization of the Council’s vision for the Gulf Coast region (Figure 3).

At the level of individual activities (both projects and programs), Council members set quantitative targets for each of their Comprehensive Plan objectives and describe any adaptive management strategies they

plan to implement to ensure objectives are met. As set out in the activity's ODP, monitoring data are collected and used to determine whether projects are meeting, or are expected to meet, their targeted objectives. Monitoring data may also be used to signal the need for any corrective actions that may enhance performance, as feasible. Funding recipients also report on how the results of data collection may help to resolve critical uncertainties influencing restoration and management decisions, informing and improving the success of efforts beyond the scope of the activity.

To support adaptive improvements through this process, the Council has also made progress on a related commitment made in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update: to continue to work toward utilizing science-based restoration targets for the Gulf ecosystem. Quantitative targets are set for individual activities. At larger geographic scales, the Council has broadly identified the goals and objectives that could be advanced for different watersheds and geographic regions, based on key environmental stressors described for each area, and the priority restoration techniques that would best support success. This was first laid out in the 2019 Planning Framework, which supported planning and collaboration undertaken to develop 2020-21 FPL 3.

As FPL-funded activities are implemented and monitored, periodic updates to the Comprehensive Plan provide the opportunity to increase awareness of lessons learned from those activities as the Council prepares for its next cycle of funding. Comprehensive Plan updates allow the Council to review and be responsive to findings from its work and other newly emerging science, as well as information on technological advancements and changed environmental or socioeconomic conditions (e.g., impacts from hurricanes, the COVID-19 pandemic, etc.). For example, the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update incorporated such new information to refine and update the Council's strategies and commitments for how it would make decisions and implement restoration activities. The commitments described in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update led the Council to develop and fund the [2017 CPS FPL](#) that provided the funding to meet those commitments, particularly as they relate to collaborative decision-making.

These and other actions will continue to allow the Council to improve ecosystem restoration and protection outcome and impact measurement and reporting, and assist in the development of local and regional ecosystem models. This work will also help the Council utilize lessons learned to identify and refine priority restoration needs and critical uncertainties related to Gulf restoration and inform adaptive Council decision-making processes related to these investments over time.

Planning Framework

One of the most significant actions the Council has taken to improve performance was the development of the Council's 2019 Planning Framework which strategically links past and future restoration funding decisions to the overarching goals and objectives outlined in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update. The Planning Framework indicates priorities designed to continue building on previous investments, while expanding opportunities to meet all Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives in the future.

The Planning Framework lists priority restoration approaches and techniques (Figure 4) their relationship to the Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives, and associated geographic areas. The purpose of this document was to provide the public and potential funding partners with an indication of the kinds of projects that were anticipated to be developed for FPL 3 funding consideration. As part of the process of developing future FPLs, the Planning Framework will be reviewed and revised as needed to incorporate outcomes and lessons learned from previously implemented projects, scientific and technical developments, changing policy, public input, and other planning considerations.

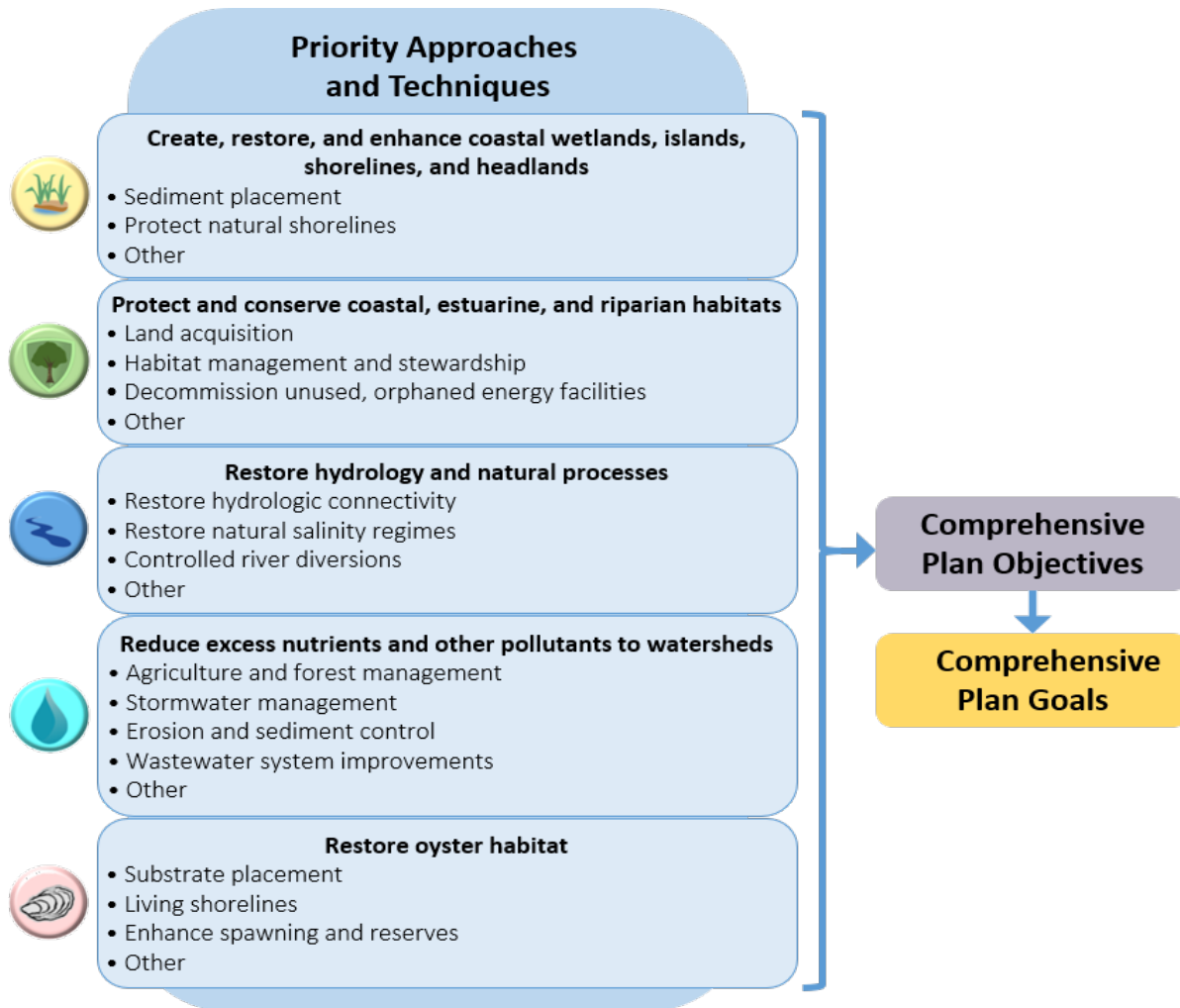


Figure 4. The 2019 Planning Framework priority approaches and techniques can be applied to support the Comprehensive Plan objectives and goals.

Enhancing Environmental Compliance Efficiency through Interagency Collaboration

The RESTORE Council is an active member of the Gulf Coast Interagency Environmental Restoration Working Group (GCIERWG), which was formed to help achieve more effective and efficient environmental reviews of Gulf ecosystem restoration projects. Improved environmental reviews should result in more timely restoration implementation. Formed in recognition of the critical need for early and consistent interagency coordination and prioritization of restoration work, the GCIERWG coordinates through

4.3 2015 Initial Funded Priority List (2015 Initial FPL)

In 2015, the Council approved the [2015 Initial Funded Priority List \(2015 Initial FPL\)](#) for approximately \$156.6M in restoration activities such as hydrologic restoration, land conservation, and planning for large-scale restoration projects. The funding for the 2015 Initial FPL came from the settlement of Clean Water Act civil penalties against Transocean Deepwater Inc. and related entities. When it approved the 2015 Initial FPL, the Council did not know the amount and timing of additional funding that could be obtained

from the then-ongoing litigation with British Petroleum (BP). The 2015 Initial FPL was organized around ten watersheds/estuaries across the Gulf to concentrate and leverage available funds to address critical ecosystem needs in high priority locations. The Council's decisions were informed by stakeholder input and the best available science associated with a variety of factors, including widely-recognized ecological stressors, foundational investment needed to respond to those stressors, building on other funded conservation actions, and socioeconomic and cultural considerations. Activities were selected to provide near-term ecological results while also completing planning and science decision-support tools that may provide for future success.

4.4 Funded Priority List 3

It was through the collaborative process supported by the CPS FPL that the Council recognized that developing FPL 3 in two phases would enable the Council to fund projects requiring near-term attention and take advantage of important partnership opportunities to advance large-scale ecosystem restoration, as well as identifying programs that seek watershed-level benefits for Gulf resources, and restoration initiatives that leverage funds with other government programs for greater benefits.

Approved a little more than one year apart, 2020 FPL 3a and 2021 FPL 3b provide funding for priority ecosystem restoration activities throughout the Gulf of Mexico. The activities contained in FPL 3a and 3b reflected lessons learned from the 2015 Initial FPL process and commitments made in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update and further emphasized in the 2022 Comprehensive Plan update. This approach to identifying priority restoration activities acknowledges the interconnected nature of coastal and marine ecosystems. It also recognizes the importance of addressing system-wide stressors that reduce ecosystem health. FPLs 3a and b advanced this concept by investing in programmatic approaches to address the ecosystem needs in certain geographic areas.

2020 FPL 3a includes two large-scale ecosystem restoration projects: one in Alabama and the other in Louisiana. 2021 FPL 3b includes an additional 20 activities to address additional ecosystem needs across the Gulf coast region. The Council applied the 2019 Planning Framework, public comment, best available science determinations, and internal administrative procedures to support its funding decisions. 2021 FPL 3b contains many programs intended to address large-scale ecosystem problems through the implementation of specific projects within those programs. For some programs, specific projects were not identified at the time 2021 FPL 3b was finalized. Rather, the FPL describes the priority issues that the programs aim to address in order to meet specified goals and objectives, the Planning Framework approaches that will be utilized, the decision processes that will be or have been followed to identify projects over time, and the metrics that will be used to determine whether the programs are meeting their stated goals and objectives. The Council believes that selecting and implementing projects within these programs will allow for a more systematic approach to addressing ecosystem-level problems within high priority watersheds. The Council also anticipates that by approving funds for these priority programs, additional partners may become interested over time.

During FY 2022, one project from 2020 FPL 3a (Table 2) and seven projects from 2021 FPL 3b were funded (see Appendix A for program/project description).

Table 2. List of 2020 FPL 3a awards made during FY 2022.

Council Member	FPL 3a Projects Approved during FY 2022	Award Amount (\$ M)
Alabama	Perdido River Land Conservation & Habitat Enhancements	\$10.15

Table 3. List of FPL 3b 2021 awards made during FY 2022

Council Member	FPL 3b Projects Approved during FY 2022	Award Amount (\$ M)
Florida	Florida Strategic Gulf Coast Land Acquisition Program (Planning & Implementation)	\$14.0
Florida	Florida Water Quality Improvement Program (Planning)	\$6.75
Florida	Florida Gulf Coast Resiliency Program (Planning)	\$5.6
Florida	Florida Gulf Coast Tributaries Hydrologic Restoration Program (Planning)	\$3.44
Texas	Texas Land Acquisition Program for Coastal Conservation (Planning and Implementation)	\$24.3
DOI	Develop Ecological Flow Decision-Support for Mobile River & Perdido River Basins	\$3.4
DOI	Wind-Tidal Flat Restoration Pilot (Planning & Implementation)	\$0.32
FY 2022 Total		\$57.81

5. Spill Impact Component

In addition to the Council-Selected Restoration Component, the remaining 30 percent of the Trust Fund under the Council’s purview is allocated to the states under the Spill Impact Component, or “Bucket 3,” according to a formula established by the Council and implemented through the [RESTORE Act Spill Impact Component Allocation regulation](#) which was published on December 15, 2015. These allocations became effective on April 12, 2016, following entry of the Consent Decree. Using the information set forth in the rule, the allocation of funds among the five states is:

- Alabama – 20.40%;
- Florida – 18.36%;
- Louisiana – 34.59%;
- Mississippi – 19.07%; and
- Texas – 7.58%.

Spill Impact Component funds are spent according to individual State Expenditure Plans (SEPs) developed by each state member (in Florida, by the Gulf Consortium) that set forth programs contributing to the overall economic and ecological recovery of the Gulf. In 2016 the Council updated the [Guidelines](#) that describe required SEP elements, the process for submitting SEPs, and the criteria set forth in the Act under which the Council Chair must approve or disapprove SEPs.

Funds for projects in approved SEPs are disbursed to the state Council members (in Florida, to the Gulf Consortium) via grants when the requisite funds become available in the Trust Fund. As with the Council-Selected Restoration Component, all activities for which Spill Impact component funding is sought are carefully reviewed to ensure consistency with the applicable SEP and compliance with the RESTORE Act and all other applicable requirements, including the use of Best Available Science, and compliance with all applicable federal environmental laws.

Over the seven-year period of FY 2016 to FY 2022, a total of \$392.8M has been awarded through the Spill Impact Component. During FY 2022, 15 grants totaling \$79.1M were awarded to Alabama (Table 4; 6 projects; \$30.9M), Florida Gulf Consortium (Table 5; 8 projects, \$24.6M), and Texas (Table 6; 1 program; \$23.7M).

Table 4. State Expenditure Plan funds and list of projects in Alabama approved during FY 2022 (see Appendix B for additional details).

SEP Projects Approved during FY 2022	Award Amount (\$ M)
SEP #10: Bayou La Batre Collection System/Lift Station Upgrades	\$13.2
SEP #29 - Planning Grant to Amend State Expenditure Plan 2021	\$0.27
SEP #24: Storm Water Management Improvements for Toulmin Springs Branch and Gum Tree Branch	\$1.22
SEP #26: Little Lagoon Restoration Project	\$6.18
SEP #4: Auburn University Gulf Coast Engineering Research Station	\$9.27
SEP #3: Expansion of the Orange Beach Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center	\$0.72

FY 2022 Total	\$30.86
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Table 5. State Expenditure Plan funds and list of projects for the Florida Consortium approved during FY 2022 (see Appendix B for additional details).

SEP Projects Approved during FY 2022	Award Amount (\$ M)
13-1: NW Quadrant Sewer Force Main Project – Construction	\$6.0
18-6: Gulf Shellfish Institute: Applied Research for Shellfish Aquaculture	\$0.35
10-2: Hodges Park Rehabilitation	\$1.08
2-1: Santa Rosa Sound Water Quality Improvement Program – Monitoring	\$0.86
8-1: Wakulla Springshed Water Quality Protection Program - Otter Creek WWTF Construction	\$7.72
3-4: Shoal River Headwaters Protection Program-Phase I Construction	\$1.43
15-1: Port Richey Watershed Stormwater Management Project-Construction	\$5.09
18:1-Manatee River Oyster Restoration	\$2.04
FY 2022 Total	\$24.57

Table 6. State Expenditure Plan funds and project in Texas approved during FY 2022 (see Appendix B for additional details).

SEP Projects Approved during FY 2022	Award Amount (\$ M)
FY22 RESTORE Shoreline & Beach Restoration (BKT 3)	\$23.68

6. Summary of Council Performance

6.1 Assessment of the Council’s Progress Toward Program Goals

Ecosystems are subjected to both natural and human alterations that act together as “stressors” and affect natural ecosystem structure and function. The more ecosystems are stressed, the less resilient they may be to even larger, global challenges. With its approval of the 2015 Initial FPL, 2020 FPL 3a, and 2021 FPL 3b, the Council has approved funding for several programs that are intended to address large-scale ecosystem stressors that result in water quality impairment, coastal habitat loss and degradation, and coastal resilience challenges.

The use of a watershed/estuary-based approach for comprehensive ecological restoration was captured as a fundamental component of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update following completion of the 2015 Initial FPL, which included funding in 10 key watersheds. Many stakeholders cautioned the Council against distributing the available funds in a way that supports disconnected (although beneficial) restoration projects; the Council was asked not to engage in “random acts of restoration.” The Council shares that perspective and believes that focusing on watersheds and other foundational activities will ensure that the funds are spent in a way that contributes to comprehensive Gulf restoration. Taking a holistic approach to restoration recognizes the interconnected nature of coastal and marine ecosystems (a fundamental organizational principle of watersheds/estuaries) and the importance of addressing system-wide stressors that reduce ecosystem integrity. Moving forward, the Council will continue to use this holistic approach in order to maximize project benefits and track outcomes.

Over the seven fiscal years of 2016 through 2022, a total of 155 awards were made (Tables 7 and 8), including: 26 grants and 26 IAAs under FPL 1, 5 grants and 5 IAA’s under FPL 2, 1 grant under 2020 FPL 3a, 5 grants and 3 IAAs under 2021 FPL 3b, and 83 SEP awards.

Table 7. Number of grants to state members by program and fiscal year (2016 to 2022).

Fiscal Year	FPL 1	CPS (FPL2)	2020 FPL 3a	2021 FPL 3b	SEP	Total
2016	1				2	3
2017	13				2	15
2018	6	5			4	15
2019	4				5	9
2020	1				39	40
2021	1			1	16	18
2022			1	5	15	21
Totals	26	5	1	6	83	121

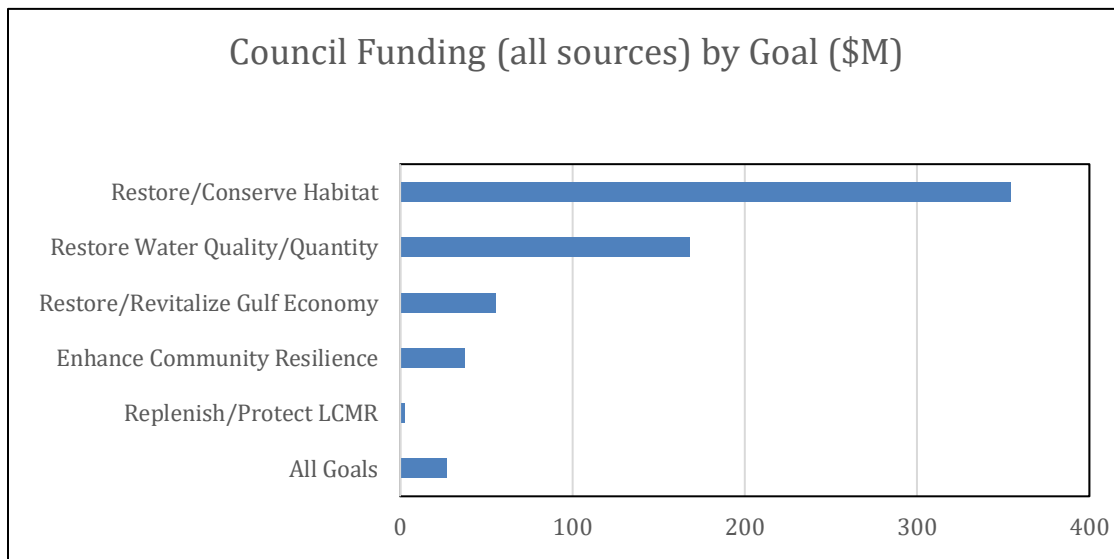
Table 8. Number of IAAs to federal members by program and fiscal year (2016 to 2022)

Fiscal Year	FPL 1	CPS (FPL2)	2021 FPL 3b	Total
2016	1			1
2017	8			8
2018	9	4		13
2019	4	1		5
2020	2			2
2021	2		1	3
2022			2	2
Totals	26	5	3	34

The Council Selected Restoration Component has provided \$271M in funding through FY 2022. The Spill Impact component provides grant funds to the state Council members, with a total of \$392.8M awarded over this seven-year period.

Over the past seven years, a total of 55 percent of all RESTORE Council funding through the Council-Selected and Spill Impact Components are supporting the Restore and Conserve Habitat goal (Figure 5) while 25% of all funding is supporting the Restore Water Quality and Quantity goal.

Figure 5. Funding trends for state and federal members (all sources) in support of the Council's Comprehensive Plan goals



Funding trends by the seven fiscal years for which funding has been awarded to Council members are shown in Figure 6 for all funding sources (Council-Selected and Spill Impact Components) in support of the Council’s goal to Restore and Conserve Habitat, while the Restore Water Quantity and Quality funding trends by year are provided in Figure 7.

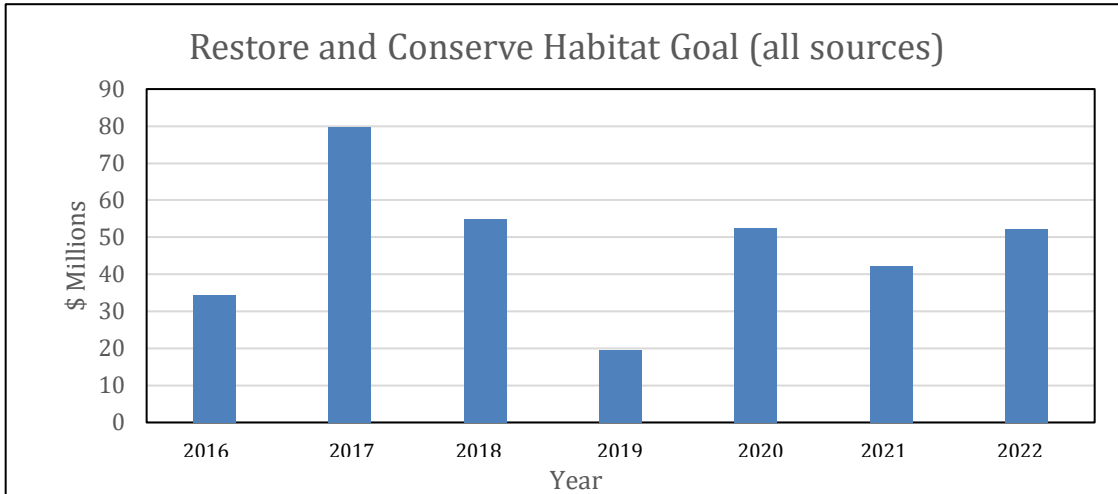


Figure 6. Funding trends for grants and IAAs from Council Selected and Spill Impact Components in support of the Restore and Conserve Habitat goal by fiscal year

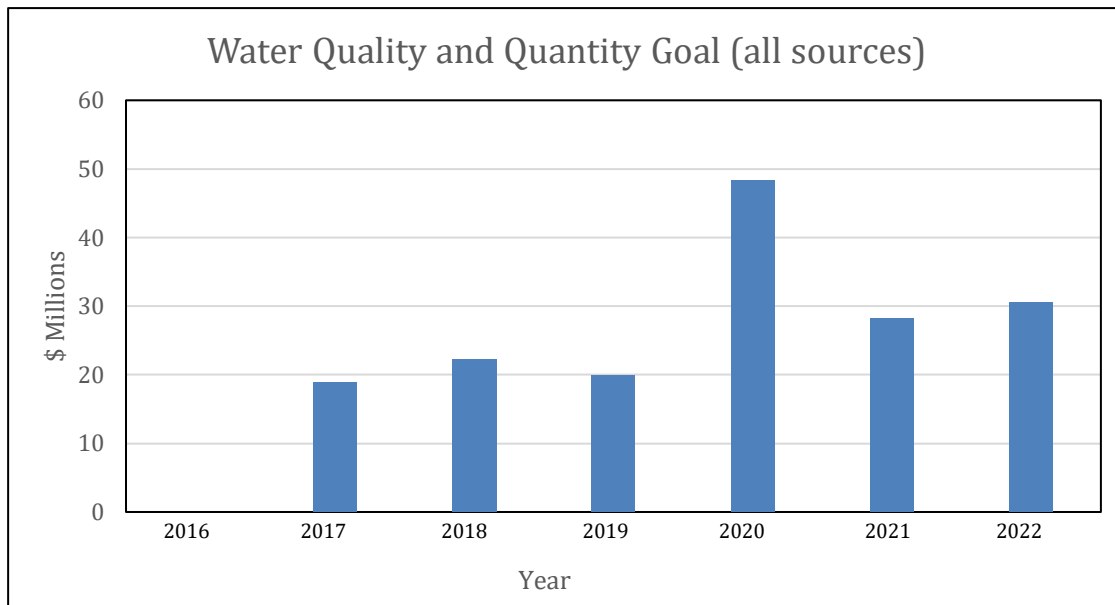


Figure 7. Funding trends for grants and IAA’s from FPL 1 and SEPs in support of the Restore and Conserve Water Quality and Quantity goal by fiscal year

Funding by Watershed

As the Council recognizes that ecosystem restoration investments may also improve prosperity and quality of life, this approach strives to both restore the Gulf Coast region’s environment and simultaneously revitalize the region’s economy. In addition, this approach acknowledges that coordinated action with other partners is crucial to successfully restore and sustain the health of the Gulf Coast region.

Ecosystems are subjected to both natural and human alterations that act together as “stressors” and affect natural ecosystem structure and function. The more ecosystems are stressed, the less resilient they may be to even larger, global challenges such as climate change

The use of a watershed/estuary-based approach for comprehensive ecological restoration was captured as a fundamental component of the 2016 and 2022 Comprehensive Plan Updates. Linking projects to environmental stressors by watershed or estuary is scientifically sound and offers operational advantages which assist in leveraging ecosystem restoration program resources. A focus on watersheds, in concert with foundational Gulfwide activities, is one approach to ensuring that funds are spent in a way that contributes to comprehensive Gulf restoration. With the approach, the Council engages stakeholders and strategically addresses priority goals. The Council makes funding decisions that leverage limited restoration resources for maximum effectiveness, while also supporting planning, science, and other activities that maximize the potential for success.

Geographic areas described in the [2019 Planning Framework](#) are a step toward identifying priority watersheds/estuaries for investment to meet Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives. These geographic areas vary in size from specific watersheds/estuaries to coverage of the entire coastal area of one or more states. To some degree, this range reflects the extent to which individual projects have been identified within the broader programs. In some geographic areas, the planning process may be advanced sufficiently to have identified specific restoration activities within a watershed/estuary. In others, additional planning and review of restoration options may be needed before identifying specific actions. In addition, these geographic areas reflect the anticipated collaboration — among members, among funding partners, and across states — needed to address broader environmental stressors.

The allocation of funding by Gulf watershed/geographic area is shown in Figure 8. The watersheds/geographic areas that have received the most funding as a total of all funding sources, are the Lower Mississippi River (26.4%), Mobile Bay (\$25.5%), and Mississippi Sound (19.9%).

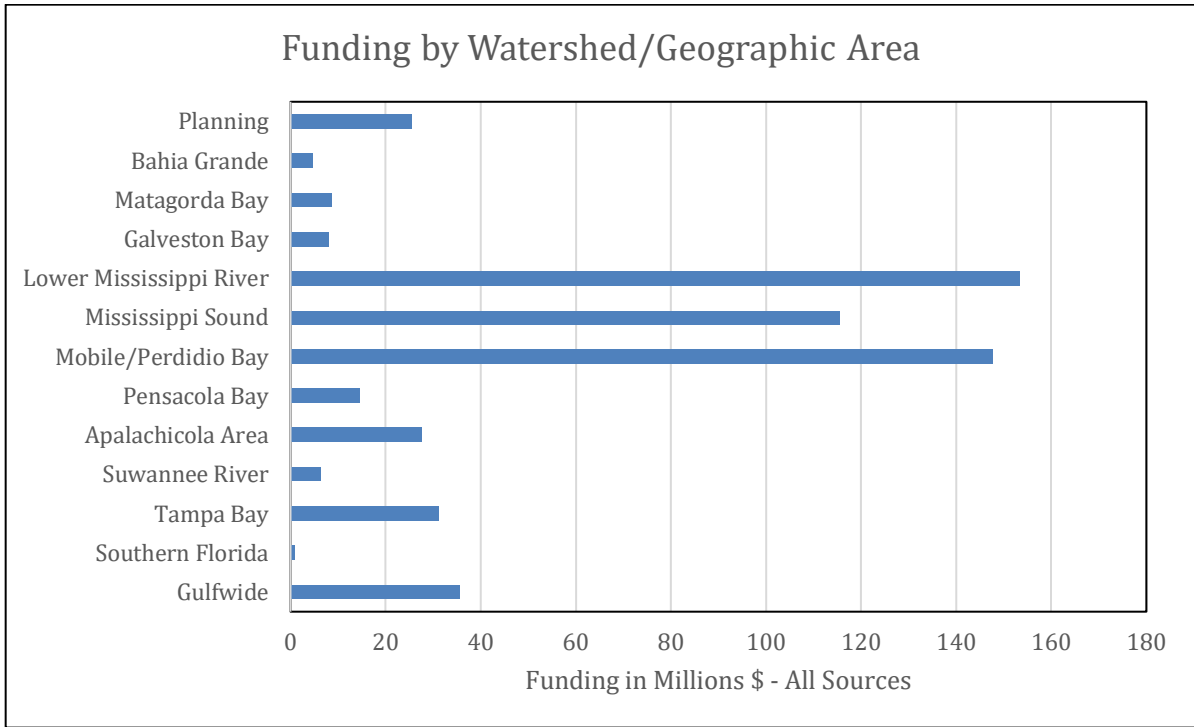


Figure 8. Distribution of funding for state and federal Council members from the Council-Selected Restoration and Spill Impact Components by watershed or geographic area.

6.2 Summary by Planning Framework Elements

The Council’s [2019 Planning framework](#) strategically links past and future restoration funding decisions to the overarching goals and objectives outlined in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update. The Planning Framework indicates priorities designed to continue building on previous investments, while expanding opportunities to meet all Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives in the future.

Although the Planning Framework was not developed until 2019, categorization by each of the Comprehensive Plan Objectives for the projects and programs funded under the Council-Selected Restoration Component through FY 2022 (FPLs 1, 2 and 3a and b) provides an overview of the Council’s funding priorities to date. Over 92 percent of funds approved or budgeted (Figure 9) went to support the following three objectives: Restore, enhance and protect habitats (42.7%, \$284.7M); Restore, improve and protect water resources (28.4%, \$189.2M); and Restore and enhance natural processes and shorelines (21.4%, \$142.3M). The remaining 7.5 percent of selected programs and projects are being used to promote community resilience (\$14M), improve science-based decision-making (\$12.5M), and promote natural resource stewardship and environmental education (\$2M).

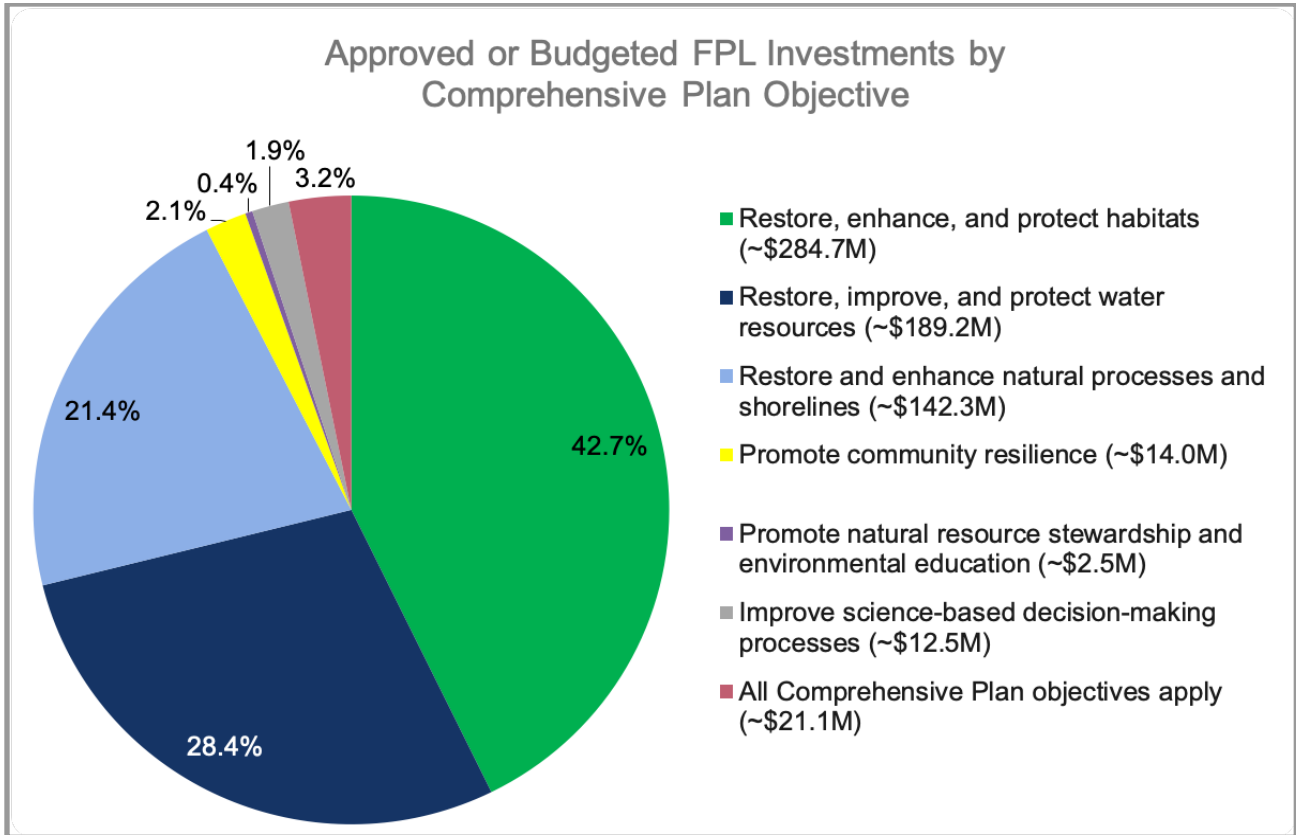


Figure 9. 2015 Initial FPL, 2017 CPS FPL, 2020 FPL 3a, and 2021 FPL 3b funds by Comprehensive Plan Objective. Note: The “Improve science-based decision-making processes approach” is sometimes used to support other primary objectives. For example, in the 2015 Initial FPL, some monitoring activities were funded to primarily benefit the “Restore, enhance, and protect habitats” objective.

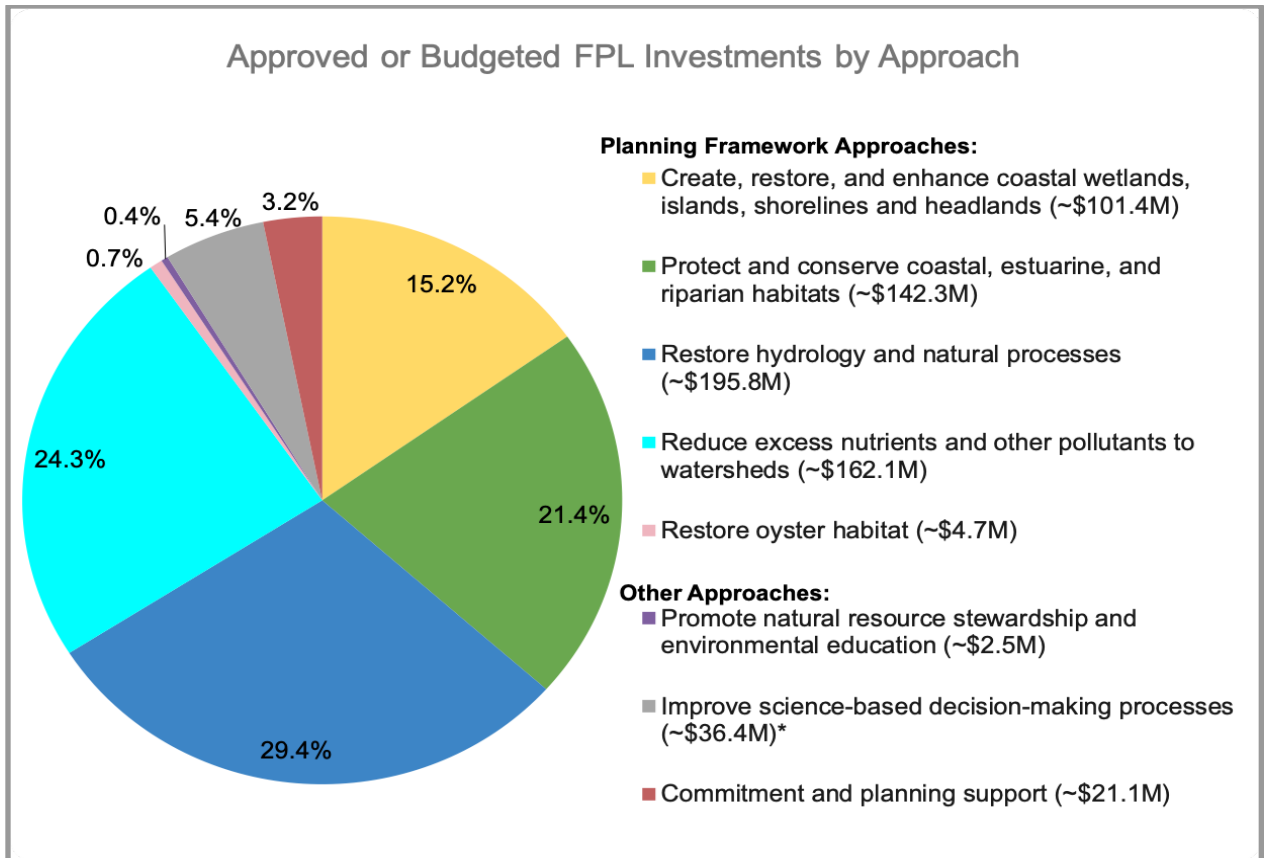


Figure 10. 2015 Initial FPL, 2017 CPS FPL, 2020 FPL 3a, and 2021 FPL 3b funds by primary approach. Note: The “Improve science-based decision-making processes approach” is sometimes used to support other primary objectives. For example, in the 2015 Initial FPL, some monitoring activities were funded to primarily benefit the “Restore, enhance, and protect habitats” objective.

The Planning Framework also provides a mechanism to view the primary approaches to ecosystem restoration of the Gulf being utilized by the members through the Council-Selected Restoration Component FPLs (Figure 10). To date (FY 2022), there are four primary approaches being utilized that account for over 90 percent of the funds approved or budgeted, including: Restore hydrology and natural processes (29.4%, \$195.8M); Reduce excess nutrients and other pollutants to watersheds (24.3%, \$162.1M); Protect and conserve coastal, estuarine, and riparian habitats (21.4%, \$142.3M); and Create, restore and enhance coastal wetlands, islands, shorelines, and headlands (15.2%, \$101.4M).

The Spill Impact Component funding through FY 2022 can also be parsed by the Council’s Objectives to identify primary funding priorities (Figure 11). Projects that support the Councils objectives to Restore, enhance and protect habitats (31.3%, \$120.7M) and Restore, improve and protect water resources (28.7%, \$110.5M) account for 60 percent of the SEP funding to date. A total of 31.8 percent of the remaining SEP projects support the following Council objectives: Promote community resilience (15.8%, \$60.8M); Improve science-based decision-making (9.2%, \$35.6M); and economic-related projects (6.8%, \$26.1M).

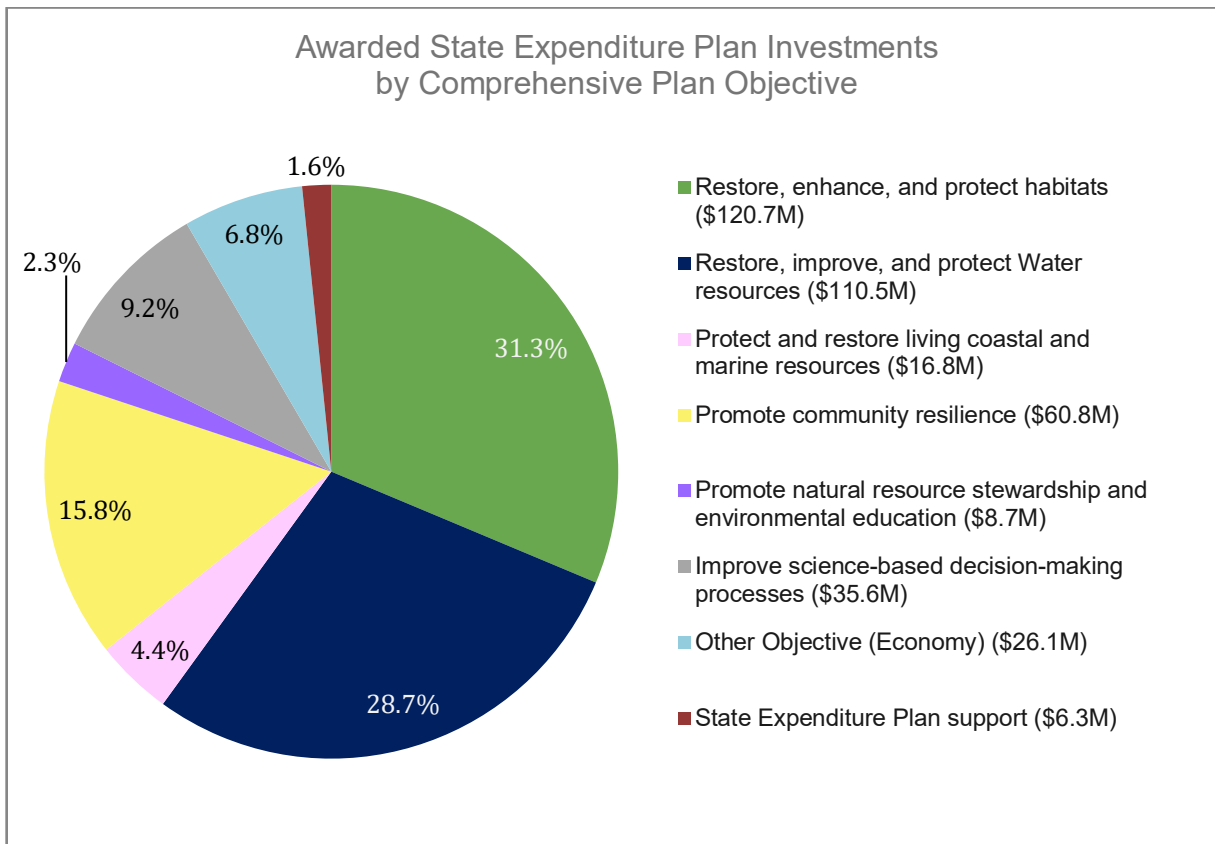


Figure 11. State Expenditure Plans awarded funds by Comprehensive Plan objectives. This figure includes funds awarded to all 5 states as of September, 2022. Note: Unlike for the Council-Selected Restoration Component figures, this figure shows only funds that have actually been awarded to states through grants. State Expenditure Plans may be regularly amended to add, change, or remove projects in order to adapt to changing needs within each state over the lifetime of the program. Therefore, funds for activities approved in SEPs, but not yet awarded to states, are not shown.

6.3 Summary by Performance Metrics

Over its lifetime, the Council will invest over \$3 billion in Gulf Coast ecosystem and economic restoration activities. These investments will not only advance the Council’s vision of a healthy and productive Gulf ecosystem, but also result in diverse scientific and economic data observations which can be used to demonstrate the benefits of Council investments. The RESTORE Council recognizes the importance of comprehensive planning for the collection and compilation of data that can be compared across projects. Comparable data enables reporting at multiple scales, including project- and program-specific scales, as well as potential future larger-scale assessments across the Gulf. Understanding outcomes and impacts will further help to achieve tangible results and ensure that funds are invested in a meaningful way.

Award Recipients are required to monitor the performance of all projects funded by the Council toward ecosystem restoration. In 2021, the Council updated its [Observational Data Plan \(ODP\) Guidelines](#) to provide guidance to the Council’s grant and IAA recipients on the selection of metrics, parameters, and monitoring methodologies for Council funded activities. The Council has currently identified 61 [performance-level metrics](#) that are organized by the Planning Framework restoration approaches and techniques being implemented by a project or program. These metrics are used to monitor and evaluate the efficacy of projects and programs in meeting the mission goals and objectives of the Council and track annual performance. Based on the Council’s 2019 Submission Guidelines and 2021 ODP Guidelines, metrics selected should be:

- Objective;
- Quantifiable;
- Accompanied by targets (success criteria);
- Consistent across program activities (e.g., water quality benefits);
- Identified in proposals with details provided in application observational data plans; and
- Able to support the goals and objectives of the program or project.

The FPL and SEP projects funded during fiscal years 2016, through 2022 are already achieving results (Table 9). The metric measurements are provided by the Council’s Goals and subset by Objective. To date, Council funds have been used to acquire 11,604 acres of land and restore 2,003 acres of wetlands and 6,410 acres of non-wetland areas, primarily in support of the Council’s goal to Restore and Conserve Habitat. It should be noted that most land acquisition and improved management practices also have direct connection to improving water quality and quantity. Council funds under the Council-Selected Restoration and Spill Impact Components are being used to restore land, marine habitat, and wetlands (8,636 acres) and remove invasive species (1,617 acres) which support the Council’s goal to Restore and Conserve Habitat. Funds invested through the Council-Selected Restoration and Spill Impact Components are also providing support for research and planning, monitoring activities, outreach and education, and providing economic benefits in support of the Council’s goal to Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy.

Table 9. Performance-level metrics results from projects funded under the Comprehensive Plan Component and Spill-Impact Component Funding. The information in the table summarizes the accomplishments reported by FPL and SEP activities awarded to date. For each metric measure, the associated primary Comprehensive Plan goal, objective, and Planning Framework Restoration Technique are provided.

Goal: Restore and Conserve Habitat

Objective: Restore, Enhance and Protect Habitat – Technique: Land Acquisition

Metric Measure	Total
Acres acquired in fee	11,604
Miles of shoreline acquired	14.5

Objective: Restore, Enhance and Protect Habitat – Technique: Habitat Management and Stewardship

Metric Measure	Total
Agricultural best management practices (BMPs) - Acres under contracts/agreements	38,302
Removal of invasives - Acres restored	1,617
Habitat restoration (non-wetland) - Acres restored	6,410
Wetland restoration - Acres restored	2,003
Habitat restoration - Acres SAV restored	223

Objective: Restore, Enhance and Protect Habitat – Technique: Substrate placement

Metric Measure	Total
Habitat restoration - Oysters habitat (acres)	317

Goal: Restore Water Quality and Quantity

Objective: Restore, Improve and Protect Water Resources – Technique: Agriculture and forest management

Metric Measure	Total
Erosion Control – acres restored to reduce surface and/or stream channel erosion	435

Goal: All

Objective: All – Technique: Planning

Metric Measure	Total
Number of management plans developed	11

Objective: Improve Science-based Decision-Making Processes – Technique: Improve Science-based Decision-Making Processes

Metric Measure	Total
Number of studies used to inform management	47
Number of decision-support tools developed	5

Objective: Improve Science-based Decision-Making Processes – **Technique:** Increase monitoring capacities

Metric Measure	Total
Number of streams/sites being monitored	447
Acres being monitored	13,437*

Objective: Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education – **Technique:** Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education

Metric Measure	Total
Number of people enrolled to implement best management practices	356
Number of users engaged online	7,580
Number of participants that successfully completed training	466

Outreach through promoting natural resource stewardship and environmental education is an important component of the Council’s efforts as shown 7,580 users being engaged with online activities. While much of this work is ongoing, at the end of FY 2022, Council funded activities also resulted in the improvement of management practices on at least 38,302 acres through Best Management Practices (BMPs). The Council is also improving science-based decision-making processes by supporting the completion of 47 studies to inform management and monitoring for 13,437 acres in 447 sites across the Gulf. *Of particular note regarding the number of acres being monitored, Council funds are being used to leverage other monitoring, assessment and data management programs including Louisiana’s 14.6M-acre Adaptive Management Program areas under the overarching umbrella of the System-Wide Assessment and Monitoring Program (SWAMP).

The Council continues to improve its use of ecosystem science, monitoring, and data management to report on the overall success of restoration. As described in the [CMAWG Annual Workplans](#), the Council uses the CMAWG to serve as a forum for the Council to collectively address monitoring and adaptive management topics relevant to multiple Council member agencies, including encouraging compatibility of monitoring and data management procedures used by all members.

Taking advantage of opportunities to build programmatic and science efficiencies, the ODP Guidelines update was collaboratively developed to foster consistency in data collection and management across Gulfwide monitoring efforts. Recommendations were developed in coordination with Gulf restoration funding partners, including the Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) trustees and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), and build off of analyses from the 2015 Initial FPL-funded Council Monitoring and Assessment Program. By fostering comparability and compatibility among robust datasets, this work will enable broader assessments of outcomes, support improvements to ecosystem models, and help address the uncertainties related to restoration, which in turn will inform adaptive management and Council decision-making related to investments.

As shown in Figure 11, the ODP Guidelines use the [2019 Planning Framework](#) priority approaches and techniques to organize recommendations for metrics and parameters and to demonstrate how they will be employed to support the Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives of a funded activity. Utilizing this organization, the Council anticipates that the benefits of its investments will be able to be reported over time, not only at the scale of individual activities but also for particular approaches, techniques, and watersheds.

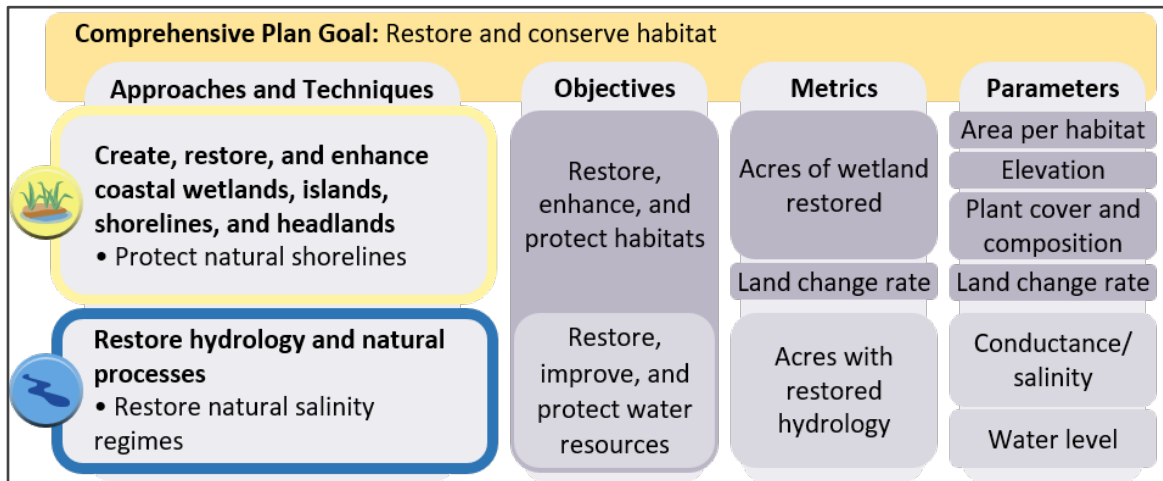


Figure 11. Using an example project, this figure illustrates how selected objectives would be supported by collecting appropriate observational data. In the figure, restoration approaches and techniques are aligned on rows with the objectives they are employed to support, and with metrics for tracking benefits to those objectives. Each metric row aligns with one or more parameters for which data will be collected to enable assessment and reporting

By setting up this kind of logical framework that people can see visually depicted here, the Council has made it easier to conduct informative monitoring of its awards and has set up options for telling a broader story with that data.

Most importantly, metrics must be able to support all of the goals and objectives a project has identified. If a project claims that its objective is to restore habitat, then it has to have some way of tracking the restoration of that habitat. There are of course case-by-case exceptions based on what is feasible for particular projects. Especially with SEP projects, where the members are given more discretion over how funds are to be used, factors are considered that may limit the ability or the need to conduct detailed monitoring.

6.4 Assessment of the Commitment and Planning Support (CPS) FPL

The 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update provided a review of the effectiveness of the CPS FPL, concluding that the Council’s use of a small portion (\$20.8M of 663.9M funding to date) of its total Council-Selected Restoration Component funds to advance its Comprehensive Plan commitments has successfully met the intended purpose.

Some highlights of the collaborative activities and the outcomes of those activities include:

- FPL-focused stakeholder engagement: Some members used funds to meet with stakeholders in their region to discuss priorities and solicit restoration ideas. This included creation of supporting materials such as graphics, questionnaires and surveys, informational handouts, and other visual aids for use in presenting ideas about projects that may be considered for funding in future FPLs. Several states used 2017 CPS FPL funds to conduct meetings, referred to as “summits,” where the public was presented with updates on *Deepwater Horizon* restoration efforts through current restoration projects and the announcement of new projects for future funding. Another communication tool being used by members is the maintenance of state-based coastal restoration websites. In addition to the Council’s website (www.restorethegulf.gov), these state websites are resources for the public to gather information on restoration in their area of interest as well as implementation of the [RESTORE Act](#).
- Intra-Council collaboration
 - *Member-to-member meetings*: At different points during the 2020-21 FPL 3 development process, members gathered in small groups to brainstorm on restoration ideas and priorities across the Gulf, and to determine whether there might be any funding partnering opportunities that could be leveraged to create stronger proposals. Some members also established state-based work groups to provide technical assistance, and developed partnerships between states and federal entities to assist with environmental compliance activities.
 - *Pre-proposal Council meetings*: During Year 2 of the CPS awards, members dedicated several two-day Council meetings to discuss FPL project and program ideas as a full group, in order to gauge interest and strengthen the quality of the concepts prior to developing proposals.
 - *Internal Best Available Science (BAS) Review Panel*: This panel was convened after completion of external BAS reviews of FPL 3 proposals by external experts. It leveraged technical expertise across the member agencies in reviewing and responding to these reviews. Responsive to both public comments and Comprehensive Plan commitments, the BAS review process for FPL 3 was enhanced with the inclusion of the internal BAS panel review, which enabled collaborative discussions of project interactions, synergies, benefits, and risks.
 - *Environmental compliance efficiencies*: In order to strengthen the quality and general feasibility of proposals, members used funds to conduct pre-consultation environmental compliance coordination. Through this collaborative process, members determined that existing documentation held by a federal member could be used to meet National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements on some 2021 FPL 3b programs. This expedited funding approvals for certain projects and programs, and avoided both potential process and documentation duplication.
 - *Leveraging Member Agency expertise*: Members used funds to support their staffs’ time to engage in multiple standing internal workgroups related to public engagement, monitoring, and environmental compliance.

7. Administrative Accomplishments

7.1 Financial Summary

Apportionments

The Council is funded in its entirety by the RESTORE Trust Fund and it serves as an expenditure fund to the Trust Fund. It does not receive appropriated funds, and all funding is Category B, mandatory funding. The Council's financial statements reflect the amount of the funds available to and used by the Council. Table 10 shows the Council's trust fund apportionments received in fiscal years 2013-2021. An apportionment is an Office of Management and Budget approved plan on how to spend resources provided by a mandatory appropriation, an annual or supplemental appropriation act, or a continuing resolution, as well as other sources of funding such as a Trust Fund. An apportionment contains the amounts available for obligation and expenditure. It also specifies and limits what obligations and expenditures can be made during specified timeframes. Table 8 shows the Council's trust fund apportionments received in fiscal years 2018 - 2022.

Table 10. Trust Fund Apportionments Received Summary.

Trust Fund Balance (After Sequestration)	Council Selected Administrative Funds (6011)	Council Selected Projects and Programs Funds (6012)	TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN	SPILL IMPACT (6013)
TRUST FUND DEPOSITS	\$24,704,504	\$798,778,950	\$823,483,454	\$778,686,577
Apportionment FY13 -FY18	6,398,400	202,321,137	208,719,537	99,500,001
Apportionment FY19	1,445,181	10,034,211	11,479,392	94,310,000
Apportionment FY20	1,109,447	34,277,021	35,386,468	185,726,644
Apportionment FY21	1,734,224	146,361,378	148,095,602	73,623,810
Apportionment FY22	1,081,530	6,505,857	7,587,387	274,396,619
Total Apportioned	11,768,782	399,499,604	411,268,386	727,557,074
Balance Available in Trust Fund	\$12,935,722	\$399,279,346	\$412,215,068	\$51,129,503

Five-Year Operational Costs Summary

To best serve the communities of the Gulf Coast region, the Council strives to implement the Comprehensive Plan and accomplish the requirements of the RESTORE Act in an effective and efficient manner, at the minimum cost possible in order to maximize the funds available for restoration projects and programs. The Council has managed its fiscal resources through a strategy of incremental growth corresponding to the development of the Council-Selected Restoration Component and Spill Impact Component programs.

Table 11 identifies each fiscal year’s new apportionment for operations, recoveries from prior year obligations, current year and total revenue, funded obligations incurred, the total cost of operations, and carryforward from the prior and current year. Council approval is required for use of carryforward funds if an expense exceeds a certain threshold but has not been included in the approved annual operating budget. In FY 2022, \$1,737,290 in carryforward funds were used to fund interagency agreements for the annual financial audit, procurement, accounting, budget and payroll services, translation services, and GrantSolutions dashboards. In addition, carry-forward funds in the amount of \$161,710 remaining from the \$1.2 million reserved for the Unified Solution (GrantSolutions and PIPER) to replace the Council’s previous electronic grants management system (the Restoration Assistance and Awards Management System) were carried into fiscal year 2022.

In fiscal year 2023 carryforward is planned to be used for Axiom, Administrative contract support, and PIPER maintenance. Excess fiscal year 2022 carry- forward funds will be applied to fiscal year 2023 operational requirements in lieu of requesting new funding from the Trust Fund.

Table 11. Year Revenue and Operational Cost History (dollars in millions)

Council Operational Cost History	Carry-forward from PY	New apportionment	Recoveries from PY obligations	Current year trust fund revenue	Total revenue	Funded obligations incurred	Total Cost of Operations	Carry-forward
FY16 -18*	\$4.24	\$15.68	\$0.39	\$20.31	\$20.49	\$14.39	\$14.57	\$5.92
FY19	\$2.60	\$5.79	\$0.01	\$8.41	\$8.43	\$6.62	\$6.78	\$2.23
FY20	\$2.23	\$6.38	\$0.33	\$8.94	\$8.95	\$7.95	\$6.99	\$2.23
FY21	\$2.23	\$7.64	\$0.02	\$9.89	\$8.73	\$7.14	\$7.71	\$1.74
FY22	\$1.74	\$7.55	\$0.08	\$9.36	\$9.33	\$5.94	\$7.66	\$1.96

*Denotes average costs for this time period

Five Year Operational Cost Trends

Operations costs for the Council (Table 12) have consistently increased each year with three primary cost drivers, salaries and benefits costs, travel, and contracts, and agreements for services, including costs associated with the automated grant system. However, the Council follows an incremental approach to financial management and requests funds for only immediate operational needs.

Table 12. Council’s operating expenses (obligations) incurred for fiscal year 2018 – 2022 by cost category

Fiscal Year	Salaries and Benefits	Contract and IAAs	Travel	Equipment/ Grant System	Supplies, Printing and Misc.	Rent, Communications Utilities
2018	\$2.998	\$2.184	\$0.210	\$0.022	\$0.028	\$0.006
2019	\$3.513	\$2.783	\$0.280	\$0.019	\$0.015	\$0.011
2020	\$4.188	\$3.415	\$0.119	\$0.204	\$0.007	\$0.012
2021	\$4.049	\$2.866	\$0.025	\$0.131	\$0.006	\$0.061
2022	\$4.277	\$3.044	\$0.082	\$0.190	\$0.024	\$0.058

The Council increases staff commensurate with the maturation of operations. For FY 2022, the number of full-time equivalents (FTE), and Council staff positions increased to 24 FTE. Higher operating expenses in fiscal year 2022 were the result of a 6% increase in salaries and benefits, as well as 6% increase in Contracts and IAA’s for essential agency support functions. Travel increased by 228% in FY 2022, reflective of the resumption of travel after the lifting of COVID travel restrictions.

Administrative Expenses

The RESTORE Act specifies that of the Council-Selected Restoration Component amounts received by the Council, not more than 3% of the funds may be used for administrative expenses, including staff. This is further detailed in the Treasury regulation implementing the Act at 31 CFR §34.204(b), “Limitations on administrative costs and administrative expenses” (as amended September 28, 2016), which provides that “Of the amounts received by the Council under the Comprehensive Plan [Council-Selected Restoration] Component, not more than three percent may be used for administrative expenses. The three percent limit is applied to the amounts it receives under the Comprehensive Plan [Council-Selected Restoration] Component before the termination of the Trust Fund. Amounts used for administrative expenses may not at any time exceed three percent of the total of the amounts received by the Council and the amounts in the Trust Fund that are allocated to, but not yet received by the Council under § 34.103.”

The Council worked with OMB to segregate administrative expense funds through the apportionment process. The Treasury regulation implementing the Act at 34 CFR § 34.2 provides the definition of administrative expenses that guides the Council in properly classifying certain expenses as administrative and the remaining categories of expenses as programmatic.

The Council oversees projects and programs during the post-award period. Since the Council will cease operations upon the expenditure of all funds available from the Trust Fund, a long-term forecast for its administrative and operational expenses is developed based on the projected closeout date of all awards. Based on the Consent Decree payment schedule and the projected closeout timeframe for awards, Council operations have been projected through 2042 to ensure that operational costs are managed in a fiscally prudent manner throughout the life of the program. This analysis projects that the cumulative administrative expense will be approximately \$49.2M which is less than the \$49.4M that will be available for such expenses from the aggregate current and future deposits into the Trust Fund (not including

accrued interest).

Table 13 shows the funds deposited as of September 30, 2022, for the Council-Selected Restoration component, and the amount of funds available for administrative expenses. The amount apportioned for administrative expenses is well below the amount of administrative funds available in the Trust Fund, which is equal to 3% of the total funds apportioned for the Council-Selected Restoration Component. Of the \$828.7M, including interest, deposited into the Trust Fund for the Comprehensive Plan component, \$823.5M was made available. Due to sequestration, \$5.1 million was withheld in FY 2022 but was included in the current deposit amount. Of the \$24.7M available for administrative expenses, \$12.9M remains in the trust fund. Overall, 49% of the available administrative funds have been apportioned which equates to 1.5% of the total available trust funds.

Table 13. Status of 3% Administrative Expense Funds (as of 09/30/2022)

Amount Available	\$828,672,420
Minus Sequestration for 2022	\$5,188,966
Total Amount Available	\$823,483,454
Administrative Expense Funds Available (Total Amount Available x 3%)	\$24,704,504
Minus Total Administrative Funds Apportioned through 2022	\$11,768,782
Balance of Administrative Funds Remaining in the Trust Fund	\$12,935,722

7.2 Grants Management

Grants and Data Systems

RESTORE Council staff follow all federal financial laws and regulations, including the adoption of standardized data structures under the Grants Reporting Efficiency and Agreement Transparency Act of 2019 (GREAT Act), which continue to be refined over time. To address these anticipated changes, the Council intentionally selected a shared federal service provider, the Health and Human Services (HHS) GrantSolutions system, to manage grant and IAA award data. In addition, the Council’s Program Information Platform for Ecosystem Restoration (PIPER) system, which was developed under a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), to collect, store and manage scientific and programmatic data that GrantSolutions is not designed to handle, is customizable as needed to address standardized data structures and requirements as these are developed and refined. On March 16, 2020, the Council deployed this “unified solution” after ensuring a complete migration of key award data to each system.

Data collected for Council-funded activities can only be useful for reporting and evaluation if users are able to find the data, assess its utility, and understand how it was generated. To address the need to house scientific programmatic data, the Council deployed the Program Information Platform for Ecosystem Restoration (PIPER) in FY 2020, developed in partnership with the USGS. PIPER will support the Council staff with the review of project/program proposals and applications, and track their continued progress toward meeting project/program goals and objectives.

To help award recipients navigate through the RESTORE Council's data and reporting systems, the Council developed the [RESTORE Council Grants Management System Portal](#). The Portal went live in 2021. It is not an application in itself, but rather is a landing page with a series of links and an overview of guidance on grants processes. The portal page was added to streamline recipient access to guidance.

Further, to enhance current and future use of data, Council staff and partners developed the Council [Metadata Records Library and Information Network \(MERLIN\)](#) in 2018. MERLIN is an online metadata records tool developed in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey and NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information. MERLIN houses metadata records that describe information about data. The development of this tool supports the Council's 2018 approval of the use of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 19115 metadata standard for all Council funded projects to promote consistency in the data collection for Council-funded activities.

Risk Mitigation, Compliance, and Oversight Monitoring

All grant and IAA applications undergo a rigorous review by RESTORE grant and program staff for compliance with two CFR 200, environmental laws, other statutory requirements, and best available science. All issues identified are collaboratively resolved with the applicant using a team approach. In FY 2022, a total of 23 awards and 41 award amendments were processed (32 non-monetary and 9 monetary).

The Council compliance/oversight program is built upon understanding and assessing risk. The annual compliance/oversight plan was developed and successfully implemented Council staff. Almost 200 financial reports were reviewed in FY 2022. A 100% review of Florida Gulf Consortium payments was completed, comprising over 20 reviews of payment documentation with each of these completed within 30 days of submission. On-site financial compliance reviews were conducted with the Florida Gulf Consortium and Louisiana. In addition, desk reviews of payment documentation were conducted for four grants and three IAAs.

To mitigate risk and improve the efficient application of limited monitoring resources, the Council staff developed and implemented the Grants Monitoring Risk Analysis and Screening Tool in FY 2020 to evaluate the potential need for additional oversight for each Council award. This tool articulates a number of risk factors that could affect the Council's assistance awards and assigns weights to these risk factors based on likelihood and impact. The tool pulls in available data from the Council's grant system for each award and collects the assessment of Council grant specialists. The tool provides an overall weighted risk score for each award that facilitates targeted selection of awards for advanced monitoring. In accordance with the RESTORE Council's Technical Oversight Procedures (revised April 2020), Council staff developed a monitoring plan and schedule for FY 2022. Using the Grant Monitoring Risk Analysis and Screening Tool, a natural cluster of awards and agreements with an overall weighted risk score of 4.1 or above was identified, which were then reviewed for additional factors such as, but not limited to, whether they were at the end of the period of performance, whether they had received advanced monitoring in the previous year, any issues that had been identified for the award or the recipient, and other considerations.

Award oversight and monitoring must be responsive to evolving program needs, manageable in scope, cognizant of risk factors and strategic in order to be successful and efficient while being in sync with changing project schedules. These oversight interactions serve as collaborative opportunities for staff to

provide technical assistance to Council members during implementation and for members to share challenges, lessons learned and their successes along the way as they are encountered during both restoration planning and implementation.

7.3 Enterprise Risk Management

Audits of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

Three Treasury Office of Inspector General (TOIG) audits were completed during FY 2022 with no findings related to financial management in accordance with accounting principles; no deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting considered material weaknesses; and no instances of reportable noncompliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements tested. Similarly, the Council's information security program and practices were found to be effective, and there were no findings under the Payment Integrity Information Act audit. The IPERA Review found that the Council was compliant with all of the applicable requirements set forth in PART IV-A.3 of Appendix C to OMB Circular No. A-123, Requirements for Payment Integrity Improvement (OMB M-18-20) and the Charge Card Assessment found that the overall risk of illegal, improper, or erroneous purchases and payments in the Council's charge card program was low and in the convenience check program was also very low.

The following is a summary of TOIG audits closed during FY 2022 along with a brief summary of findings:

Closed TOIG Audits during FY 2022:

- Management and Performance Challenges for FY 2022 (OIG-CA-22-001) was completed October 8, 2021, noting three challenges: Loss of key leadership from the retirement of the CFO and Executive Director; Federal Statutory and Regulatory Compliance; and Grant and Interagency Agreement Monitoring. The actions resulting from this audit were supporting documentation from RAAMS was uploaded into GrantSolutions for individual awards by the end of FY 2022 along with information compiled on the Agency's Google Drive.
- Information Technology: The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 Evaluation Report for Fiscal Year 2022 was completed on August 2022 (OIG-CA-22-018) and found the Council's information security program and practices were effective.
- Payment Integrity Information Act (PIIA) Audit (OIG-22-034) was completed on June 7, 2022, with two findings, including: The Council did not provide payment integrity data to OMB during the annual data call in accordance with OMB A-123 Appendix C and OMB A-136; and The Council did not include Improper Payments in its improper payment risk assessment methodology. In response, the Council stated it will use the findings of the audit report to improve its reporting and compliance with PIAA, and continue to work diligently to comply with the requirements of the law, to adhere to OMB's guidance and to prevent, reduce and recover improper payments in the Council's programs.
- Financial Statement Audit (OIG-CA-23-008) was completed November 16, 2022, and found the financial statements were fairly presented, in all material respects, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Further, no deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting that are considered material weaknesses; and no instances of reportable noncompliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements tested.

In addition to the TOIG audits, the Council is also subject to audit and/or testing reviews from other agencies which include the following:

- RC Annual Purchase Card Audit was completed with no findings.

Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)

The Council complies with the requirements of OMB Circular A-123 Management's Responsibility for Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) and Internal Controls, as well as Improper Payments and Elimination and Recovery Act (IPERA), the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards), the President's Management Agenda, etc., as well as internally generated ERM requirements. The Council has established an ERM governance structure that begins with specific oversight responsibility assigned to the Audit Committee. The Executive Director is delegated responsibility for implementation and oversight of the ERM program and in turn, has assigned program development and execution responsibilities to the CFO/Director of Administration. The Executive Director has designated the Director of Administration as the agency Chief Risk Officer who is supported directly by a risk management specialist. Risk management and internal controls are managed by staff within finance, budget, and IT; compliance, and internal controls are integrated into all elements of the organization.

The Council has implemented an integrated internal control framework to govern its operations, reporting, and compliance and is currently developing its risk mitigation strategies, metrics, performance indicators, monitoring, analytics, communication, and remediation.

In the FY 2022 Risk Profile update, the main focus for Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) was the top seven critical risks. Each risk was reviewed and it was determined that effective controls were in place. The Council continues to closely monitor the top seven risks and implement mitigation activities with the continued refinement and development of the Council Post-Award Grant/IAA Monitoring process and continued internal controls testing. The Council's "17 Principles of Internal Control Checklist" was updated in FY21. This annual checklist update is critical to demonstrate how the Council meets the requirements outlined in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) Green Book and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A123.

7.4 Other Administrative Updates

Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA)

The Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 (FISMA) requires federal agencies to have an annual independent evaluation performed of their information security program and practices to determine the effectiveness of such program and practices, and to report the results of the evaluations to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OMB delegated its responsibility to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for the collection of annual FISMA responses. DHS prepared the FISMA questionnaire to collect these responses (FISMA Reporting Metrics). Applicable OMB policy and guidelines, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) standards and guidelines were also considered.

A successful FISMA audit was achieved for the FY 2022, which requires each Federal agency to develop, document, and implement an agency-wide program to provide information security for the information

and systems that support the operations and assets of the agency, including those provided or managed by another agency, contractor, or other sources.

Freedom of Information Act Requests (FOIA)

During FY 2022, Council staff received five Freedom of Information Requests (FOIA). The average number of days needed to respond to these requests was one day. No funds were collected from the requesters.

8. Centers of Excellence Accomplishments

Background

The RESTORE Act dedicates 2.5 percent of the Trust Fund to the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program, administered by the Department of Treasury. These funds may be used to establish Centers of Excellence and by those Centers of Excellence, for science, technology, and monitoring in one or more of the following disciplines:

- Coastal and deltaic sustainability, restoration, and protection, including solutions and technology that allow citizens to live in a safe and sustainable manner in a coastal delta in the Gulf Coast region;
- Coastal fisheries and wildlife ecosystem research and monitoring in the Gulf Coast region;
- Offshore energy development, including research and technology to improve the sustainable and safe development of energy resources in the Gulf of Mexico;
- Sustainable and resilient growth, economic and commercial development in the Gulf Coast region; and
- Comprehensive observation, monitoring, and mapping of the Gulf of Mexico.

The RESTORE Act specifies who may apply to receive funds under the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program. The following are the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program eligible applicants for each state:

- In Alabama, the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council or such administrative agent as it may designate;
- In Florida, the Florida Institute of Oceanography;
- In Louisiana, the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board of Louisiana through the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana;
- In Mississippi, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality; and
- In Texas, the Office of the Governor or an appointee of the Office of the Governor.

Pursuant to the RESTORE Act, each Center of Excellence provides an annual report to the RESTORE Council with information regarding all grants, including the amount, discipline or disciplines, and recipients of the grants, and in the case of any grant awarded to a consortium, the membership of the consortium. This information is to be included in the Council's Annual Report to Congress. As of the date of this report, five Centers of Excellence have been established. Following are summaries of the activities from each program; Full annual reports for FY 2022 from each [Center of Excellence](#) are provided on the Council's website.

8.1 Alabama's RESTORE Act Center of Excellence

In 2015 the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council (AGCRC) selected the Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (MESC) at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) to be the home for Alabama's Center of Excellence (ALCOE). The Alabama MESC is comprised of 23 public and private colleges and universities located throughout Alabama from the mountains to the coast: Alabama A&M University, Alabama State University, Athens State University, Auburn University, Auburn University at Montgomery, Birmingham-

Southern College, Huntingdon College, Jacksonville State University, Judson College, Samford University, Spring Hill College, Stillman College, Talladega College, Troy University, Tuskegee University, The University of Alabama, University of Mobile, the University of Montevallo, the Universities of North Alabama, South Alabama, and West Alabama. The MESC was founded to focus resources and reduce redundancy in Marine Sciences in higher education while serving as a vehicle for collaborative coastal studies. Dauphin Island Sea Lab was founded in 1972, a former Air Force Base. Please see <https://www.disl.edu/about/our-history> for a history of DISL's facilities, science, and personnel. The Dauphin Island Sea Lab's mission is to become a center for transformative U.S. oceanic and coastal research and education.

The mission of the AL Center of Excellence is to provide citizens and officials access to the findings of innovative research and information related to Mobile Bay and Alabama Coastal Waters.

Focus of the COE

The ALCOE is focused on RESTORE Act Priority Disciplines 1,2,4, and 5, highlighted below.

- Coastal and deltaic sustainability, restoration and protection, including solutions and technology that allow citizens to live in a safe and sustainable manner in a coastal delta in the Gulf Coast region;
- Coastal fisheries and wildlife ecosystem research and monitoring in the Gulf Coast region;
- Sustainable and resilient growth, economic and commercial development in the Gulf of Mexico; and
- Comprehensive observation, monitoring, and mapping of the Gulf of Mexico.

Summary of the annual performance of the COE

Of the 17 milestones outlined in the Alabama Center of Excellence Federal Award, two (2) were completed in 2022 and seven (7) are ongoing. Completed milestones included RFP issuance, proposal evaluation, and subaward execution related to [ALCOE RFP #1](#). Ten (10) proposals were selected for funding related to ALCOE RFP#1 totaling a dedication of over \$ 4 million to research. The awards are listed below. The duration of the research portion of each project is approximately three (3) years. Late 2022/Early 2023 marks year one (Y1) of the research related to these 10 projects.

8.2 Florida's RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence

In 2022 the Florida RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Program (FLRACEP) began the process of putting together a 5-year strategic plan to include new competitive requests for proposals focused on RESTORE disciplines related to wildlife ecosystem research and monitoring, restoration, and comprehensive ecosystem observing, monitoring, and mapping.

Chief Scientist, Dr. Raineault, who joined as Program Manager for FLRACEP in October 2021, reviewed FLRACEP's history and achievements, and strategized the research approach with the Program Management Team, considering the CERGP's across the Gulf and other RESTORE and Gulf resiliency-focused programs. The Annual All Hands Meeting in January included the Centers of Excellence leads reporting on their research progress, lively knowledge gap assessment discussions, and presentations by each of the Gulf state Centers of Excellence leads. FLRACEP organized a meeting at GOMCON to further the discussion of the restoration impacts knowledge gap, which was raised as an important research

opportunity of interest Gulfwide. This was developed into RFP IV and was released in July. Award decisions were made in November and pending Treasury's acceptance of an application to fund these new Centers of Excellence, research will begin in spring 2023. The Centers will work with end-users in all phases of their programs to contribute new knowledge about restored ecosystems and inform future restoration practices.

A new financial and administrative team joined FIO early in 2022, with Ms. Kelsey Wilkinson (Manager, Fiscal and Business) and Ms. Lauren Taylor (Fiscal and Business Specialist) taking on financial and administrative support for FLRACEP. Staff continue to monitor RFP II, III, and III.5, while working on an amendment to the current Treasury grant and a new grant application. In addition, FIO convened a Science Review Panel for the RFP II Center of Excellence, which is focused on the development of a long-term fisheries monitoring timeseries and technology development. The favorable review and subsequent decision by the Program Management Team continued funding for the program.

The Office of Gulf Coast Restoration has obligated over \$8.8M to the FLRACEP program funding four RFPs since the inception of the program.

8.3 Louisiana's RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence

The second Request for Proposals cycle (RFP2 cycle) of the RESTORE Act Center of Excellence for Louisiana (LA-COE) involves managing four Graduate Studentship awards and four Research Awards. During FY 2022, a semi-annual webinar was held in April, a RESTORE Act Center of Excellence session was hosted at the Gulf of Mexico Conference (GoMCon) in April, and an All-hands meeting and Executive Committee meeting were held in August. Research subrecipients also submitted their first performance progress report (PPR) in February and the second one in August. The details of those awards, results, reports, and any available data, as well as how this research can inform the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Coastal Master Plan is routinely updated on the LA-COE RFP2 cycle webpage: <https://thewaterinstitute.org/la-coe/funded-research-rfp2>.

8.4 Mississippi's RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence

Brief Description of the selected COE

In February 2015, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) made available for public comment for 45 days a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) describing the competitive selection process, rules, and policies. MDEQ prepared the draft RFP in accordance with state law and in compliance with 31 C.F.R. §34.700-708. Notice of the public comment and review period for the draft RFP was published in the Sun Herald and Clarion Ledger newspapers as well as online at www.restore.ms. After consideration of meaningful input from the public, a final RFP was published in April 2015. Notice of availability of the final RFP was published in the Sun Herald and Clarion Ledger newspapers on April 6, 2015, and April 13, 2015, as well as online at www.restore.ms. The deadline to submit proposals was May 7, 2015. As a result of the Final RFP, MDEQ received two proposals. After reviewing the proposals according to the qualifications and criteria described above, the Mississippi Based Restore Act Center of Excellence (MBRACE) was selected. MBRACE is a consortium of four Mississippi universities - Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, University of Mississippi and University of Southern Mississippi. The University of Southern Mississippi serves as the lead university for the consortium.

Overview of focus of the COE

The focus of MBRACE, a consortium of Mississippi's research universities, is a sound, comprehensive science- and technology-based understanding of the chronic and acute stressors, both anthropogenic and natural, on the dynamic and productive waters and ecosystems of the northern Gulf. The goals of MBRACE are: (1) serve as a focal point for new, long-term research and socioeconomic initiatives along the northern Gulf with relevance to Mississippi's resources; (2) serve the people of Mississippi and the northern Gulf Coast region with a scientifically based understanding of ecosystem status and trends (past to present, predictive) with special emphasis on improved forecasting abilities to ensure sustainable coastal and ocean ecosystems of the Gulf; and (3) work within a consortium of stakeholders including Mississippi's research universities under the Mississippi Research Consortium, state and federal agencies, local communities, private industry, and non-governmental organizations.

8.5 Texas' RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence

As the Texas Governor's appointee to the RESTORE Council, Executive Director of the TCEQ has established two Centers of Excellence in Texas in accordance with the requirements set forth in the RESTORE Act and U.S. Treasury regulations.

Texas OneGulf

The mission of the Texas OneGulf (OG) Center of Excellence is to gather and improve knowledge about the Gulf of Mexico to inform decision-making around the challenges to environmental and economic sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico and its impact on the health and well-being of Texans and the nation. Texas OneGulf is designed with the capacity and flexibility to address all five disciplines denoted in Section 1605 of RESTORE. For this reporting period, OG was awarded funding and has begun activities on one project which is currently active and has two projects pending. Highlights for this reporting period include activities associated with the one on-going project, Geospatial Framework and Analysis for Coastal Resilience, for the South Texas Coastal Bend area, as well as preparation for additional projects that are expected to commence soon.

Subsea Systems Institute

The Subsea Systems Institute (SSI) is a Center of Excellence formed under the Restore Act and represents a collaboration between the University of Houston, Rice University and NASA/Johnson Space Center. The mission of SSI is to improve the safety and efficiency of offshore energy development by conducting translational engineering and technology development for offshore energy production. The key outcomes from the work of the SSI are:

- Unbiased third-party validation to build public trust in the safety and operation of offshore energy production;
- Deployment of advantaged safest technologies for offshore energy development to ensure safety and operational excellence in offshore applications;
- The attraction of talent for jobs and investment in the local, state, and national economy reinforce Houston and the State of Texas's reputation as the Energy Capital of the World.

For this reporting period, SSI has completed work on six projects and have begun activities related to additional projects expected to start later this year.

Appendices

Appendix A – Council-Selected Restoration Component Activities Funded During FY 2022

Project Title: Perdido River Land Conservation & Habitat Enhancements

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: \$10,146,173 – 2020 FPL 3a

Federal Award ID Number: GT3CP22AL0001

Award Date: 12/1/2021

End Date: 11/30/2026

Project Description: The proposed program consists of the acquisition and management of approximately 10,000-12,000 acres in the Perdido Watershed, located in Baldwin County, AL. The initial activity proposes to acquire and place into state conservation management approximately 2,684 acres, with an additional 8,000-10,000 acres to be acquired in future amendments. The parcel contemplated is currently in silviculture use. ADCNR has been engaged in conversation with a landowner about potential acquisition of an approximately 2,684-acre parcel, located within an area known as the Magnolia South Tract. Upon acquisition, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) would conduct habitat management and stewardship activities, which could include prescribed burning, invasive species removal, longleaf pine restoration, and protection and habitat enhancements for species including the gopher tortoise. Acquired land would become part of the Perdido Wildlife Management Area and be accessible to the public for recreational use.

Project Title: Florida Strategic Gulf Coast Land Acquisition Program (Planning & Implementation)

Council Member: State of Florida, Department of Environmental Protection

Award Amount: \$14,000,000 – 2021 FPL 3b

Federal Award ID Number: GT3CP22FL0002

Award Date: 3/1/2022

End Date: 9/30/2031

Project Description: The RESTORE Council has approved \$14M as FPL Category 1 planning and implementation activities in Council-Selected Restoration Component funding for the Florida Strategic Gulf Coast Land Acquisition Program, sponsored by Florida, through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). The program supports the primary RESTORE Comprehensive Plan goal to restore and conserve habitat through a suite of linked activities to increase conserved and protected State owned or managed lands by 10,000 to 20,000 acres. Program activities include implementation of land acquisitions, partnering with the existing Florida Forever Program, Florida's premier conservation and recreation lands acquisition program. The program will utilize the Florida Forever priority list to identify parcels for acquisition; parcels on the Florida Forever priority list are ranked using a thorough scientific review and a comprehensive natural resource analysis. FDEP will target lands draining into the Gulf of Mexico that are in the Florida Forever Critical Natural Lands and Climate Change Lands categories or other Florida Forever parcels with similar attributes. Land acquisitions could include both fee simple acquisition and conservation easements from willing sellers. Program activities are intended to result in environmental benefits to Florida's natural resources and ecosystems by protecting critical habitats,

preserving native biodiversity and ecosystem function, mitigating sea level rise, flooding, and other current and future risks to coastal communities. Program duration is 10 years.

Project Title: Florida Water Quality Improvement Program (Planning)

Council Member: State of Florida, Department of Environmental Protection

Award Amount: \$6,750,000 – 2021 FPL 3b Federal Award ID Number: GT3CP22FL0003

Award Date: 6/16/2022 End Date: 6/30/2032

Project Description: The RESTORE Council has approved 6.75M for planning as FPL Category 1 Council-Selected Restoration Component funding for the Florida Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP), sponsored by Florida, through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). In addition, the Council is also identifying a separate \$20.25M implementation component as a FPL Category 2 priority for potential future funding. The program supports the primary RESTORE Comprehensive Plan goal to restore water quality and quantity throughout the Florida Gulf Coast by underwriting a suite of linked, high-priority water quality improvement projects. Projects may include stormwater treatment, wastewater reuse, septic tank abatement, sediment reduction, and land acquisition. Planning and implementation projects in Florida watersheds that drain to the Gulf of Mexico will be considered.

The WQIP activities are intended to 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 WQIP framework allows 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 duration is 10 years.

Project Title: Florida Gulf Coast Resiliency Program (Planning)

Council Member: State of Florida, Department of Environmental Protection

Award Amount: \$5,600,000 – 2021 FPL 3b Federal Award ID Number: GT3CP22FL0004

Award Date: 6/16/2022 End Date: 9/30/2031

Project Description: The RESTORE Council has approved \$5.6M for planning activities as FPL Category 1 Council-Selected Restoration Component funding for the Florida Gulf Coast Resiliency Program, sponsored by Florida, through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). In addition, the Council is also identifying a separate \$8.4M implementation component as an FPL Category 2 priority for potential future funding. The program will support the primary RESTORE Comprehensive Plan goal to enhance community resilience through activities to identify vulnerabilities and implement sustainable solutions to improve coastal resiliency. Activities include vulnerability assessments to identify strategies to improve resiliency; living shorelines to protect against erosion and reduce wave energy; and coastal and submerged lands management and acquisition activities to protect habitats that enhance resiliency. The FDEP will partner with the Florida Forever Program to identify acquisitions with the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection on vulnerability assessments and submerged lands management activities. Developing strategies to address resiliency is critical to Florida’s ability to adapt to a changing coastline.

This program will result in environmental benefits such as resiliency improvements, protections against wave energy and storm surge, habitat protection (e.g., marshes, mangroves, seagrass, coral, and oyster reefs), sustaining healthy wildlife populations, water quality benefits, recreation and tourism opportunities, and fisheries benefits. Program duration is 10 years.

Project Title: Florida Gulf Coast Tributaries Hydrologic Restoration Program (Planning)

Council Member: State of Florida, Department of Environmental Protection

Award Amount: \$3,437,500 – 2021 FPL 3b

Federal Award ID Number: GT3CP22FL0006

Award Date: 9/9/2022

End Date: 8/31/2032

Project Description: The RESTORE Council has approved \$3.44M in planning activities as FPL Category 1 in Council-Selected Restoration Component funding for the Florida Gulf Coast Tributaries Hydrologic Restoration Program (THRP) sponsored by Florida, through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). In addition, the Council is also identifying a separate \$10.31M implementation component as an FPL Category 2 priority for potential future funding. The THRP supports the primary RESTORE Comprehensive Plan goal to restore water quality and quantity throughout the Florida Gulf Coast by underwriting a comprehensive suite of linked, high-priority hydrologic improvement projects. Examples include canal plugging, restoring natural dimensions of tidal passes/inlets, restoring/reconnecting wetlands, installing erosion control or water control structures, etc. Planning and implementation projects proposed in Florida watersheds that drain to the Gulf of Mexico will be considered under this program.

The THRP will improve flow regime dynamics, nutrient cycling, salinity gradients, wildlife habitat and biodiversity, recreational experiences, and may help reduce algal blooms and fish kills. The THRP framework will allow for administration of project funding that targets projects providing cumulative benefits to the Gulf and link environmental benefits between selected 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 duration is 10 years.

Project Title: Texas Land Acquisition Program for Coastal Conservation (Planning and Implementation)

Council Member: State of Texas, Commission on Environmental Quality

Award Amount: \$24,300,000 – 2021 FPL 3b

Federal Award ID Number: GT3CP22TX0005

Award Date: 9/9/2022

End Date: 8/31/2026

Project Description: The RESTORE Council has approved \$24.3M in planning and implementation activities as FPL Category 1 Council-Selected Restoration Component funding for the Texas Land Acquisition Program for Coastal Conservation sponsored by Texas, through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). The program supports the primary RESTORE Comprehensive Plan goal to restore and conserve habitat through activities to acquire large, high-quality coastal zone properties in Texas. Locations will be selected based on greatest value to the coastal environment now and in the future considering the pressures of development. Targeted habitats will include urban green corridors, riparian, prairie and other upland, wooded wetlands, or bay and chenier wetlands. Potential partners for the program may include The Nature Conservancy, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Galveston Bay

Foundation, Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program, as well as other possible state and local governments. The program will utilize specified criteria for selecting projects that were identified earlier through public meetings and as part of a stakeholder process and in discussions between the RESTORE appointee and the Office of the Governor.

This program will conserve valuable land as habitat and provide natural buffers to flooding and erosion, decreasing the need for habitat destroying hard engineering projects while providing valuable ecosystem services. Program duration is expected to be 4 years.

Project Title: Wind-Tidal Flat Restoration Pilot (Planning & Implementation)

Council Member: U.S. Department of the Interior

Award Amount: \$321,000 – 2021 FPL 3b

Federal Award ID Number: IA3CP22CM0003

Award Date: 6/1/2022

End Date: 6/30/2024

Project Description: The RESTORE Council has approved \$321K in Council-Selected Restoration Component funding for the Wind-Tidal Flat Restoration Pilot project in support of decommissioning of onshore orphaned energy facilities. The sponsor is the U.S. Department of the Interior, on behalf of the U.S. National Park Services (NPS). This includes \$21K in planning and \$300K in implementation funds as FPL Category 1. Building on investments made in the Council’s 2015 Initial FPL, the project will support the primary RESTORE Comprehensive Plan goal to restore and conserve habitat in coastal Texas, including Padre Island National Seashore. The Wind-Tidal Flat Restoration Pilot Project will test various restoration techniques and assess the efficacy and cost effectiveness of those techniques. The wind-tidal flat areas at Padre Island National Seashore are significant in that they protect portions of the largest freshwater wetland in Texas, conserve protected species, and provide wintering habitat for millions of migratory birds. However, impacts from previous energy exploration have impaired these important habitats. This project will lead to the restoration and improved resiliency for 5 acres of Gulf wind-tidal flat habitat and will provide lessons learned that can be applied to other tidal flat sites in need of restoration. Project duration is 2.5 years although key information will be gained within the first year of field work implementation.

Project Title: Develop Ecological Flow Decision-Support for Mobile River & Perdido River Basins

Council Member: U.S. Department of the Interior

Award Amount: \$3,400,000 – 2021 FPL 3b

Federal Award ID Number: IA3CP22CM0002

Award Date: 5/5/2022

End Date: 4/14/2026

Project Description: The RESTORE Council has approved \$321K in Council-Selected Restoration Component funding for the Wind-Tidal Flat Restoration Pilot project in support of decommissioning of onshore orphaned energy facilities. The sponsor is the U.S. Department of the Interior, on behalf of the U.S. National Park Services (NPS). This includes \$21K in planning and \$300K in implementation funds as FPL Category 1. Building on investments made in the Council’s 2015 Initial FPL, the project will support the primary RESTORE Comprehensive Plan goal to restore and conserve habitat in coastal Texas, including Padre Island National Seashore. The Wind-Tidal Flat Restoration Pilot Project will test various restoration techniques and assess the efficacy and cost effectiveness of those techniques. The wind-tidal flat areas at

Padre Island National Seashore are significant in that they protect portions of the largest freshwater wetland in Texas, conserve protected species, and provide wintering habitat for millions of migratory birds. However, impacts from previous energy exploration have impaired these important habitats. This project will lead to the restoration and improved resiliency for 5 acres of Gulf wind-tidal flat habitat and will provide lessons learned that can be applied to other tidal flat sites in need of restoration. Project duration is 2.5 years although key information will be gained within the first year of field work implementation.

Appendix B - SEP Activities Funded During FY 2022

Project Title: SEP #10: Bayou La Batre Collection System/Lift Station Upgrades

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: \$13,189,150

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22AL0031

Award Date: 12/17/2021

End Date: 12/16/2025

Project Description: This 42-month project includes planning, engineering and design and construction required to rehabilitate the collection system and lift stations in Bayou La Batre, Alabama. Aligned with the Comprehensive Plan goal to restore water quality, implementation of this project will result in fewer overflows and an overall reduction of contaminants into local soils and waters. The collection system includes 22 lift stations needing upgrades to the structures, pumps, and controls along with the installation of auxiliary backup pumps to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows throughout the collection system. The upgrades will involve installing larger lift station pumps with controls and installing by-pass lift station pumps instead of generators. The collection system rehabilitation is over fifteen miles of collection system that is exhibiting high infiltration and inflow. The collection system is recommended to be slip lined, which the method used for I&I reduction less than five years ago on other areas of the collection system. The environmental benefit is reduced infiltration and inflow and reduction of sanitary sewer overflows into highly sensitive waters of the State of Alabama.

With a grant award of \$13,189,150, the Mobile County Commission will manage all design, permit compliance and construction elements of this project.

Project Title: SEP #29 - Planning Grant to Amend State Expenditure Plan 2021

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: \$267,276

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22AL0033

Award Date: 1/13/2022

End Date: 6/30/2025

Project Description: Planning assistance, in the amount of \$ 267,276.00, will be used to support ADCNR in the identification and evaluation of projects, programs, and activities and the development of two State Expenditure Plan (SEP) amendments for funding from Alabama's Spill Impact Component allocation. Over a three-year period, planning activities will include adding contingency funding for existing projects and identifying and evaluating potential projects, programs, and activities for eligibility; development of project components; review of budget reasonableness and feasibility; and stakeholder and public engagement. Activities will also include the development of two SEP amendments, oversight and management, coordination activities with the RESTORE Council, as well as the development, coordination and execution of the grant applications/award/amendments between ADCNR and RESTORE Council and pass-through sub-awards.

Project Title: SEP #24: Storm Water Management Improvements for Toulmin Springs Branch and Gum Tree Branch

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: \$1,222,744

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22AL0032

Award Date: 2/8/2022

End Date: 4/30/2024

Project Description: With \$1,222,744 of funding under a subaward agreement with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Mobile County Commission will oversee development of engineering plans, specifications and pre-construction documents to guide future implementation of environmental restoration and drainage improvement projects in Toulmin Springs and Gum Tree Branch. These activities will address stressors affecting water quality, localized flooding and stream/riparian habitats degradation in the sub-watersheds, contributing to healthier and sustainable ecosystem service delivery. Specifically, the planning documents will inform construction projects designed to improve water quality and reduce incidences of urban flooding in parts of Toulmin Springs Branch and Gum Tree Branch in the cities of Mobile and Prichard, Alabama. Toulmin Springs Branch is a sub-watershed of Three Mile Creek watershed, and Gum Tree Branch is a sub-watershed of Eight Mile Creek watershed.

This two-year planning activity is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan goals of restoring and protecting water quality of the Gulf Coast region's fresh, estuarine, and marine water.

Project Title: SEP #26: Little Lagoon Restoration Project

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: \$6,175,557

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22AL0038

Award Date: 5/10/2022

End Date: 11/30/2026

Project Description: The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) will be the recipient of this award and have overall responsibility for oversight of the City of Gulf Shores (COGS). The COGS will be the subrecipient and implementing agency, working with the Auburn University, the University of South Alabama and Mississippi State University to implement a number of activities that collectively align with comprehensive plan goals to restore and conserve habitat, restore water quality and replenish and protect coastal resources. The project will have secondary beneficial impacts to the region including more resilient and sustainable infrastructure and increased recreational and ecotourism opportunities. Specific activities will result in fish habitat expansion through the construction of living shorelines, improved hydrologic connectivity of the existing canal system, conversion of approximately 200 individual septic systems to municipal sewer, shellfish restoration, marsh and seagrass restoration, hydrodynamic modeling, ecological research and long-term water quality monitoring.

With funding of \$6,175,557, this project will be implemented by the COGS over a five-year period in and around Little Lagoon. Little Lagoon is an 8 mile-long, ¼ mile wide brackish coastal lake hydrologically connected to the Gulf of Mexico and is part of a system of coastal dune lakes in south Baldwin County. Little Lagoon is located in COGS and is bounded on the west by the Bon Secour Wildlife Refuge and to the east by Gulf State Park.

Project Title: SEP #4: Auburn University Gulf Coast Engineering Research Station

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: \$9,270,000

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22AL0042

Award Date: 5/13/2022

End Date: 5/31/2027

Project Description: Auburn University (AU) has a mandate to extend access to higher education, advance practical fields like engineering, agriculture and marine sciences through research and outreach and contribute to economic development of Alabama and the United States. This project furthers AU’s Land-, Sea-, and Space-Grant mandate by creating a world-class research facility in Orange Beach, AL where engineers and scientists from academic institutions and private industry can engage in engineering research of critical importance to coastal Alabama, the Gulf Coast region and other communities.

Project Title: SEP #3: Expansion of the Orange Beach Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: \$722,255

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22AL0043

Award Date: 5/13/2022

End Date: 5/31/2024

Project Description: The State of Alabama, through the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), was awarded \$722,255, in RESTORE Act Spill Impact Component funds for the Expansion of the Orange Beach Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center. The project will be implemented by the City of Orange Beach under a subaward from ADCNR.

The project will expand the capacity and capabilities of the current Wildlife Rehabilitation Program to improve the ability to care for increased species and total number of birds and mammals without having to turn away or transfer sick or injured animals to other regions. The current facility is regulated and permitted by ADCNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and operations follow state and federal regulations as well as the Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation.

The new facility will be located on City-owned property. Specific activities will include build out of the building interior to support exam room, as well as wildlife shelter and recovery areas and other work space; and construction of outdoor enclosures for mammals and birds.

The project meets the RESTORE Council’s Comprehensive Plan goal to Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources by expanding the region’s capability to rescue and rehabilitate injured wildlife and conduct education and outreach to promote human behavior that minimizes detrimental impact to wildlife and their habitat. The project also supports the RESTORE Council’s Comprehensive Plan Objectives to Protect and Restore Living Coastal and Marine Resources. This award began in 2022 and its anticipated duration is 2 years.

Project Title: 13-1: NW Quadrant Sewer Force Main Project – Construction

Council Member: Gulf Consortium (Florida)

Award Amount: \$5,988,821

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22FL0034

Award Date: 3/11/2022

End Date: 4/15/2025

Project Description: The Gulf Consortium, in partnership with subrecipient Citrus County, is requesting \$5,988,821 to construct a sanitary sewer collection system consisting of two (2) pump stations and a force main extension routed along U.S. Highway 19 in Citrus County that will route collected wastewater to the Meadowcrest Wastewater Treatment Facility. The objectives of the project are to: (1) reduce legacy water

pollution from old and failing septic systems; (2) improve local water quality in Crystal River/Kings Bay, with a focus on nutrient and bacterial load reductions; and (3) offset the use of potable water for irrigation with reclaimed water from the treated effluent. This project is important to addressing the restoration and protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region (Eligible Activity 1). This activity will be vital to Comprehensive Plan Goal 2 - Restoring Water Quality and Quantity (Primary), and is consistent with Comprehensive Plan Objective 2 (Primary) – Restore, Improve, and Protect Water Resources. Citrus County will execute a contract with a consultant to conduct components of the planned scope of work. This project is co-funded by a grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) which covers Construction, Engineering, and Inspection (CEI) and construction expenses. This project is estimated to begin construction in March of 2022 and will last approximately 3 years.

Project Title: 18-6: Gulf Shellfish Institute: Applied Research for Shellfish Aquaculture

Council Member: Gulf Consortium (Florida)

Award Amount: \$349,885

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21FL0028

Award Date: 3/22/2022

End Date: 6/30/2027

Project Description: The Gulf Consortium, in cooperation with its subrecipient, Manatee County is requesting \$349,885 in Council-Selected Component funding for the Council approved Applied Research for Shellfish Aquaculture Project. Manatee County will partner with Gulf Shellfish Institute, Inc. (GSI), a non-profit organization and subrecipient to Manatee County, to conduct applied research that will lead to increased production and availability of locally grown, and sustainably produced shellfish (clams, oysters, scallops) for local markets. This research will be pivotal in maximizing the success of environmental restoration efforts in local waters through stock enhancement of local shellfish populations. The research needs being addressed were identified by stakeholders through a planning process undertaken in 2019 and 2020 (with Direct Component funding to Manatee County).

This project aims to promote 1) the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast region as well as work, and 2) workforce development and job creation (Comprehensive Plan Goals 3 and 5). Additionally, this project addresses RESTORE Act Eligible Activity 11: Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast region (primary). The benefits of this research will be an increased production of locally produced seafood, bolstering the economies of working waterfronts; improved coastal water quality; and a reduction in the federal seafood trade deficit. Program duration is expected to be approximately 6 years, from September, 2021 until September 2027.

Project Title: 10-2: Hodges Park Rehabilitation

Council Member: Gulf Consortium (Florida)

Award Amount: \$1,075,161

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22FL0037

Award Date: 5/13/2022

End Date: 6/30/2027

Project Description: The Gulf Consortium, through the sub-recipient, Taylor County is requesting \$1,075,161 to complete the rehabilitation of Hodges Park at Keaton Beach. Though the County has one of the

longest contiguous coastlines in Florida on the Gulf, Hodges Park is the only public beach in the County. Hodges Park is essential to tourism and economic development and recovery. The rehabilitation will include: (1) demolition and new construction of restrooms and picnic pavilions; (2) removal of existing playground and installation of a new one with shade coverings; (3) installation of a sand volleyball court; (4) removal and construction of parking facilities; (5) construction of sidewalk and boardwalk to existing fishing pier; (6) beach re-nourishment and improved beach access; (7) removal of invasive vegetation and planting beach appropriate native vegetation; (8) security lighting; and (9) nature study area. The Hodges Park Rehabilitation Project is consistent with and addresses the following Comprehensive Plan Goals: Goal 5: Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy. The rehabilitation project is consistent with, and addresses Objective 8: Restore, Diversify, and Revitalize the Gulf Economy with Economic and Environmental Restoration Projects (Florida-specific objective). Project completion is expected to take 2 years and will commence in March, 2022.

Project Title: 2-1: Santa Rosa Sound Water Quality Improvement Program - Monitoring

Council Member: Gulf Consortium (Florida)

Award Amount: \$856,243

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22FL0036

Award Date: 5/11/2022

End Date: 12/17/2025

Project Description: Santa Rosa County is requesting \$856,243 in Council-Selected Restoration Component funding for the Council approved Santa Rosa Sound Water Quality Improvement Program. This component will establish a Water Quality Monitoring program that collects, interprets, and makes available data about water quality characteristics from nine stations in and around Santa Rosa Sound, Santa Rosa County, FL over a period of 5 years. Santa Rosa County will execute a subrecipient agreement with UWF to conduct components of the planned scope of work. Developing strategies to make data available will provide baseline pre-construction and post-construction data that informs the Observational Data Plan and Reporting for Project 2-1 Santa Rosa Sound Water Quality Improvements included in the RESTORE Spill Component SEP for Santa Rosa County. Consolidated data will be made accessible to city, state and federal resource managers as well as the public through a web-based Geographic Information System application.

This activity will be vital to tracking the Comprehensive Plan goal and objective of restoring water quality and quantity and restoring, improving, and protecting water resources preceding and following the abandonment of 758 septic systems and elimination of the NBWWTF effluent discharge from the Sound. Additionally, this data is important to addressing the restoration and protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region (Eligible Activity 1). Project duration is expected to be 5 years and will tentatively begin in October, 2021.

Project Title: 8-1: Wakulla Springshed Water Quality Protection Program - Otter Creek WWTF Construction

Council Member: Gulf Consortium (Florida)

Award Amount: \$7,721,441

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22FL0039

Award Date: 5/11/2022

End Date: 6/30/2025

Project Description: Wakulla County is requesting \$7,721,441 in Council-Selected Restoration Component funding for the Council approved Wakulla Springshed Water Quality Protection Program. This project includes the following: sitework (both pre-construction site preparation and post construction paving), and construction of a master influent lift station and equalization basin with screening capabilities, an administration and maintenance building, a 0.6 MGD AeroMod treatment train (Train 3), an effluent pump station and all associated piping / valves. The purpose of this program is to provide wastewater and stormwater infrastructure improvements to reduce discharges of pollutants to the springshed of Wakulla Springs - and to the surface waters of the Wakulla River, St. Marks River, and Apalachee Bay - from existing septic systems and sewer overflows. The objectives of the program are to: (1) reduce nutrient and bacteria loads to the groundwater from septic tanks; and, (2) reduce nutrient, bacteria and sediments load to surface waters from sanitary sewer overflows and untreated stormwater runoff.

This project identifies with the primary RESTORE Act eligible activity of Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region. The program is consistent with Comprehensive Plan Goal 2 – Restore Water Quality and Quantity (primary) and Comprehensive Plan Objective 2 – Restore, Improve, and Protect Water Resources (primary). Project duration is 2.5 years and is slated to begin on May 1, 2022.

Project Title: 3-4: Shoal River Headwaters Protection Program-Phase I Construction

Council Member: Gulf Consortium (Florida)

Award Amount: \$1,431,554

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22FL0040

Award Date: 5/12/2022

End Date: 7/31/2024

Project Description: Okaloosa County, through the Florida Gulf Consortium, is requesting \$1,431,554 in Oil Spill Impact Component funding for the Shoal River Headwaters Protection Program (HPP) - Phase I (Bob Sikes Airport Industrial Park Water Reclamation Facility (BSAIPWRF) Effluent Disposal Expansion) – Construction. The first component (Phase I) will facilitate the expansion of centralized public sewer facilities near the Airport and surrounding Industrial Park to accommodate anticipated commercial and industrial growth in this area and residential development along U.S. Hwy 90 from the outskirts of Crestview, FL to the Walton County line.

Project Title: 15-1: Port Richey Watershed Stormwater Management Project-Construction

Council Member: **Gulf Consortium (Florida)**

Award Amount: \$5,090,277

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22FL0041

Award Date: 5/12/2022

End Date: 5/31/2025

Project Description: Pasco County, through the Florida Gulf Consortium, is requesting \$5,090,277 in Spill Impact Component funding for the Council approved Port Richey Watershed Stormwater Management Project. This construction project involves major upgrades to old and inadequate drainage infrastructure in the Port Richey watershed. This project is currently in design and permitting phases, and it is jointly funded by Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). Project components for construction include 1) converting the former Magnolia Valley Golf Course to a wetland storage and water quality treatment system, restoring a natural slough conveyance through the abandoned golf course property, and 2)

improving drainage conveyances in the upstream Magnolia Valley residential community whose stormwater runoff flows through the defunct golf course parcel. Although this project addresses water quality improvement, the primary focus of the project is on coastal flood protection and related infrastructure (Primary – RESTORE Eligible Activity 7). For this reason, this project is classified as infrastructure with respect to the 25 percent infrastructure limitation. The pot 3 funding requests for this project are for construction of stormwater management improvements. Additionally, this project aims to enhance community resilience (Primary – Comprehensive Plan Goal 4), and promote community resilience (Primary Comprehensive Plan Objective 5). The project duration is expected to be three years.

Project Title: 18:1-Manatee River Oyster Restoration

Council Member: Gulf Consortium (Florida)

Award Amount: \$2,039,612

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22FL0044

Award Date: 9/9/2022

End Date: 6/30/2025

Project Description: The Gulf Consortium, through the sub-recipient, Manatee County is requesting \$2,039,612 in Spill Impact Component funding for the Council approved Manatee River Oyster Restoration project. The project involves planning, engineering and design, environmental compliance, construction (the placement of cultch (natural shell and/or other suitable material) in estuarine portions of the Manatee River, from Fort Hamer Road Bridge to Tampa Bay, including the Braden River, Wares Creek, and Warner’s and McLewis Bayous) and monitoring. The project will restore productive oyster reefs lost or degraded primarily from combined stresses of reduced freshwater flows, water quality declines, historic dredging for construction materials, and associated disease and predation. The project is needed to restore lost and degraded oyster reefs in the estuarine (lower) portions of the Manatee River and its tributaries in lower Tampa Bay. Project completion is expected to take approximately 13 years.

Project Title: FY22 RESTORE Shoreline & Beach Restoration (BKT 3)

Council Member: State of Texas, Commission on Environmental Quality

Award Amount: \$23,680,000

Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP22TX0035

Award Date: 4/20/2022

End Date: 2/28/2026

Project Description: The State of Texas, through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), is requesting \$23,680,000 in Spill Impact Component funding for the Shoreline and Beach Restoration Program (SBRP). The TCEQ proposes to work in collaboration with the Texas Governor's Office and the Governor's Commission to Rebuild Texas (CRT) to assist local Texas coastal communities that were severely impacted by Hurricane Harvey in 2017. The Shoreline and Beach Restoration Program, and the associated projects implemented under this program, contributes to both the ecological and economic recovery of the Gulf Coast. Texas has hundreds of miles of coastline on the Gulf with significant population and industry. Restoration of shorelines and beaches can increase the health of those ecosystems, promote tourism, and provide important barriers to protect established development. Program duration is expected to be four years.