

## **US Department of the Interior**

### **Gulf Coastal Habitat Restoration Program**

The primary goal of the Gulf Coastal Habitat Restoration Program (GCHRP) is to restore and conserve the health, diversity, and resilience of key coastal, estuarine, and marine habitats – and the living resources that depend on them. The GCHRP is designed to use existing funding mechanisms and provide crucially needed capacity to focus and synergize on-the-ground implementation of restoration projects throughout the 5 Gulf States. Over the next 5 years, the GCHRP would provide up to \$20 million in direct on-the-ground project funding for conservation actions to those partners who may not have direct access to Deepwater Horizon Spill-related funding sources (e.g., be a NRDA Trustee or RESTORE Council member). The GCHRP is not intended to be another function of the RESTORE Council itself, or to duplicate existing grant or assistance programs but rather complement ongoing work, maintain and grow the vital network of partners in local communities, and bridge the gap between larger watershed and landscape planning and local community-based implementation. A priority of the GCHRP will be to collaborate with other programs focused on finding opportunities to help train a local, highly-skilled restoration workforce. The types of projects expected to be funded can include (but are not limited to) the use of prescribed fire for habitat management; control of invasive or exotic species; restoration of oyster reefs, wetlands, coastal prairie, coastal dune lakes, agricultural fields, colonial rookery islands, riparian habitats, coastal forest ecosystems such as longleaf pine savanna, cypress tupelo and mangrove habitats; living shoreline protection; fish and aquatic passage and barrier removal; beneficial or direct use of dredged material to create marshes or other habitats; transplanting and re-introduction of native plant species; and land conservation, including voluntary easements with landowners or fee-title acquisition. While individual projects may be discrete in construction, this Program will collectively assess success on a broader landscape scale. Requested funding amount: \$26,795,100.