

Draft Funded Priorities List 3b

Proposal Abstract

Sponsor: Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Proposal: Florida Water Quality Improvement Program

Florida, through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), is requesting \$30M in Council-Selected Restoration Component funding for the proposed Florida Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP). This would include \$7.5M in planning funds as FPL Category 1, as well as a separate \$22.5M implementation component as an FPL Category 2 priority for potential funding. The program would support 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 proposed in Florida watersheds that drain to the Gulf of Mexico would be considered.

The WQIP activities would 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.