

FUNDED PRIORITIES LIST 3B



Enhancing Gulf Waters through Forested Watershed Restoration

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

The Council is considering approval of \$23M in planning and implementation funds as FPL Category 1 for the *Enhancing Gulf Waters through Forested Watershed Restoration* program. This program would utilize the Planning Framework techniques and approaches outlined in the figure below to address environmental stressors Gulf-wide. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is the sponsor of this proposed program.

This program would include activities to restore private and public forests by providing technical and financial assistance to private landowners and communities in watersheds where forest resources are instrumental to the health of the Gulf of Mexico. Establishing this large-scale program that would substantially enhance and maintain water quality and quantity by managing and restoring forested ecosystems in a three-state region. A coordinated cross-boundary effort would be led by State Forestry Agencies in Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida and would leverage the funding and activities of other organizations that are well established in the RESTORE zone. Activities include social marketing techniques to effectively reach landowners, implementation of best management practices (e.g., establishing forests, prescribed fire, and controlling invasive exotic species), and use of science-based decision support tools to inform forest restoration investments and quantify outcomes. Anticipated environmental benefits from this program include improvements to water quality and quantity; and wildlife and threatened and endangered species habitat through professional forest management, avoided land use conversion, and increased forest cover.

Program at a Glance

The *Enhancing Gulf Waters through Forested Watershed Restoration* program applies Planning Framework approaches and techniques to support Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives. In support of the primary objective to *Restore, improve, and protect water resources*, stressors such as habitat loss and conversion to agricultural and urban land use will be addressed using the *Agriculture and forest management* technique, the *Stormwater management* technique, and the *Habitat management and stewardship* technique. Success using agriculture, forest, and stormwater management to *Restore, improve, and protect water resources* may be tracked using acres under BMP agreements and lbs. of sediment avoided or removed as metrics, while success using habitat management and stewardship to support both the primary objective and the secondary objective, to *Restore, enhance, and protect habitats*, may be tracked using acres of habitat restored. The number of people reached and number of people enrolled may also be used as metrics of project success.

Comprehensive Plan Goal: Restore water quality and quantity



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