

# Council-Selected Restoration Component

## Proposal Submission & Evaluation Process

One of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council's (Council) primary responsibilities is to develop a Comprehensive Plan (Plan) to restore the ecosystem and economy of the Gulf Coast region. The Council approved an Initial Comprehensive Plan in August 2013 that outlines overarching goals and objectives for restoration. In the months following approval of the Plan, the Council developed a proposal submission and evaluation process to facilitate the evaluation and selection of projects that will be included on a draft prioritized list of projects and programs, known as the Funded Priorities List (FPL).

The Council determined that a consistent, transparent, and objective process is the most efficient way to operationalize the requirements in the RESTORE Act and to fund those projects which will have positive impacts for the natural resources of the Gulf region.

**In July 2014, The Council finalized a proposal submission and evaluation process that will accomplish the following:**

**1. Proposes focus areas of Habitat and Water Quality for projects and programs which will be included on the FPL as the first addendum to the Initial Comprehensive Plan.** The Council expects many projects submitted will address multiple goals and objectives (which are broad and inclusive by their nature), while recognizing that focusing efforts for the first addendum will maximize efficient use of limited funds and encourage members to find synergies among projects and across jurisdictional boundaries.

**2. Encourages project submissions that emphasize the following:**

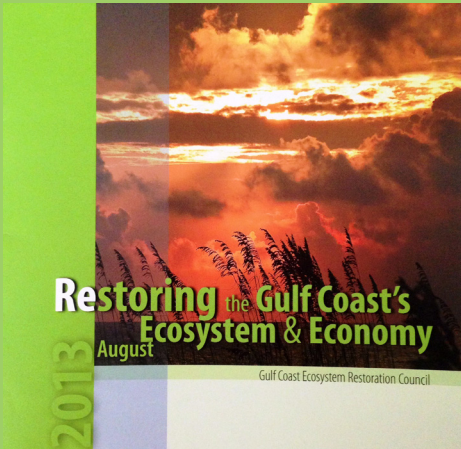
- How a project is foundational in the sense that the project forms the initial core steps in addressing a significant ecosystem issue and that future projects can be tiered to substantially increase the benefits;
- How a project will be sustainable over time;
- Why a project is likely to succeed; and
- How a project benefits the human community where implementation occurs.

**3. Provides for external independent scientific review of project proposals.** Each proposal will be reviewed by three external experts from both inside and outside the Gulf region to assess that the project utilizes best available science, a term that is defined in the RESTORE Act 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."

**4. Ensures that all applicable environmental compliance requirements are addressed.**

**5. Ensures that projects meet both statutory requirements and commitments the Council made in the Comprehensive Plan.**

The Council anticipates that the project submission window for its members will open in August 2014, with a draft FPL published in 2015.



## Public Engagement and Transparency

Public engagement remains an important element of planning, and the Council will continue to seek input from the public. Council members anticipate convening community conversations across the Gulf to provide information about the proposal submission and evaluation process as well as to collect public input that will inform the development of the Draft FPL. Dates and locations will be made available on the Council's web site.

All proposed projects submitted by Council members for funding consideration will be posted online for public viewing. The draft FPL will be published for a formal public comment period to provide interested stakeholders the opportunity to provide input on proposed projects and programs prior to funding and implementation.

For More Information

Go to [restorethegulf.gov](http://restorethegulf.gov) or scan the QR code below.



# Process for Council-Selected Restoration Component

Projects Submitted. Projects may focus on Habitat and Water Quality goals, with an emphasis on projects that are foundational, sustainable, have a high probability of success and that have community benefits.

## Project Vetting

### Eligibility Verification and Budget Reasonableness, Coordination Reviews

#### Science Evaluation

Science evaluation includes how each proposal has:

1. Established the use of best available science.
2. Described the scientific basis of the proposed activity.

Projects will be reviewed by an external science panel with restoration expertise.

#### Priority and Commitment to Plan Evaluation

1. Project addresses one or more of the priority criteria outlined in the RESTORE Act.
2. Project meets the commitments made in the Initial Comprehensive Plan (pgs 8,9).

#### Environmental Compliance Readiness

1. Proposal identifies all environmental compliance requirements.
2. Status of environmental compliance.

Results from proposal submission and evaluation will be compiled into a context report and attached to each proposal to aid in the development of a draft Funded Priorities List.

## Developing a Draft Funded Priorities List (FPL)

This first FPL addendum will contain projects and programs that will be funded with available funds from Transocean Deepwater Inc. Future amendments to this FPL and the process by which projects are selected for inclusion will evolve over time as new information becomes available, adaptive management activities occur, and as funding uncertainties are resolved. The Council anticipates that once the full amount ultimately to be paid into the Trust Fund is known, future amendments to the FPL will include significantly larger projects and project lists that reflect the full amount available to be spent for restoration activities. This approach will allow the Council to invest early in specific actions, projects and programs that can be carried out in the near-term with known funding to provide on-the-ground results while maintaining a focus on the long-term recovery of the Gulf Coast.