Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council
Draft 2026 Funded Priorities List

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council Members

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Executive Summary

The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (RESTORE Council or Council) proposes to commit approximately $403,654,000 in new funding for water quality improvement, habitat conservation and restoration, and other ecosystem projects and programs across the Gulf Coast, pursuant to the *Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies Act of the Gulf Coast States of 2012* (33 U.S.C. § 1321(t) and *note*) (RESTORE Act). This 2026 Funded Priorities List (FPL) proposal includes 19 ecosystem restoration projects and programs which build upon over $685 million in restoration activities previously identified by the Council. With these additional funds, the RESTORE Council will have committed over $1 Billion for restoration activities across the Gulf Coast under the Council-Selected Restoration Component of the RESTORE Act. In addition, the RESTORE Council proposes to reallocate $9,605,860 in savings from previously approved projects and programs to further support activities in this draft FPL. This draft 2026 FPL proposal also includes updates to the RESTORE 2022 Comprehensive Plan. Members of the public are invited to provide comments on this proposal.

The RESTORE Act is a federal law that dedicated a portion of a civil settlement with parties responsible for the *Deepwater Horizon* disaster to the RESTORE Council to fund environmental and economic restoration across the Gulf Coast. Under the 2016 *Deepwater Horizon* consent decree among the United States, the five Gulf States, and British Petroleum (BP), BP makes payments into the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund over a 15-year period ending in 2031. As funds become available, the RESTORE Council works collaboratively with input from stakeholders across the Gulf to develop FPLs, which designate ecosystem projects and programs for funding. This funding would come from the RESTORE Act allocation known as the Council-Selected Restoration Component. FPL funding decisions are guided by criteria set forth in the RESTORE Act, the Council's Comprehensive Plan, the Council's Planning Framework and other policies.

In the draft 2026 FPL, the RESTORE Council proposes funding for ten new activities as well as amendments to increase funding for nine activities approved in prior FPLs. This draft FPL adheres to the FPL development process committed to by the RESTORE Council, including the application of best available science (BAS), public engagement and transparency, and the Planning Framework. Each activity proposed for new or increased funding is described as well as summaries of the BAS reviews of the proposals. The potential benefits of this proposed funding include:

- Ecosystem restoration in important ecoregions and watersheds, including the Texas Gulf Region, Lower Mississippi/Lake Pontchartrain watershed in Louisiana, Mississippi Sound in Mississippi and Alabama, the Mobile Bay and Mobile/Tensaw Delta Watershed in Alabama, and Pensacola Bay and other coastal Florida watersheds.
- Large-scale restoration of the Chandeleur Islands, which provide valuable habitat for a wide range of fish and wildlife species, while also serving as a first line of storm defense for communities in Louisiana.
- Leveraging funding from multiple sources, including previous FPLs, within a specific geographic area to maximize ecosystem restoration outcomes.
- Restoration of a former barrier headland in a cross-state border project led by Mississippi and Alabama.
- Large-scale programs to address water quality and quantity, habitat restoration, coastal resilience, and other ecosystem restoration needs in the Gulf Coast region.
- Continuation of funding to enhance the environmental vitality of the region's natural resources while also providing environmental job training for youth from Federally recognized tribes.
- Private land conservation and ecological restoration on agricultural lands across the Gulf; and
- Scientific efforts to help build the knowledge needed to advance Gulf restoration.

The activities described in this document will continue to strategically leverage investments with other restoration efforts and build upon successes of existing and past FPL activities in accordance with the Council's Comprehensive Plan.

Our Vision

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

I. Introduction

A. The RESTORE Act and Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

The RESTORE Council was established in 2012 by the *Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012* (33 U.S.C. § 1321(t) and *note*) (RESTORE Act), a federal law enacted in response to the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill disaster. Members of the RESTORE Council include the Governors of the States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas; the Secretaries of the U.S. Departments of the Interior, the Army, Commerce, Agriculture, and Homeland Security; and the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Administrator of the EPA currently serves as the RESTORE Council Chairperson.

Pursuant to the RESTORE Act, the RESTORE Council is responsible for administering a portion of the funds associated with settlement of civil penalties against parties responsible for the *Deepwater Horizon* spill. Specifically, the RESTORE Council is responsible for administering two RESTORE Act funding allocations, the Council-Selected Restoration Component and the Spill Impact Component, each of which receives 30% of the funds allocated under the RESTORE Act. Figure 1 shows the funding allocations and amounts under the RESTORE Act and associated settlements of civil penalties.

Under the 2016 *Deepwater Horizon* consent decree among the United States, British Petroleum (BP), and the five Gulf States, BP makes payments into the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund (Trust Fund) over a 15-year period ending in 2031. As funds become available, the RESTORE Council works collaboratively with input from stakeholders across the Gulf to develop Funded Priorities Lists (FPLs), which designate ecosystem projects and programs for funding. FPL funding decisions are guided by criteria set forth in the RESTORE Act, the Council's Comprehensive Plan, the Council's Planning Framework and other policies.

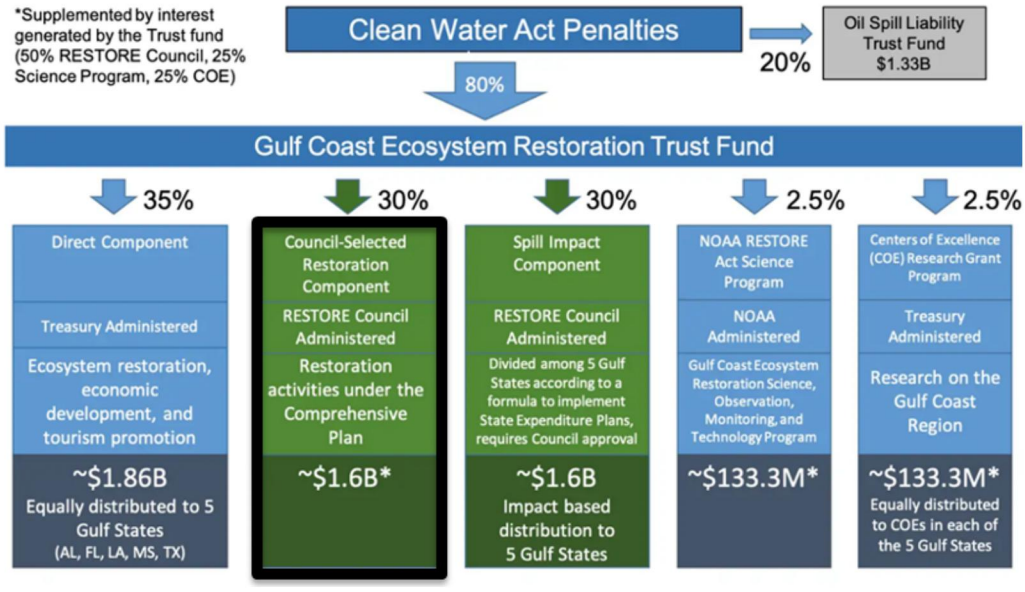

Figure 1. Allocation of the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund based on settlements with BP, Transocean and Anadarko; RESTORE Council oversight components are highlighted in green.

B. RESTORE Act Priority Criteria

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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Projects that restore long-term resilience of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands most impacted by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.

The RESTORE Council's strategy for achieving a healthy Gulf is founded on goals and objectives set forth in the Council's Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the RESTORE Council committed to an overarching framework for an integrated and coordinated approach to region-wide Gulf Coast restoration and to help guide the collective actions at the local, state, tribal, and federal levels.

The RESTORE Council's goals are:

Goal 1	**Restore and Conserve Habitat - Restore and conserve the health, diversity, and resilience of key coastal, estuarine, and marine habitats.**
Goal 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.**
Goal 3	**Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources - Restore and protect healthy, diverse, and sustainable living coastal and marine resources.**
Goal 4	**Enhance Community Resilience - Build upon and sustain communities with the capacity to adapt to short and long-term changes.**
Goal 5*	**Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy - Enhance the sustainability and resilience of the Gulf economy.**

*Goal 5: Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy" focuses on reviving and supporting a sustainable Gulf economy. While a healthy ecosystem does benefit the economy, this goal does not apply directly to the Council-Selected Restoration Component. This goal directly pertains to expenditures by the Gulf Coast States authorized in the RESTORE Act under the Spill Impact Component (administered by the RESTORE Council) and ensures that these investments can be considered in the context of comprehensive restoration.

Figure 2: Restore Council's Goals as defined in the Comprehensive Plan.

Consistent with these goals, the RESTORE Council's objectives are:

1. Restore, Enhance and Protect Habitats;
2. Restore, Improve and Protect Water Resources;
3. Protect and Restore Living Coastal and Marine Resources;
4. Restore and Enhance Natural Processes and Shorelines;
5. Promote Community Resilience;
6. Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education; and
7. Improve Science-Based Decision-Making Processes.

The RESTORE Council approves Council-Selected Restoration Component funding for projects and programs through the development of FPLs. Projects and programs funded through this component must be in furtherance of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and meet at least one of the above-mentioned criteria identified in the RESTORE Act.

The RESTORE Council developed a Planning Framework to provide guidance to help ensure that funds are used as effectively as possible and to serve as a "bridge" between the Council's Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives and the specific restoration activities to be approved in future FPLs. The Planning Framework lists priority restoration approaches and techniques (Figure 3), their relationship to the Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives, and associated geographic areas. The purpose of this document is to provide the public and potential funding partners with an indication of the kinds of projects and programs that are anticipated to be developed for FPL funding consideration.

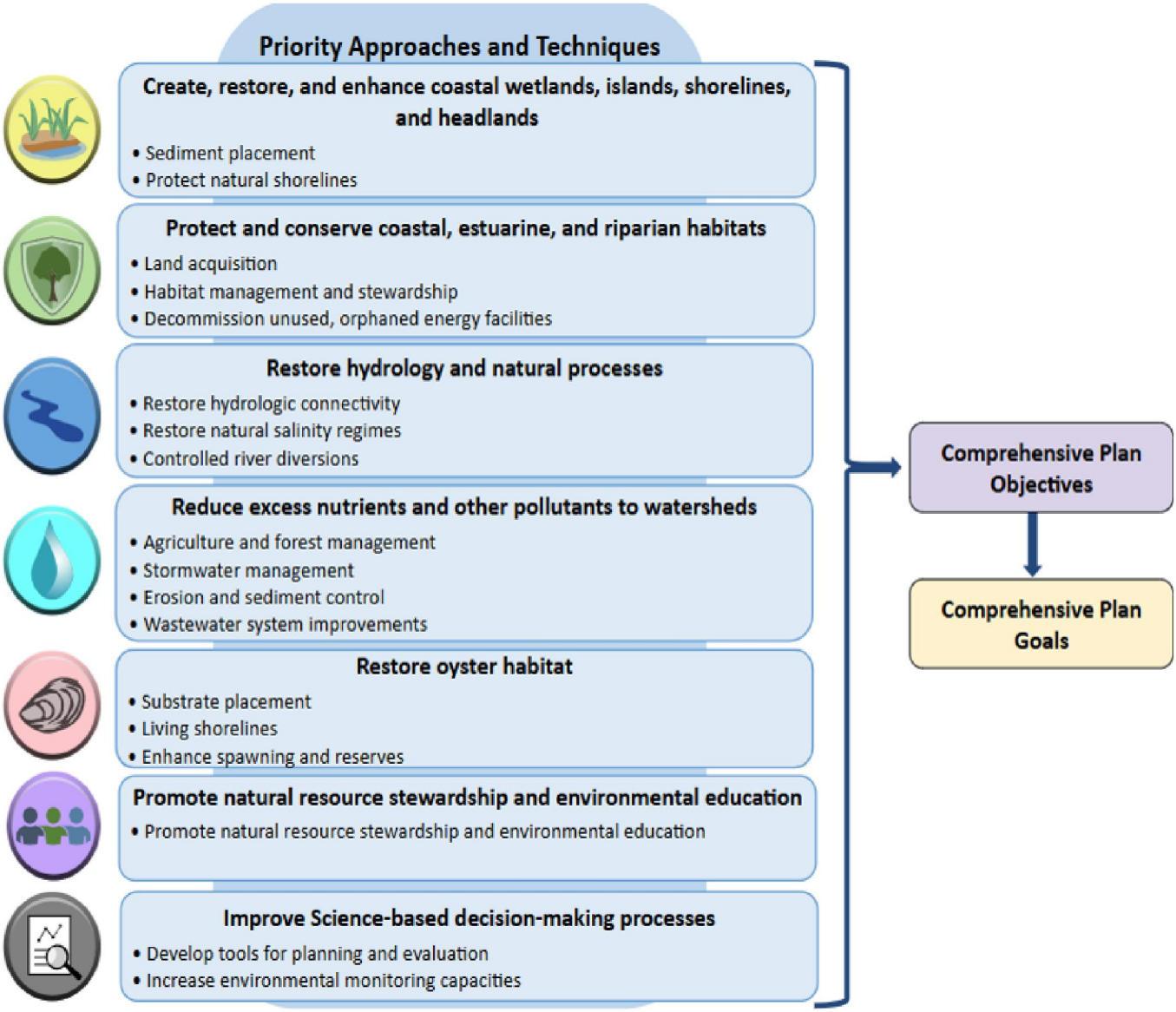

Figure 3: The Planning Framework priority approaches and techniques can be applied to support the Comprehensive Plan objectives and goals.

C. Restoration Investments in Prior FPLs

Over its lifetime, the Council will invest over $1.6 Billion in Gulf Coast ecosystem restoration activities through the Council-Selected Restoration Component. To date, the Council has approved three major Funded Priorities Lists: the Initial FPL in 2015; the Comprehensive Plan Commitment and Planning Support FPL approved in 2018 and amended in 2024; and FPL 3, approved in two phases in 2020 and 2021. Through these prior FPLs, the RESTORE Council has committed over $685,519,565 for ecosystem restoration projects and programs across the Gulf Coast. The Council seeks to expand this investment with the projects and programs proposed in this document for approval in 2026. Information on the projects and programs contained in past FPLs can be found on the Council's website and RESTORE Project Map.

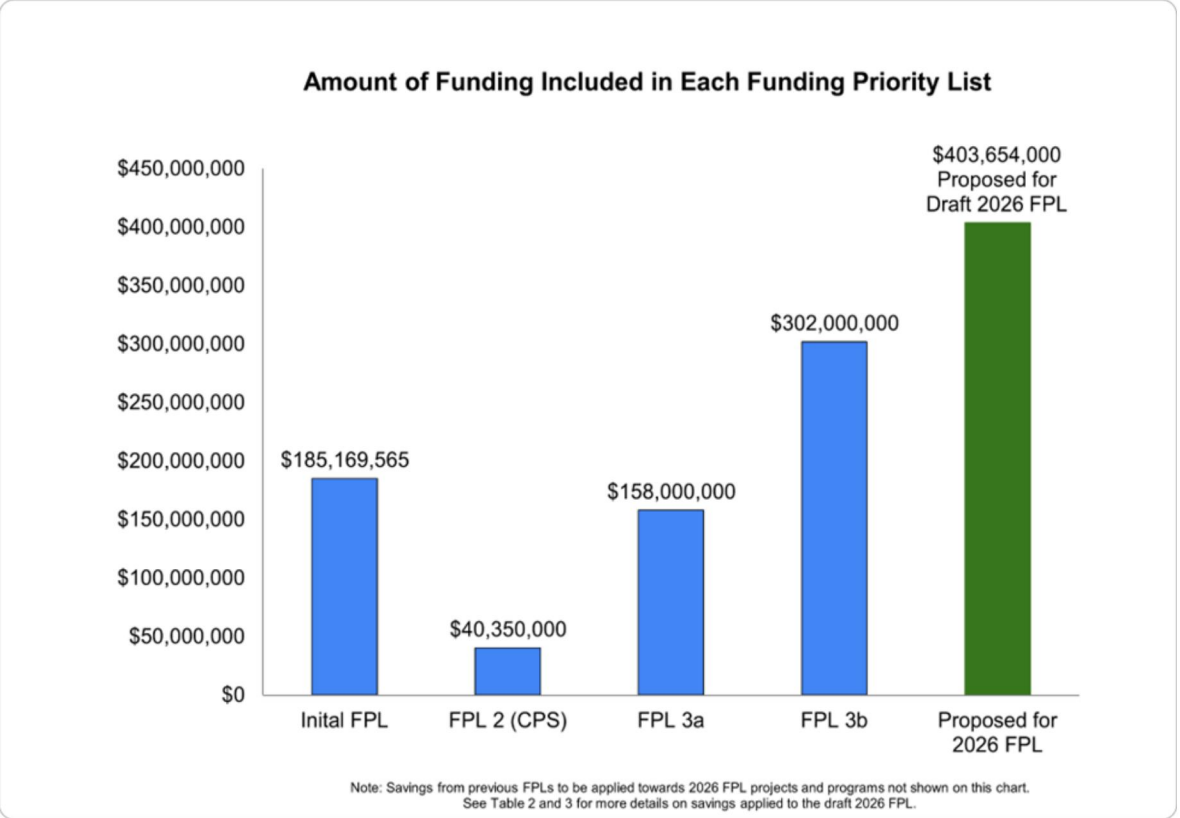

Figure 4 : Amount of funding included in previous FPL and proposed for the 2026 FPL.

II. Council Collaboration in FPL Development

The Council develops FPLs through a collaborative and iterative process among its members. In the early stages of collaboration for the 2026 FPL, members identified and discussed potential priorities that ranged from broad programmatic goals to specific project concepts, as well as the continuation of previously approved activities. Throughout this process, project and program concepts were reviewed and discussed by all members, further refined, and in some cases, dropped from further consideration based on feedback and other factors (e.g., availability of alternative funding sources). These discussions helped members further shape their respective project and program concepts as they developed the 2026 FPL proposals.

Figure 5: Steps in developing a Funding Priorities List

A. FPL Proposal Submission Guidelines and Review Process

In 2023, the RESTORE Council developed updated guidance for its members on the content and review process for funding proposals. The Proposal Submission Guidelines primary purpose is to help Council members develop effective proposals for potential funding in FPLs. Council members are the only entities eligible to submit proposals for potential funding under the Council-Selected Restoration Component. Federally recognized tribes may submit proposals via a federal Council member sponsor. The members were asked to submit potential project proposals for review and consideration for the 2026 FPL. The Council then reviewed all proposals for compliance with the RESTORE Act, consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and Planning Framework, and compliance with all applicable environmental laws.

The RESTORE Act requires the Council 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." To meet the intent of the RESTORE Act, and to support the Council's Comprehensive Plan commitment to science-based decision-making, all FPL proposals underwent a BAS review process that included three anonymous external science reviews (including reviews by experts from within and outside the Gulf Coast region) and an Internal BAS Review Panel. The purpose of this internal panel was to use Council member-agency technical expertise to consider external reviews, identify ways to further strengthen the scientific basis of each proposal and, as applicable, identify potential synergies between proposals not identified prior to their submission.

For the existing projects or programs in the 2026 FPL requesting additional funding, the proposals were evaluated for consistency with the previous BAS reviews to ensure:

- the previous BAS review was deemed applicable; and
- there was no new information or changing environmental or other circumstances that was relevant to the previous BAS review.

After all proposal reviews were completed, members responded to review comments pertaining to their respective proposals. This included revising their proposals if warranted. The revised proposals and the proposal "packages" containing the reviews and responses can be found in the appendices. As the collaborative process among the members continued, some proposals were modified, and others were eliminated from further consideration.

B. FPL Categories

FPLs include activities in two categories:

- **Category 1** activities are approved for the Council-Selected Restoration Component 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 able to be approved by the RESTORE Council, but which the RESTORE Council considers warrant potential future funding. A Council vote to amend the FPL is required to move an activity from Category 2 to Category 1. The RESTORE Council will provide a minimum of 15 days public notice before voting on whether to approve funding for an activity in Category 2, thereby moving it to Category 1. These notifications will be provided to Council Announcement subscribers, referred to in the "Public Comment Process for the 2026 FPL" section of this document. These notifications also will be posted to the RESTORE Council's website.

More information regarding FPL Category 1 and Category 2 can be found in the Proposal Submission Guidelines.

C. Proposed Activities Alignment with the Comprehensive Plan

The Council defined goals and objectives and six foundational commitments in the Comprehensive Plan to guide its ecosystem restoration funding decisions. The Council selects and funds projects and programs that restore 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, that support meeting its vision of a "healthy and productive Gulf ecosystem achieved through collaboration on strategic restoration projects and programs."

The Council's six commitments are:

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

These proposed activities build on or expand previously funded projects and programs consistent with the Council's commitment to a watershed/estuary-based approach to restoration found in the Comprehensive Plan and Planning Framework. An example of this is the *Restoration of Grand Batture Island* project in the Mississippi Sound. This project, co-sponsored by Mississippi and Alabama, would support the restoration and protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region by creating, restoring and enhancing coastal habitats through the restoration of Grand Batture Island.

Proposed new regional ecosystem-based activities that would support the Council's objective to restore, enhance, and protect habitats include the Louisiana-sponsored *Chandeleur Islands Restoration* project, the Texas-sponsored *Protecting and Restoring Waterbird Rookery Habitat* program, and the Department of the Interior-sponsored *Colonial Waterbird Rookery Island Restoration* project. These activities would restore and enhance critical nesting habitats for wildlife. The *Chandeleur Islands Restoration* project would benefit sea turtles such as Loggerhead, Green and the endangered Kemp's Ridley, as well as several bird species, including colonial nesting waterbirds and foraging birds. The *Protecting and Restoring Waterbird Rookery Habitat* program and *Colonial Waterbird Rookery Island Restoration* project would leverage each other to help restore coastal bird populations through restoring key nesting habitats along the Texas coast by supporting restoration techniques that include sediment placement, protecting natural shorelines, and habitat management and stewardship. Additionally, Gulf-wide projects such as the proposed EPA-sponsored *Trash Free Waters Program Benefiting Communities in the Gulf Coast* would benefit coastal communities across all five Gulf Coast states by developing competitive funding opportunities to prevent, remove and/or recycle/upcycle trash from waters that drain to the Gulf Coast.

The Council recognizes the benefit in continuing to invest in activities previously approved for funding. Expanding these critical efforts ensures that the large-scale restoration efforts the Council has already identified and invested in continue to progress. For example, the Council proposes to continue to support the USDA-sponsored *Gulf Coast Conservation Reserve* program in order to build upon the restoration and conservation progress made through previous FPL funding. This program would implement conservation practices and restoration activities on private lands which would benefit water quality in Coastal Texas, the Mississippi Sound and the Mobile Bay and Perdido Bay watersheds.

In addition to continuing to support the *Gulf Coast Conservation Reserve* Program, the Council recognizes the benefit in continuing to invest in two FPL3b large-scale water quality programs, the *Coastal Alabama Regional Water Quality* program and the *Florida Water Quality Improvement* program. These programs build on planning and ongoing efforts to improve water quality and quantity specific to the geographic areas and watersheds by leveraging local and regional expertise, and other funding. All the projects and programs proposed, whether new activities or amendments to previously funded activities, align with the Council's commitments in the Comprehensive Plan. More information on the six commitments can be found in the Council's Comprehensive Plan. Table 1 below shows a crosswalk of how all the proposed 2026 FPL activities align with the Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives.

Table 1: Alignment of the 2026 FPL Proposals with the Council's Goals and Objectives

		Comprehensive Plan Objectives						
Geographic Area	Project/Program	Restore, enhance, and protect habitats	Protect and restore living coastal and marine resources	Restore and enhance natural processes and shorelines	Restore, improve, and protect water resources	Promote community resilience	Natural resource stewardship and env. education	Improve science-based decision-making processes
Coastal Texas	Managing Wetlands Migration Corridors and Natural Floodways Program	✓			✓			
	Oyster Reef Restoration Program	✓	✓					
	Protecting and Restoring Waterbird Rookery Habitat Program	✓	✓					
	Colonial Waterbird Rookery Island Restoration	✓						
	Wind-Tidal Flat Restoration Pilot, Phase 2							✓
	Development of Indicators and Identification of Thresholds to Support Reef Restoration	✓						✓
Pontchartrain Basin, Louisiana	Chandeleur Islands Restoration Project	✓	✓	✓				
Mississippi Sound, Mississippi and Alabama	Restoration of Grand Batture Island	✓	✓	✓				
	Coastal Nearshore Habitat Restoration and Development Program	✓	✓	✓				
Mobile Bay and Mobile-Tensaw Delta, Perdido Bay and River, Alabama	Coastal Alabama Regional Water Quality Program				✓	✓		
	Upper Mobile Bay Beneficial Use Wetland Creation Site	✓	✓					
	West End Dauphin Island, Alabama Renourishment and Resilience			✓		✓		
Coastal Florida	Florida Gulf Coast Resiliency Program					✓		
	Florida Gulf Coast Tributaries Hydrologic Restoration Program				✓			
	Florida Water Quality Improvement Program				✓			
	Enhance Coastal Resilience Through Beach and Dune Restoration, Escambia County		✓	✓				
Gulf-wide	Trash Free Waters Program Benefiting Communities in the Gulf Coast				✓		✓	
	Gulf Coast Conservation Reserve Program	✓			✓			
	Tribal Youth Conservation Corps					✓	✓	
		Restore and conserve habitat			Restore water quality and quantity	Enhance community resilience	Varies	
		Comprehensive Plan Goals						

III. Proposed Activities

A. Proposed Activities Overview

The projects and programs (collectively referred to as activities) included in Table 2 and Table 3 below would address ecosystem needs across the Gulf Coast. In FY 2026, the Council proposes to approve new funding of approximately $74,573,000 for Category 1 activities and $329,081,000 in Category 2 activities for a total $403,654,000. The Council is also proposing to reprogram $9,605,860 in unspent funds from previous FPLs to support projects and programs contained in the 2026 FPL.

B. Reprogrammed Savings from Previous FPLs

To maximize on-the-ground restoration, the RESTORE Council incentivizes savings and efficiency under the Council-Selected Restoration Component. Under the Council's "Savings Policy," if an FPL project or program is completed under budget or other savings are achieved, the sponsoring member may seek approval to reprogram the remaining unspent funds on another FPL activity sponsored by that same member. The use of unspent funds is subject to a Council vote after an opportunity for public comment and in accordance with the RESTORE Act and all other applicable laws.

Council members are proposing to use this savings policy to reallocate unspent funds from several previously approved activities in the 2026 FPL:

- The State of Alabama has completed work on an Initial FPL project, *Enhancing Opportunities for Beneficial Use of Dredge Sediments*, and has a total of $1,950,000 in unspent funds. Alabama is proposing to reallocate those funds to the 2026 FPL joint Mississippi-Alabama *Restoration of Grand Batture Island* project.
- The State of Louisiana has completed work on three Initial FPL projects (*West Grand Terre Beach Nourishment & Stabilization, Golden Triangle Marsh Creation*, and *Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline*) and has a total of $5,872,250 in unspent funds. Louisiana is proposing to reallocate those funds to the 2026 FPL *Chandeleur Islands Restoration* project.
- EPA has completed work on the Initial FPL *Tampa Bay Estuary* program and seeks to reallocate $283,610 in unspent funds to the 2026 FPL activity entitled *Trash Free Waters Program Benefiting Communities in the Gulf Coast*.

These proposed reallocations of unspent funds are shown in the table below under the "Savings Applied" column. As with all proposed 2026 FPL funding, the Council seeks public input on these proposed reallocations. In addition to the savings-based reallocations discussed above, the State of Alabama is proposing to reallocate the $1,500,000 approved for the FPL3b *Perdido Watershed Water Quality Improvements and Restoration Assessment* program funds into the *Coastal Alabama Regional Water Quality* program.

C. New Activities Proposed for the 2026 FPL

The new activities included in the 2026 FPL are listed below in Table 2, along with the savings mentioned above, their location and the total requested funding amount(s). The environmental compliance documentation for implementation activities in FPL Category 1 can be found on the Council's website. The Council may move implementation funding for a project or program from Category 2 to Category 1 between the publication of the draft 2026 FPL and a Council vote on the final 2026 FPL, provided that the applicable environmental laws have been addressed. In such a case, the final 2026 FPL would include links to the applicable environmental compliance documentation.

Table 2: Proposed 2026 FPL New Activities Funding

Geographic Area	Proposed New Activities for 2026 FPL	Savings Applied*	2026 FPL Funds Proposed: Category 1**	2026 FPL Funds Proposed: Category 2**	Total New Funds Proposed for 2026 FPL	Total 2026 FPL Funds with Savings
Coastal Texas	Development of Indicators and Identification of Thresholds to Support Reef Restoration		$1,200,000	$0	$1,200,000	$1,200,000
	Colonial Waterbird Rookery Island Restoration		$600,000	$1,400,000	$2,000,000	$2,000,000
	Managing Wetlands Migration Corridors and Natural Floodways Program		$8,424,000	$38,376,000	$46,800,000	$46,800,000
	Oyster Reef Restoration Program		$2,304,000	$10,496,000	$12,800,000	$12,800,000
	Protecting and Restoring Waterbird Rookery Habitat Program		$2,304,000	$10,496,000	$12,800,000	$12,800,000
Pontchartrain Basin, Louisiana	Chandeleur Islands Restoration Project	$5,872,250	$0	$84,900,000	$84,900,000	$90,772,250
Mississippi Sound Mississippi and Alabama	Restoration of Grand Batture Island	$1,950,000	$13,750,000	$41,250,000	$55,000,000	56,950,000
Mobile Bay and Mobile-Tensaw Delta, Alabama	West End Dauphin Island, Alabama Renourishment and Resilience		$0	$38,000,000	$38,000,000	$38,000,000
Coastal Florida	Enhance Coastal Resilience Through Beach and Dune Restoration, Escambia County		$900,000	$0	$900,000	$900,000
Gulfwide (All five states)	Trash Free Waters Program Benefiting Communities in the Gulf Coast	$283,610	$1,000,000	$8,000,000	$9,000,000	$9,283,610
	Subtotals	$8,105,860	$30,482,000	$232,918,000	**$263,400,000**	**$271,505,860**

*Savings Applied represents funds from previous FPLs. All savings will be in Category 2.
**Category 1 and 2 values are subject to change prior to the release of the final 2026 FPL.

D. Expanding on Existing Projects

Nine of the nineteen activities proposed for the 2026 FPL represent requests for additional funding for existing projects and programs approved in prior FPLs. These are listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Proposed Amendments to Approved Activities Requesting Additional Funding.

Geographic Area	Proposed Additional Funding for Existing Activities	Previous FPL	Savings Applied*	New Funds Proposed in 2026: Category 1	New Funds Proposed in 2026: Category 2	Total New Funds Proposed in 2026	Total 2026 FPL Funds with Savings
Coastal Texas	Wind-Tidal Flat Restoration Pilot, Phase 2	FPL 3b		$1,200,000	$0	$1,200,000	$1,200,000
Mississippi Sound, Mississippi	Coastal Nearshore Habitat Restoration and Development Program in Mississippi	FPL 3b		$5,000,000	$20,000,000	$25,000,000	$25,000,000
Mobile Bay and Mobile-Tensaw Delta, Perdido Bay and River, AL-FL	Coastal Alabama Regional Water Quality Program	FPL 3b	$1,500,000	$2,400,000	$5,600,000	$8,000,000	$9,500,000
	Upper Mobile Bay Beneficial Use Wetland Creation Site	Initial FPL		$0	$24,000,000	$24,000,000	$24,000,000
Coastal Florida	Florida Gulf Coast Resilience Program	FPL 3b		$8,000,000	$12,000,000	$20,000,000	$20,000,000
	Florida Gulf Coast Tributaries Hydrologic Restoration Program	FPL 3b		$5,042,000	$7,563,000	$12,605,000	$12,605,000
	Florida Water Quality Improvement Program	FPL 3b		$18,000,000	$27,000,000	$45,000,000	$45,000,000
Gulfwide (TX & AL)	Gulf Coast Conservation Reserve Program	Initial FPL & FPL 3b		$3,000,000	$0	$3,000,000	$3,000,000
Gulfwide (TX, LA, MS, AL & FL)	Tribal Youth Conservation Corps	Initial FPL & FPL 3b		$1,449,000	$0	$1,449,000	$1,449,000
	Subtotals		$1,500,000	$44,091,000	$96,163,000	**$140,254,000**	**$141,754,000**

*Savings Applied represents funds from previous FPLs. All savings will be in Category 2.
**Category 1 and 2 values are subject to change prior to the release of the final 2026 FPL.

2026 FPL Total for New Activities & Amendments to Existing Activities $263,400,000 + $140,254,000 = **$403,654,000**
2026 FPL Total with Savings $271,505,860 + $141,754,000 = **$413,259,860**

IV. Proposed Activities by Geographic Area

Summary descriptions of each activity proposed for funding are presented below according to the geographic area in which they would occur. More details regarding each activity description can be found in the proposal package in the appendices. The proposal "package" contains the draft proposal, a summary of the best available science review and responses, and the review forms.

A. Coastal Texas

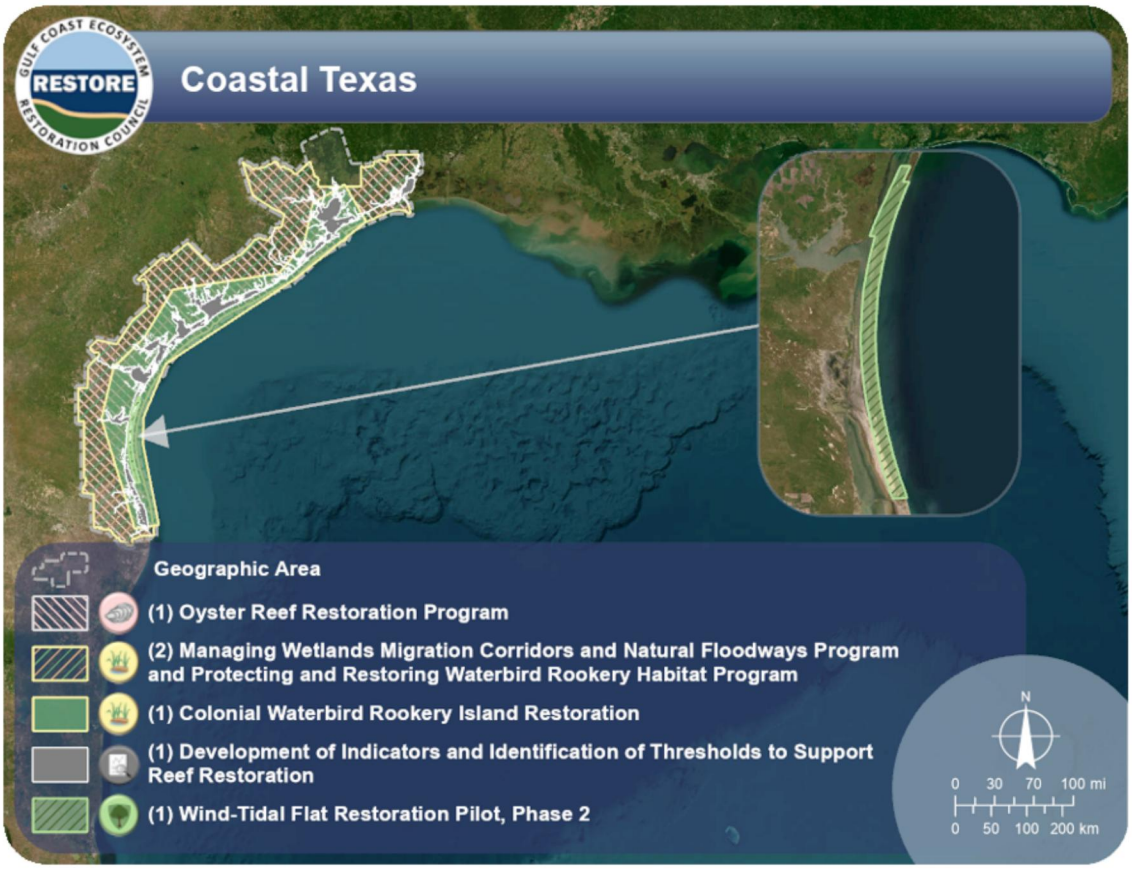

Figure 6: Coastal Texas Proposed Projects and Programs for the 2026 FPL

A.1 Managing Wetlands Migration Corridors and Natural Floodways Program (New Program)

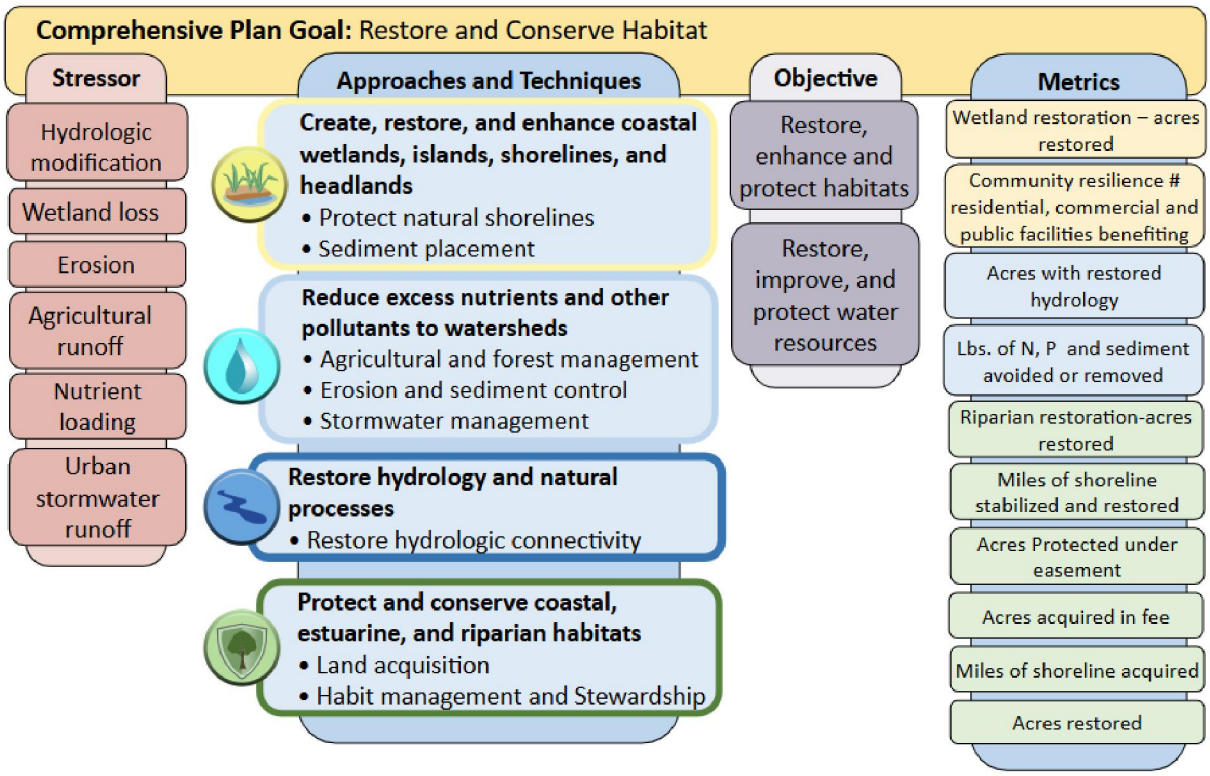

Figure 7: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The *Managing Wetlands Migration Corridors and Natural Floodways* program aims to combat the loss of estuarine wetlands by protecting pathways for wetlands to shift inland. With a proposed budget of $46.8M, the program would fund project activities such as land acquisition, habitat management, hydrologic restoration, agricultural and forest management, stormwater management, erosion control, sediment placement and shoreline protection. It would also fund planning, implementation and monitoring to measure success. Coastal wetlands are vital for supporting wildlife, recreational activities, commercial fisheries, flood control and water quality. In Texas, coastal habitats and communities face risks from storm surges, especially when combined with heavy rainfall. Periodic and long-term inundation of estuarine habitats can profoundly alter the hydrology of these systems, undermining their resilience and ability to support diverse wildlife and ecosystem functions. This program supports the RESTORE Council's primary goal of habitat restoration and conservation, with secondary benefits including improved water quality and quantity, and community resilience.

Priority would be given to well-developed, scalable projects that offer lasting benefits such as habitat conservation, improved flood protection, enhanced wildlife habitat and water quality improvement. The program's duration is 7 years.

A.2 Oyster Reef Restoration Program (New Program)

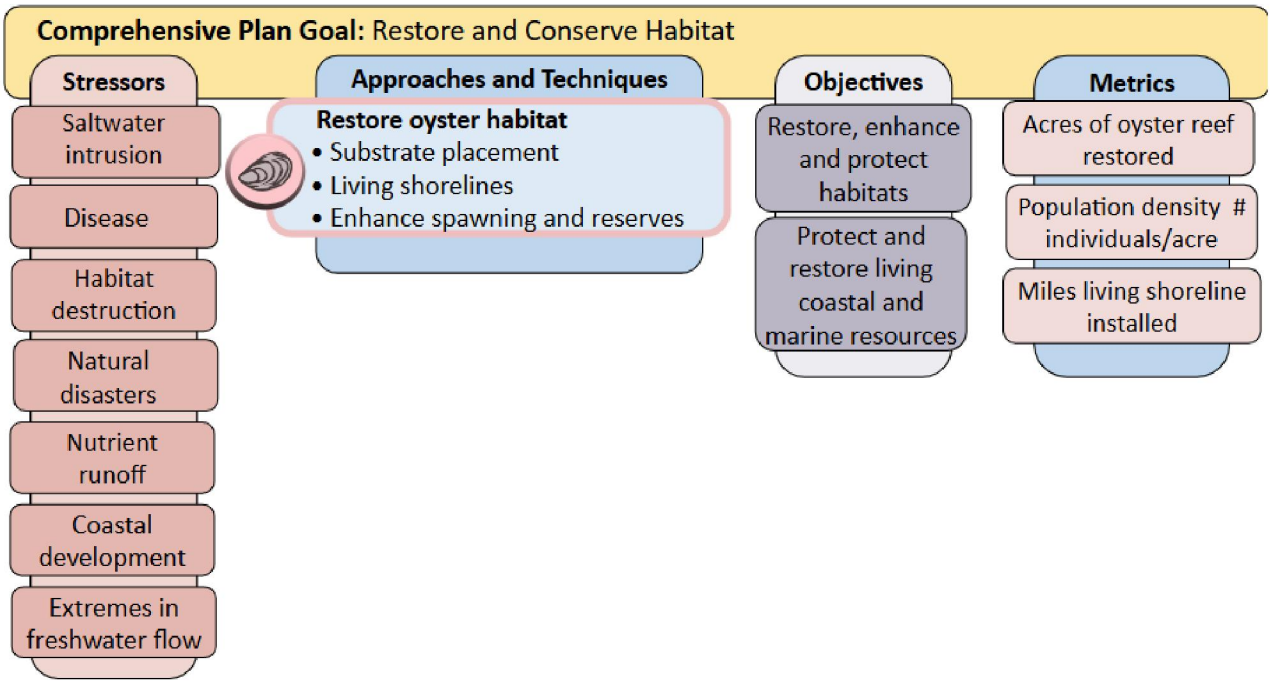

Figure 8: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The Texas *Oyster Reef Restoration* program seeks to restore and conserve habitat and replenish and protect living coastal and marine resources by restoring non-commercial oyster reef habitats in Texas estuarine waters. Over time, oyster reefs across Texas bays and estuaries have declined significantly. Oysters play a critical role in both the environment and the economy by providing essential habitat for many marine species and offering valuable ecosystem services such as filtering water, protecting shorelines, and supporting recreational and commercial fishing.

With a proposed budget of $12.8M, the program would use restoration methods such as placing new substrate, building living shorelines and enhancing areas where oysters can spawn. Additional program activities would include planning, implementation and monitoring to ensure success. Priority would be given to projects that have undergone prior review and align with key criteria, such as project readiness, scalability and potential effectiveness. The overall goal of this program is to enhance the habitat and productivity of Texas's oyster resources. The program's duration is 7 years.

A.3 Development of Indicators and Identification of Thresholds to Support Reef Restoration (New Project)

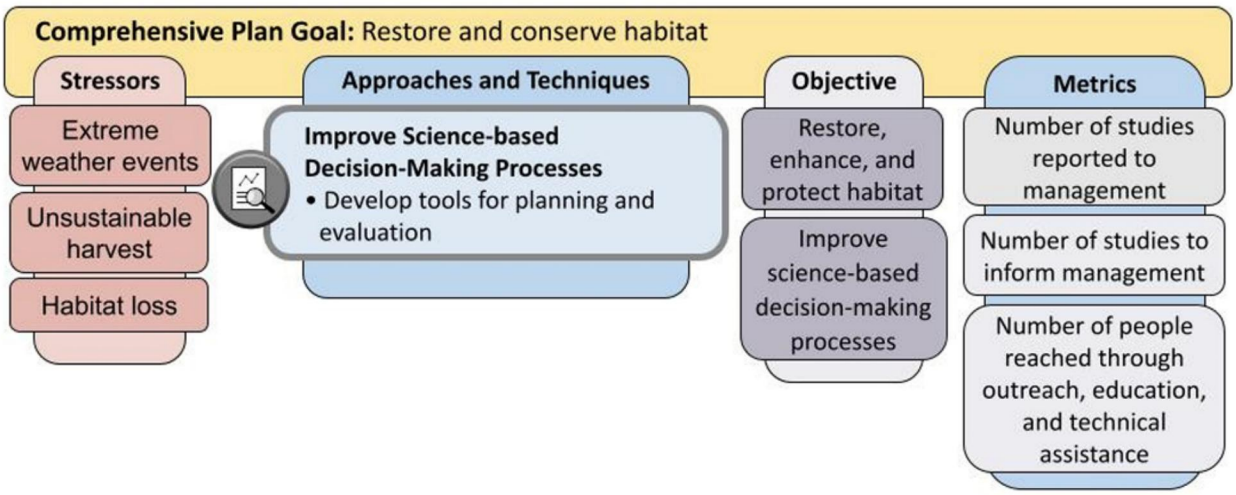

Figure 9: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

With the *Development of Indicators and Identification of Thresholds to Support Reef Restoration* project, the Department of the Interior is requesting $1.2M to build on recent work that has already identified priority restoration sites and calculated restoration and aquaculture suitability indices. This project would expand on this work by studying oysters at the reef level, focusing on population characteristics and how these link to restoration activities, environmental conditions and different management approaches. Across the northern Gulf, restoration and management goals include ensuring resilience and sustainability of oysters, the reefs they create and the services the reefs and oysters provide. This project supports the primary Comprehensive Plan goal of restoring and conserving habitat.

In Texas, managers aim to balance oyster reef restoration and sustainable fisheries through the use of passive (i.e., harvest management), and active (i.e., material in the water) methods. This project would provide critical data to inform management decisions by providing outcome indices based on proposed restoration management and environmental conditions related to oyster reef structure, population dynamics and biodiversity and food web support. The project duration is 4 years.

A.4 Protecting and Restoring Waterbird Rookery Habitat Program (New Program)

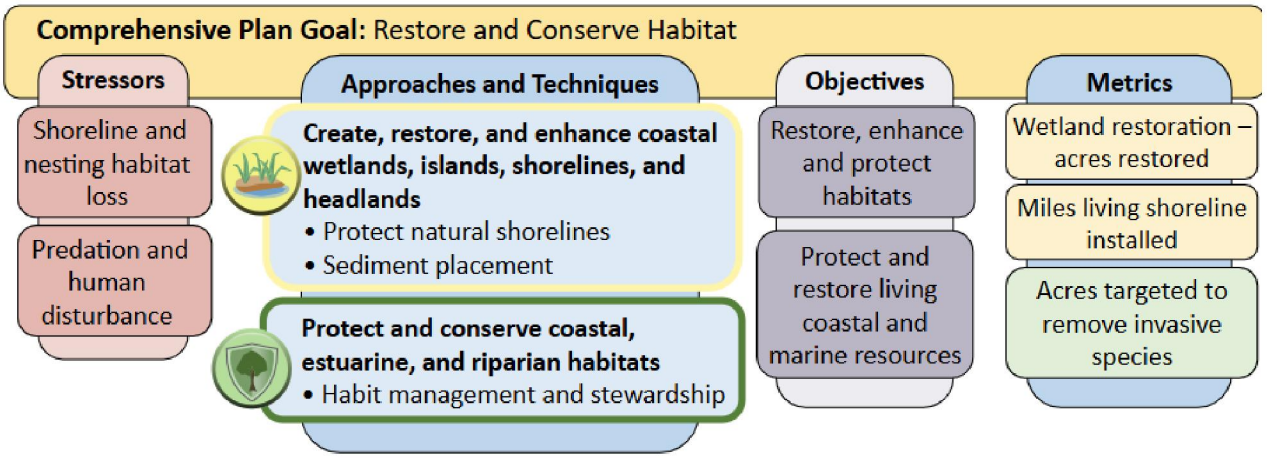

Figure 10: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The *Protecting and Restoring Waterbird Rookery Habitat* program in Texas is focused on preserving and improving essential nesting sites for waterbirds. Across the state, many nesting bird colonies are located on islands formed from dredged materials. These important nesting areas are increasingly at risk due to problems like the loss of vegetation, human disturbance, and predators, all of which contribute to declining bird populations.

This program aligns with the Council's Comprehensive Plan goal to restore and conserve habitats by focusing on the protection and enhancement of rookery islands. With a proposed budget of $12.8 million, the program would support restoration techniques that include placing sediment to stabilize islands, protecting natural shorelines and managing habitat to support healthy bird colonies. It would also include planning, implementation and monitoring activities to ensure success. Priority would be given to projects that have undergone prior review and align with key criteria, such as project readiness, scalability and potential effectiveness. The overall goal is to improve the resilience and sustainability of waterbird populations in Texas. The program's duration is 7 years.

A.5 Colonial Waterbird Rookery Island Restoration (New Project)

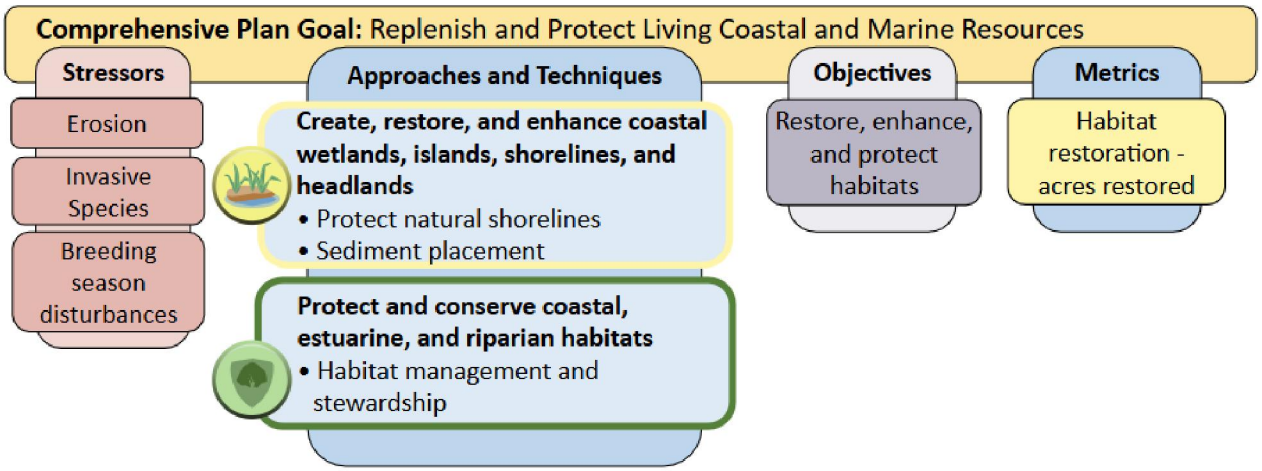

Figure 11: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The Department of the Interior (DOI) is requesting $2M in funding for the *Colonial Waterbird Rookery Island Restoration* project to support restoration actions to slow and reverse declines in waterbirds on islands in coastal Texas. Actions could include restoration through sediment placement, erosion protection, vegetation manipulation, invasive species control, and/or disturbance abatement. DOI would work with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas General Land Office and other partners to implement the projects in support of waterbird rookery island restoration actions. The project supports the Council's Comprehensive Plan goal of restoring and conserving habitat.

This project would leverage NOAA RESTORE Science Program funding for the development of a tool to prioritize rookery island restoration based on bird biology, nesting productivity and food resources, named "Colony Island Network Design and Implementation" (CINDI). This tool is designed to help managers prioritize a network of colony islands where rehabilitation and management are cost effective and the potential for enhancing waterbird populations is high. Funding from this project would be used to implement actions using the CINDI tool as a guide. The project's duration is 5 years.

This DOI-led project would support the *Protecting and Restoring Waterbird Rookery Habitat* program proposed by Texas by leveraging a science-based prioritization tool to guide restoration efforts to high-impact sites. Together, these two projects create a coordinated, data-driven approach to improve habitats, boost nesting success and sustain healthy waterbird populations across Texas.

A.6 Wind-Tidal Flat Restoration Pilot, Phase 2 (Amending Existing Project)

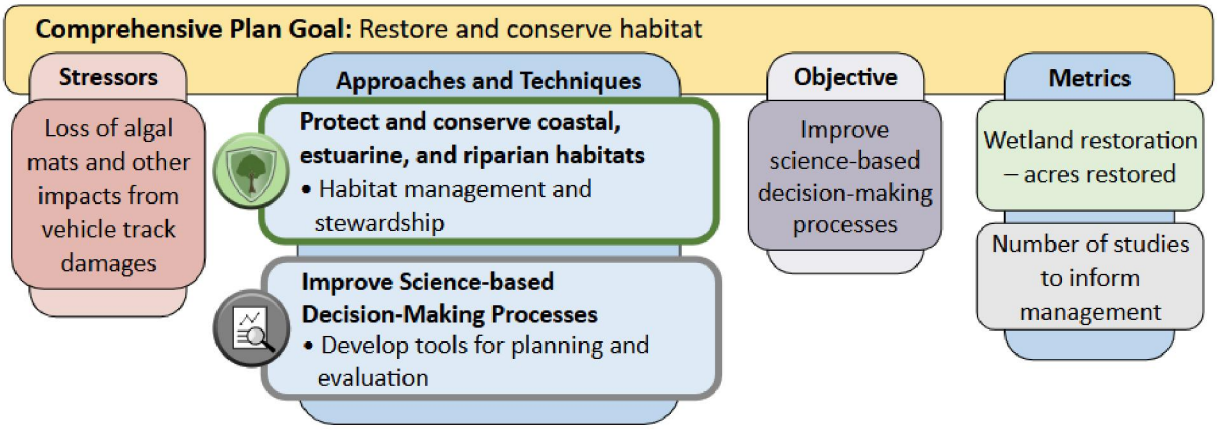

Figure 12: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The *Wind-Tidal Flat Restoration Pilot* project led by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service was approved by the RESTORE Council in the FPL 3b in 2021. In FY 2026, the Council proposes to build on this pilot, which focuses on restoring wind-tidal flat habitats at Padre Island National Seashore.

In this expanded effort, the DOI is requesting $1.2M to build upon the pilot to map and assess the overall distribution and conditions of wind tidal flat habitats at Padre Island National Seashore and conduct on-the-ground restoration targeting areas that have sustained damage over time. A cost-benefit analysis would be conducted to estimate costs of using the selected restoration approach over a large scale.

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. These important habitats have been impaired over time. This project aims to both scale up and redefine the methods tested in the pilot by using drones with advanced multispectral imaging technology to improve the accuracy of wind-tidal flat mapping and by applying field-tested “best practices” for restoration identified in the pilot.

A document of lessons-learned would be created to share with resource managers across the Gulf and to inform future management decisions regarding conservation and restoration of wind-tidal flat habitats. The project supports the RESTORE Council’s goal of restoring and conserving habitat. The project’s duration is 3 years.

Additional information about the proposed projects and programs within the coastal Texas geographic area can be found in Appendix A (Texas sponsored) or Appendix H (DOI sponsored).

B. Pontchartrain Basin in Louisiana

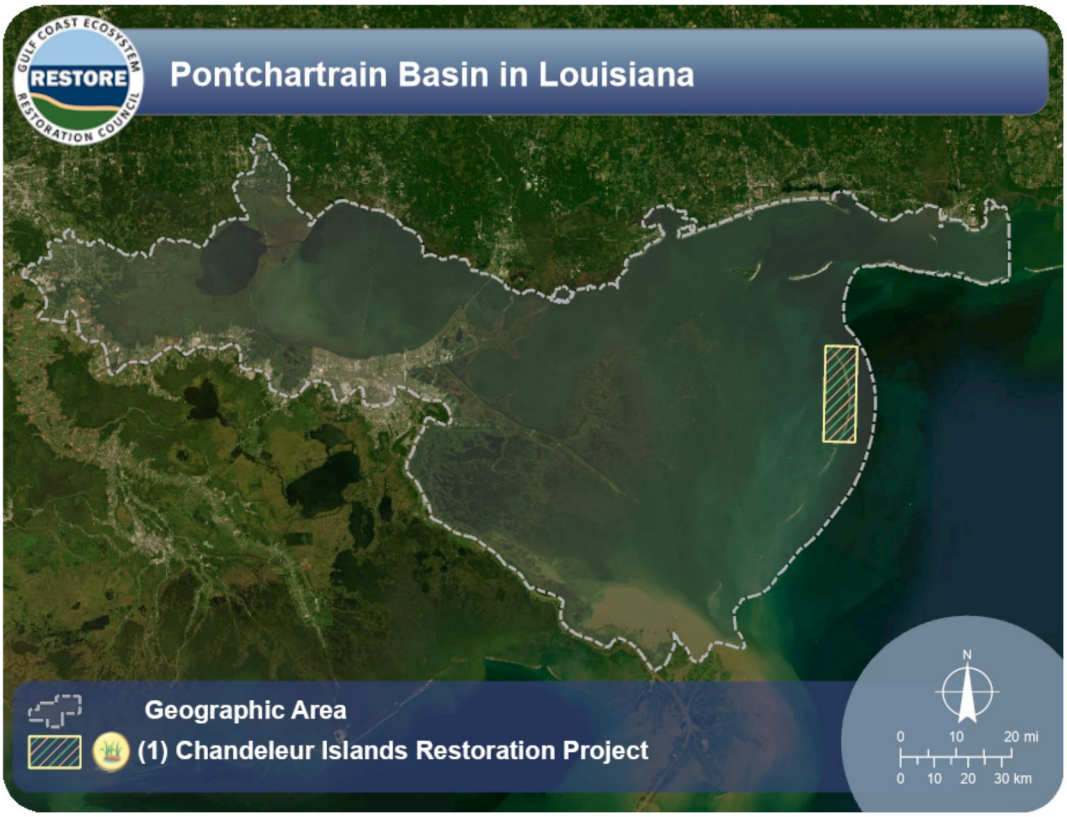

Figure 13: Pontchartrain Basin in Louisiana Proposed Project for the 2026 FPL

B.1 Chandeleur Islands Restoration Project (New Project)

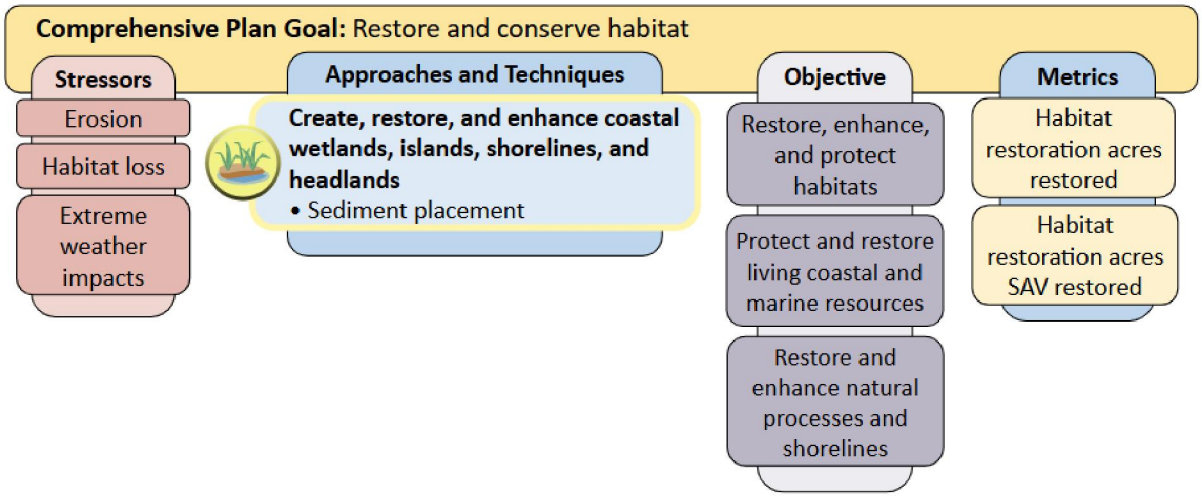

Figure 14: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The State of Louisiana is requesting $84.9M in funding for the Chandeleur Islands Restoration project. In addition, the RESTORE Council proposes to reallocate $5,872,250 in savings from previously approved projects to further support this activity. This is an entire ecosystem restoration project that would restore wildlife and fish habitats for several species in addition to preserving and enhancing 5,200 acres of the island's marine seagrass meadows. The project is located on a remote barrier island complex in southeast Louisiana, more than 20 miles offshore and managed as part of Breton National Wildlife Refuge. This project includes restoration activities on both North Chandeleur and New Harbor Islands in St. Bernard Parish. The restoration strategy is designed to reverse decades of erosional wetland loss and provide direct benefits to a wide range of wildlife and fish species that were impacted by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. This includes sea turtles such as Loggerhead, Green and the endangered Kemp's Ridley. Several bird species would benefit, including colonial nesting waterbirds and foraging birds. A wide variety of fish species including reef fish, sharks and game fish would benefit. Additionally, eighty species designated as "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" would benefit from this project.

Restoration of the Chandeleur Islands would rebuild an important barrier island that serves as a first line of defense for many communities in St. Bernard Parish. The island is rapidly eroding, and its restoration is featured in St. Bernard's 2022 Coastal Strategy document to mitigate against storm surges from tropical storms and hurricanes. This project is being implemented by the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. This project supports the Council's primary goal of restoring and conserving habitats. The project's duration is 3 years.

Additional information about the proposed project in the Louisiana (Pontchartrain Basin) geographic area can be found in Appendix B.

C. Mississippi Sound in Mississippi and Alabama

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C.1 Restoration of Grand Batture Island (New Project)

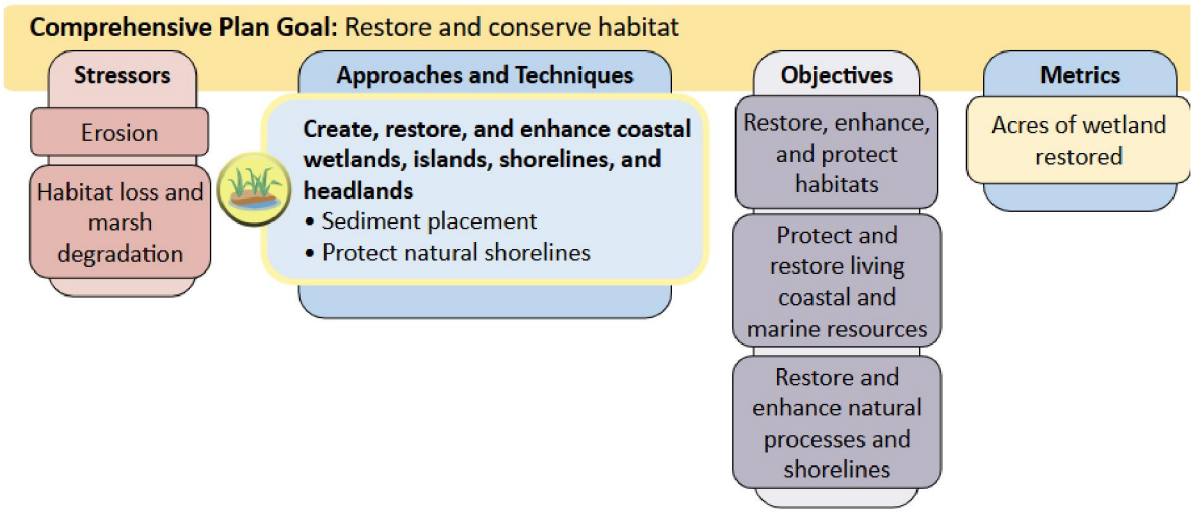
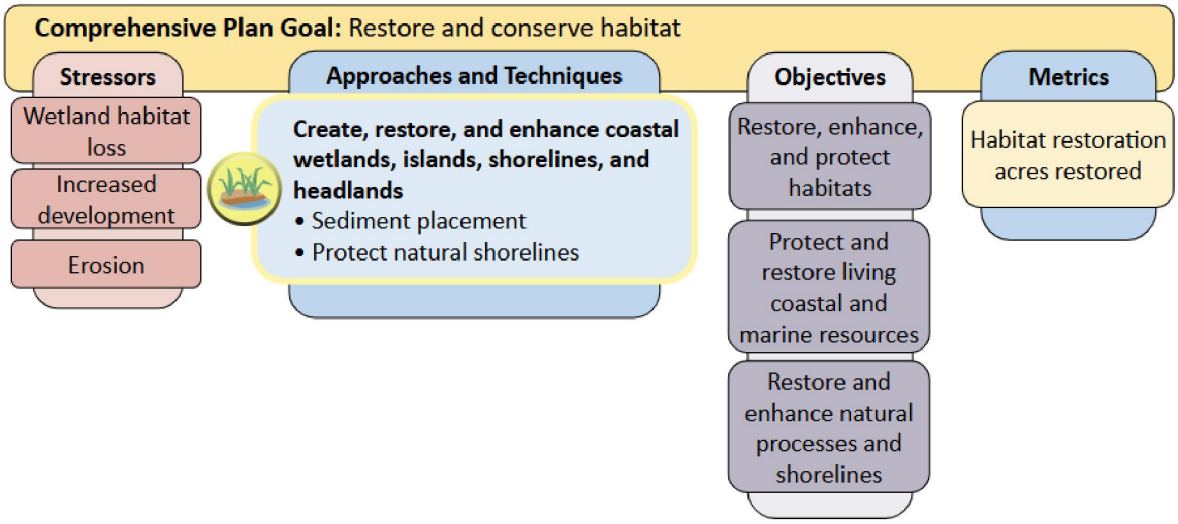


Figure 16: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The States of Mississippi and Alabama are requesting $55M in funding for the proposed cross-border Restoration of the Grand Batture Island project. In addition, the RESTORE Council proposes to reallocate $1,950,000 in savings from a previously approved project to further support this activity. This project would support the restoration and protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region by creating, restoring and enhancing coastal habitats through the restoration of Grand Batture Island in Jackson County, Mississippi and Mobile County, Alabama.

The remnants of Grand Batture Island are characterized by natural sandy beaches, dunes and back barrier marsh. In the past, the island played a crucial role by protecting extensive intertidal marshes and supporting thriving oyster and submerged aquatic vegetation beds within Point aux Chenes Bay, Middle Bay and Grand Bay. Restoration actions would reduce erosion rates, protect essential coastal marsh and create crucial habitat for many species including shorebirds and the diamondback terrapin. This project supports the Council's primary goal of restoring and conserving habitats. The project duration is 10 years.

C.2 Coastal Nearshore Habitat Restoration and Development Program (Amending Existing Program)



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The State of Mississippi is requesting an increase of $25M in funding for the Coastal Nearshore Habitat Restoration and Development program in Mississippi. The Program builds-on work funded by the Initial FPL, FPL 3b and projects supported by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund.

Coastal nearshore habitats provide many important ecosystem services including acting as natural buffers to protect shorelines from erosion, storm surge protection, fisheries production and water quality benefits through sediment and nutrient reduction. The creation of new coastal nearshore habitats and the restoration of these habitats would continue to support and increase these ecosystem services to coastal systems in Mississippi. This project supports the Council's primary goal of restoring and conserving habitats. The program's duration is 10 years.

Additional information about the proposed project and program in Mississippi can be found in Appendix C.

D. Mobile Bay and Tensaw Delta, Perdido Bay & River in Alabama

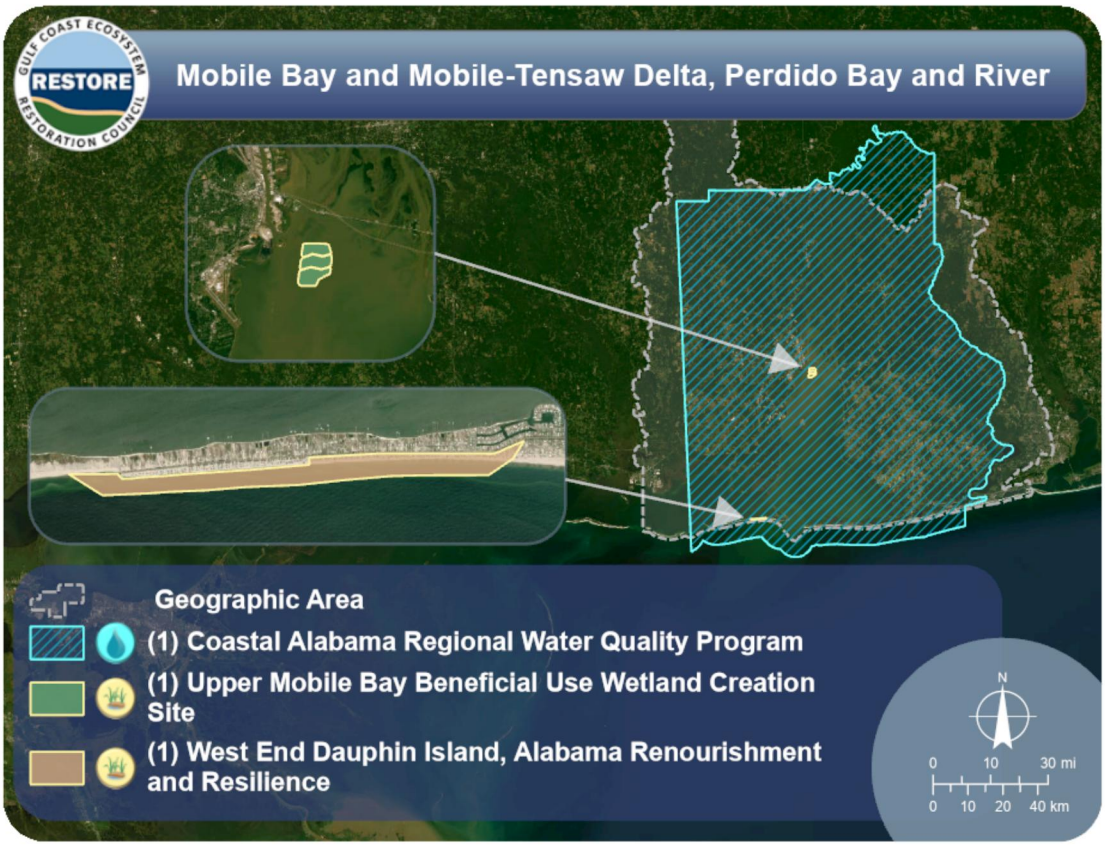


Figure 18: Alabama Proposed Projects and Programs for the 2026 FPL

D.1 Coastal Alabama Regional Water Quality Program (Amending Existing Program)

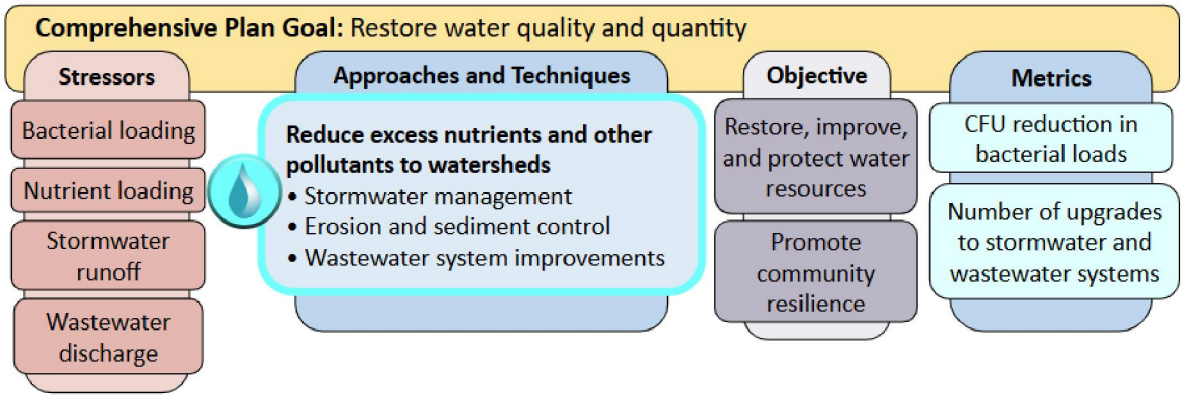


Figure 19: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The Coastal Alabama Regional Water Quality program was approved by the Council in FPL 3b in 2021. The State of Alabama is currently requesting to amend FPL 3b by adding $8M in funding to continue the Coastal Alabama Regional Water Quality program. In addition, the RESTORE Council proposes to reallocate $1,500,000 in unspent funds from a previously approved program to further this activity. The program would support the primary Comprehensive Plan goal of restoring water quality and quantity. The program includes planning-related work as well as implementation activities which could include construction of or upgrades to stormwater and wastewater management systems, low impact development, green infrastructure activities and septic to sewer conversions. Alabama works in partnership with local entities implementing water quality improvement projects as stakeholders continue to prioritize water quality improvement as a basis for restoring the environment and economy of coastal Alabama. The program's duration is 10 years.

D.2 Upper Mobile Bay Beneficial Use Wetland Creation Site (Amending Existing Project)

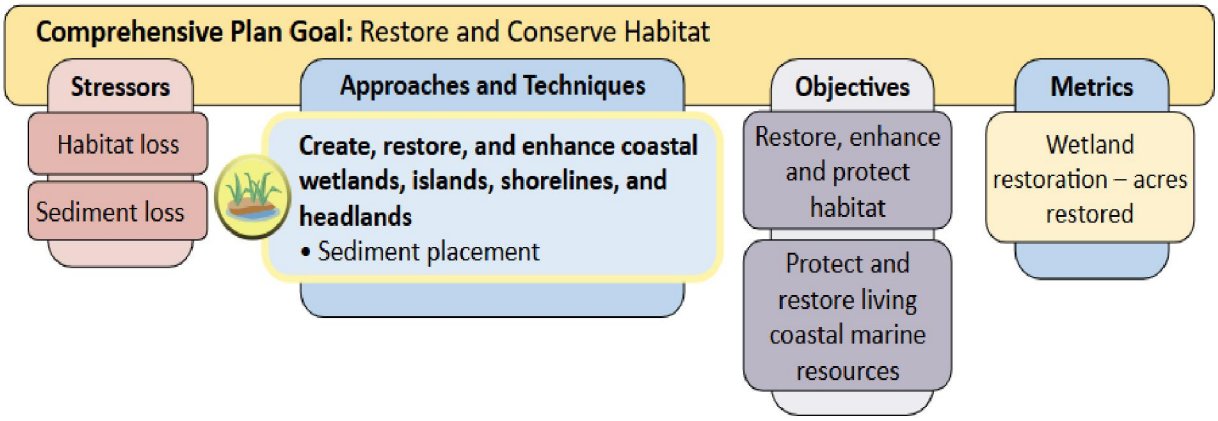


Figure 20: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The Upper Mobile Bay Beneficial Use Wetland Creation Site project was approved by the Council in the Initial FPL in 2015. This project funded design and environmental compliance of a wetland restoration project in upper Mobile Bay. The State of Alabama is currently requesting to amend the Initial FPL by adding $24M in funding to construct a 100-acre wetland restoration cell in Upper Mobile Bay as the first phase of 1,200 acres of tidal wetlands.

The project would enhance utilization of navigation channel maintenance sediment and contribute to maximizing use of dredge material for effective and sustainable coastal restoration. The project would support the primary Comprehensive Plan goal to restore and conserve habitat by restoring the estuarine marsh through the construction of a semi-submerged containment area and placement of dredge material. Additional benefits include providing habitat for living coastal and marine resources, enhancing community resilience by providing a buffer to a main thoroughfare between Mobile and Baldwin Counties, and enhancing the economy of the region by providing cost effective disposal options for the many navigation-related industries located along the Mobile River. The project's duration is 3 years.

D.3 West End Dauphin Island, Alabama Renourishment and Resilience (New Project)

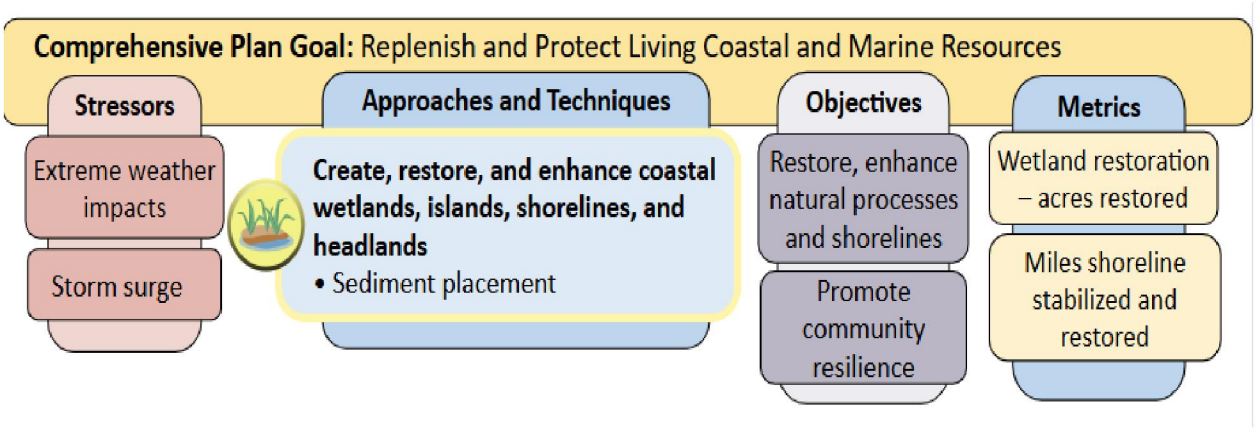


Figure 21: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The State of Alabama is requesting $38M in funding for the West End Dauphin Island, Alabama Renourishment and Resilience project to restore approximately 200 acres of critical barrier island habitat. This includes rebuilding 3.5 miles of linear dune, 40 acres of sandy water bottoms and 160 acres of beach and dune habitat. Restoring this area would help protect valuable estuarine habitats in the Mississippi Sound such as seagrasses, oyster beds and salt marshes. It would also protect 30,000 acres of mainland conservation land and nearby coastal communities that are vulnerable to storms and flooding. This project supports the primary Comprehensive Plan goal of replenishing and protecting living coastal and marine resources. This habitat restoration project would also provide for the enhancement of community resilience. The project's duration is 5 years.

Additional information about the proposed projects and programs in Alabama can be found in Appendix D.

E. Coastal Florida

Figure 22: Coastal Florida Proposed Projects and Programs for the 2026 FPL

E.1 Florida Gulf Coast Resilience Program (Amending Existing Program)

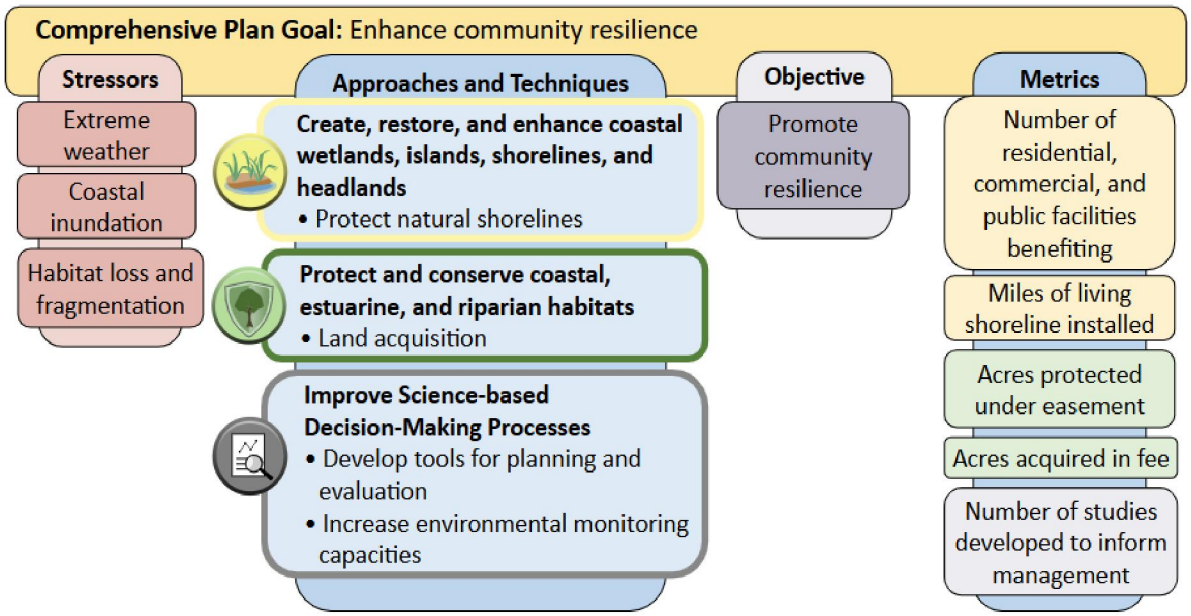


Figure 23: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

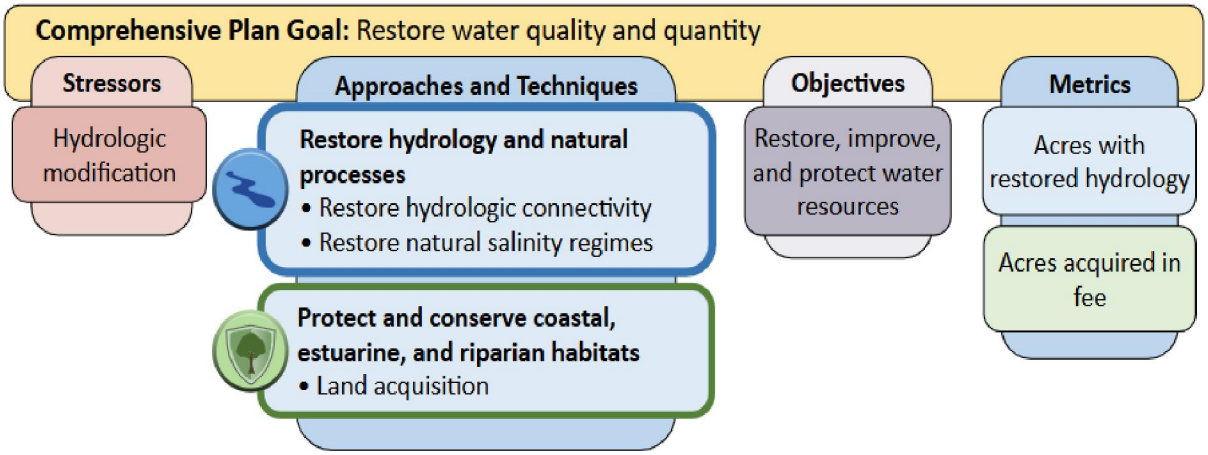
The Florida Gulf Coast Resilience program (FGCRP) was approved by the RESTORE Council in FPL 3b in 2021. The State of Florida is currently requesting to amend FPL 3b by adding $20M in funding to continue this program. The FGCRP supports the primary RESTORE Comprehensive Plan goal of enhancing community resilience through activities that implement sustainable solutions to improve coastal resilience.

Program activities include:

- planning and implementation of adaptation and mitigation strategies to address the impacts of flooding;
- living shorelines to protect against erosion and reduce wave energy; and
- land management and land acquisition activities to protect submerged lands and coastal ecosystems that enhance resilience.

Developing strategies to address resilience is critical to Florida's ability to adapt to a changing coastline. FGCRP results include resilience improvements such as reducing repetitive loss of critical habitats and infrastructure, protecting against wave energy, erosion and storm surge, enhancing habitat protection (e.g., marshes, mangroves, seagrass, coral, and oyster reef restoration), enhancing sustainable healthy wildlife populations and fisheries, enhancing water quality benefits and improving recreation and tourism opportunities. The program's duration is 7 years.

E.2 Florida Gulf Coast Tributaries Hydrologic Restoration Program (Amending Existing Program)



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The Florida Gulf Coast Tributaries Hydrologic Restoration program (THRP) was approved by the Council for funding in FPL 3b. The State of Florida is currently requesting $12.6M in additional funding. This program supports the primary RESTORE Comprehensive Plan goal of restoring 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 and installing erosion control or water control structures. Planning and implementation projects proposed in Florida watersheds that drain to the Gulf of America would be considered under this program.

The THRP improves flow regime dynamics, nutrient cycling, salinity gradients, wildlife habitat and biodiversity and recreational experiences, and may help reduce algal blooms and fish kills. The program framework allows for administration of project funding that targets projects that provide cumulative benefits to the Gulf and link environmental benefits between selected projects and other restoration projects in a watershed or region. The program's duration is 7 years.

E.3 Florida Water Quality Improvement Program (Amending Existing Program)

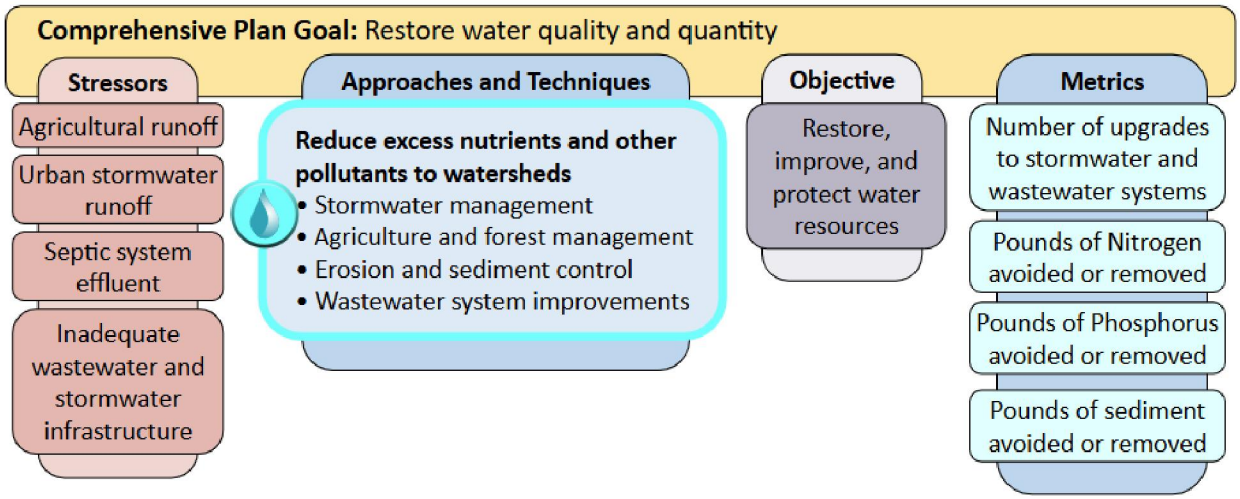
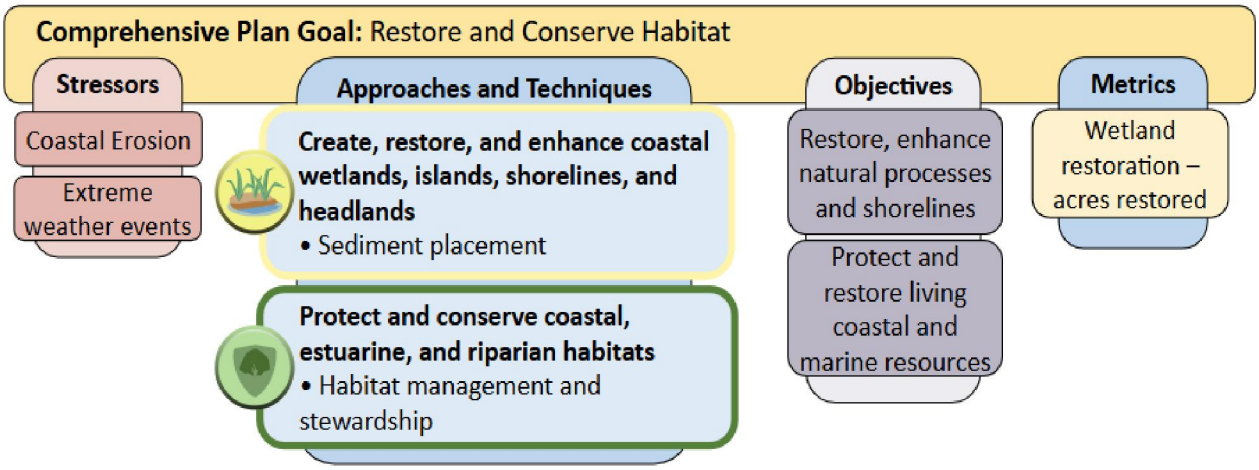


Figure 25: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The *Florida Water Quality Improvement* program (WQIP) was approved by the Council in FPL 3b. The State of Florida is requesting $45M of additional funding to continue this program. The WQIP supports the primary RESTORE Comprehensive Plan goal of restoring 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 treatment enhancements, sediment reduction and land acquisition. Planning and implementation projects would be located in Florida watersheds that drain to the Gulf of America.

Program activities are intended to result in water quality restoration with anticipated environmental benefits that include fewer algal blooms, fish kills, beach closures, fish and shellfish consumption restrictions, as well as healthier seagrass and 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 of America and link environmental benefits between WQIP projects and other restoration projects in a watershed or region. The program's duration is 7 years.

E.4 Enhance Coastal Resilience Through Beach and Dune Restoration, Escambia County (New Project)



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The U.S. Department of the Interior is requesting $900k in funding for the proposed *Enhance Coastal Resilience Through Beach and Dune Restoration, Escambia County* project. This project would cover planning and compliance work needed to extend local beach restoration efforts into the Gulf Islands National Seashore (GINS). Extending these beach nourishment efforts onto federal land would enhance infrastructure protection and combat coastal erosion.

While this project does not directly request funding for sediment placement, it would prepare the way for future beach nourishment and immediately support dune stabilization by planting vegetation.This project includes two years of planning and three years of planting and monitoring. Plants grown from existing species in the GINS would help stabilize dunes, protect infrastructure, reduce erosion and improve storm resilience. It would also help maintain wildlife corridors for species like beach mice and expand nesting habitat for shorebirds and sea turtles, whose breeding areas have been reduced by coastal development. Enhancing barrier island resilience through this effort would not only improve habitat but also support local communities by protecting critical evacuation routes and promoting tourism in the area, particularly following recent hurricane impacts. The primary goal of this project is to restore and conserve habitat. The project duration is 5 years.

Additional information about the proposed programs in Florida can be found in Appendix E (Florida sponsored) or Appendix H (DOI sponsored).

F. Gulfwide

Figure 27: Gulf-wide Proposed Programs for the 2026 FPL

F.1 Trash Free Waters Program Benefiting Communities in the Gulf Coast (New Program)

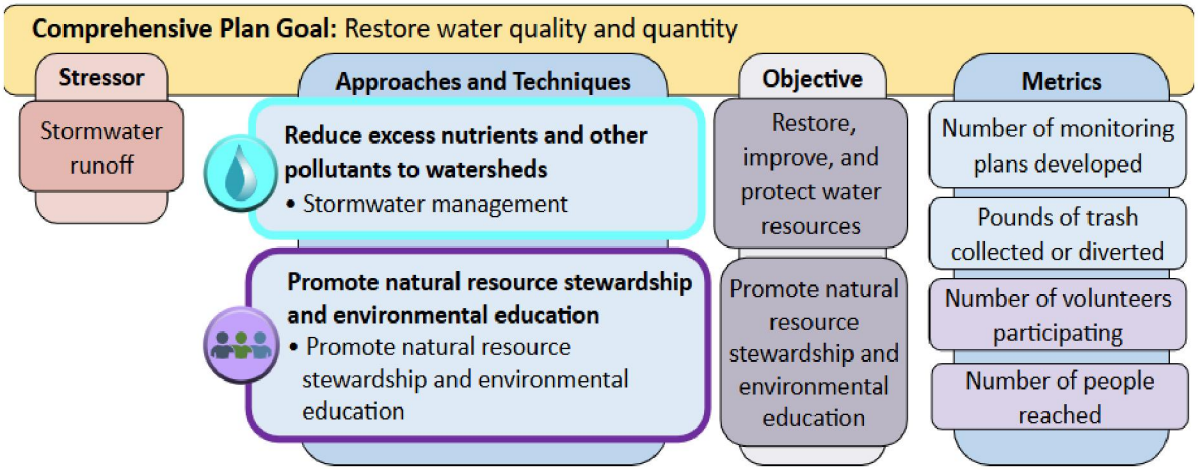

Figure 28: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is requesting $9M for a *Trash Free Waters (TFW)* program that would benefit coastal communities across the five Gulf Coast states. In addition, the RESTORE Council proposes to reallocate $283,610 in savings from a previously approved program to further support this activity. Working together with all five Gulf state partners, EPA would develop competitive funding opportunities to prevent, remove and/or recycle/upcycle trash from waters that drain to the Gulf Coast. Eligible projects would include prevention activities (sustainable replacement products, waste lifecycle, environmental stewardship), removal activities (in-situ trash capture devices, cleanup events, incentivized disposal) and/or circularity and life cycle activities or planning in order to provide positive outcomes at larger scale (generation to disposal). This program supports the Council's Comprehensive Plan goal of restoring water quality and quantity.

EPA proposes to award grants in each Gulf state with estimated project periods of up to 3 years. Estimated benefits are reducing pollutants such as trash from water bodies that flow to the Gulf of America, thereby improving water quality and positively impacting ecosystems and local economies. TFW projects have proven records of diverting or recycling tens of thousands of pounds of trash, preventing future litter by education and outreach, and educating future stewards of the environment. The program duration is 7 years.

Additional information about the proposed program for EPA can be found in Appendix F.

F.2 Gulf Coast Conservation Reserve Program (Amending Existing Program)

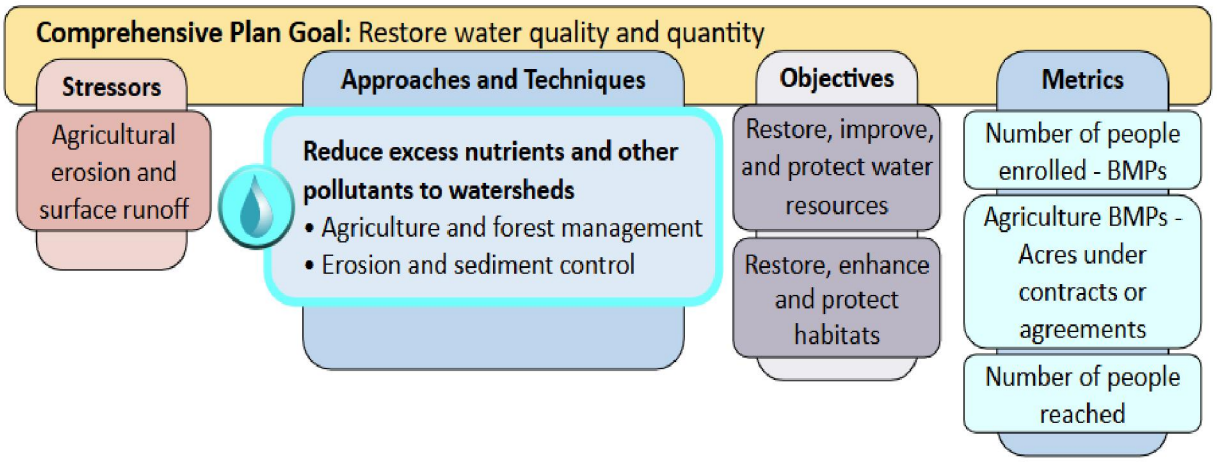

Figure 29: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The Gulf Coast Conservation Reserve program (GCCRP) was established through the Council's 2015 Initial FPL and continued in FPL3b for the purpose of protecting and restoring critical wildlife habitat and improving water quality through the development of conservation and restoration plans. This amendment would add $3,000,000 in funding for additional activities in Texas and Alabama.

The GCCRP activities would allow for conservation planning on private lands including but not limited to ecosystem restoration by conducting soil and water conservation for the benefit of water quality to priority bays and estuaries. This program would serve to assist willing private landowners with implementing conservation measures that improve water and wildlife habitat conditions. This program would build upon the restoration and conservation progress made through the previous FPL funding and would support the primary Comprehensive Plan goal to restore water quality and quantity. The program's duration is 4 years.

Additional information about the proposed program for USDA can be found in Appendix G.

F.3 Tribal Youth Conservation Corps (Amending Existing Program)

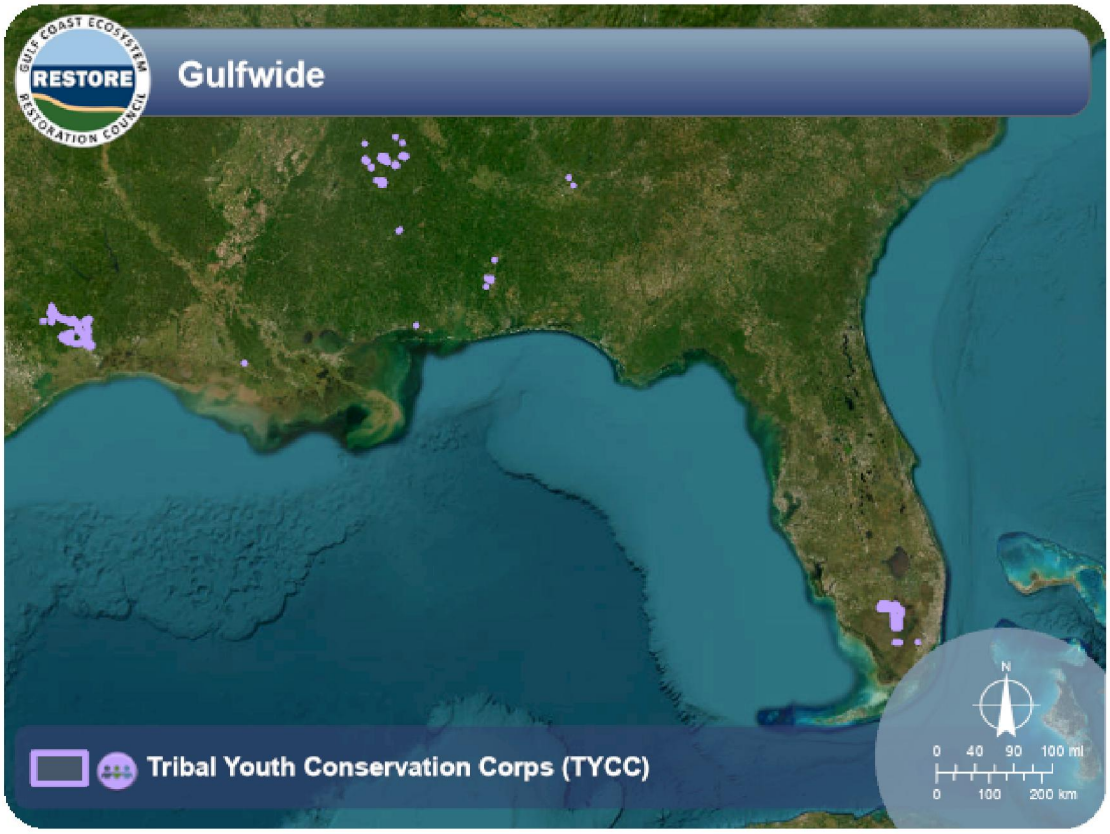

Figure 30: Proposed Tribal Youth Conservation Corps Program for the 2026 FPL

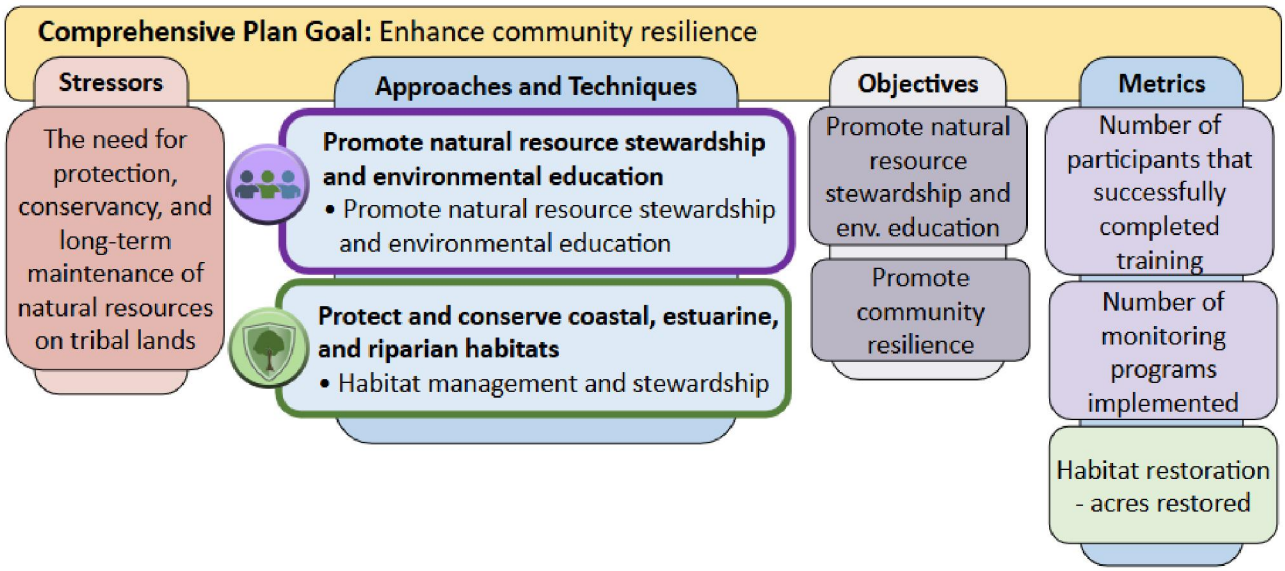

Figure 31: This figure shows the Comprehensive Plan goal of this activity (top row), how the Planning Framework approaches and techniques employed by this activity (second column) will address stressors (first column) to support Comprehensive Plan objectives (third column), and the corresponding metrics that may be used to track program or implemented project success (fourth column). As this program is implemented, metrics may be added, removed, or replaced, as appropriate, as specific projects under the program are identified.

The Tribal Youth Conservation Corps (TYCC) is an ongoing program funded by the Council in both the Initial FPL and FPL 3b. This program is active in six federally recognized Tribes: the Seminole, Miccosukee, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Mississippi Band of Choctaw, Chitimacha and Alabama-Coushatta. Each Tribe has developed and conducted restoration and educational activities in a manner that best benefits their Tribal community's unique needs. This amendment would add $1,449,000 in funding for this program.

The goal of TYCC is to educate and train Tribal youth through direct participation in restoration projects that reflect each Tribe's unique cultural and environmental priorities. These projects have already helped restore up to 2,000 acres, addressing coastal erosion, invasive species removal, habitat restoration, and cultural preservation. The program helps Tribes to restore the Gulf while providing meaningful job opportunities for youth, creating powerful connections to nature and helping prepare the next generation of environmental stewards. This program supports the primary Comprehensive Plan goal of enhancing community resilience. The program's duration is 3 years.

Additional information about the proposed program for the Tribal Youth Program can be found in Appendix H.

V. Proposed Change to the 2022 Comprehensive Plan

In addition to identifying proposed projects and programs for funding, this draft 2026 FPL includes an update to the Comprehensive Plan. The Council approved the *2022 Comprehensive Plan Update: Restoring the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem and Economy*, providing the public with updates to the strategic guidance the Council established to effectively administer its roles and responsibilities. In addition, it provided a summary of Council progress on its goals, objectives, and commitments, and the effectiveness of the Council's use of general planning funds to meet those commitments.

A key part of the proposed update is the Council's continued focus on delivering results and measuring impacts. In this update the Council is clarifying that only projects or programs that collect environmental data must include an Observational Data Plan (ODP). The ODP contains information on how monitoring data will be collected, managed, and made publicly available. Environmental data is defined as information collected directly from measurements of physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical properties and conditions; or produced from models. This update reaffirms the Council's commitment to demonstrate the benefits of the Council investments and measuring the overall success of restoration.

VI. Request for Public Comment and Next Steps

The draft 2026 FPL will be available public review and comment period beginning November 20, 2025 and ending on January 2, 2026. During this time frame, the Council will provide an overview of the proposed 2026 FPL via live public webinars and in-person meetings, according to the schedule provided on the Council's website. The public will be able to provide feedback during the public comment period, both verbally and in writing during the public webinars, by email at restorecouncil@restorethegulf.gov.

The Council will review all comments received before the deadline, develop a written response to comments, and consider those comments as it proceeds to finalize the 2026 FPL. The Council will then vote on whether to approve the draft 2026 FPL. All associated information including fact sheets and original proposal packages will be available on the Council's website.

The Council appreciates those stakeholders who are not only interested in Gulf restoration but also participate in the Council's restoration activities by offering comments during the public comment period. If you are interested in receiving notifications of upcoming webinars, public meetings, or public comment periods, please subscribe to receive the Council's automatic email updates at https://www.restorethegulf.gov/. Locate the "Stay in Touch" box and click "Subscribe" to select the "Public Meetings and Public Comment Periods" category, in addition to other categories of interest to you.

Appendices

Appendix A: State of Texas Proposal Package

Appendix B: State of Louisiana Proposal Package

Appendix C: State of Mississippi Proposal Package

Appendix D: State of Alabama Proposal Package

Appendix E: State of Florida Proposal Package

Appendix F: The Environmental Protection Agency Proposal Package

Appendix G: The United States Department of Agriculture Proposal Package

Appendix H: The Department of the Interior Proposal Package