

**Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council
Summary of Council Funding Approval
Norton Creek Sanitary Sewer Inflow and Infiltration Rehabilitation Project**

September 25, 2024

On September 25, 2024, the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council) voted to approve \$7,500,000 in implementation funding for the Norton Creek Sanitary Sewer Inflow and Infiltration Rehabilitation project (Norton Creek), a component of the FPL 3b the [Coastal Alabama Regional Water Quality Program](#). Background on this funding approval is provided below. Before voting on whether to approve funding, the Council requested stakeholder input during a 30-day public comment period which began on July 18, 2024. A summary of comments received and the Council's responses can be found [here](#).

Background:

Pursuant to the *Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012* (RESTORE Act), the Council is responsible for administering portions of *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill settlement funds for the purpose of restoring the environment and economy of the Gulf coast. The Council administers two funding programs, one of which is the Council-Selected Restoration Component, or "Bucket 2." Under Bucket 2, the Council votes to approve Gulf ecosystem restoration projects and programs proposed by the Council members. Bucket 2 projects and programs approved for funding by the Council are included in what is called a Funded Priorities List (FPL).

FPLs include activities in two categories. Category 1 activities are approved for Bucket 2 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 (NEPA) and other applicable laws.

Category 2 activities are Council priorities for potential future funding but are not currently approved for funding. As appropriate, the Council reviews the activities in Category 2 in order to determine whether to move the given activity to Category 1 and approve it for funding via a Council vote. Such funding approvals are done via amendments to the FPL containing the given project(s) or program(s). FPL amendments are also required for other changes to listed projects (e.g., material changes in scope or cost, transfer of sponsorship to another Council member). The project that is the subject of this FPL amendment is described below.

Norton Creek Project Summary

The Council has approved \$7,500,000 in implementation funds for the Norton Creek project located in Mobile County, Alabama and sponsored by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR). These implementation funds were budgeted in Category 2 of

the Council's FPL 3b. This project will be implemented as a component of the FPL 3b Coastal Alabama Regional Water Quality Program.

The Norton Creek sanitary sewer collection system experiences excessive inflow and infiltration due in part to the City's low-lying areas and its adjacency to the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. This project includes cured in place pipe lining of gravity sewer main and rehabilitation of associated manholes, relocation and replacement of gravity sewer main and associated manholes, and relocation of the Police Club Lift Station to the end of Commerce Street.

The City of Saraland is located adjacent to the Mobile-Tensaw Delta in Mobile County, Alabama. The area's raw sewer is conveyed to the Saraland Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) where it is treated, and effluent is discharged into Bayou Sara, flowing downstream into the Mobile River and ultimately Mobile Bay. Inflow and Infiltration into the sewer collection lines causes increased sanitary sewer overflows which negatively impact water quality in Norton Creek and surrounding water bodies. Inflow and infiltration cause a large strain on the sanitary sewer lift stations in the collection system as well. The lift station pumps are forced to run continuously, reducing their useful life and increasing their susceptibility for failure. Failures of pump stations result in sanitary sewer overflows and sewer spills which pollute waterways, threatening wildlife, and creating dangerous public health and safety conditions for nearby residents. Environmental benefits of the Norton Creek project include fewer sanitary sewer overflows, reducing dangerous pollution entering Norton Creek, Bayou Sara, Mobile River and Mobile Bay. Further, less inflow and infiltration will reduce the volume of effluent to be treated at the WWTP, improving efficiency, and reducing treated discharge in the waterways of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta.

On January 22, 2024, the City of Saraland Board of Water and Sewer received Clean Water Act Section 404 authorization under the Department of Army Nationwide Permit 58 - Utility Line Activities for Water and Other Substances. To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Council has adopted the January 4, 2021, Corps of Engineers Decision Document for Nationwide Permit 58. ADCNR also completed additional environmental compliance coordination for the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Alabama Historical Commission. This environmental compliance documentation can be found [here](#).

To learn more about the RESTORE Council visit us at www.restorethegulf.gov or send questions to restorecouncil@restorethegulf.gov.