



Draft 2026 FUNDED PRIORITIES LIST

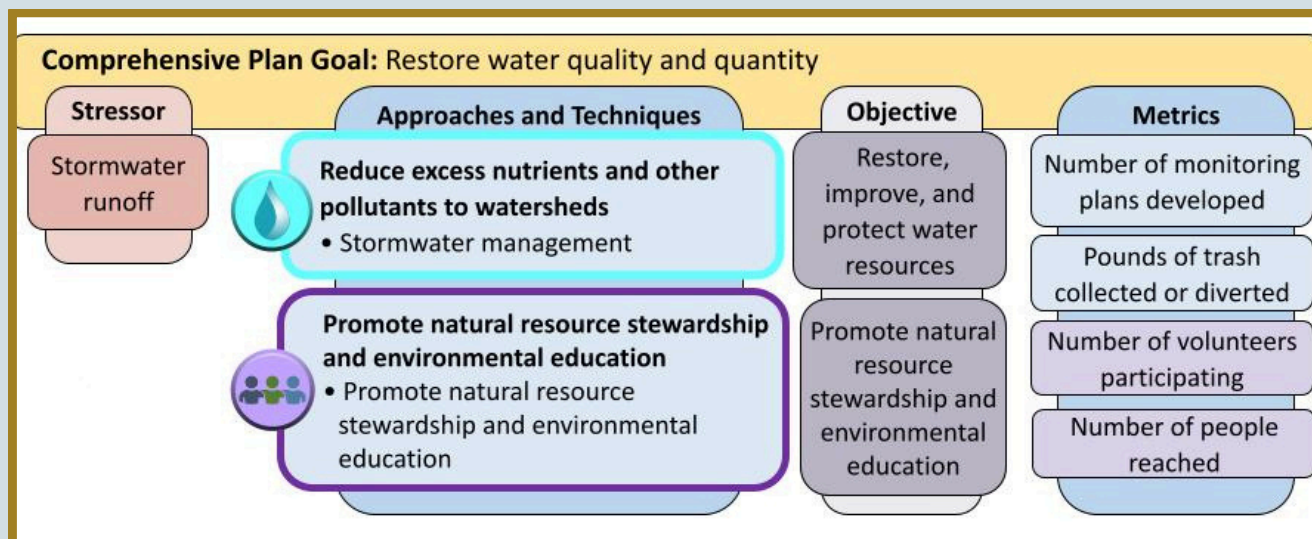
Trash Free Waters Program Benefiting Communities in the Gulf coast (New Program)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is requesting \$9M for a *Trash Free Waters (TFW)* program that will 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 will develop competitive funding opportunities to prevent, remove and/or recycle/upcycle trash from waters that drain to the Gulf Coast. Eligible projects will 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.

Program at a Glance

The *Trash Free Waters* program applies Planning Framework approaches and techniques to support Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives. To support the primary objective, *Restore, improve, and protect water resources* stressors such as stormwater runoff will be addressed using the *Reduce excess nutrients and other pollutants to watersheds* approach. Success using reduce pollutants to watersheds to support the primary objective may be tracked using the metric of pounds of trash collected or diverted. Success achieving the secondary objective, *Promote natural resource stewardship and environmental education*, may be tracked using the number of volunteers participating and the number of people reached. Additional metrics of project success include the number of monitoring plans developed that will monitor the success of the funded projects.



Draft FPL 2026 Public Comment Period:
November 20 - 11:59 PM MT January 2, 2026

Visit restorethegulf.gov for info on public meetings & how to comment.



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2026 FPL

**U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency**

Gulfwide

Trash Free Waters Program
Benefiting Communities in the
Gulf Coast



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0 100 200 300 km