

Tribal Youth Conservation Corps (TYCC)

RESTORE Council Proposal Document

General Information

Title:

Tribal Youth Conservation Corps (TYCC)

Project Abstract:

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.

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 request to the RESTORE Council is to seek funding for continued program support.

FPL Category: Cat1: Planning/ Cat1: Implementation

Activity Type: Program

Program: Tribal Youth Coastal Restoration Program (DOI/BIA)

Co-sponsoring Agency(ies): N/A

Is this a construction project?:

No

RESTORE Act Priority Criteria:

(I) 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.

Priority Criteria Justification:

Each Tribe designs its own projects for their youth. Through this program, Tribal youth will undertake efforts to learn to protect, restore, and manage natural resources and the environment through activities such as native plant restoration, site cleanup, sampling of water and soil, as well as environmental and cultural education of Tribal youth. This program will train youth in long-term stewardship of the Gulf Coast environment. The impact of this education and training should continue for many generations to come. Some Tribes will place emphasis on understanding and using technologies (e.g., drones, GIS, other software packages) to better recruit and teach students. Tribal leaders design specific projects, i.e., teaching and experiential learning, to prepare students to understand and respect the natural environment. Tribal

leadership encourages Tribal youth to engage in activities that will enable them to assume future roles in the community and gain self-reliance. The activities also provide training to work on restoration throughout the Gulf and engage the indigenous communities of the Gulf in the larger restoration effort.

Project Duration (in years): 3

Goals

Primary Comprehensive Plan Goal:

Enhance Community Resilience

Primary Comprehensive Plan Objective:

Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education

Secondary Comprehensive Plan Objectives:

Promote Community Resilience

Secondary Comprehensive Plan Goals:

N/A

PF Restoration Technique(s):

Promote natural resource stewardship and environmental education: Promote natural resource stewardship and environmental education

Protect and conserve coastal, estuarine, and riparian habitats: Habitat management and stewardship

Location

Location:

The location of the six Tribes described in the program include two in Florida, one in Alabama, one in Mississippi, one in Louisiana, and one in Texas.

HUC8 Watershed(s):

South Atlantic-Gulf Region(Alabama) - Coosa-Tallapoosa(Lower Coosa)
South Atlantic-Gulf Region(Alabama) - Coosa-Tallapoosa(Lower Tallapoosa)
South Atlantic-Gulf Region(Alabama) - Alabama(Lower Alabama)
South Atlantic-Gulf Region(Choctawhatchee-Escambia) - Florida Panhandle Coastal(Perdido)
Texas-Gulf Region(Neches) - Neches(Lower Neches)
Texas-Gulf Region(Neches) - Neches(Village)
Texas-Gulf Region(Neches) - Neches(Pine Island Bayou)
Texas-Gulf Region(Trinity) - Lower Trinity(Lower Trinity-Kickapoo)
South Atlantic-Gulf Region(Pascagoula) - Pascagoula(Lower Leaf)
South Atlantic-Gulf Region(Southern Florida) - Southern Florida(Everglades)
South Atlantic-Gulf Region(Southern Florida) - Southern Florida(Big Cypress Swamp)
South Atlantic-Gulf Region(Southern Florida) - Southern Florida(Florda Southeast Coast)
South Atlantic-Gulf Region(Choctawhatchee-Escambia) - Escambia(Escambia)
Lower Mississippi Region(Louisiana Coastal) - Atchafalaya-Vermillion(Bayou Teche)
Lower Mississippi Region(Louisiana Coastal) - Atchafalaya-Vermillion(Vermilion)
South Atlantic-Gulf Region(Pearl) - Pearl(Upper Pearl)

South Atlantic-Gulf Region(Pascagoula) - Pascagoula(Mississippi Coastal)

State(s):

Texas
Alabama
Mississippi
Louisiana
Florida

County/Parish(es):

AL - Elmore
AL - Escambia
AL - Monroe
AL - Montgomery
FL - Broward
FL - Escambia
FL - Miami-Dade
FL - Hendry
LA - St. Mary
MS - Attala
MS - Jackson
MS - Jones
MS - Kemper
MS - Leake
MS - Neshoba
MS - Newton
MS - Scott
MS - Winston
TX - Hardin
TX - Jefferson
TX - Orange
TX - Polk

Congressional District(s):

AL - 2
AL - 6
MS - 2
FL - 26
TX - 14
LA - 3
FL - 20
MS - 3
AL - 1
FL - 18
TX - 36
MS - 4
FL - 1
TX - 8
FL - 28

Narrative

Introduction and Overview:

The overarching goal of this program is to educate and train Tribal youth through the implementation of restoration projects that benefit the Gulf Coast. This work builds on the success of previous Tribal Youth Conservation Corps activities, which anticipates restoration of about 2000 acres by the conclusion of FPL3b. These efforts included a number of restoration activities that have improved coastal habitat, reduced beach erosion, preserved cultural resources, and removed invasive species. Activities will again be selected and designed to benefit the Gulf coast region through direct restoration and training that would educate youth on the importance of these natural habitats, as well as the development of skills to restore and conserve coastal habitats throughout the region.

The program will support the primary RESTORE Comprehensive Plan goal to enhance community resilience through planning and implementation activities. This proposal will allow the program to build on the successes of the FPL1 and FPL3b initiatives and will fund Tribal Youth programming with the following Federally recognized Tribes: Seminole Tribe of Florida, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, and Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas.

Proposed Methods :

Cultural, historic preservation and environmental training will include off-site visits for learning, data collection activities, and experiencing activities and events. The Tribes will arrange for transportation of youth to engage in local restoration programs and collaborative events at other Tribal sites. At some sites, Tribal members will donate identified mother plants to transplant, as warranted, to allow youth to place them in appropriate locations. Propagation will be at the identified sites. Restoring sites are important educational conservation tools for teaching youth that they are the next generation of stewards of Tribal lands and surrounding habitats. In several project locations, the primary projects are focused on planting native plants and trees. Planting can be both cost effective and easily achievable.

Environmental Benefits:

Anticipated environmental benefits include disrupting the process of shoreline erosion, mitigating the impacts of sea level rise, restoring a critical environmental balance in a threatened area, as well as building in Tribal youth a knowledge and commitment to protecting the environment, and the preliminary skills to work in or appreciate the restoration field in the future. Completion of the work could help mitigate future risks to the Gulf ecosystem associated with sea level rise.

Metrics:

Metric Title: PRM004 : Monitoring - # monitoring programs implemented

Target: 3

Narrative: Success will be measured by the number of monitoring projects (e.g., water quality monitoring, species surveys) implemented through the program.

Metric Title: COI007 : Building institutional capacity - # of participants that successfully completed training

Target: 20

Narrative: Success will be measured by the total number of student interns successfully completing the TYCC program.

Metric Title: HR004 : Habitat restoration - Acres restored

Target: 250

Narrative: Success will be measured in total acres restored because of TYCC program implementation.

Risk and Uncertainties:

This program began in 2016 and has been successfully implemented since then. From prior RESTORE Council awards, 239 students participated in the program and restored 995 acres of habitat between 2016 and 2019. The program was largely placed on hold during the COVID 19 pandemic, though certain educational events were held virtually, and some limited restoration and trainings were held when social distancing and other safety measures could be accommodated. Thus, risk and uncertainty can be generated through random, stochastic events (e.g., pandemic) and similar when managing a youth program (e.g., finding enough participants, overcoming barriers to participation). Each of the participating Tribes have developed public engagement and outreach events to mitigate for risk and uncertainties when running a youth program.

Monitoring and Adaptive Management:

n/a

Data Management:

Data generated are largely the number of participations, and qualitative documentation of activities implemented. These data are included in annual reporting.

Collaboration:

With the addition of the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, the program will integrate projects within NPS lands in the Big Thicket National Preserve.

Across all Gulf Tribes the program utilizes in-house knowledge and staff from each Tribe and expertise in various Federal agencies (e.g., NRCS) to develop the planned activities of the Tribe. All of this collaboration is in-kind leveraging.

Public Engagement, Outreach, and Education:

This is a continuation of an existing program. Each year, each participating Tribe conducts public engagement and outreach activities to maximize information sharing in the local communities to obtain applications from interested students. The program is focused on providing environmental and cultural education to students such that they could pursue a degree or job in a natural resources related field or gain an appreciation of the resources.

Leveraging:

Funds: \$10,000.00

Type: Leveraging

Status: Committed

Source Type: Other Federal

Description: Across all Gulf Tribes, the Tribes leverage their in-house knowledge and staff to develop the individual Tribal programs. All these leveraging opportunities are in-kind. In addition, BIA will use in-kind appropriations for the salaries of BIA employees'

time spent in monitoring, management, and mandatory compliance activities.

Environmental Compliance:

Existing Categorical Exclusion documents have been created for each of the six Tribal projects. DOI has also provided an EA for the Council to evaluate and adopt to cover certain activities in Texas. DOI has indicated that these Categorical Exclusions and the EA fully cover the activities described in this document. The Council may adopt these Categorical Exclusions and EA for the approval of this activity. In addition to this type of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis, this program was also evaluated and found to be in compliance with the following statutes and Executive Orders: Endangered Species Act; National Historic Preservation Act; Magnuson-Stevens Act; Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act; Executive Order 11988; Executive Order 11990; Executive Order 13898; Coastal Zone Management Act; Coastal Barrier Resources Act; Farmland Protection Policy Act; Section 404 of the Clean Water Act; Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act; Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act; Marine Mammal Protection Act; National Marine Sanctuaries Act; Migratory Bird Treaty Act; Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act; and Clean Air Act.

Bibliography (All references listed below that were published prior to 2025 may reference the Gulf of Mexico. This nomenclature has been retained to maintain the integrity of the referenced material. The Council recognizes the name change Gulf of America):

Akers, D. L., 1999: Removing the heart of the Choctaw people: Indian removal from a Native American perspective. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 23 (3), 63-76, <https://doi.org/10.17953/aicr.23.3.p52341016666h822>.

Baldwin, B. S., Cirtain, M., Horton, D. S., Ouellette, J., Franklin, S. B., Preece, J. E., 2009: Propagation methods for Rivercane (*Arundinaria gigantea*) L. (Walter) Muhl. *Castanea*, 74(3), 300-316, <https://doi.org/10.2179/08-042R2.1>.

Bernard, S. K., 2016: Teche: a history of Louisiana's most famous bayou. University Press of Mississippi, 272 pp.

Brown, J. D., Benson, T. J., Bednarz, J. C., 2009: Vegetation characteristics of Swainson's Warbler habitat at the White River National Wildlife Refuge, Arkansas. *Wetlands*, 29, 586, <https://doi.org/10.1672/08-54.1>.

Clark, R., 1971: The woody plants of Alabama. *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden*, 58(2), 99-242, doi:10.2307/2394932.

Diemer, J., 1986: The ecology and management of the Gopher Tortoise in the Southeastern United States. *Herpetologica*, 42(1), 125-133.

Fordham, A., Schwab, R., 2018: Indigenous youth engagement in natural resource management in Australia and North America: A review. Canberra, ACT: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR), The Australian National University.

Gulf of Mexico Habitat Restoration via Conservation Corps Partnership, <https://www.sciencebase.gov/catalog/item/5d1f513ee4b0941bde64db5b/>

Larsen, L. G., Choi, J., Nungesser, M. K., Harvey, J. W., 2012: Directional connectivity in hydrology and ecology. *Ecological Applications*, 22(8), 2204-2220.

Louisiana Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast,
http://coastal.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017-Coastal-Master-Plan-Web-Single-Page_CFinal-with-Effective-Date-06092017.pdf.

Morton, J. F., 1978: Brazilian Pepper- its impact on people, animals and the environment. Economic Botany, 32, 353-359, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02907927>.

Roach, N.S., Barrett, K., 2015: Managed habitats increase occupancy of Black Rails (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) and may buffer impacts from sea level rise. Wetlands, 35, 1065-1076, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13157-015-0695-6>.

Rodgers, J. C., Murrah, A. W., Cooke, W. H., 2009: The impact of Hurricane Katrina on the coastal vegetation of the Weeks Bay Reserve, Alabama from NDVI data. Estuaries and Coasts, 32, 496-507, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12237-009-9138-z>.

Budget

Project Budget Narrative:

Each participating Tribe would receive \$79,100 annually to Plan, Implement, and Provide Program Oversight.; Eastern Region of BIA would receive \$7,000 annually (oversight of 5 agreements); Southern Plains Region of BIA would receive \$1,400 annually (oversight of 1 agreement).

Total FPL Project/Program Budget Request:

\$ 1,449,000.00

Estimated Percent Monitoring and Adaptive Management: N/A

Estimated Percent Planning: 10 %

Estimated Percent Implementation: 85 %

Estimated Percent Project Management: N/A

Estimated Percent Data Management: 3 %

Estimated Percent Contingency: 2 %

Is the Project Scalable?:

Yes

If yes, provide a short description regarding scalability.:

Project will be scalable by the number of years.

Environmental

Environmental Requirement	Has the Requirement Been Addressed?	Compliance Notes (e.g., title and date of document, permit number, weblink etc.)
National Environmental Policy Act	Yes	Each Tribal project was reviewed individually in accordance with NEPA and a categorical exclusion review has been completed for each project.
Endangered Species Act	Yes	ESA reviews were completed for each project and supporting documentation has been included with the NEPA categorical exclusion review for each project.
National Historic Preservation Act	Yes	NHPA reviews were completed for each project and supporting documentation has been included with the NEPA categorical exclusion review for each project.
Magnuson-Stevens Act	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.
Coastal Zone Management Act	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.
Coastal Barrier Resources Act	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.
Farmland Protection Policy Act	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.
Clean Water Act (Section 404)	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.
River and Harbors Act (Section 10)	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.
Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.

Marine Mammal Protection Act	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.
Migratory Bird Treaty Act	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.
Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.
Clean Air Act	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.
Other Applicable Environmental Compliance Laws or Regulations	N/A	Although determined to not be applicable, the requirements of this act were considered as part of the compliance review conducted by BIA.

Maps, Charts, Figures



Caption : Tribal Youth Conservation Corps Program

Other Uploads

Main Uploads_0:

Miccosukee RESTORE CE signed.pdf

Caption : N/A

Main Uploads_1:

Seminole RESTORE signed CE.pdf

Caption : N/A

Main Uploads_2:

MBCI RESTORE signed CE.pdf

Caption : N/A

Main Uploads_3:

Chitimacha RESTORE signed CE.pdf

Caption : N/A

Main Uploads_4:

Poarch Creek RESTORE CE signed.pdf

Caption : N/A

GIS Data_6:

TribalData.gdb.zip

Caption : N/A

Council Staff Review:

Tribal Youth Conservation Corps (TYCC)

Note: All comments indicated below were addressed in the proposal provided above.

FPL Internal Staff Review

Project/Program	Tribal Youth Conservation Corps		
Primary Reviewer	Amy Newbold	Sponsor	DOI
EC Reviewer	John Ettinger	Co-Sponsor	NA
1. Is/Are the selected Priority Criteria supported by information in the proposal?		Yes	
Notes	This is a continuation of an existing FPL funded program.		
2. Does the proposal meet the RESTORE Act geographic eligibility requirement?		Yes	
Notes			
3. Are the Comprehensive Plan primary goal and primary objective supported by information in the proposal?		Yes	
Notes			
4. Planning Framework: If the proposal is designed to align with the Planning Framework, does the proposal support the selected priority approaches, priority techniques, and/or geographic area?		Yes	
Notes			
5. Does the proposal align with the applicable RESTORE Council definition of project or program?		Yes	
Notes			
6. Does the budget narrative adequately describe the costs associated with		Yes	

the proposed activity?	
Notes	
7. Have three external BAS reviews been completed and has the proposal sponsor provided their response?	Yes
Notes	DOI applied BAS reviews that were completed upon proposal in previous FPL. This is justified due to the methods remaining largely the same and the scientific integrity of the program potentially increasing.
8. Have appropriate metrics been proposed to support all primary and secondary goals?	Yes
Notes	
9. Environmental compliance: If FPL Category 1 has been selected for the implementation component of the project or program, does the proposal include environmental compliance documentation that fully supports the selection of Category 1?	More information needed
Notes	<p>DOI is proposing that Council use/adopt the EC documentation used for the first phase in FPL 3b. It is appropriate and efficient to use FPL 3 environmental compliance documentation for 2026 FPL activities provided that the existing documentation either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Fully covers the potential effects of the 2026 FPL activity and requires no updates, or (2) Fully covers the potential effects of the 2026 FPL activity including any needed updates to address changes in environmental conditions or the expected effects of the 2026 FPL activity. <p>Note: Restore Council staff worked with the state to resolve these comments.</p>

Best Available Science Review: Tribal Youth Conservation Corps (TYCC)

This program was reviewed for BAS under FPL 3b. Under the 2026 FPL, DOI is proposing a continuation of this program.

The original BAS review as well as the DOI's response to the BAS comments can be found on the [Council's 2026 FPL webpage](#).