

RESTORE COUNCIL

10-YEAR COMMEMORATION REPORT



APRIL 2020

**Eleven men were killed in the *Deepwater Horizon* explosion.
They were from three of the five Gulf States and were dedicated
to their families and their work.**

The eleven victims were:

Jason Anderson (Midfield, Texas)

Aaron Dale Burkeen (Philadelphia, Mississippi)

Donald "Duck" Clark (Newellton, Louisiana)

Stephen Ray Curtis (Georgetown, Louisiana)

Gordon Jones (Baton Rouge, Louisiana)

Roy Wyatt Kemp (Jonesville, Louisiana)

Karl Kleppinger, Jr. (Natchez, Mississippi)

Keith Blair Manuel (Gonzalez, Louisiana)

Dewey Revette (State Line, Mississippi)

Shane Roshto (Liberty, Mississippi)

Adam Weise (Yorktown, Texas)

We strive to honor them with our work.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Section One: Background	5
I. The Spill and Response: April 20, 2010 - September 19, 2010.....	5
II. Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force	6
III. RESTORE Act.....	7
Section Two: RESTORE Council	10
I. Structure	10
II. Initial Comprehensive Plan: Restore the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem and Economy	10
III. Initial Funded Priorities List.....	11
IV. Federal District Court Settlement	11
V. 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update: Restoring the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem and Economy	12
VI. 2017 Funded Priorities List: Comprehensive Plan Commitment and Planning Support.....	12
VII. 2019 Planning Framework	12
VIII. HOLD: 2020 Funded Priorities List	13
IX. Collaborative Restoration	13
Section Three: Accomplishments	15
I. Council-Selected Restoration Component Highlights.....	15
II. Spill Impact Component Highlights.....	16
III. Coordination of Science and Research.....	21
IV. Gulf Stakeholders.....	22
Section Four: Looking Ahead	24
Appendix.....	25

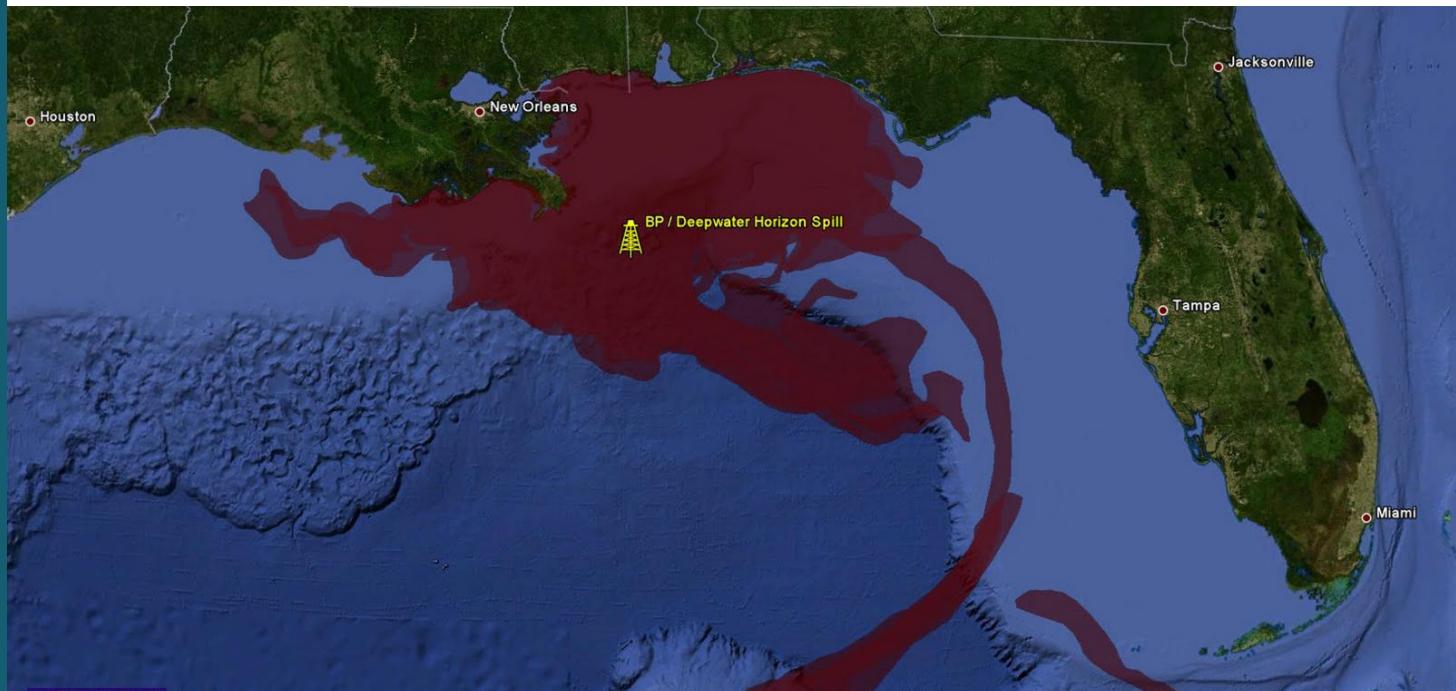
INTRODUCTION

On the night of April 20, 2010, an explosion of the drilling rig, *Deepwater Horizon* off the coast of Louisiana, led to the largest oil spill in American history. The explosion, caused by a blowout of the wellhead more than a mile below the surface of the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf), killed 11 men and injured 17 others. Millions of barrels of oil flowed into the Gulf for 87 days before the well was contained.

The unprecedented event generated renewed interest in the Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf Coast region. In a short time, people across the nation began to realize how the region is a treasured place for seafood, commerce, and natural resources and for a unique way of life. People came together for a common mission to respond to the spill's threat to their ecosystems and their economies. The relationships forged across state lines and through levels of government were cemented together with citizens' passion to recover and restore. It was the beginning of a commitment to collaboration that became the foundation of the programs and projects that followed.

In a similar way, the resulting legal and legislative structures to create and sustain funding for restoration in the five Gulf states required new ways to meet unique needs created by the spill. What followed has become a real-life example of effective partnerships and enhanced shared accountability. Beginning with the explosion 10 years ago, all levels of state, local, and federal government have interacted collectively to solve common problems and to achieve large scale results.

The 10th year serves as a time to look back at the *Deepwater Horizon* spill and describe the projects and programs thus far, which is the purpose of this 10-year report. It is not a legal document or a statutorily required report. It is instead a story about people who have been inspired to take action for a region they call home.



The *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill is the largest and most complex spill in the nation.



The *Deepwater Horizon* oil rig burns in the Gulf of Mexico after an explosion in late April, killing 11 people and injuring 17 others.

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND

I. The Spill and Immediate Response: April 20, 2010 - September 19, 2010

On the night of Tuesday, April 20, 2010, gas, oil, and concrete from the *Deepwater Horizon* exploded up the wellbore, the hole that is drilled for exploration of oil, onto the deck of the rig and caught fire. The well, drilling the Macondo Prospect, was located approximately 41 miles off the Louisiana Coast. The explosion killed 11 people and injured 17 others. Ninety-eight people survived without serious injury.

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) first received reports of a possible explosion on the oil rig at approximately 10:00 p.m. and along with other response agencies and merchant marines, immediately began a rescue of the 115 people onboard. The search operations continued in the days and nights that followed.

The response began to transition from search and rescue to pollution response on April 23, 2010. On April 29, 2010, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security designated the spill as a Spill of National Significance and on May 1, 2010, named a USCG Admiral (then Commandant) as National Incident Commander. The Coast Guard, under the authority of the *National Oil and Hazardous Substance Contingency Plan* (40 CFR 300), directed all of the response efforts to contain and clean up the oil spill. A Unified Command (UC) was established in Houma, Louisiana, and an Area Command was set up in Robert, Louisiana, followed by a second Incident Command Post in Mobile, Alabama. Forward Operating Bases were locally established in each Louisiana parish and in counties across Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.

The *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill is the largest and most complex spill the nation has ever confronted. It was complicated by the lack of human access to the Macondo wellhead, which was located 5,000 feet below the ocean surface and 41 miles offshore. The Coast Guard was dependent on the use of remotely operated vehicles and remote sensors to access the well site to control the release of oil. In addition, the capture and containment of the spill was challenging because it was not a single flow of oil, but thousands of smaller surface sheens and slicks along with a midwater plume that was difficult to detect and track.

The Unified Command organized and directed a fleet of over 6,000 vessels, including skimmers, vessels of opportunity, research vessels, Coast Guard cutters, and other specialized vessels. The Unified Command also established an Aviation Coordination Center that provided command and control for over 120 aircrafts, both military and interagency air assets, which were vital for real-time observations and for verification of oil trajectory modeling. In an effort to ensure the flow of commerce, a Marine Transportation System Recovery Unit was established.

The U.S. Environmental Protection (EPA) and many other agencies—both state and federal—provided critical support during the response in accordance with the national contingency plan. For example, EPA's monitoring and sampling activities provided support to the Coast Guard, states and local governments with information about the potential impacts of the oil spill and response on the health of residents as well as aquatic life along the shoreline. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provided coordinated weather and biological services to federal, state, and local governments. Other federal agencies involved in the response included the Department of Labor, the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service, and the Department of Defense which authorized up to 17,500 National Guard members in four states as responders. State and local agencies in the Gulf States were mobilized to work closely with the federal agencies in a multi-layer response.

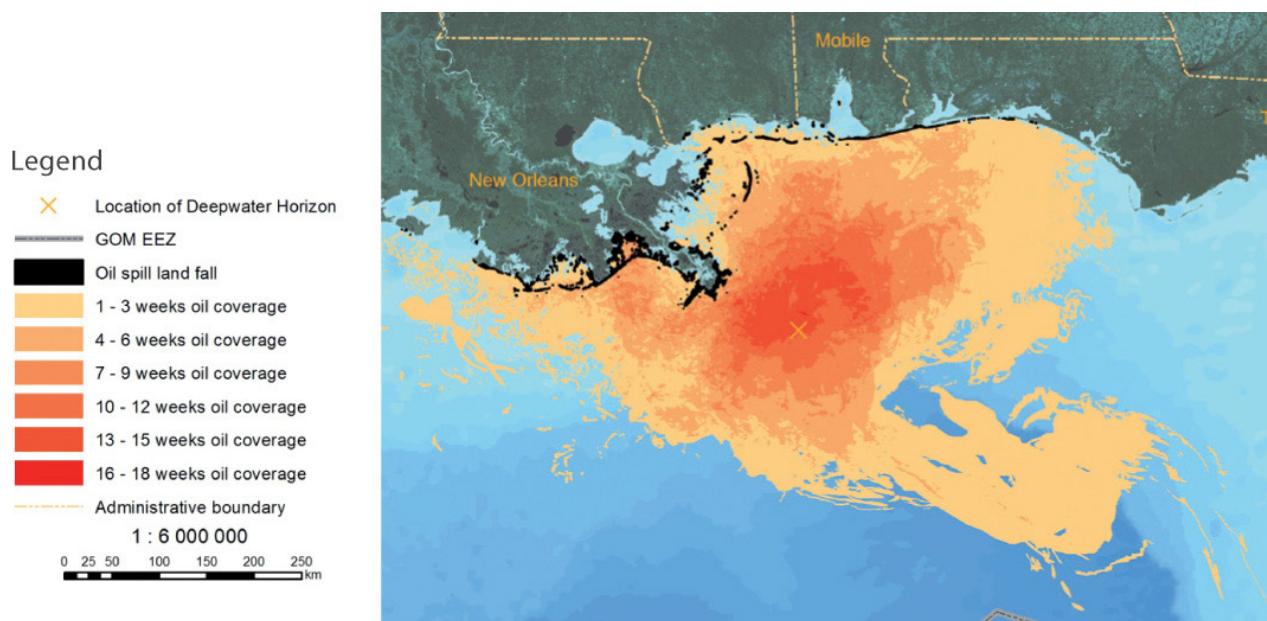
In the months following the explosion, federal, state, and local agencies and thousands of Coast Guard active duty, reserve, and volunteer personnel from around the country continued to respond, surging to the Gulf Coast to combat the millions of barrels of oil discharged. The combined efforts of both federal and state agencies involved approximately 48,000 people who responded to the oil discharging into Gulf waters and finding its way onshore. Private citizens joined together to assist with monitoring where oil was found.

On August 4, 2010, BP reported that the well had achieved "static condition" after drilling mud filled the well. The well was declared completely and permanently sealed on September 19, 2010.

Approximately 134 million gallons (3.19 million barrels) of oil had flowed into the Gulf of Mexico.

II. Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force

In the weeks following the spill, the Gulf Coast region became a focal point for the nation. It became clear that the health and resilience of the region's coastal ecosystems and commerce were fundamental to the country's well-being. A map showing the breadth of the Gulf of Mexico watershed (nearly 600,000 square



Map depicts the spread of surface oil in the Gulf of Mexico in three-week increments over the course of the spill.

miles across five U.S. states), combined with the severity of the spill, was an alarm that awakened an urgent interest in following the response with comprehensive, meaningful recovery actions.

In June 2010, the President asked Ray Mabus, then Secretary of the Navy and a Mississippi native, to develop a long-term restoration plan for the Gulf Coast. Secretary Mabus released a report (*America's Gulf Coast, A Long Term Recovery Plan after the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill*, (<https://restoret hegulf.gov/history>)) in September 2010, based on information gathered from meetings with Gulf Coast leadership and from public meetings attended by thousands of local residents and businesses.

The recommendations from this initial report laid the groundwork for legislation to fund restoration efforts, as well as the development of strategies for a comprehensive approach to restoration. A key recommendation of the report was the creation of a Gulf Coast Recovery Council to focus on ecosystem restoration and on improving the economy of the Gulf Coast.

On October 5, 2010, the President issued Executive Order 13554, which established the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (Task Force) "to coordinate intergovernmental responsibilities, planning, and exchange of information to better implement Gulf Coast ecosystem restoration and to facilitate appropriate accountability and support throughout the restoration process." The Task Force was an advisory body composed of senior officials from the five Gulf Coast states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, and 11 federal agencies and White House offices. The EPA's former Administrator Lisa P. Jackson served as Chair of the Task Force, and the former Chair of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana, Garret Graves, served as Vice-chair.

The primary charge of the Task Force was to create a unified, strategic approach to restore the region's ecosystem. In December 2011 and April 2012, respectively, the Task Force members published the *Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy* (Strategy) and the *Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem Science Assessment and Needs* that articulated an overarching vision for restoration.

The Task Force developed the Strategy with the input of local partners, scientists, federally recognized tribes, and the public. The foundation of the Strategy consists of four ecosystem restoration goals to facilitate long-term restoration:

1. Restore and conserve habitat,
2. Restore water quality,
3. Replenish and protect living coastal and marine resources, and
4. Enhance community resilience.

III. RESTORE Act

The residents of the Gulf region who had recently experienced devastating hurricanes, such as Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Ike, and Gustav, were tested again by the *Deepwater Horizon* spill. In fact, the severity of this environmental disaster was historic, and the people knew that they had to pull together in an unprecedented way to marshal resources in their effort to fully restore and protect their water, land, and economies. Leaders from all levels of government and private citizens and groups joined forces to begin working for a dedicated funding source to



sustain restoration and conservation in the region. Coalitions formed among business and environmental groups, and private citizens created and funded their own groups to lobby for funds.



Vessel shown skimming oil from the surface of the Gulf of Mexico after the spill.

U.S. Senators Mary Landrieu (D-Louisiana) and Richard Shelby (R-Alabama) introduced the *Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act* (RESTORE Act or Act) on July 21, 2011. A coalition of bipartisan Gulf Coast lawmakers introduced the RESTORE Act in the U.S. House of Representatives, and with support from environmental and business groups, built consensus to address the economic and ecological restoration of coastal communities.

The Senate passed the RESTORE Act as an amendment to the Surface Transportation Bill in a bipartisan vote of 76-22 on March 14, 2012. In April the House voted 293-127 to pass the transportation bill, which included the RESTORE Act. Both the House and Senate passed the full transportation bill on June 29, 2012. President Barack Obama signed the transportation bill, including the RESTORE Act, into law on July 6, 2012.

The RESTORE Act, enacted as an amendment to the federal *Clean Water Act* (or *Federal Water Pollution Control Act*), created the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund (Trust Fund) in the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Eighty percent of the civil and administrative penalties paid under the *Clean Water Act* by responsible parties in connection with the *Deepwater Horizon* spill goes into the Trust Fund for ecosystem restoration, economic recovery, and tourism promotion in the Gulf Coast region. The remaining 20 percent goes to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, managed by the U.S. Coast Guard for oil spill related emergency responses.

The RESTORE Act restoration efforts are in addition to those undertaken by the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) program under the Oil Pollution Act, and by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in connection with the settlement of criminal charges arising out of the spill. See subsection IX Collaborative Restoration.

The RESTORE Act also established the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (RESTORE Council or Council). At the same time, in Executive Order 13636 President Obama dissolved the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Task Force and charged the Council with implementing the RESTORE Act and incorporating the Task Force's work into its continuing effort to guide restoration efforts in the region. The Council members are the Governors of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas; the Secretaries of the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, the Army, Commerce, Homeland Security and the Interior; and the EPA Administrator. Currently, the EPA Administrator serves as Council Chair.

The Trust Fund is allocated to five different components under the Act, which are commonly referred to as "buckets." The U.S. Department of the Treasury administers two of the buckets, and also issues compliance regulations and conducts audits of all activities under the Act.

The funds are allocated as follows:

- **Direct Component (“Bucket 1”)** – 35 percent equally divided among the five Gulf states for ecosystem restoration and economic development.

The Direct Component is a grant program administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. In addition to conducting audits, Treasury ensures that the States select eligible projects and programs, adhere to procurement rules, have meaningful public input, and develop Multiyear Implementation Plans (MIP) for use of the funding.

- **Council-Selected Restoration Component (“Bucket 2”)** – 30 percent (plus 50 percent of the interest earned by the Trust Fund) administered by the RESTORE Council for ecosystem restoration.

The Council selects Bucket 2 projects and programs from among proposals submitted by the eleven Council members. An evaluation process, including public review and comment, leads to a Funded Priorities List (FPL) of projects approved for funding approximately every three years.

- **Spill Impact Component (“Bucket 3”)** – 30 percent divided among the five Gulf states according to a formula based on the proportionate number of shoreline miles that experienced oiling (on or before April 10, 2011), the average distance from the *Deepwater Horizon* oil rig, and average population of coastal counties from the 2010 census. The allocation of Bucket 3 funds to be used for each state’s activities is: Alabama – 20.40 percent; Florida – 18.36 percent; Louisiana – 34.59 percent; Mississippi – 19.07 percent; and Texas – 7.58 percent.

The RESTORE Council administers the Spill Impact Component, and each state submits “State Expenditure Plans” (SEPs) to the Council for approval. The SEPs describe projects and programs to be funded through grants. In Alabama, the SEP is developed and submitted by the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council. A consortium of Florida counties develops and oversees Florida’s Bucket 3 activities. The other SEPs are administered by the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

- **Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science Program (“Bucket 4”)** – 2.5 percent (plus 25 percent of the interest earned by the Trust Fund) for a monitoring, observation, science and technology program administered by NOAA.

NOAA established the NOAA RESTORE Science Program in consultation with the USFWS. The purpose of the program is to support the long-term sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem, including its fish stocks, fish habitat, and fishing industries.

- **Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program (“Bucket 5”)** – 2.5 percent (plus 25 percent of the interest earned by the Trust Fund) for a Center(s) of Excellence in each of the Gulf states. The U.S. Department of the Treasury administers the program. Each state reports annually to the Council on the progress of its Center of Excellence, for inclusion in the Council’s annual report to Congress as required by the RESTORE Act.

The RESTORE Act lists the entities in each state which are responsible for awarding competitive grants to nongovernmental groups and consortia in the Gulf Coast region for the establishment of centers of excellence. The state entities are as follows: the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council (or an administrative agent it may designate, currently the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources); the Florida Institute of Oceanography; the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board; the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality; and the Office of the Governor of Texas (or an appointee).



SECTION TWO: RESTORE COUNCIL

I. Structure

When the RESTORE Act established the Trust Fund and was signed into law, there were two critical missing pieces. First, the amount of money that would ultimately become available in the Trust Fund was unknown since there was ongoing litigation. Over the following two years approximately \$800 million (plus interest) became available from the settlement of *Clean Water Act* civil claims against Transocean Deepwater Inc. and related entities, but the ultimate amount (from claims against BP and others) had yet not been determined. Second, U.S. Department of the Treasury had not yet issued final regulations that would authorize the flow of funds.

The RESTORE Act named the Council members and created an organizational and voting structure whereby the state members would have a powerful voice in the decisions about leadership and funding. The five state members select the Council Chairperson from among the six federal members. In addition, approval of significant actions, which include project funding decisions, requires agreement by a majority of the states as well as the Council Chairperson. This structure is an example of cooperative federalism, with the federal and state governments collaborating to reach common goals.

The Council, a new federal agency, was built over time, not in a single action. Without funding, it was a governmental entity with mandates but no staff or offices. The states selected the Department of Commerce as the first RESTORE Council chair, and the Department assigned staff to coordinate the functions of the RESTORE Council.

II. Initial Comprehensive Plan

The Act imposed a one-year timeline for development of a Comprehensive Plan (Plan) to describe how the Council would restore the ecosystem and the economy of the Gulf Coast region. To accomplish this the Council asked the member agencies to volunteer staff to develop and draft the Plan – there was not yet a mechanism for hiring Council staff, or money to pay them. A three-member writing team was chosen, and the Initial Comprehensive Plan was released in August 2013. Uncertainty about the amount of money that would be available and the processes and procedures to access the funds continued.

THE PLAN'S FIVE GOALS:

1. Restore and Conserve Habitat
2. Restore Water Quality
3. Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources
4. Enhance Community Resilience
5. Restore and Revitalize

The Plan was based on the work of the *Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force Strategy* and other local, regional, state, and federal plans. The RESTORE Act requires the Council to adopt and expand the goals identified in the *Task Force Strategy* which provided continuity with previous work. The Plan adopted five goals:

1. Restore and Conserve Habitat – Restore and conserve the health, diversity, and resilience of key coastal, estuarine, and marine habitats.
2. Restore Water Quality – restore and protect water quality of the Gulf Coast region's fresh, estuarine, and marine waters.
3. Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources – Restore and protect healthy, diverse, and sustainable coastal and marine resources.
4. Enhance Community Resilience – Build upon and sustain communities with the capacity to adapt to short- and long-term changes.
5. Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy – Enhance the sustainability and resiliency of the Gulf economy.

The Plan laid out the framework and processes for how proposals for funding under the Council-Selected Restoration Component (Bucket 2) would be submitted and evaluated, including proposals for project planning, design, and permitting. The Plan also included processes for development of the State Expenditure Plans for funds allocated under the Spill Impact Component (Bucket 3).

The Council, created from multiple parts, began to take shape, still depending on staff from member agencies. When the U.S. Treasury allowed a portion of the Transocean Deepwater Inc. settlement of civil claims to be used for administrative functions, a small Council staff was hired in late 2013. The Council office opened in New Orleans, Louisiana, in September 2014.

The Council is dedicated to keeping administrative spending as low as possible and its focus on the Gulf Coast region. A small staff is dedicated to programs and projects, while administrative services, such as payroll, are provided under shared services agreements with larger federal agencies.

III. Initial Funded Priorities List

After the publication of the Initial Comprehensive Plan, Council members collaborated to develop an Initial Funded Priorities List (FPL) of the projects and programs that would utilize Bucket 2 funds. The process for developing the draft FPL was initiated in August 2014 with an invitation to each Council member to submit up to five proposals focusing on restoring habitat and water quality, the first two goals of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition to their own five proposals, Council members could submit proposals on behalf of federally recognized tribes. The Council received 50 submissions totaling over approximately 350 individual projects.

The Council sought to identify the activities that would either complement each other or have synergistic effects with other restoration projects, and on December 9, 2015, the Council voted to approve the Initial FPL. This FPL was organized around 10 key watersheds and estuaries across the Gulf to concentrate and leverage available funds and focus on restoration and conservation activities on habitat (Goal 1) and water quality (Goal 2). The Initial FPL funds restoration activities to provide substantial near-term ecological benefits and to set the stage for future successes with large-scale comprehensive Gulf restoration.

IV. Federal District Court Settlement

On April 4, 2016, a federal court in New Orleans entered a consent decree resolving civil claims against BP arising out of the spill. The historic settlement resolved, among other things, all of the U.S. government's civil claims against BP under the *Clean Water Act* and the *Oil Pollution Act* in connection with the spill. It also involved a related settlement of economic damage claims of the Gulf states and local governments.

In the aggregate, this resolution of civil claims against BP totaled more than \$20 billion, payable by BP over more than 15 years to various federal and state entities. It is the largest civil penalty ever paid by a defendant under any environmental statute and the largest recovery of damages for injuries to natural resources. Under a 2015 Anadarko civil penalty and a 2013 Transocean civil settlement, approximately \$1.6 billion will eventually become available in each of Bucket 2 and Bucket 3.

V. Comprehensive Plan Update

The RESTORE Act requires the Council to update the Comprehensive Plan every 5 years, and the Council issued its first Comprehensive Plan Update in 2016. The Council included “water quantity” in the existing *Goal 2: Restore Water Quality* to acknowledge that restoring water quality and habitat can at times require efforts to address water quantity issues. The 2016 Comp Plan Update also provided guidance to address challenges that surfaced in developing the Initial FPL. It clarified definitions of the terms “project” and “program” and provided a definition for “activity.” Most notably, the Plan Update emphasized the importance of collaboration among other stakeholders in order to identify the most effective restoration projects and programs.

The Act also requires the Council to provide a Ten-Year Funding Strategy, which was not possible in the Initial Comprehensive Plan because of the uncertainty and timing of funding. The 2016 Comp Plan Update provided a Ten-Year Funding Strategy which included the following vision statement: *A healthy and productive Gulf ecosystem achieved through collaboration on strategic restoration projects and programs.* Other elements of the Ten-Year Funding Strategy include the three-year FPL development process and a strategy for the support of large-scale projects and programs. The Council also refined and amplified its foundational commitments, with a strong emphasis on collaboration (among Council members and with other *Deepwater Horizon* funding streams), and on improving transparency and application of best available science in support of its decision-making processes.

VI. 2017 Funded Priorities List: Comprehensive Plan Commitment and Planning Support

On January 24, 2018, the Council voted to approve the *2017 Funded Priorities List: Comprehensive Plan Commitment and Planning Support* (CPS FPL). The CPS FPL addressed the challenge of coordinating restoration efforts by allocating funds to enhance collaboration, coordination, public engagement, and the use of the best available science in developing and selecting restoration projects. The grant awards enabled state and federal members to have the resources needed to undertake planning and collaboration activities, rather than using taxpayer funds for this work.

VII. Planning Framework

The Council finalized a Planning Framework in August 2019 to serve as a bridge between the Council’s overarching goals and objectives and the specific projects and programs included in FPLs. The purpose was to identify the Council’s priorities prior to the members submitting proposals to be considered for funding in the next FPL (“FPL 3”), and to support the Council’s 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update commitments to the following:

- A regional ecosystem approach to restoration
- Leveraging resources and partnerships through increased collaboration
- Increasing public engagement, inclusion, and transparency for Bucket 2 funding decisions
- Advancing science-based decision-making
- Delivering results and measuring impacts

VIII. Funded Priorities List 3- Using A Phased Approach

The Council develops FPLs through collaboration among its members and with feedback from stakeholders across the Gulf. As a result of this collaborative process, the Council determined that developing its third FPL in two phases, [FPL 3a](#) and FPL 3b, would enable the Council to respond to ecosystem needs and take advantage of important partnership opportunities to advance large-scale ecosystem restoration in the near term.

For FPL 3a, the Council sought public comment as it considered two ecosystem projects as the potential first phase of FPL 3. This proposed phase adhered to the FPL development processes committed to by the Council, particularly as they related to the use of best available science (BAS), public engagement and transparency, and the Council's recently finalized Planning Framework. The Council voted to approve FPL 3a in February 2020, FPL 3a included two large scale projects, one in Louisiana and the other in Alabama.

In developing the second phase, FPL 3b, the Council is following the same process it used to develop FPL 3a to consider proposals that address ecosystem needs in Texas, Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama, along with the Gulfwide proposals. Development of FPL 3b will continue to be collaborative and transparent, with Council members eligible to submit proposals. Federally-recognized Tribes are eligible to submit proposals for FPL 3b funding through federal Council members. Under this approach, the Council will focus on the development of FPL 3b during 2020, with an anticipated release of the draft for public review and comment in late 2020. The Council anticipates voting on whether to approve FPL 3b in the first half of 2021.

Background information about the RESTORE Council, including the planning documents, Annual Reports to Congress, and the FPLs, can be found at: www.restorethegulf.gov.

IX. Collaborative Restoration

To achieve long-term impact on a large scale, the Council, both as a group and as individual members in the Gulf Coast region, must work together. Developing partnerships among public, private, and intergovernmental entities maximizes the impact of projects and creates innovative efficiencies, while minimizing "random acts of restoration," which do not support the Council's commitment to holistic and collaborative approaches to restoration. The interconnected nature of coastal and marine ecosystems and system-wide stressors that reduce ecosystem integrity need to be addressed in a holistic manner to enhance restoration efforts. For example, Bucket 2 projects have linked common interests and leveraged their funding sources to make a bigger difference in landscapes and lives.

There are two other groups receiving restoration funds from the *Deepwater Horizon* (DWH) settlements that the Council interacts with: The DWH Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustees, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund.

The Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR)

The *Deepwater Horizon* NRDAR is a legal process based in the Oil Pollution Act (OPA). Under OPA, designated state and federal agencies act as natural resource trustees on behalf of the public to assess the natural resource injuries resulting from an oil spill and develop and implement a plan to restore those injured resources.

Early Restoration: To work collaboratively on the NRDAR, the *Deepwater Horizon* Trustees organized a Trustee Council comprised of representatives from the U.S. Department of Commerce; the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI); the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); and designated agencies representing the five Gulf States: Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.

Early Restoration: For the *Deepwater Horizon* spill, the Trustees undertook Early Restoration that was intended to accelerate restoration of injured natural resources and their services, but not to fully compensate the public for all of the resulting injuries and losses. On the first anniversary of the spill (April 20, 2011), the Trustees and BP agreed that BP would provide up to \$1 billion toward Early Restoration projects, under the terms of a Framework Agreement for Early Restoration (“the “Framework Agreement”), as a preliminary step toward restoring injured natural resources and services caused by the spill.

Early Restoration proceeded in phases, with each phase adding additional projects to partially address injuries to nearshore resources, birds, fish, sea turtles, federally managed lands, and recreational uses. Injuries were partially addressed through coastal habitat restoration, resource-specific restoration, and education and recreational infrastructure projects. The Early Restoration Projects were aimed at accelerating meaningful restoration while also contributing to knowledge required for long-term restoration planning.

NRDAR: The DWH trustee agencies found that the DWH oil spill resulted in ecosystem-wide injuries to the Gulf of Mexico. Based on that assessment, the Trustees developed, with input from the public, a programmatic restoration plan that uses a comprehensive ecosystem approach to address these injuries. The plan provides long-term direction for restoring the injured natural resources with the \$8.8 billion in natural resource restoration funding included in the 2016 settlement with BP. The programmatic restoration plan established seven restoration areas: one for each Gulf state, one that addresses region-wide issues, and one that focuses on open ocean restoration. To accomplish this massive restoration effort, the settlement established a separate Trustee Implementation Group – often referred to as TIGs – for each restoration area, and one for unknown conditions and adaptive management. The Trustee Council provides coordination among the TIGs and ensures transparency, fiscal and scientific accountability, and consistency with the programmatic plan, as well as between TIGs and with other Gulf restoration programs including the RESTORE Council and the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The Trustee Council and TIGs continue to engage the public in restoration of injured natural resources. For more information visit the Trustees' website at: www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) was created by Congress in 1984 to work with both public and private sectors to protect the nation's fish, wildlife, plants, and habitats. Under the terms of a 2013 settlement of federal criminal charges against BP and Transocean Deepwater Inc. arising out of the DWH spill, NFWF has received more than \$2.5 billion to fund projects benefiting natural resources in and around the Gulf of Mexico. NFWF established the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF) to administer these funds, which are to be used to:

- Restore and maintain the ecological functions of landscape-scale coastal habitats,
- Restore and maintain the ecological integrity of priority coastal bays and estuaries, and
- Replenish and protect living resources.

The settlement agreement requires NFWF to consult with state natural resource agencies, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They also coordinate with the DWH NRDA Trustees and the RESTORE Council through the agencies and states' representatives who serve on the councils.



SECTION THREE: ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I. Council-Selected Restoration Component Highlights

Thirty percent of the amounts in the Trust Fund is allocated to the Council under the Council-Selected Restoration Component of the RESTORE Act (Bucket 2). When funds from the settlement of *Clean Water Act* civil penalties against Transocean Deepwater Inc. and related entities became available, the Council determined that it could then develop the Initial FPL. Its focus was on projects that restore habitat and/or water quality and that could provide near-term, on-the-ground ecosystem benefits. The Council also set aside a pool of available funds for potential projects and programs with merit but which required environmental compliance to be completed. These potential projects and programs were included in "Category 2" of the FPL. Planning activities were also included in the FPL to build a foundation for eventual implementation as additional funds became available. The Council voted to approve the 2015 Initial FPL on December 9, 2015.

Since its approval, the 2015 Initial FPL has been amended to use and plan for the additional funds that would become available as a result of the 2016 settlement with BP. In addition to addressing priorities established by the RESTORE Act and meeting commitments made in the Initial Comprehensive Plan, each project or program selected for funding has completed a best available science evaluation and met the environmental compliance requirements.

Over \$177 million has been approved for 46 projects throughout the Gulf Region. The projects and programs from the Initial FPL selected for funding are found in Appendix A.

During 2018, the Council approved the Funded Priorities List: Comprehensive Plan Commitment and Planning Support (CPS FPL) to address a major challenge to Gulf-wide ecosystem restoration. There had been no designated funding stream to support Council members' efforts to plan and coordinate restoration activities under Bucket 2. The CPS FPL provides the necessary resources for Council members to facilitate and encourage essential coordination and collaboration, and the use of the best available science in developing and selecting restoration projects and programs.

Nine awards were made providing \$18.7 million over the next five years to Council members in 2018 under the CPS FPL.

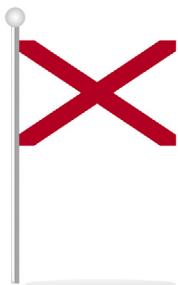
On February 12, 2020, the Council approved FPL 3a which includes the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp as a priority for potential future funding and budgeting \$130,000,000 in implementation funds. The Council also approved \$26,880,000 in planning and implementation funds for

the Perdido River Land Conservation and Habitat Enhancements project, which involves the acquisition, conservation, management, and restoration of approximately 10,000-12,000 acres of coastal habitat in Alabama. In addition, the Council is identifying a separate implementation component of this project as a priority for potential future funding, and budgeting \$1,120,000 for this additional implementation component.

II. Spill Impact Component Highlights

Thirty percent of the amounts in the Trust Fund is allocated to the five Gulf states under the Spill Impact Component of the RESTORE Act (Bucket 3). Each State submits a State Expenditure Plan (SEP) to the Council for approval. The SEPs must adhere to four basic criteria in the RESTORE Act, and the disbursement of funds is made after there is verification that the state has complied with all applicable federal environmental and other laws. The Council approved state Planning SEPs to provide resources for the states to develop long-range, more comprehensive SEPs.

ALABAMA



Alabama's SEP was developed by the [Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council](#). The Recovery Council is made up of the Governor, who serves as chair; the director of the Alabama State Port Authority, who serves as vice-chair; the chairman of the Baldwin County Commission; the president of the Mobile County Commission; and the mayors of Bayou La Batre, Dauphin Island, Fairhope, Gulf Shores, Mobile and Orange Beach. Former Congressman, and now Chief of Staff, Jo Bonner serves as Governor Ivey's representative in her absence. The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources serves as the administrator for the Alabama Recovery Council.

The SEP was approved by the RESTORE Council in March 2019. The SEP proposes 28 activities for a total estimated cost of \$132 million. The projects included in the SEP are all located within Mobile and Baldwin Counties. The 28 selected projects focus, in large part, on water quality, park and public facility improvements, and environmental restoration.

The projects included in Alabama's SEP are:

- Environmental Restoration of Cotton Bayou & Terry Cove
- Development of a Regional Strategic Plan for the Coastal Alabama Region
- Expansion of the Orange Beach Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center/Gulf Coast Wildlife Recovery and Interpretive Center
- Auburn University Gulf Coast Engineering Research Station
- Characterization and Delineation of Significant Sand Resource Areas Essential for Beach Restoration
- City of Chickasaw Sewer Rehabilitation Project
- Alabama Gulf Seafood Marketing
- Aloe Bay/Mississippi Sound Water Quality Enhancement Project
- Extension of Effluent Force Main from Bayou La Batre WWTF
- Bayou La Batre Collection System/Lift Station Upgrades
- Lillian Park Beach Habitat and Shoreline Protection



- Perch Creek Area Sanitary Sewer Trunk Line CIPP
- Longevity, Stability & Water Quality Improvements, Bon Secour DMDA
- Replacement of Substandard Facilities at the ADEM Coastal Office & Mobile Field Office
- Area Stormwater Mapping & Resiliency Planning
- Three Mile Creek Watershed Restoration
- Fairhope Area Community-Based Comprehensive Land Use Plan
- Fort Morgan Parkway Trail Extension
- Meaher Park Improvements
- County Dirt Road Paving (Sediment Reduction) Program
- Alabama Point Seawall Repair
- Road Improvements E. of SR-161
- Orange Beach North Sewer Force Main Upgrade
- Stormwater Management Improvements for Toulmin Springs Branch and Gum Tree Branch
- Fairhope Sewer Upgrade Phase I
- Little Lagoon Restoration Project
- Eastern Shore Sanitary Sewer Overflows Prevention Plan
- One Mobile: Reconnecting People, Work and Play through Complete Streets
- Planning Grant to Amend State Expenditure Plan



For more information about these projects and other restoration projects in Alabama, please visit
<https://www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org>

FLORIDA

Florida's State Expenditure Plan (SEP) is being implemented by the [Gulf Consortium](#), a public entity created to develop and implement the SEP in Florida. The Gulf Consortium consists of representatives from each of Florida's 23 Gulf Coast counties. The Florida SEP includes 68 projects for a total Bucket 3 investment of about \$293 million. Each county has anywhere from one to seven projects planned in the Florida SEP.



The SEP was approved in September of 2018. Three awards are active with twelve additional grants submitted for approval. The current awards as of October 2019 are:

- Wastewater Improvement/Septic to Sewer conversions for four counties – Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Citrus, and Charlotte Counties;
- A Coastal Public Access Program, Bayside Marina Feasibility Study, in Wakulla County; and an



- Artificial Reef Installation in Pasco County.

There are four major project types in the approved projects list, which will collectively contribute significant improvements to Gulf of Mexico health:

- Water Quality Projects (septic to sewer and stormwater improvements): \$188,337,813 (31 projects);
- Living Resources Projects (reef restoration): \$18,382,520 (14 projects);
- Recreation/Public Access Projects (boat ramps and park improvements): \$38,139,667 (10 projects); and
- Habitat Restoration Projects (living shorelines): \$17,150,000 (5 projects).

The above list does not represent all of Florida's projects. For a complete list of all Florida's SEP projects please see the interactive web-based SEP dashboard at: <https://datavisual.balmoralgroup.us/GulfConsortiumProjects>.

LOUISIANA



Louisiana's SEP contains one large scale project and two key programs to be funded, under Bucket 3, with more than \$551.5 million over a 15-year period. This funding will be used to (i) implement the Houma Navigation Canal Lock Complex (\$366M), (ii) provide funding for the State's Adaptive Management program (\$60.9M), and (iii) establish a Parish Matching Opportunities Program (up to \$100M).¹

The initial SEP, developed by the [Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority](#) (CPRA), was approved by the RESTORE Council on March 23, 2017. The Parish Matching Opportunities Program Amendment to the SEP, approved by the Council on June 18, 2018, included the first round of projects selected for funding under the initial installment of that program. The projects and programs contained in the SEP are described in more detail below.

- Houma Navigation Canal Lock Complex: Terrebonne Basin, where the Houma Navigation Canal Lock Complex is located, is experiencing one of the highest rates of land loss in coastal Louisiana. By reducing saltwater intrusion and distributing freshwater within the Terrebonne Basin and providing storm surge protection as part of the Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Protection Project, this project will save thousands of acres of marsh from degradation and help restore historic salinity regimes in the mid-Terrebonne basin.
- Adaptive Management Program: CPRA's Adaptive Management program is a program designed to help streamline implementation of the Coastal Master Plan. While Adaptive Management includes a number of different activities, the Adaptive Management funds under RESTORE Bucket 3 will be used for data collection under CPRA's system-wide assessment and monitoring program (SWAMP) and for data management and analysis. Therefore, this program will enhance the state's ability to monitor, at the program-level scale, how successfully large-scale coastal restoration projects are performing and to understand the trajectory of land loss in coastal Louisiana, the causes of that loss, and the effects of efforts to improve this trajectory towards stability and long-term sustainability.
- Parish Matching Opportunities Program: CPRA's Parish Matching Opportunities Program was developed to parishes an incentive to use their RESTORE funds to support projects consistent with



¹ The Plan also contains a contingency amount of \$24.6M.

the Coastal Master Plan. This program allocates a portion of CPRA's Bucket 3 funds to parishes who are receiving RESTORE funds under the Direct Component to implement parish priority projects that are either within or consistent with the state's Coastal Master Plan. Program funds are anticipated to be allocated in a series of approximately five \$20M increments. The first round of projects was announced in 2018 and includes the following projects:

- Cameron Parish – Construction, Rockefeller Shoreline Stabilization (\$6.67 million);
- Lafourche Parish – Engineering and Design, Grand Bayou Freshwater Reintroduction (\$412,722);
- St. Bernard Parish – Construction, Lake Lery Marsh Creation (\$2.78 million);
- St. Charles Parish – Construction, Paradis Canal Gate (\$2.54 million);
- Tangipahoa Parish – Engineering, Design and Construction, Manchac Landbridge Shoreline Protection (\$3 million); and
- Vermilion Parish – Engineering, Design and Construction, Freshwater Bayou Canal Shoreline Protection (\$4.59 million).



For more information about the Louisiana SEP Bucket 3 projects, please visit: <http://coastal.la.gov/deepwater-horizon-oil-spill-content/oil-spill-overview/restore-act/>

MISSISSIPPI



Mississippi's initial SEP was approved by the Council on April 13, 2017. The SEP and two subsequent amendments in 2017 and 2018 total \$95 million in projects and programs.

The projects and programs identified for funding include:

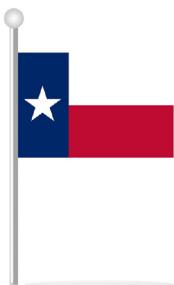
- The Mississippi Gulf Coast Water Quality Improvement Program (\$49 million);
- Pascagoula Oyster Reef Complex Relay and Enhancement (\$4.1 million);
- Compatibility, Coordination, and Restoration Planning (\$1.8 million);
- Gulf of Mexico Citizen Led Initiative (\$1.9 million);
- Remote Oyster Setting Facility (\$9.36 million);



- Coastal Headwater Land Conservation Program (\$8 million);
- Round Island Living Shoreline Demonstration and Protection Project (\$2.2 million);
- Hancock County Marsh Living Shoreline Extension (\$6 million);
- Beneficial Use of Dredge Material for Marsh Creation and Restoration in Mississippi (\$12 million); and
- Mississippi Oyster Shell Recycling Program (\$650,000).

For more information, visit the Mississippi restoration website: <http://www.mdeq.ms.gov/restoration>

TEXAS



Texas's initial SEP was approved by the Council in March 2019. The SEP's projects total approximately \$31 million and address the effects of Hurricane Harvey, which hit the upper and middle Texas Coast in August 2018.

The SEP focuses on hurricane recovery, ecological and economic, as well as resiliency-related programs. The programmatic areas in the SEP were developed in consultation with the Office of Governor (OOG), as well as the Commission to Rebuild Texas (CRT) established by the Governor to oversee the state's response to Hurricane Harvey.

Four programmatic areas were included in the SEP:

- Nature-Based Tourism - Repair and replace nature-based tourism resources damaged by Hurricane Harvey;
- Removal of Debris and/or Associated Sediment from Creeks, Bayous and Other Waterways - Remove Harvey-related debris and associated sediment in waterways to improve ecosystems and mitigate future flooding;
- Water Quality and Quantity - Restore natural hydrology, freshwater flows and salinity levels in coastal waterways affected by Hurricane Harvey; and
- Shoreline and Beach Restoration - Restore beaches and shorelines affected by Hurricane Harvey through erosion control, habitat restoration and enhancement of wetlands.

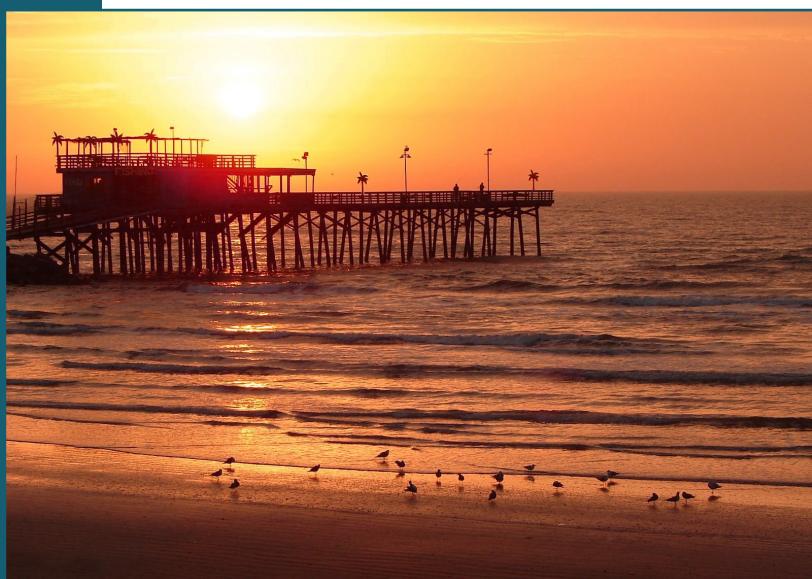
The Texas Commission Environmental Quality, on behalf of the state of Texas, has submitted one of the four programmatic applications required to receive grant awards based on the SEP.

Upon receipt of the grant awards, Toby Baker, TCEQ Executive Director and Governor Abbott's appointee to the RESTORE Council, in consultation with the OOG and the CRT, will select specific projects to implement the programmatic areas.

The projects selected for grant funds will be in counties that are eligible to receive Bucket 3 funds and are included in the Hurricane Harvey federal Disaster Declaration for Texas. Those counties are: Aransas, Brazoria, Calhoun, Chambers, Galveston, Harris, Jackson, Jefferson, Matagorda, Nueces, Orange, Refugio, San Patricio, and Victoria.

Only Texas State Agencies, political subdivisions and public institutions of Higher Education are eligible to receive grant funds through the SEP.

For information about the Texas RESTORE projects, visit its website: <http://restorethetexascoast.org>



III. Coordination of Science and Research

The RESTORE Act requires the Council to undertake projects and programs, using the Best Available Science (BAS), to restore and protect the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, coastal wetlands, and the Gulf Coast economy. BAS is defined in the Act as science that "...maximizes the quality, objectivity, and integrity of information, including statistical information... uses peer-reviewed and publicly available data; and...clearly documents and communicates risks and uncertainties in the scientific basis for such projects." The Council incorporated BAS into its 2015 Initial FPL by creating a Science Review Process that used external science reviews to ensure that project and program proposals were developed using the best available science.

Since 2015, the Council has integrated BAS across its many activities. For example, all funded Council projects and programs have data management and monitoring plans to help assess long-term success of projects and to ensure that data is managed and publicly available. In addition, in 2018 the Council funded the development of the Council's Metadata Records Library and Information Network (MERLIN). MERLIN is an online tool which houses Council project metadata (records) that describes information about data collected under Council-funded projects and programs. These records assist the Council in keeping track of the projects, and facilitate the sharing of data collected during project activities.

The Council has also implemented BAS in its work through active coordination and collaboration with other restoration funders across the Gulf. For example, the Council Monitoring and Assessment Program (CMAP) is a Gulf-wide investment included in the Council's 2015

Initial FPL. CMAP, which is administered jointly by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the United States Geological Survey (USGS), funds the development of basic, foundational components for Gulfwide monitoring to measure beneficial impacts of restoration investments. The program works in conjunction with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) and collaborates with the Gulf states, federal and local partners, academia, non-governmental organizations, and businesses and industries.

One of the highlights of the CMAP project is the development of the Council Monitoring and Assessment Inventory of Existing Water Quality Monitoring, Habitat Monitoring, and Mapping Program Metadata in the Gulf of Mexico. This georeferenced, quality-assured and controlled inventory integrated and expanded upon Ocean Conservancy, Global Change Monitoring Portal (GCMP), and GOMA databases to develop a more comprehensive directory of active and inactive monitoring and mapping programs in the Gulf of Mexico. The information collected is available in a report located at: <https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/project/restore-council-monitoring-and-assessment-program-building-a-comprehensive-monitoring-network/> and will be made web accessible and queriable in June 2020.

The RESTORE Council staff also works closely with other funders in the Gulf of Mexico through their participation in the Gulf of Mexico Restoration and Science Program Coordination Forum, which is chaired by the NOAA RESTORE Science Program. Its members include the programs that received funding as a consequence of the *Deepwater Horizon* (DWH) oil spill: the Centers of Excellence from each Gulf Coast state, the RESTORE Council, Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, National Academies' Gulf Research Program, NFWF Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, Gulf of Mexico



Research Initiative, the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) Trustees for the *Deepwater Horizon* spill, and the Department of the Treasury.

The Forum is a way for the various programs to communicate with each other to avoid duplication of activities. It also promotes joint activities that address shared issues and publishes an annual funding opportunities calendar that consolidates planned funding opportunities across all the DWH programs. It supports the coordination of the submittal of project information to the DWH Project Tracker. The *Deepwater Horizon* Project Tracker, for which the Council provides funding support, is a comprehensive website that tracks restoration, research, and recovery projects resulting from the DWH spill.

Council staff have also been actively involved in the DWH Long-Term Data Management (LTDM) Collaboration working group, which was established in the Gulf of Mexico in 2017. Its purpose is to foster collaboration, data sharing, and best data management among the many groups working to restore and improve the coastal environment in the Gulf Coast region. The working group's members represent data users, generators, and managers as well as program managers, funders and decision-makers from a variety of Gulf of Mexico partners. The group, facilitated by the Coastal Research Response Center (CRCC) at the University of New Hampshire in partnership with NOAA, collected an [overview inventory](#) of over thirty different management systems in the Gulf Coast region.



The Council has also played a role in building science capacity in the Gulf of Mexico. Since 2015 the Council has hosted five National Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine Gulf Research Program science policy fellows. This fellowship pairs early-career scientists with a federal or state environmental, natural resource, oil and gas, or public health agency in the Gulf of Mexico region for one year of on-the-job training. RESTORE Council Science Policy Fellows have applied their training in a variety of scientific backgrounds to help the Council meet its commitment to identify and promote the use of best available science.

IV. Gulf Stakeholders

The people of the Gulf Coast region, as individuals and in groups, are the cornerstone of restoration actions. They are passionate about restoration because the region's history, commerce, and way of life are all connected to its natural resources. They are also knowledgeable. No one knows the Gulf Coast like the people who live there. With that in mind, the Council, since its beginning, has been committed to broad participation and input from the diverse stakeholders in the region.

Both the public engagement staff and the technical staff routinely represent the Council at public meetings, workshops, and conferences. The five Gulf Coast states host meetings to provide a status report and to seek input about restoration activities from all the various funding sources. In addition, the federal members of the Council which also serve as NRDA Trustees have public information meetings. Council members and staff have used these meetings to exchange information with stakeholders and to develop a better understanding of wants and challenges.

The public information meetings are in addition to the public comment periods leading up to

significant Council actions such as the adoption of FPLs. During the public comment periods, citizens are encouraged to offer comments through letters, emails, and public meetings. To fulfill the Council's commitment to transparency, these comments are available on the [RESTORE Public Comments](#) page.

The Council also distributes information about its activities through automatic email updates, called "eBlasts." The eBlast tool is an effective way to update stakeholders on the RESTORE Council activities, grant announcements, public meetings and/or public comment period for one or more of the Gulf Coast states. Stakeholders are encouraged to [subscribe to receive eBlast](#) or view the [RESTORE Council Announcements](#), which contains past eBlasts.

In September 2018, the Council began to offer webinars to give stakeholders a way to learn about restoration efforts, both current and past. The initiative, the [RESTORE Education Opportunities Series](#), is a collection of webinars aimed to not only provide education related to the path towards the next Funded Priorities List, but also to return to the *Deepwater Horizon* spill to explain how the RESTORE Council and similar restoration efforts are working to restore the Gulf. Stakeholders throughout the Gulf Region are encouraged to view these webinars and direct follow up questions to restorecouncil@restorethegulf.gov.

The Council considers Gulf Coast stakeholders to be inclusive of federally recognized tribes. There are eleven Federally Recognized Tribes in the five Gulf Coast states and twenty-seven Federally Recognized Tribes who have ancestral lands in those states. The Council accepts the responsibility of government-to-government relations, and to that end, participates in the annual United Southern and Eastern Tribes (USET) meeting and has hosted Tribal engagement meetings.

The Council also strives to be inclusive of under-represented communities. Official publications, for example, are translated into Vietnamese for the benefit of stakeholders for whom English is not their primary language.





SECTION FOUR: LOOKING AHEAD

The RESTORE Council has accomplished much since its creation by the RESTORE Act, but it has more work to do. As it moves forward, it will build on the foundations laid by the planning documents and expressed through the Funded Priorities Lists. The Council will continue to take action and make thoughtful and effective decisions to meet the goals for its work in the Gulf Coast region.

As important as the goals are, the Council knows that the future will depend not just on funding but on a collaborative spirit among the Council members. While each state and federal agency will always be dedicated to its unique purposes, the restoration efforts will build on relationships, forged from the oil spill response through multiple restoration actions that followed, to find common ground to make significant steps toward the objectives.

Meanwhile, as they have from the beginning, the Council and its staff will operate from a sense of service to the Gulf Coast region and its people, including families of the 11 men who lost their lives. They individually and collectively will remain dedicated to doing good work to restore and protect the Gulf Coast region and to build its economy. Their work will be guided by listening to the stakeholders and using the best science available to make decisions that promote the long-term ecological and environmental health of the Gulf Coast.

APPENDIX A.

Project and Programs selected for funding in the Initial FPI

Activity	Watershed/ Estuary	Type	Responsible Council Member(s)/ Partnering Council Member(s)	Cost
Bahia Grande Coastal Corridor	Laguna Madre, TX	Implementation	State of Texas/ Department of Interior (DOI)	\$4,378,500
Plug Abandoned Oil and Gas Wells		Implementation	DOI/State of Texas	\$1,317,567
Bahia Grande Wetland System Restoration		Planning	Department of Commerce and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC-NOAA)/DOI and State of Texas	\$404,318
Bahia Grande Wetland System Restoration		Implementation	DOC-NOAA/DOI and State of Texas	\$968,863
Matagorda Bay System Priority Landscape Conservation	Matagorda Bay, TX	Implementation	State of Texas	\$6,012,000
Bayou Greenways	Galveston Bay, TX	Planning & Implementation	State of Texas	\$7,109,000
Texas Beneficial Use/ Marsh Restoration		Planning	State of Texas	\$968,000
Jean Lafitte Canal Backfilling	Mississippi River Delta, LA	Implementation	DOI	\$8,731,000
West Grand Terre Beach Nourishment and Stabilization		Planning	State of Louisiana	\$7,259,216

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Activity	Watershed/ Estuary	Type	Responsible Council Member(s)/ Partnering Council Member(s)	Cost
Jean Lafitte Canal Backfilling	Mississippi River Delta, LA	Implementation	DOI	\$8,731,000
West Grand Terre Beach Nourishment and Stabilization		Planning	State of Louisiana	\$7,259,216
Golden Triangle Marsh Creation		Planning	State of Louisiana	\$4,347,733
Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline		Planning	State of Louisiana	\$3,220,460
Mississippi River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp		Planning	State of Louisiana	\$14,190,000
Lowermost Mississippi River Management		Planning	State of Louisiana	\$9,300,000
Bayou Dularge Ridge, Marsh & Hydrologic Restoration		Planning	U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on behalf of Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana	\$5,162,084
Deer Island Beneficial Use Site		Implementation	State of Mississippi	\$3,000,000
Strategic Land Protection, Conservation, and Enhancement of Priority Gulf Coast Landscapes	Mississippi Sound, MS	Planning & Implementation	State of Mississippi/ USDA and DOI	\$15,500,000
SeaGrant Education and Outreach		Planning & Implementation	State of Mississippi/USDA, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and DOI	\$750,000
The Mississippi Sound Estuarine Program		Planning & Implementation	State of Mississippi	\$2,270,000
Enhancing Opportunities for Beneficial Use of Dredge Sediments		Planning	State of Mississippi/ USACE and State of Alabama	\$2,180,000

APPENDIX

Activity	Watershed/ Estuary	Type	Responsible Council Member(s)/ Partnering Council Member(s)	Cost
Coastal Alabama Comprehensive Watershed Restoration Planning Project	Mobile Bay, AL	Planning	State of Alabama/ EPA	\$4,342,500
Alabama Living Shorelines Program		Planning	State of Alabama	\$908,500
Comprehensive Living Shoreline Monitoring		Planning	State of Alabama	\$25,000
Alabama Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Restoration & Monitoring Program		Implementation	State of Alabama	\$875,000
Marsh Restoration in Fish River, Weeks Bay, Oyster Bay & Meadows Tract		Planning	DOC-NOAA/State of Alabama	\$907,954
Mobile Bay National Estuary Program		Planning	EPA/State of Alabama	\$358,000
Upper Mobile Bay Beneficial Use Wetland Creation Site		Planning	USACE/State of Alabama, DOI and DOC	\$2,500,000
Enhancing Opportunities for Beneficial Use of Dredged Sediments		Planning	State of Alabama/ State of Mississippi and USACE	\$3,000,000
Alabama Living Shorelines Program		Implementation	State of Alabama	\$5,341,500
Comprehensive Living Shoreline Monitoring		Implementation	State of Alabama	\$3,975,000
Marsh Restoration in Fish River, Weeks Bay, Oyster Bay & Meadows Tract		Implementation	DOC-NOAA/State of Alabama	\$2,250,089
Mobile Bay National Estuary Program		Implementation	EPA/ State of Alabama	\$1,742,000

APPENDIX

Activity	Watershed/ Estuary	Type	Responsible Council Member(s)/ Partnering Council Member(s)	Cost
Pensacola Bay Living Shoreline - Phase I	Pensacola Bay, FL	Planning	State of Florida	\$231,314
Beach Haven - Joint Stormwater & Wastewater Improvement Project - Phase II		Implementation	State of Florida	\$5,967,000
Bayou Chico Contaminated Sediment Removal- Planning, Design, and Permitting		Planning	State of Florida	\$356,850
Pensacola Bay Living Shoreline - Phase I		Implementation	State of Florida	\$1,564,636
Apalachicola Watershed Agriculture Water Quality Improvements	Apalachicola Bay, FL	Implementation	State of Florida/ USDA	\$2,219,856
Tate's Hell Strategy 1		Planning & Implementation	USDA/ State of Florida	\$7,000,000
Money Bayou Wetlands Restoration		Planning	DOC-NOAA/ State of Florida	\$387,726
Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration		Planning	State of Florida	\$702,000
Money Bayou Wetlands Restoration		Implementation	DOC-NOAA/ State of Florida	\$852,653
Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration		Implementation	State of Florida	\$3,978,000
Suwannee River Partnership Irrigation Water Enhancement Program	Suwannee Watershed, FL	Implementation	State of Florida/ USDA	\$2,884,000

APPENDIX

Activity	Watershed/ Estuary	Type	Responsible Council Member(s)/ Partnering Council Member(s)	Cost
Palm River Restoration Project Phase II, East McKay Bay	Tampa Bay, FL	Planning	State of Florida	\$87,750
Robinson Preserve Wetlands Restoration		Planning	DOC-NOAA/ State of Florida	\$470,910
Tampa Bay National Estuary Program		Planning	EPA/ State of Florida	\$100,000
Palm River Restoration Project Phase II, East McKay Bay		Implementation	State of Florida	\$497,250
Robinson Preserve Wetlands Restoration		Implementation	DOC-NOAA/ State of Florida	\$1,319,636
Tampa Bay National Estuary Program		Implementation	EPA/ State of Florida	\$2,000,000
Council Monitoring & Assessment Program Development	Gulf-wide	Planning	DOC-NOAA and DOI-U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)/All Council Members	\$2,500,000
GOMA Coordination		Planning	State of Alabama/ DOC and DOI	\$375,000
Strategic Conservation Assessment Framework		Planning	DOI/All Council Members	\$1,879,380
Baseline Flow, Gage Analysis & On-Line Tool to Support Restoration		Planning & Implementation	EPA and DOI-USGS/ All Council Members	\$5,800,000
Gulf Coast Conservation Reserve Program		Planning & Implementation	USDA/State of Mississippi	\$6,000,000
Gulf of Mexico Conservation Enhancement Grant Program		Planning	EPA/All Council Members	\$375,000

APPENDIX

Activity	Watershed/ Estuary	Type	Responsible Council Member(s)/ Partnering Council Member(s)	Cost
Gulf of Mexico Habitat Restoration via Conservation Corps Partnerships	Gulf-wide	Implementation	DOC/DOL and States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas and five Tribes (Seminole Tribe of Florida, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians, Poach Band of Creek Indians, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, and Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana)	\$8,000,000
Gulf of Mexico Estuary Program		Planning	EPA/State of Florida	\$2,200,000
Gulf of Mexico Conservation Enhancement Grant Program		Implementation	EPA/All Council Members	\$2,125,000





restoretthegef.gov