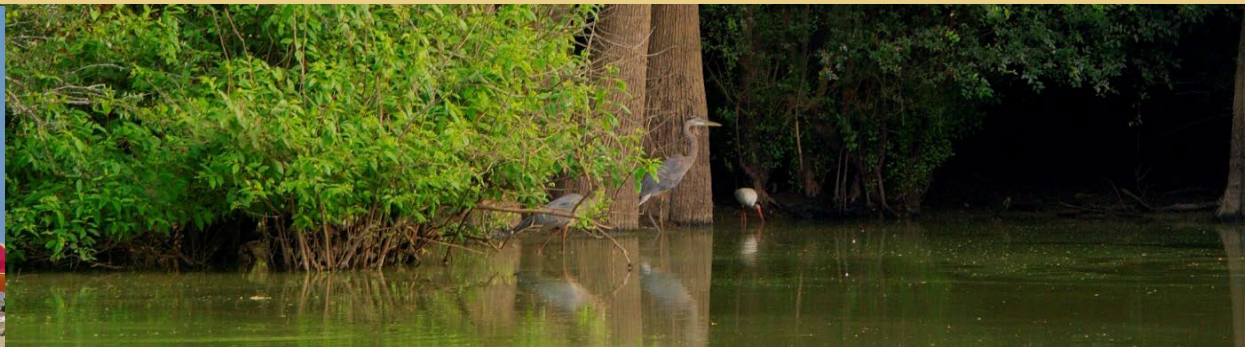
2021 Annual Report to Congress

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council



2021 Annual Report to Congress

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

Fiscal Year 2021

Submitted February 2022

Table of Contents

Contents

Table of Contents 2
1. Letter from the Executive Director 3
2. Mission and Organization 5
3. Background on the RESTORE Act 6
3.1. Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives 7
3.2. Fiscal Year 2021 Significant Council Actions 9
3.3. Sub-Awards to Non-Governmental Organizations 10
4. Council-Selected Restoration Component 11
4.1. Background 11
4.2. Building on a Foundation of Collaboration, Experience and Best Available Science 14
4.3. 2015 Initial Funded Priority List (2015 Initial FPL) 17
4.4. Funded Priority List 3 18
5. Spill Impact Component 22
6. Summary of Performance Under Buckets 2 & 3 26
6.1. Assessment of the Council's Progress Toward Program Goals, Objectives and Planning Framework 26
6.2. Summary by Planning Framework Elements 31
6.3. Summary by Performance Metrics 34
7. Administrative Accomplishments 38
7.1. Financial Summary 38
7.2. Grant Management 41
7.3. Enterprise Risk Management 43
7.4. Other Administrative Updates 45
8. Centers of Excellence Accomplishments 47
8.1. Background 47
8.2. Alabama's RESTORE Act Center of Excellence 47
8.3. Florida's RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence 48
8.4. Louisiana's RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence 49
8.5. Mississippi's RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence 51
8.6. Texas' RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence 52
Appendices 54
Appendix A – Council-Selected Restoration Component Activities Funded During FY21 54
Appendix B - SEP Activities Funded During FY2021 56

1. Letter from the Executive Director

The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council) hereby submits its Fiscal Year 2021 (FY2021) Annual Report to Congress. The Council was created by the *Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act* (RESTORE Act or Act) in 2012 as an independent federal agency charged with administering a portion of the civil settlements associated with the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. Consisting of the five Gulf Coast states and six federal agencies, the Council's mission is to implement a comprehensive plan for the ecological and economic recovery of the Gulf Coast.

The Council has oversight over the expenditure of 60% of the funds made available from the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund established by the RESTORE Act (Trust Fund). Under the Council-Selected Restoration Component of the RESTORE Act, 30% of available funding is administered for Gulfwide ecosystem restoration and protection according to the Comprehensive Plan developed by the Council through Funded Priorities Lists (FPLs). Another 30% is allocated to the States under the Spill Impact Component according to a formula established by the Council through a regulation, and spent according to individual State Expenditure Plans (SEPs) to contribute to the overall economic and ecological recovery of the Gulf.

FY 2021 was a milestone year for the Council, as it crossed the $500M mark in terms of funding awarded for Gulf coast restoration. In FY 2021, the Council obligated $113.7M through grants and interagency agreements (IAAs) to carry out project and programs under the RESTORE Act, bringing the total amount awarded to $510.7M. Of this, $203.1M has been awarded to date from the Council-Selected Restoration Component (N= 63 awards) and $307.6M from the Spill Impact Component (N=68 awards).

In addition, in FY 2021 the Council completed its most recent FPL cycle, approving $302M for projects and programs across the Gulf Coast. As detailed later in this document, the Council approves projects and programs for the Council-Selected Restoration Component funding as set forth in FPLs, developed through collaboration among its members and with feedback from stakeholders across the Gulf of Mexico. The Council was initially planning to develop FPL 3 during FY 2020 as a single action, consisting of a list of restoration projects and programs addressing ecosystem needs across the Gulf coast. However, as a direct result of the Council's collaborative process, the Council decided to develop FPL 3 in two phases. On February 12, 2020, the Council approved the first phase, referred to as 2020 Funded Priorities List 3a (FPL 3a) which included two projects in Louisiana and Alabama totaling $158M. On April 28, 2021, the Council approved 20 activities, totaling $302M consisting of $140.4M in Category 1 activities (ready for funding) and $161.5M for Category 2 activities (subject to future funding approval). In finalizing the 2021 FPL 3b, the Council adhered to the FPL development processes committed to by the Council, as described in its FPL 3 Proposal Submission Guidelines and Review Process. This selection process included best available science and other proposal reviews and was based on consideration of the ecosystem priorities of each Council member as well as the other criteria set forth in the RESTORE Act.

As the Council continues to work towards achieving the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan in order to advance its vision of a "healthy and productive Gulf ecosystem achieved through collaboration on strategic restoration projects and programs," it emphasizes sound management of its funding and resources. This is evidenced by the 2021 financial statement audit that resulted in an unmodified opinion with no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and a finding that the financial statements presented the financial position of the Council fairly, in all material respects.

On behalf of the Council, I am pleased to submit the FY2021 Annual Report to Congress outlining our progress over the past twelve months. The Council remains committed to maintaining active communication with Congress. Please contact us at any time with your thoughts, suggestions or questions. Thank you for your continued leadership and support in restoring the Gulf Coast region.

Mary S. Walker
Executive Director

2. Mission and Organization

The Council is charged by the RESTORE Act with helping to restore the ecosystem and economy of the Gulf Coast region by developing and overseeing Trust Fund expenditures in implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and approval of SEPs, and carrying out other responsibilities.

The Council includes the Governors of the States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, and the Secretaries of the U.S. Departments of the Interior, Army, Commerce, Agriculture, Homeland Security, and the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, who currently serves as the chair of the Council.

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council Members

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Chair)
Janet G. McCabe
Deputy Administrator

State of Alabama
Kay Ivey
Governor

State of Florida
Ron DeSantis
Governor

State of Louisiana
John Bel Edwards
Governor

State of Mississippi
Tate Reeves
Governor

State of Texas
Greg Abbott
Governor

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

U.S. Department of the Army
Michael L. Connor
Secretary

U.S. Department of Commerce
Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Alejandro N. Mayorkas
Secretary

U.S. Department of the Interior
Deb Haaland
Secretary

3. Background on the RESTORE Act

The Gulf Coast environment was significantly injured by the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill as well as by past and ongoing human actions. Restoring an area as large and complex as the Gulf Coast region is a costly, multi-generational undertaking. Gulf habitats are also continually degraded and lost due to development, infrastructure, sea-level rise, altered riverine processes, ocean acidification, salinity changes and other human-caused factors. Water quality in the coastal and marine environments is degraded by upstream pollution and hydrologic alterations spanning multiple States and involving the watersheds of large and small rivers alike. Some of the region's environmental problems such as wetland loss and hypoxia span areas the size of some U.S. states. Hurricane frequency and intensity in the Gulf of Mexico is another key factor that must be considered as ecosystem restoration efforts move forward. These system stressors represent serious risks to the cultural, social, and economic benefits derived from the Gulf ecosystem.

On October 5, 2010, President Obama 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 eleven federal agencies and White House offices. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency'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.

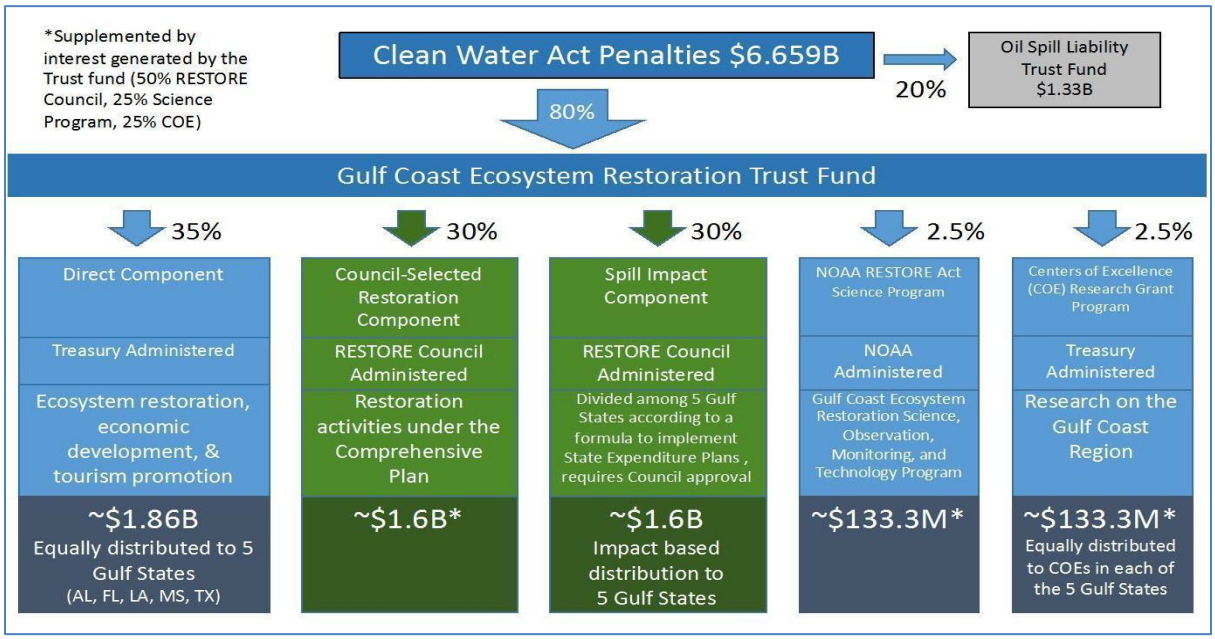
The primary charge of the Task Force was to create a unified, strategic approach to restore the region's ecosystem. In December 2011, the Task Force members published the Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy (Strategy) and the Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem Science Assessment and Needs that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

Signed into law in July 2012, the RESTORE Act (33 U.S.C §1321(t) and *note*) was enacted as an amendment to the *Federal Water Pollution Control Act* (Clean Water Act or CWA) and created the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council as well as the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund. Pursuant to the Act, the Trust Fund receives 80% of the civil and administrative penalties assessed under the CWA resulting from the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. The Act imposed a one-year timeline for development of the Initial Comprehensive Plan: Restoring the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem and Economy (2013 Initial Comprehensive Plan) to describe how the Council would restore the ecosystem and the economy of the Gulf Coast region.

On January 3, 2013, the United States announced that Transocean Deepwater Inc. and related entities had agreed to pay $1 billion (plus interest) in civil penalties for violating the Clean Water Act in relation to their conduct in the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. In accordance with the consent decree, Transocean has paid all three of its installments of civil penalties plus interest to the U.S. Department of Justice. The U.S. Department of Justice has transferred 80 percent of these funds to the Treasury Department for deposit into the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund, totaling $816M. On November 20, 2015, the federal court for the Eastern District Court of Louisiana ordered Anadarko Petroleum Corp. to pay a $159.5M civil fine; of this amount, $128M, including interest, has been deposited in the Trust Fund. Anadarko was the last defendant in the *Deepwater Horizon* spill Clean Water Act litigation.

On April 4, 2016, a federal court in New Orleans entered a consent decree resolving civil claims against BP arising from the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill (United States vs. BPXP et al.). The resolution of civil claim totals for entities held responsible for the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill will yield more than $20 billion, the largest civil penalties ever awarded under any environmental statute, and the largest recovery of damages for injuries to natural resources of The United States. Of these penalties, the RESTORE Act will provide $5.33 billion (80 percent of $6.659 billion) to the Trust Fund, based on the following: $1 billion (plus interest) in civil penalties from Transocean Deepwater Inc. and related entities for violating the Clean Water Act in relation to their conduct in the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill; $159.5M from a civil fine paid by Anadarko Petroleum Corporation; and $5.5 billion (plus interest) from BP Exploration and Production, Inc. (BP) for a Clean Water Act civil penalty under the April 4, 2016 consent decree, payable over a fifteen-year period at approximately $91M per year through 2031 (Figure 1).

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



3.1. Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives

The 2013 Initial Comprehensive Plan provided a framework to implement a coordinated, Gulf Coast region-wide restoration effort in a way that restores, protects, and revitalizes the Gulf Coast. This first Comprehensive Plan guided the Council's actions to restore the Gulf Coast ecosystem and economy and it continues to evolve. The 2013 Initial Comprehensive Plan established the Council's goals and objectives for the region and provides a process to fund restoration projects and programs as funds become available. The RESTORE Act requires the Council to update the Comprehensive Plan every five years. Accordingly, the Council updated its Initial Comprehensive Plan in 2016 and during FY2021, set the foundation for an update in 2022.

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update: Restoring the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem and Economy (2016 Comprehensive Plan Update) provides a Ten-Year Funding Strategy which includes an overarching 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 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. The 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update also committed to enhancing public engagement and the use of best available science to support a holistic approach to Gulf restoration. These commitments are intended to ensure that future Council investments provide the greatest possible ecological return.

Goals

To provide the overarching framework for an integrated and coordinated approach for region-wide Gulf Coast restoration and to help guide the collective actions at the local, state, tribal, and federal levels, the Council adopted five goals. The 2016 Update added Water Quantity to the Water Quality goal.

1. ***Restore and Conserve Habitat*** – Restore and conserve the health, diversity, and resilience of key coastal, estuarine, and marine habitats.
2. ***Restore Water Quality and Quantity*** – Restore and protect the water quality and quantity of the Gulf Coast region's fresh, estuarine, and marine waters.
3. ***Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources*** – Restore and protect healthy, diverse, and sustainable living coastal and marine resources.
4. ***Enhance Community Resilience*** – Build upon and sustain communities with 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 fifth goal focuses on reviving and supporting a sustainable Gulf economy. This goal pertains to expenditures by the Gulf Coast States authorized in the RESTORE Act under the Direct Component (administered by the Department of the Treasury) and the Spill Impact Component, and ensures that these investments can be considered in the context of comprehensive restoration. This goal does not apply to the Council-Selected Restoration Component.

To achieve all five goals, the Council supports ecosystem restoration that can enhance local communities by giving people desirable places to live, work, and play, while creating opportunities for new and existing businesses of all sizes, especially those dependent on natural resources. In addition, the Council will support ecosystem restoration that builds local workforce capacity.

The Council coordinates restoration activities under the Council-Selected Restoration Component and the Spill Impact Component to further its goals. While the Council does not have direct involvement in the activities undertaken by the States or local governments through the Direct Component, the Council will strive, as appropriate, to coordinate its work with those activities. In addition, the Council actively coordinates with the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science Program (administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program (administered by the Treasury Department).

Objectives

The Council selects and funds projects and programs that restore and protect the natural resources, ecosystems, water quality, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region. The objectives developed in the Comprehensive Plan include:

- **Restore, Enhance, and Protect Habitats** – Restore, enhance and protect the extent, functionality, resiliency, and sustainability of coastal, freshwater, estuarine, wildlife, and marine habitats.
- **Restore, Improve, and Protect Water Resources** – Restore, improve, and protect the Gulf Coast region's fresh, estuarine, and marine water resources by reducing or treating nutrient and pollutant loading; and improving the management of freshwater flows, discharges to and withdrawals from critical systems.
- **Protect and Restore Living Coastal and Marine Resources** – Restore and protect healthy, diverse, and sustainable living coastal and marine resources including finfish, shellfish, birds, mammals, reptiles, coral, and deep benthic communities.
- **Restore and Enhance Natural Processes and Shorelines** – Restore and enhance ecosystem resilience, sustainability, and natural defenses through the restoration of natural coastal, estuarine, and riverine processes, and/or the restoration of natural shorelines.
- **Promote Community Resilience** – Build and sustain Gulf Coast communities' capacity to adapt to short- and long-term natural and man-made hazards, particularly increased flood risks associated with sea-level rise and environmental stressors. Promote ecosystem restoration that enhances community resilience through the re-establishment of non-structural, natural buffers against storms and flooding.
- **Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education** – Promote and enhance natural resource stewardship through environmental education efforts that include formal and informal educational opportunities, professional development and training, communication, and actions for all ages.
- **Improve Science-Based Decision-Making Processes** – Improve science-based decision-making processes used by the Council.

3.2. Fiscal Year 2021 Significant Council Actions

The RESTORE Act (33 U.S.C. § 1321(t) and *note)* requires a Council vote for the following types of actions (referred to as "Significant Actions") (33 U.S.C § 1321(t)(2)(C)(vi)):

1. Approval of the Comprehensive Plan and revisions and updates thereto;
2. Approval of State Expenditure Plans (SEPs) and revisions and updates thereto;
3. Approval of reports to Congress required by the Act;
4. Approval of transfers pursuant to 33 U.S.C. § 1321(t)(2)(E)(ii)(II); and
5. Other Significant Actions as determined by the Council (e.g., approval of the Council regulation establishing the formula required under 33 U.S.C. § 1321(t)(3)).

All Significant Actions of the Council, except approval of SEPs, require the affirmative vote of the Chairperson and three State members to be effective. Approval of a SEP or a SEP revision requires only the affirmative vote of the Chairperson together with certification that the SEP satisfies all applicable requirements of the RESTORE Act by the submitting State member. Following is a list of the Council's Significant Actions for FY2021:

Council-Selected Restoration Component

- Funded Priorities List 3b, April 28, 2021;
- 2015 Initial FPL Amendments
    - Deer Island Beneficial Use Site in Mississippi, Finding of No Significant Impact, August 18, 2021

- Marsh Restoration in Fish River and Oyster Bay in Alabama, Record of Decision, August 18, 2021

Spill Impact Component

- Florida State Expenditure Plan Amendment #3

Other

- 2020 Annual Report to Congress, February 3, 2021

3.3. Sub-Awards to Non-Governmental Organizations

The RESTORE Act requires that, for purposes of awards made under the Council-Selected Restoration Component, a State or federal award recipient may make a grant or subaward to or enter into a cooperative agreement with a non-governmental entity that equals or exceeds 10 percent of the total amount of the award provided to the State or federal award recipient only if certain notice requirements are met. The Council has provided notice in advance of each such proposed subaward in fiscal year 2021 through the Federal Register and to specified Congressional Committees. In addition, the Council must include the name, purpose and amount of each qualifying subaward in its Annual Report to Congress. Table 1 provides the required information.

Table 1. List of FY2021 awards made under the Council-Selected Restoration Component to a state or federal award recipient with a non-governmental entity that equals or exceeds 10 percent of the total amount of the award.

Primary Recipient or Federal Partner	Non-Governmental Subrecipient, Amount and Purpose
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	**Atlanta Botanical Garden ($501,464)** This project intends to enhance conservation through woody vegetation removal and evaluation of the impact of novel management methods in Florida's rare coastal wetland ecosystem. There are two main objectives. First, the project will test whether restoration through vegetation removal in coastal wetlands leads to differences in hydrologic and nutrient parameters in soil, shallow groundwater, and stream water flowing into coastal dune lakes. The second objective is to evaluate whether there are differences among conventional and novel restoration treatments in terms of surface water level and chemistry, groundwater level and chemistry, soil chemistry, amphibian abundance/diversity, and ground layer vegetation. The results of this project will provide information that will benefit the long-term restoration of a much larger area encompassing more than 1,000 hectares of wetlands in Florida's Panhandle.
	Galveston Bay Foundation ($300,000) Galveston Bay Foundation proposes a three-phased program focusing on the Galveston Bay watershed. This program will provide funding to help protect priority landscapes surrounding Galveston Bay, enhance habitats and water quality on existing conserved lands, and complete an analysis of the economic benefits conservation provides in the Houston-Galveston region.
	The Nature Conservancy ($250,000) The Nature Conservancy in Louisiana will partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore oyster reef habitat along rapidly eroding shorelines in Calcasieu Lake along Sabine

Primary Recipient or Federal Partner	Non-Governmental Subrecipient, Amount and Purpose
	NWR, a priority landscape on the Gulf of Mexico. This project will build vertical oyster reef structure; protect critical coastal marsh and priority areas of Sabine NWR which supports a high diversity of fish and wildlife populations; create fisheries habitat; improve estuary water quality; slow shoreline retreat by abating wave energy; and increase the resiliency of nearby coastal communities.
	Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation ($500,000) The Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation (PGCLC), a collaborative of 24 land trusts working in the Gulf of Mexico Region, seeks to enhance land protection and conservation in priority landscapes. The PGCLC plans to fully develop land conservation projects in the coastal region with important public recreation, wildlife habitat, resilience and water quality benefits for local communities and the region as a whole. PGCLC partners implementing fee acquisition or conservation easement projects may receive subawards of up to $25,000 matched 1:1 to complete appraisals, appraisal reviews, title exams, environmental and baseline studies, surveys, closings and other due diligence necessary to conserve up to 20,000 acres.
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Restoration Center of the U.S. Department of Commerce	**The Nature Conservancy ($11,321,250)** RESTORE Act funds in the amount of $11,971,250 have been provided to implement the Gulf of Mexico Coast Conservation Corps (GulfCorps) Program through an interagency agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Restoration Center of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Initially funded under the Council's 2015 Initial FPL, the GulfCorps program supports the primary RESTORE Comprehensive Plan goal of restoring and conserving habitat. Under the GulfCorps Interagency Agreement, the NOAA Restoration Center will provide a subaward in the amount of $11,321,250 to The Nature Conservancy (TNC), a non-profit organization. GulfCorps organizations in each Gulf state will recruit, train, employ and help to inspire hundreds of young adults to produce habitat restoration benefits and become the Gulf of Mexico's future restoration workforce. GulfCorps will continue to collaborate with state, federal and local agencies, and non-profit organizations to manage natural resources and implement restoration, conservation and resilience projects.

4. Council-Selected Restoration Component

4.1. Background

The Council-Selected Restoration Component, or "Bucket 2", funding decisions are guided by criteria set forth in the RESTORE Act, the Council's 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update, and other policies, including the Council's 2019 Planning Framework. Pursuant to the RESTORE Act, Council approval of Bucket 2 funding requires an affirmative vote from at least three state members and the Chair. The other five federal members do not have a vote. Following is a brief overview of the Bucket 2 criteria and policies, with links to additional information.

RESTORE Act Priority Criteria

In selecting projects and programs under Bucket 2, the RESTORE Act requires that the Council give the highest priority to activities that address one or more of the following criteria:

- **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.
- **Large-scale projects and programs** that are projected to substantially contribute to restoring and protecting the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast ecosystem.
- **Projects contained in existing Gulf Coast State comprehensive plans** for the restoration and protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region.
- **Projects that restore long-term resiliency** of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands most impacted by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.

FPL Proposal Submission Guidelines and Review Process

In 2019, the Council developed updated guidance for its members on the content and review process for Council-Selected Restoration Component funding proposals. This updated guidance is called the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council: Council-Selected Restoration Component Funded Priorities List 3 Proposal Submission Guidelines and Review Process (2019 Submission Guidelines).The primary purpose of the Guidelines was to help Council members develop effective proposals for potential funding in FPL 3. The Council implemented FPL 3 in two phases; therefore, the 2019 Submission Guidelines pertained to submission of proposals for both FPL 3a and FPL 3b. Only Council members are eligible to submit proposals for potential funding in an FPL. Federally recognized Tribes (Tribes) may submit proposals via a federal Council member sponsor. The 2019 Submission Guidelines is divided into three sections:

- **Section 1- Proposal Evaluation Criteria and Related Information -** discusses the statutory criteria that FPL 3 proposals must address to be considered for funding, along with other legal requirements pertaining to best available science (BAS) and environmental compliance. This section also discusses the FPL categories and Planning Framework that will help guide the selection of projects and programs for inclusion in FPL 3.
- **Section 2 - Guidance for FPL Proposal Content -** describes the information to be included in FPL 3 proposals.
- **Section 3 - FPL Proposal Review Process and Public Engagement -** outlines how the Council would review and consider FPL 3 proposals to ensure compliance with the RESTORE Act, BAS, and consistency with the goals, objectives, and commitments set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. It also describes the opportunities for the public to engage in the FPL 3 development process.

FPL Categories

FPLs include activities in two categories. Category 1 activities are approved for funding. Such approval requires a Council vote as set forth in the RESTORE Act. To be approved in Category 1, a project or program must have documentation demonstrating that all applicable environmental laws have been addressed. For example, a construction project would need documentation demonstrating compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and other applicable laws.

Category 2 activities are Council priorities for potential future funding, but are not approved for funding. These are projects and/or programs that are not yet in a position to be approved by the Council, but are considered worthy of potential future funding by the Council. As appropriate, the Council will review the activities in Category 2 to determine whether to: (1) move an activity to Category 1 and approve it for funding, (2) remove it from Category 2 and any further consideration, or (3) continue to include it in Category 2. In these reviews, the Council can consider feasibility, environmental compliance and scientific, technical, policy and/or other related issues. A Council vote and FPL amendment are required to move an activity from Category 2 to Category 1, or to remove an activity from Category 2 and any further consideration.

Eligible Activities and Definitions

The Council considers proposals from members that address planning or implementation phases, or both, of projects or programs. Following are the definitions of these phases from the Council's 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update:

- **Planning** – FPL submissions may include: planning and development of ecosystem restoration projects and programs; cost estimates; feasibility analysis; engineering and design; environmental compliance and permitting; scientific elements, including evaluation and establishment of monitoring requirements and methods to report outcomes and impacts; and public engagement.
- **Implementation** – FPL submissions may include: construction; public outreach and education; and measurement, evaluation, and reporting of outcomes and impacts of restoration activities.

As set forth in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update, following are the Council's definitions of "activity," "project," and "program." These definitions are applicable to proposals for Council-Selected Restoration Component funding. FPL proposals should indicate whether the proposed activity is a project or a program. If it is the latter, the activity should be consistent with the following definition of program.

- **Activity**: A general term that includes both projects and programs, and may also be used to describe components of a project or program. For example, on the Initial FPL, all the funded projects and programs on the list could be referred to as restoration "activities."
- **Project**: A single ecosystem restoration and/or conservation activity that cannot be separated into stand-alone sub-activities. A project may be "scalable," meaning that its scope, size, and/or cost can be expanded or reduced as needed and appropriate. A project can be separated into a "planning" or "implementation" phase or can include both. One or more members can conduct a project. For example, a single project might restore marsh in a specific geographic location. Another example of a project might be the planning, engineering, and design required to advance a marsh restoration proposal to a construction-ready status.
- **Program:** A suite of intrinsically-linked restoration and/or conservation activities that must be implemented together in order to achieve the desired outcome. A program may be covered by one unified Council environmental compliance review, as appropriate, and have a common set of performance measures to effectively assess and measure outcomes. A program's sub-activities may be related in terms of geography, environmental stressors, resources, restoration and/or protection activities, and more. A program can be separated into a "planning" or "implementation" phase or can include both. One or more members can conduct a program. For example, a single program might be a Gulfwide environmental monitoring effort.

4.2. Building on a Foundation of Collaboration, Experience and Best Available Science

Building on the strong foundation established in the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy and other local, regional, state, and federal plans, the Council is taking an integrated and coordinated approach to Gulf Coast restoration. This approach strives to both restore the Gulf Coast region's environment and simultaneously revitalize the region's economy, because the Council recognizes that ecosystem restoration investments may also improve economic prosperity and quality of life, as well as the improving the resilient nature of coastal communities. In addition, this approach acknowledges that coordinated action with other partners is crucial to successfully restore and sustain the health of the Gulf Coast region.

The RESTORE Council is using a collaborative process to help ensure that Council-Selected Restoration Component funded projects and programs complement restoration being accomplished through other funding streams. The funding available through the Council, as well as the other DWH-related funding sources (including other components of the RESTORE Act, Natural Resource and Damage Assessment (DWH NRDA), and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (NFWF GEBF)), presents an unprecedented opportunity to restore Gulf ecosystem conditions and functions, representing one of the most substantial investments in landscape-level restoration in U.S. history. However, these funds will not be sufficient to fully address all the ecosystem restoration needs of the Gulf given the multiple stressors impacting the region, ranging from man-made sources like the DWH oil spill disaster, water quality/quantity issues and the annual offshore hypoxic zone, as well as naturally-occurring impacts including hurricanes. Due to these large-scale stressors and ever-changing conditions of these coastal environments, it is infeasible to restore the Gulf to conditions that were present at a specific time in the past. By working collaboratively among the Council members and with other DWH-related funding sources, as well as working with other federal, and state funds, great progress can be made to increase the resiliency of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem against these stressors.

Commitment and Planning Support FPL (CPS FPL)
A review of the process used to develop the 2015 Initial FPL was conducted that included input from both Council members and the public. Following completion of this review, the Council developed the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update which further emphasized the Council's commitments to collaborate among members, potential funding partners, and the public; increase public engagement and transparency; and refine its best available science (BAS) practices.

To advance these commitments, the Council approved a second FPL in January 2018, referred to as the *2017 Commitment and Planning Support FPL* (2017 CPS FPL). Rather than funding specific restoration projects or programs, the 2017 CPS FPL dedicated funds over a five-year period (2018 through 2023) to help Council members meet 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update commitments and identify potential areas for future FPL proposal development. Council members have used 2017 CPS FPL funds to initiate and enhance collaborations and develop tools for exchanging ecosystem restoration and protection ideas for funding consideration in the next FPL. Council members have held meetings throughout the Gulf to discuss ecosystem restoration concepts and potential techniques to address environmental challenges and stressors. These activities were critical in the development of FPL 3a and 3b.

Commitment to Science-Based Decision-Making
Under the RESTORE Act, the Council is required to "undertake projects and programs, using the best available science that would restore and protect the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine

and wildlife habitats, beaches, coastal wetlands, and economy of the Gulf Coast." The RESTORE Act defines BAS 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 continues to engage in a variety of activities that promote the enhanced use of BAS at all stages of project/program development and implementation, and across Council programmatic activities.

Best Available Science Reviews

The Council's Initial Funded Priorities List utilized voluntary, confidential and external mail-in reviews from scientific experts to ensure all proposals were developed using Best Available Science. In the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Council made clear its intention to explore different approaches for improving its science review process for Council-Selected Restoration Component funded projects and programs. To meet this commitment, Council staff developed an updated BAS Review Process that incorporated an internal BAS Proposal Review Panel in addition to external reviews. The internal science review panel's collaborative review of all proposals as part of the FPL 3a and 3b review process offered increased opportunities to identify project interactions, synergies, benefits, and risks.

The updated BAS review process assisted the Council in 2021 in selecting projects for approval in FPL 3b that will maximize benefits and support a holistic approach to Gulf restoration.

Gulf Science Coordination

The Council has also furthered its commitment to science-based decision-making through continued science coordination across its member agencies and the larger Gulf of Mexico scientific community. As part of the 2015 Initial FPL Council Monitoring and Assessment Program (CMAP), the Council funded a Council Monitoring and Assessment Workgroup (CMAWG). This workgroup, composed of technical experts from each of the member agencies, supports the RESTORE Council in meeting its commitments to monitoring and adaptive management, and the use of BAS. Ongoing coordination around science and monitoring has already reaped tangible benefits such as alignment of overlapping tasks across entities, shared work products, and plans for future leveraging of shared resources. Because of these benefits, the Council decided to continue CMAWG beyond the CMAP award period, formalizing their work through the approval of the Council Monitoring and Adaptive Management Guidelines in 2020 and through annual CMAWG Workplans.

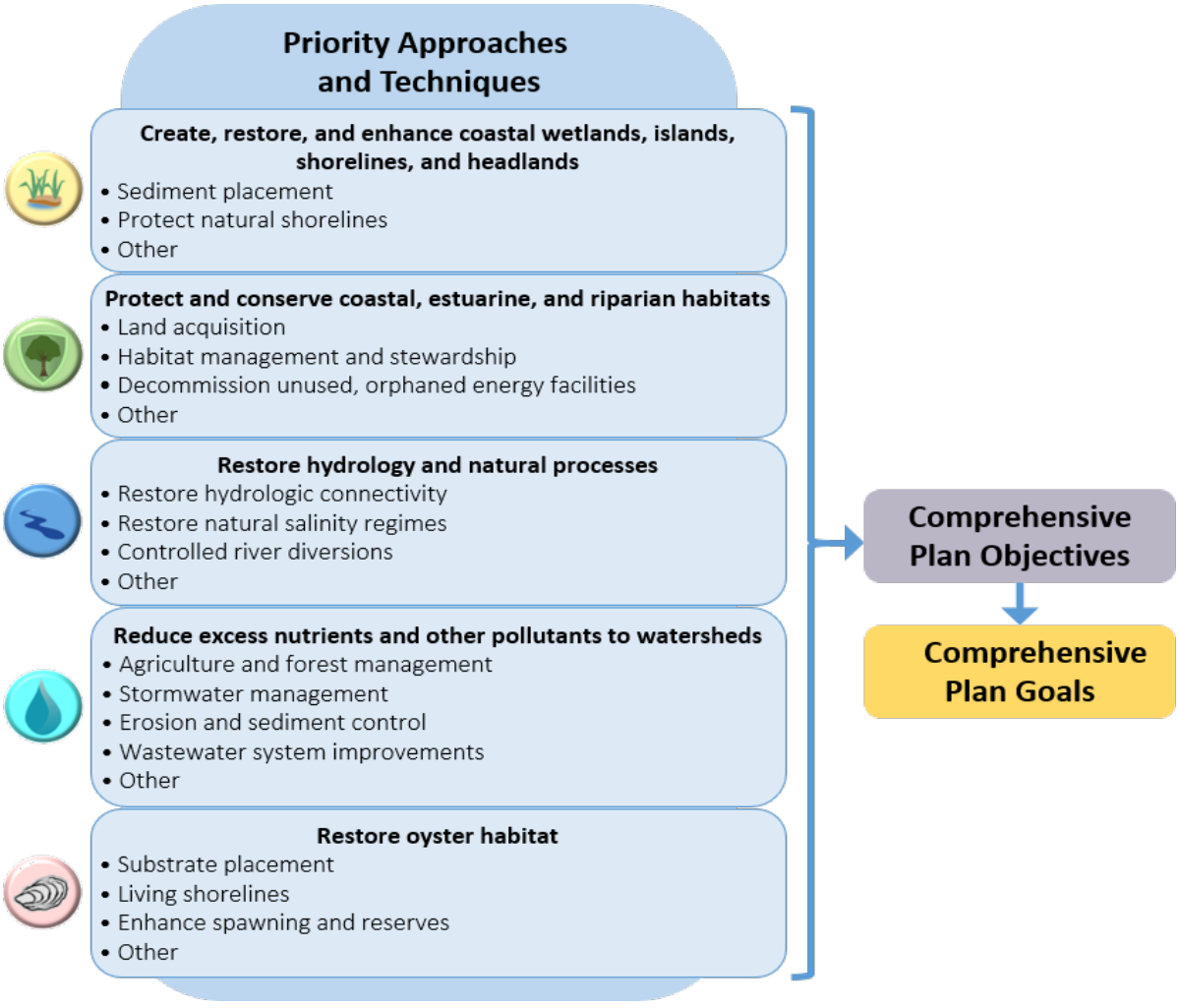
In addition to internal science coordination through the CMAWG, in 2021 the Council also engaged in external Gulf science coordination. For example, the Council participates in the Gulf Restoration Science Programs Ad Hoc Coordination Forum. This forum, hosted by the RESTORE NOAA Science Program, provides a venue for all Gulf science and restoration programs to come together to work towards consistency in metrics and data management, share funding opportunities, and look for synergies across the academic and restoration communities in the Gulf.

Planning Framework

One of the most significant actions the Council has taken to improve performance was the development of the Council's 2019 Planning Framework which strategically links past and future restoration funding decisions to the overarching goals and objectives outlined in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update. The Planning Framework indicates priorities designed to continue building on previous investments, while expanding opportunities to meet all Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives in the future.

The Planning Framework lists priority restoration approaches and techniques (Figure 2) their relationship to the Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives, and associated geographic areas. The purpose of this document was to provide the public and potential funding partners with an indication of the kinds of projects that were anticipated to be developed for FPL 3 funding consideration. As part of the process of developing future FPLs, the Planning Framework will be reviewed and revised as needed to incorporate outcomes and lessons learned from previously implemented projects, scientific and technical developments, changing policy, public input, and other planning considerations.

Figure 2. The 2019 Planning Framework priority approaches and techniques can be applied to support the Comprehensive Plan objectives and goals.



Enhancing Environmental Compliance Efficiency through Interagency Collaboration

The RESTORE Council is an active member of the Gulf Coast Interagency Environmental Restoration Working Group (GCIERWG), which was formed to help achieve more effective and efficient environmental reviews of Gulf ecosystem restoration projects. Improved environmental reviews should result in more timely restoration implementation. Formed in recognition of the critical need for early and consistent interagency coordination and prioritization of restoration work, the GCIERWG

coordinates through monthly conference calls and periodic project or program specific technical working sessions.

In 2021, interagency collaboration resulted in the Council's first use of members' National Environmental Policy Act Categorical Exclusions (NEPA CEs) at a programmatic level. Use of these NEPA CEs for land acquisition and the completion of supporting Endangered Species Act coordination, efficiently satisfied all environmental compliance requirements enabling the Council to approve over $35M in funding for two new large-scale land acquisition programs in Florida and Texas. As planning and implementation of other FPL 3b activities moves forward, the Council will build upon these interagency environmental compliance successes for land acquisition to also speed the delivery of restoration while meeting statutory requirements and providing sound analyses of Gulf restoration work.

4.3. 2015 Initial Funded Priority List (2015 Initial FPL)

In 2015, the Council approved the 2015 Initial Funded Priority List (2015 Initial FPL) for approximately $156.6M in restoration activities such as hydrologic restoration, land conservation, and planning for large-scale restoration projects. The funding for the 2015 Initial FPL came from the settlement of CWA civil penalties against Transocean Deepwater Inc. and related entities. When it approved the 2015 Initial FPL, the Council did not know the amount and timing of additional funding that could be obtained from the then-ongoing litigation with British Petroleum (BP). The 2015 Initial FPL was organized around ten watersheds/estuaries across the Gulf to concentrate and leverage available funds to address critical ecosystem needs in high priority locations. The Council's decisions were informed by stakeholder input and the best available science associated with a variety of factors, including widely-recognized ecological stressors, foundational investment needed to respond to those stressors, building on other funded conservation actions, and socioeconomic and cultural considerations. Activities were selected to provide near-term ecological results while also completing planning and science decision-support tools that may provide for future success.

During FY 2021, three awards from the 2015 Initial FPL were funded with $4.0M in a state grant and $2.77M in IAAs to two federal members (Table 2; **Appendix A**), which includes $0.3M in additional funding for an award to DOI Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Table 2. List of 2015 Initial FPL awards made during FY 2021

Council Member	2015 Initial FPL Projects Approved during FY 2021	Award Amount ($ M)
Alabama	Comprehensive Living Shoreline Monitoring (Planning and Implementation)	$4.00
DOI (additional funds to original award)	Gulf of Mexico Habitat Restoration via Conservation Corps Partnerships/Youth Conservation Corps (BIA)	$0.30
EPA	Gulf of Mexico Conservation Enhancement Grant Program	$2.47

4.4. Funded Priority List 3

The Council was initially planning on developing FPL 3 as a single action, consisting of a list of restoration projects and programs (collectively referred to as 'activities') addressing ecosystem needs across the Gulf coast. As a result of the collaborative process, the Council has determined that developing FPL 3 in two phases would enable the Council to respond to ecosystem needs, save money, and take advantage of important partnership opportunities to advance large-scale ecosystem restoration.

FPL 3a-2020

The first phase of FPL 3, entitled FPL 3a, adhered to the FPL development process committed to by the Council as outlined in the 2019 Submission Guidelines. This includes conducting internal and external reviews of the submitted proposals, and engaging in a public comment period prior to finalizing the FPL. FPL 3a consists of two projects: River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp, in Louisiana; and, Perdido River Land Conservation and Habitat Enhancements, in Alabama. Where applicable, the final project descriptions, as well as the FPL, were modified based upon internal and external reviews and public comments. The Council voted to approve the final FPL 3a on February 12, 2020.

In the 2015 Initial FPL, the Council approved approximately $14.2M for planning, engineering and design, and permitting for the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp (Maurepas project). Subsequently with the 2020 FPL 3a, the Council approved $130M project (2020 FPL 3a project description) that aims to restore processes that will enhance ecosystem health and reduce or minimize future loss of approximately 45,000 acres of bald cypress-water tupelo forest in coastal Louisiana by reintroducing Mississippi River water into the Maurepas Swamp.

Through the FPL 3 collaborative planning process, Alabama identified an opportunity for a large-scale, multi-member, multi-project, coordinated program in the Perdido Watershed (2020 FPL 3a project description). 2020 FPL 3a approved $26.9M in planning and implementation funds, and budgeted at $1.12M for an additional implementation component. This project involves the acquisition and placement into state conservation management of approximately 10,000 - 12,000 acres of habitat that will serve as a cornerstone for advancing the vision of a large-scale, coordinated program in the Perdido watershed.

FPL 3b-2021

Upon approving 2020 FPL 3a in February 2020, the Council continued its focus on identifying projects and programs to address other Gulf Coast ecosystem needs through 2021 FPL 3b funding. Using 2017 CPS FPL resources, Council members continued to collaborate among themselves and with stakeholders to identify and shape project and program concepts for potential inclusion in 2021 FPL 3b. In the early stages of collaboration, members identified and discussed potential priorities, which ranged from broad programmatic goals to specific project concepts. Throughout this process, project and program concepts were reviewed and discussed by all members, further refined, and in some cases, dropped from further consideration based on feedback and other factors (e.g., availability of alternative funding sources). These discussions helped members further shape their respective project and program concepts as they developed 2021 FPL 3b proposals.

To manage resources and time, the Council chose to limit each member to a submission limit of no more than five proposals for 2021 FPL 3b funding (as was done in the 2015 Initial FPL). Proposals submitted by a federal member on behalf of a Tribe did not count toward this limit. Members could submit a maximum of five proposals during the submission window from March 9 to April 24, 2020. The Council

then reviewed all proposals for compliance with the RESTORE Act, consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and 2019 Planning Framework, and compliance with all applicable environmental laws. Additionally, the Council refined the process that was used in the 2015 Initial FPL to review all proposals for the use of BAS to support the Council's 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update commitment to science-based decision-making, all 2021 FPL 3b proposals underwent a revised BAS review process that included three anonymous external science reviews (including reviews by experts from within and outside the Gulf Coast region) and an internal BAS Review Panel. The purpose of this internal panel was to use Council member-agency technical expertise to consider external reviews, identify ways to further strengthen the scientific basis of each proposal and, as applicable, identify potential synergies between proposals not identified prior to their submission.

Due to travel restriction stemming from COVID-19, for the first time the Council utilized a solely virtual public comment process consisting of twelve virtual public comment webinars (two general public webinars and ten state-specific webinars) to inform each of the Gulf Coast state stakeholders of proposed Council activities in their geographic area. Translation services were successfully provided for FPL 3b, including language translations from English to Vietnamese for all documents and webinars, and American Sign Language interpretations via video for hearing impaired stakeholders for virtual meetings. All materials were 508 compliance for all Council documents, whether posted on the Council website or provided electronically. The Council received a total of 142 unique comments from 1946 private citizens, businesses, governmental entities (such as state, parish/county, and local governments), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other Gulf stakeholders. The total number of unique comments also includes those collected from stakeholders who attended one of twelve virtual public meetings. These comments for FPL 3b were compiled and released as the Response to Comments document which was made available on the Council's website.

Following the 50-day public review and comment period, and careful evaluation of all stakeholder input, the 2021 FPL 3b was approved by the Council on April 28, 2021. Total funding for 2021 FPL 3b was for $302M, with $79.37M for activities in Texas, $68.85M in Mississippi, $41M in Alabama, $73.75M in Florida and $39M for activities Gulfwide (Table 3). These funds include $140.45M for Category 1 activities across the Gulf coast. In addition, the Council has budgeted $161.54M for Category 2 activities. The activities included in 2021 FPL 3b are listed in Table 2, along with their location and the types of work being funded. All associated environmental compliance documentation may be found on the RESTORE Council's website.

Table 3. The activities included in 2021 FPL 3b, as approved by the Council in FY 2021, are listed below, along with their location and the types of work that will be funded.

Activity	Geographic Area	Type	Amount Category 1	Amount Category 2
Shoreline Protection Through Living Shorelines	Texas	Planning	$1,286,250	-----
		Implementation	-----	$10,963,750
Texas Coastal Water	Texas	Planning	$3,262,500	-----

Activity	Geographic Area	Type	Amount Category 1	Amount Category 2
Quality Program		Implementation	-----	$19,237,500
Texas Land Acquisition Program for Coastal Conservation	Texas	Planning	$1,579,500	-----
		Implementation	$22,720,500	-----
Wind-Tidal Flat Restoration Pilot	Texas	Planning & Implementation	$321,000	----
Chenier Plain Ecosystem Restoration Program	Texas	Planning	$1,700,000	-----
		Implementation	-----	$18,300,000
Total Funding for Activities in Texas			**$30,869,750**	**$48,501,250**
Coastal Nearshore Habitat Restoration and Development Program in Mississippi	Mississippi Sound	Planning	$6,920,000	-----
		Implementation	-----	$27,680,000
Water Quality Improvement Program for Coastal Mississippi Waters	Mississippi Sound	Planning	$6,850,000	-----
		Implementation	-----	$27,400,000
Total Funding for Activities in Mississippi			**$13,770,000**	**$55,080,000**
Enhancing Hydrologic Connectivity in Justin's Bay (Mobile Bay)	Mobile Bay and Mobile-Tensaw Delta, AL	Planning	$1,000,000	-----
Coastal Alabama Regional Water Quality Program	Mobile Bay and Mobile-Tensaw Delta, AL; Perdido Bay and River, AL-FL	Planning	$16,130,750	-----
		Implementation	-----	$19,000,000
Develop Ecological Flow Decision-Support for Mobile River and Perdido River Basins	Mobile Bay and Mobile-Tensaw Delta, AL; Perdido Bay and River, AL-FL	Planning & Implementation	$3,400,000	-----

Activity	Geographic Area	Type	Amount Category 1	Amount Category 2
Perdido Watershed Water Quality Improvements and Restoration Assessment Program	Perdido Bay and River, AL-FL	Planning	$1,500,000	-----
Total Funding for Activities in Alabama			**$22,000,000**	**$19,000,000**
Apalachicola Regional Restoration Initiative: Strategies 2 & 3	Florida	Planning & Implementation	$5,000,000	-----
Florida Gulf Coast Resiliency Program	Florida	Planning	$5,600,000	-----
		Implementation	-----	$8,400,000
Florida Gulf Coast Tributaries Hydrologic Restoration Program	Florida	Planning	$3,437,500	-----
		Implementation	-----	$10,312,500
Florida Water Quality Improvement Program	Florida	Planning	$6,750,000	------
		Implementation	-----	$20,250,000
Florida Strategic Gulf Coast Land Acquisition Program	Florida	Planning	$1,400,000	-----
		Implementation	$12,600,000	-----
Total Funding for Activities in Florida			**$22,187,500**	**$51,562,500**
Gulf Coast Conservation Reserve Program	Gulfwide (Florida, Alabama, Mississippi)	Planning & Implementation	$3,100,000	-----
Enhancing Gulf Waters through Forested Watershed Restoration	Gulfwide (Florida, Alabama, Mississippi)	Planning & Implementation	$23,000,000	-----
Gulf of Mexico Coast Conservation Corps Program	Gulfwide (All five states)	Implementation	$11,971,250	-----

Activity	Geographic Area	Type	Amount Category 1	Amount Category 2
Tribal Youth Coastal Restoration Program	Gulfwide (Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana)	Planning & Implementation	$927,000	-----
Total Funding for Activities Gulfwide			**$38,998,250**	**$0**

The activities contained in FPL 3a and 3b reflected lessons learned from the 2015 Initial FPL process and commitments made in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update, most notably, enhanced collaboration and strategic planning to achieve large-scale ecosystem benefits. FPL 1 contains activities described as "foundational" in that they will contribute to comprehensive Gulf restoration by complementing other projects in order to produce environmental benefits greater than the sum of the individual activities. This approach to identifying priority restoration activities acknowledges the interconnected nature of coastaland marine ecosystems. It also recognizes the importance of addressing system-wide stressors that reduce ecosystem health. FPLs 3a and b advanced this concept by investing in programmatic approaches to address the ecosystem needs in certain geographic areas.

During FY 2021, one 2021 FPL 3b project, the DOC/NOAA Gulf of Mexico Coast Conservation Corps (GulfCorps) Program was awarded $11.97M on July 26, 2021.

5. Spill Impact Component

In addition to the Council-Selected Restoration Component, the remaining 30 percent of the Trust Fund under the Council's purview is allocated to the states under the Spill Impact Component, or "Bucket 3", according to a formula established by the Council and implemented through the RESTORE Act Spill Impact Component Allocation regulation which was published on December 15, 2015. These allocations became effective on April 12, 2016, following entry of the Consent Decree. Using the information set forth in the rule, the allocation of funds among the five states is:

- Alabama – 20.40%;
- Florida – 18.36%;
- Louisiana – 34.59%;
- Mississippi – 19.07%; and
- Texas – 7.58%.

A SEP is approved by the Council Chair following a submittal by the respective state and a review process to verify adherence to the criteria established in the RESTORE Act. Once a SEP is approved, funding for activities in the SEP is disbursed to the respective state via Council grants when the requisite funds become available in the Trust Fund and upon application by the state. As needed, SEPS are amended using the same review and approval process used for the original SEP. Funding for implementation activities is granted to the state after verification of compliance with all applicable federal environmental and other laws. The

RESTORE Act provides the scope of activities eligible for funding under the Spill Impact Component. As described in the RESTORE Act, these activities can include:

- Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region.
- Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife, and natural resources.
- Implementation of a federally-approved marine, coastal, or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring.
- Workforce development and job creation.
- Improvements to or on state parks located in coastal areas affected by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.
- Infrastructure projects benefiting the economy or ecosystem resources, including port infrastructure.
- Coastal flood protection and related infrastructure.
- Planning assistance.
- Administrative costs of complying with the Act.
- Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast region, including recreational fishing.
- Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast region.

During FY 2021, 16 grants totaling $94.93M (Table 4) were awarded as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: State Expenditure Plan total funds by state and list of projects approved during FY 2021

State	SEP Projects Approved during FY 2021	Award Amount ($ Ms)
Alabama SEP	SEP #8: Aloe Bay/Mississippi Sound Water Quality EnhancementProject	$11.84
	SEP #19: Meaher Park Improvements	$3.55
	SEP #21: Alabama Point Seawall Repair	$2.56
	SEP #6: City of Chickasaw Sewer Rehabilitation Project	$1.34
	SEP #1-Environmental Restoration of Cotton Bayou & Terry Cove (Phase 1-Planning)	$0.52
	SEP #13: Longevity, Stability & Water Quality Improvements, Bon Secour DMDA	$0.35
	SEP #20 Mobile County Dirt Road Paving (Sediment Reduction) Program	$10.4
	FY 2021 Total	**$30.56**
Florida SEP Florida Consortium	24-1: Adaptive Planning and Compliance Project	$0.19
	18-2: Portosueno Park Living Shoreline	$0.70
	16-2: Wastewater Collection System Improvements – E&D	$2.09
	1-1: Bayou Chico Contaminated Sediment Remediation Project	$1.12
	7-3: Apalachicola Bay Cooperative Dredging	$5.05
	18-10: Kingfish Boat Ramp Renovation and Expansion – Construction	$4.54
	FY 2021 Total	**$13.69**
Louisiana SEP	Houma Navigation Canal Lock Complex Project - Phase I Construction	**$26.73**
Mississippi SEP	Activity #9: Beneficial Use of Dredge Material for Marsh Creation and Restoration in Mississippi	$18.97
	Mississippi Beachfront Resilience	$5.0
	FY 2021 Total	**$23.97**

Florida - Pursuant to the RESTORE Act, the Florida SEP is administered by the Gulf Consortium, a public entity comprising Florida's 23 Gulf Coast counties, from Escambia County in the western panhandle of Florida to Monroe County on the southern tip of Florida. The RESTORE Act allocates $294,338,815 in Spill Impact Component funding to Florida. The amounts approved in the Florida SEP and amendments are roughly equal to Florida's total SEP allocation. As of the end of FY2021, more than $33M has been awarded to the Gulf Consortium to implement projects described in the SEP, with $13.69 awarded during FY2021.

The Florida SEP and associated amendments include 72 separate activities across the 23 Gulf Coast counties, including funds for planning and administrative activities by the Gulf Consortium. Approximately 68% of the funds approved in the Florida SEP and amendments are allocated to ecosystem restoration projects, 17% to infrastructure (including flood protection), 18% to promoting Gulf tourism, and the remaining amounts to other eligible activities. The Gulf Consortium continues to amend its SEP to change funding amounts for approved projects, add new projects, and remove others.

Alabama - The Alabama SEP is administered by the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council, which is chaired by Alabama's Governor, co-chaired by the Director of the Alabama State Port Authority, and includes 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. The RESTORE Act allocates $327,043,127 in Spill Impact Component funding to Alabama. To date, the Council has approved the initial Alabama SEP and a planning SEP for a total of $132.7M in approved Spill Impact Component funding, with $30.56M awarded during FY2021.

The Alabama SEP includes 30 separate activities across the coast of Alabama, including funds for SEP planning. Approximately 65% of the funds approved in the Alabama SEP are allocated to ecosystem restoration, 8% to improving state parks, 18% to infrastructure, 6% to planning assistance, and the remaining amounts to promotion of tourism and Gulf seafood. The Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council will amend the Alabama SEP to add more projects and/or make changes to approved projects, as appropriate.

Mississippi - The Mississippi SEP is administered by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality. The RESTORE Act allocates $305,721,198 in Spill Impact Component funding to Mississippi. To date, the Council has approved the initial Mississippi SEP, three amendments, and a planning SEP, for a total of $115.4M in approved Spill Impact Component funding. As of the end of FY2021, $66M has been awarded to the state to implement projects and programs described in the SEP, with $23.97M awarded during FY2021.

The Mississippi SEP and associated amendments include 12 separate projects and programs across the coast of Mississippi. Approximately 95% of the funds approved in the Mississippi SEP and amendments are allocated to ecosystem restoration and 5% to planning assistance. Mississippi periodically amends its SEP to increase funding for existing activities and/or add new activities, as appropriate.

Louisiana - The Louisiana SEP is administered by the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. The RESTORE Act allocates $554,530,479 in Spill Impact Component funding to Louisiana. To date, the Council has approved the initial Louisiana SEP and one amendment, for a total of $448,184,842 in approved Spill Impact Component funding. As of the end of FY2021, more than $101M has been awarded to the state to implement projects and programs described in the SEP, with $26.73M awarded during FY2021.

The Louisiana SEP and the associated amendment include eight separate projects and programs across the coast of Louisiana. Approximately 86% of the funds approved in the Louisiana SEP and the amendment are allocated to ecosystem restoration, 14% to planning assistance, and 1% to flood protection infrastructure. Louisiana amends its SEP, as appropriate, to adjust funding for existing approved activities, and/or add new activities to the SEP.

Texas - The Texas SEP is administered by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). The RESTORE Act allocates $121,518,966 in Spill Impact Component funding to Texas. To date, the Council has approved the initial Texas SEP, one amendment, and a planning SEP, for a total of $31.77M in approved Spill Impact Component funding. As of the end of FY2021, almost $8M has been awarded to the state to implement the programs described in the SEP.

The Texas SEP and the associated amendment include four programs across the coast of Texas, along with planning funds for TCEQ. This SEP, which was developed to support recovery from Hurricane Harvey, currently contains funding for two of the four approved programs: $7.83M for the Nature Based Tourism program and $23.68M for the Shoreline & Beach Restoration program. Approximately 74% of the funds approved in the Texas SEP and the amendment are allocated to ecosystem restoration, 25% to promotion of tourism, and 1% to planning assistance. Texas amends its SEP, as appropriate, to adjust funding for existing approved activities, and/or add new activities to the SEP.

6. Summary of Council Performance

6.1. Assessment of the Council's Progress Toward Program Goals, Objectives and Planning Framework

Ecosystems are subjected to both natural and human alterations that act together as "stressors" and affect natural ecosystem structure and function. The more ecosystems are stressed, the less resilient they may be to even larger, global challenges. With its approval of the 2015 Initial FPL, 2020 FPL 3a and 2021 FPL 3b, the Council has approved funding for several programs that are intended to address large-scale ecosystem stressors that result in water quality impairment, coastal habitat loss and degradation, and coastal resilience challenges.

The use of a watershed/estuary-based approach for comprehensive ecological restoration was captured as a fundamental component of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update following completion of FPL 1, which included funding in 10 key watersheds. Many stakeholders cautioned the Council against distributing the available funds in a way that supports disconnected (although beneficial) restoration projects; the Council was asked not to engage in "random acts of restoration." The Council shares that perspective and believes that focusing on watersheds and other foundational activities will ensure that the funds are spent in a way that contributes to comprehensive Gulf restoration. Taking a holistic approach to restoration recognizes the interconnected nature of coastal and marine ecosystems, a fundamental organizational principle of watersheds/estuaries, and the importance of addressing system-wide stressors that reduce ecosystem integrity. Moving forward, the Council will continue to use this holistic approach in order to maximize project benefits and track outcomes.

As part of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Council recognized that a clear and concise vision statement can help direct and shape future funding decisions. The Council believes that its vision statement for the Ten-Year Funding Strategy should include reference to both the desired environmental outcome and the process used to get there. Furthermore, the Council will build upon the tremendous restoration experience, science expertise, and other capabilities of its diverse membership of state and federal agencies. The Council's collective wisdom is greater than the sum of its individual parts.

The Council sought to capture this sentiment as well as other key elements as it developed the following vision statement:

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

Over the six fiscal years of 2016 through 2021, the following awards have been made: 26 grants and 26 IAAs under FPL 1, five grants and five IAAs under FPL 2, one IAA under 2021 FPL 3b, and 68 SEP awards (Table 5). In FY 2021, the Council obligated $113.7M through grants and IAAs to carry out projects and programs under the RESTORE Act, bringing the total amount awarded to $510.7M: $203.1M from the Council-Selected Restoration Component, or "Bucket 2" and $307.6M from the Spill Impact Component, or "Bucket 3."

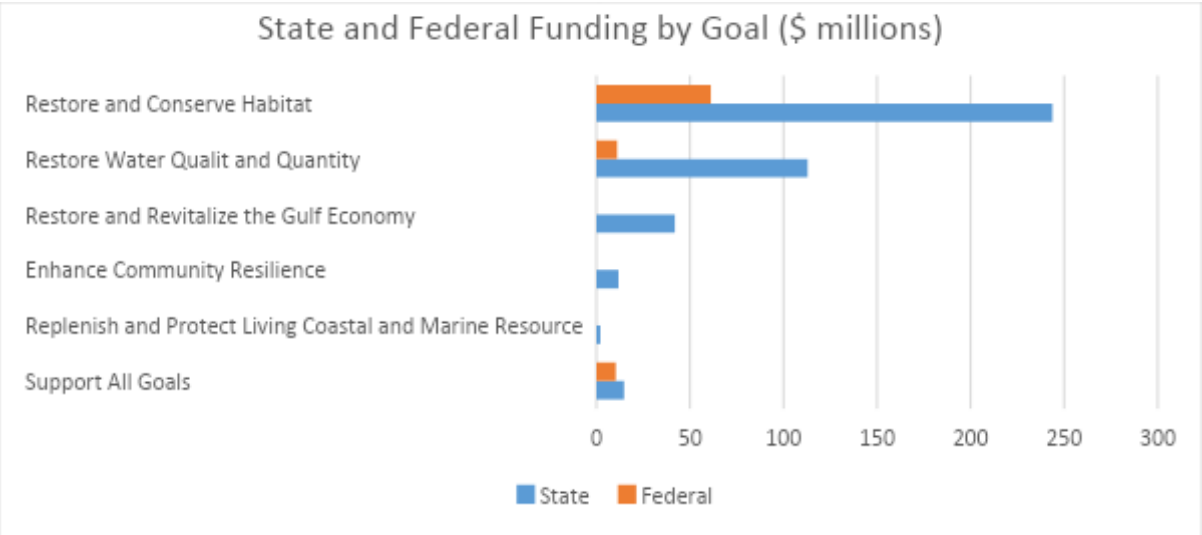
Table 5. Number of awards (grants and IAA) by program and year.

Fiscal Year	FPL 1		CPS (FPL2)		FPL 3a	FPL 3b		SEP	Total
	Grants	*IAA*	*Grants*	*IAA*		*IAA*	*Grants*		
2016	1	1						2	**4**
2017	13	8						2	**23**
2018	6	9	5	4				4	**28**
2019	4	4		1				5	**14**
2020	1	2						39	**42**
2021	1	2				1		16	**20**
Totals	**26**	**26**	**5**	**5**		**1**		**68**	**131**

Meeting Council Goals

A total of $304.8M in funding (representing 59.7% of the 510.7M for all RESTORE Council awards) has been approved in support of the Restore and Conserve Habitat goal, including $243.7M to states ($94.3M through Bucket 2 and $149.4M through Bucket 3) and $61.1M in IAAs to the federal members (Figure 3). In support of the Restore Water Quality and Quantity, total of $123.9M in funding has been received (representing 24.3%), including $112.9M through state grants ($15.77M through Bucket 2 and $97.1 in Bucket 3) and $11.06M in IAAs. The states also received Spill Impact funds to support the goals to Enhance Community Resilience ($11.8M), Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy ($41.9M) and Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources ($2.1M). To support the commitments of the Council, a total of $20.8M was funded to support all of the Council goals through the FPL2.

Figure 3. Funding trends for state and federal members (all sources) in support of Council's goals.



Over the six-year funding history (2016 through 2021), support for the Restoring and Conservation of Habitat goal by the state grants through Council-Selected and Spill Impact components (combined) has been relatively constant each year, averaging $40.6M (Figure 4) in state awards; federal IAAs have averaged $8.2M over this same time period. Support for the Restoring Water Quality and Quantity goal has averaged $18.8M in grants to state Council members (Figure 5); federal IAAs have averaged under $2M.

Figure 4. Funding trends for grants and IAAs from Council Selected and Oil Spill Components in support of the Restore and Conserve Habitat goal by fiscal year.

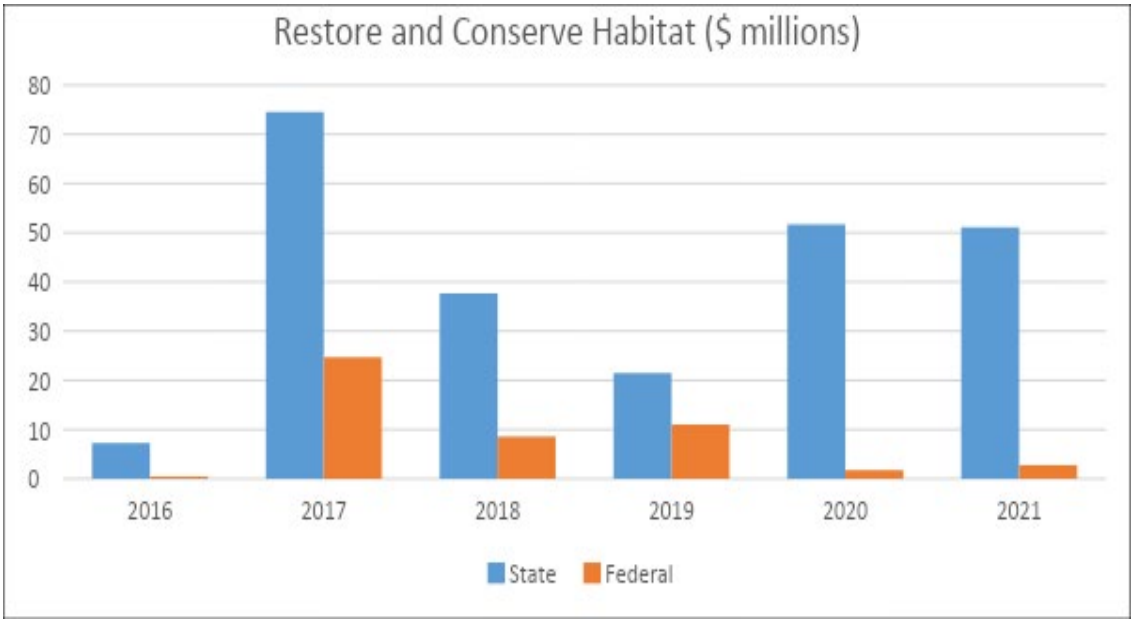
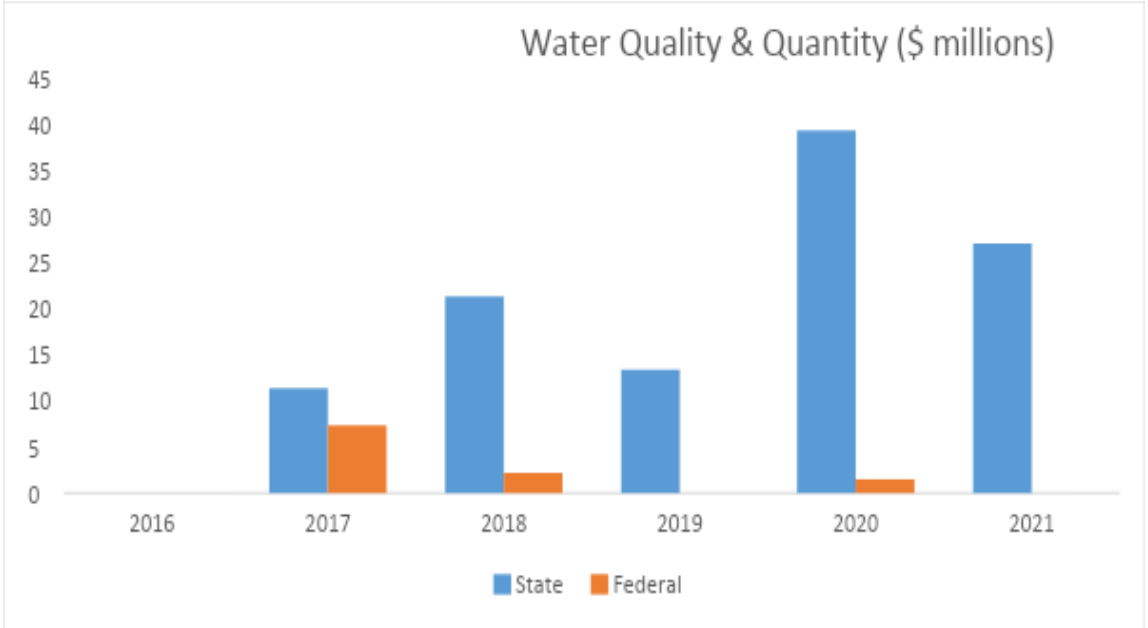


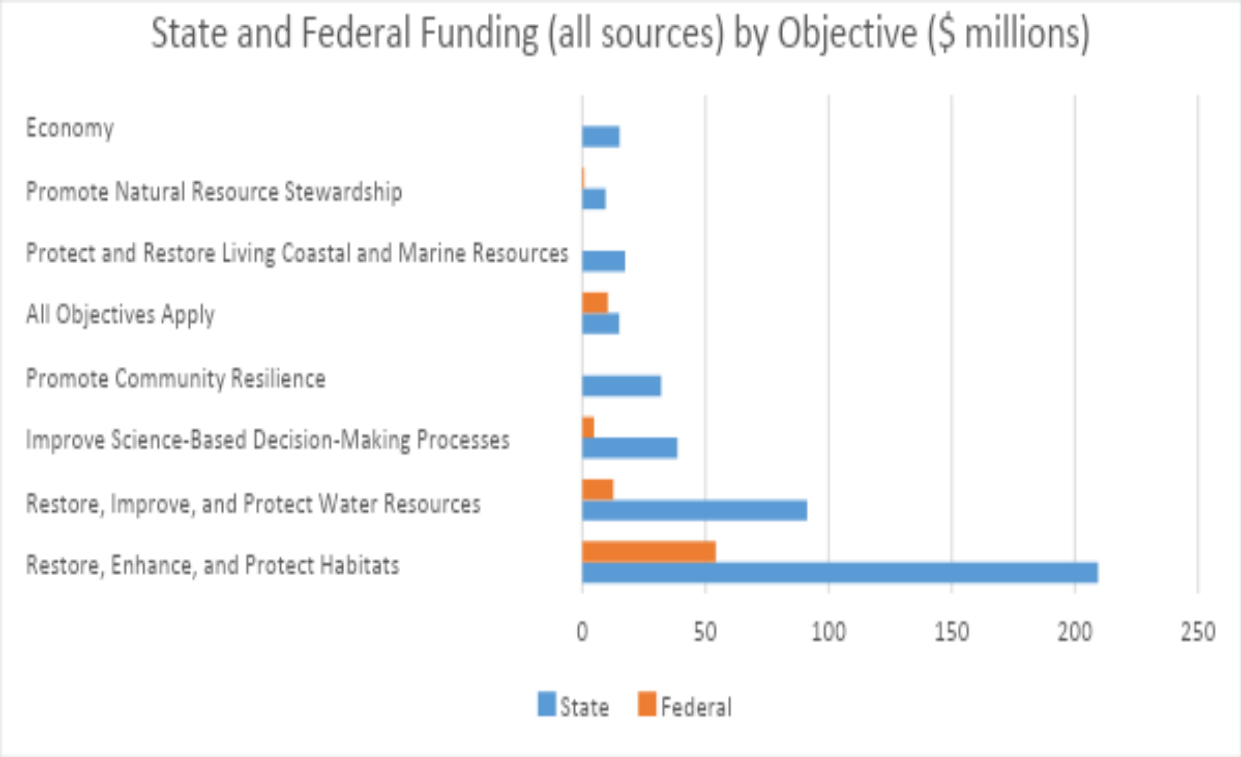
Figure 5. Funding trends for grants and IAAs from FPL 1 and SEPs in support of the Restore and Conserve Water Quality and Quantity goal by fiscal year.



Meeting Council Objectives

The Council identified seven (7) objectives in its Comprehensive Plan to support the Council's goals. The Council uses these objectives to select and fund projects and programs that restore and protect the natural resources, ecosystems, water quality, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region. The initial Council focus on restoring and conserving habitat and restoring water quality and quantity goals are reflected in the level of funding supporting the associated objectives to Restore, Enhance and Protect Habitats ($263.6M from all funding sources) and Restore, Improve and Protect Water Resources ($103.8M from all funding sources), which represents 51.6% and 20.3%, respectively, of all Bucket 2 and 3 funds (grants and IAAs) (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Distribution of funding for state and federal Council members from the Council-Selected Restoration and Spill Impact Components by objective.



Over the six-year funding history (2016 through 2021), support for the Council objective to Restore, Enhance, and Protect Habitats by the state grants through Council-Selected and Oil Spill Impact components (combined) has been relatively constant each year, averaging nearly $43.5M/year, with state investments averaging nearly $35M each year, while federal members have averaged $9.0M over this six-year period (Figure 7). Support for the Restoring, Improving, and Protecting Water Resource objective averaged $15.2M/year in grants to state Council members with an annual average of $2.96 to federal members over this same time period (Figure 8).

Figure 7. Funding trends for grants and IAAs from Council Selected and Oil Spill Components in support of the Restore, Enhance and Protect Habitat objective by fiscal year.

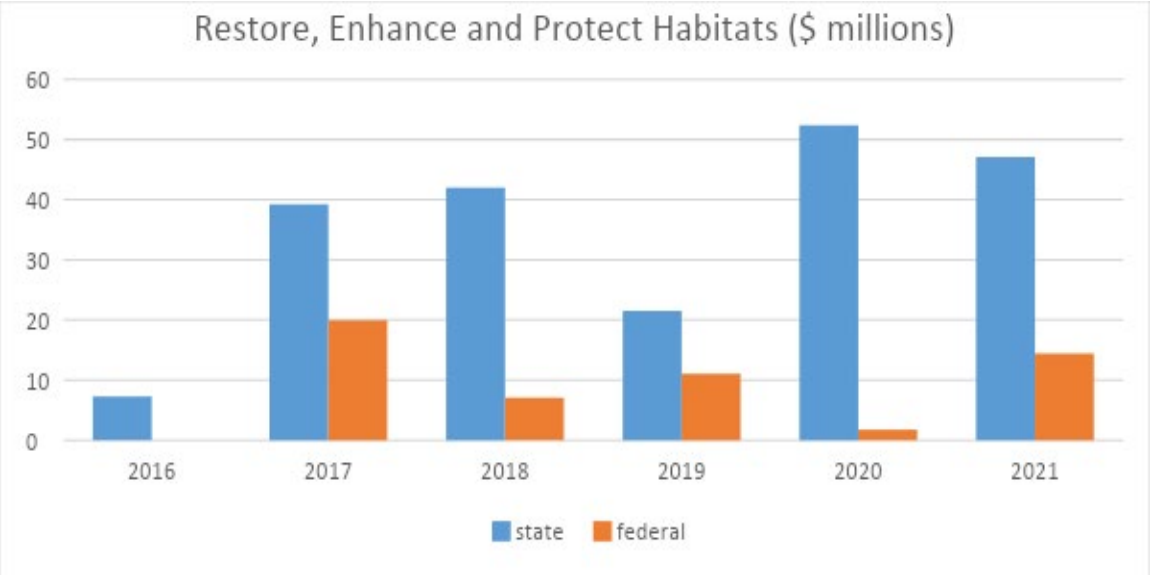
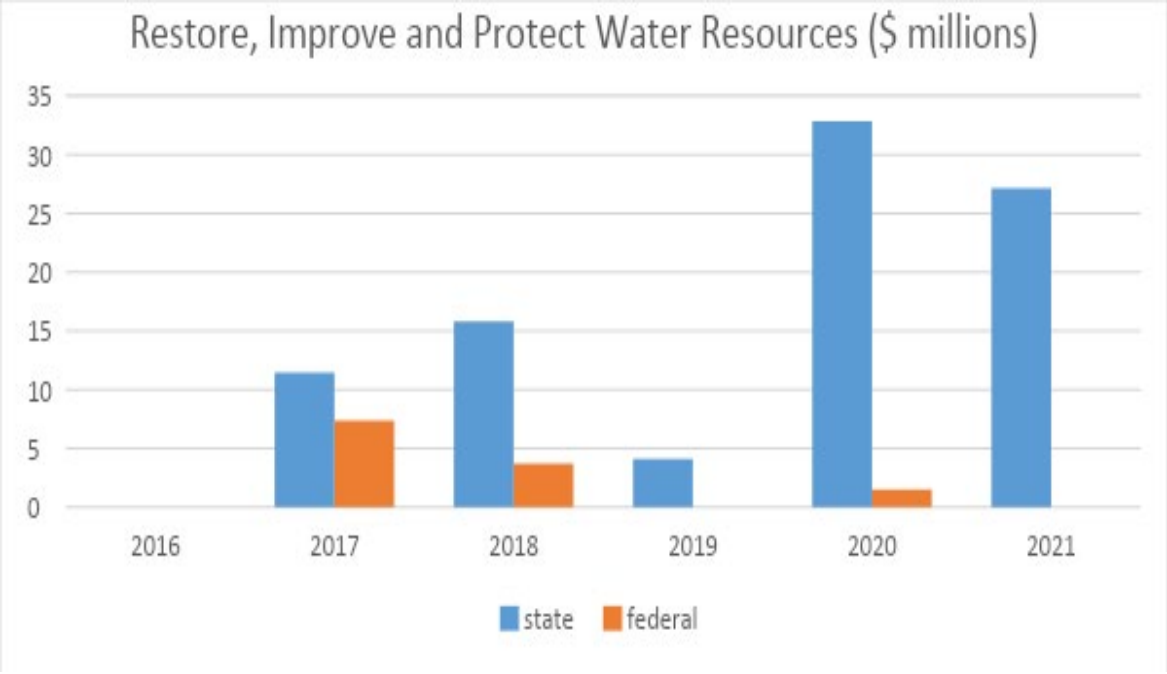


Figure 8. Funding trends for grants and IAAs from Council Selected and Oil Spill Components in support of the Restore, Improve and Protect Water Resource objective by fiscal year.



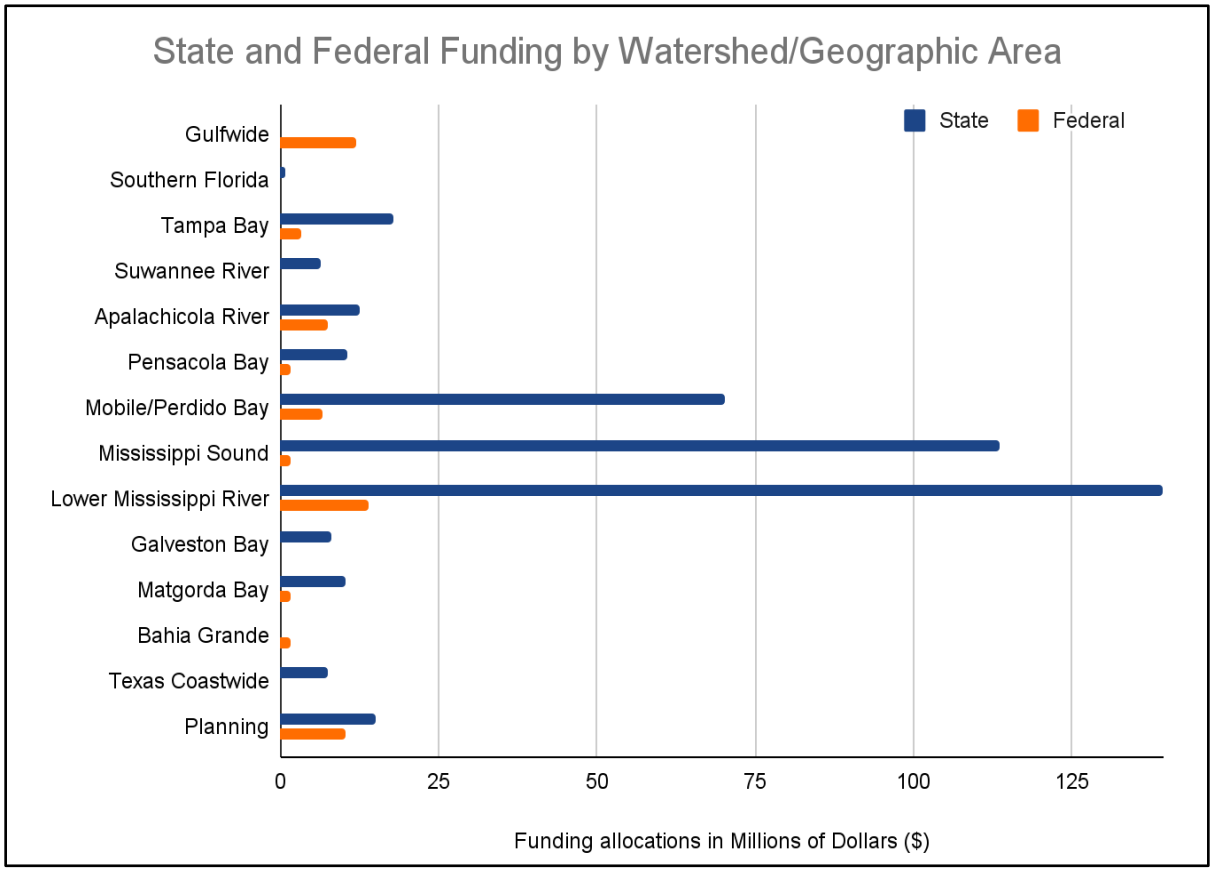
Funding by Watershed

The use of a watershed/estuary-based approach for comprehensive ecological restoration was captured as a fundamental component of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update following completion of FPL 1 which included funding in 10 key watersheds. Linking projects to environmental stressors by watershed or estuary is scientifically sound and offers operational advantages which assist in leveraging ecosystem restoration program resources. While the use of a watershed/estuary-based approach is a good

framework, it is important to note that there are features of the Gulf system that extend beyond coastal watershed boundaries, including private lands in upper watersheds, and marine and offshore habitats.

The allocation of funding by Gulf watershed/geographic area are shown in Figure 9. The watersheds/geographic areas that have received the most funding as a total of all funding sources by both state and federal members, are the Lower Mississippi River ($153.4M), Mississippi Sound ($113.3M), and Mobile Bay ($87.1M) representing 30.0%, 22.2% and 17.1% total funds, respectively.

Figure 9. Distribution of funding for state and federal Council members from the Council-Selected Restoration and Spill Impact Components by watershed or geographic area.



The five state members have also invested Council-Selected Restoration and Spill Impact Component funds in non-watershed focused efforts like the Louisiana's Adaptive Management Program ($34.6M) and in planning efforts ($15.2M).

6.2. Summary by Planning Framework Elements

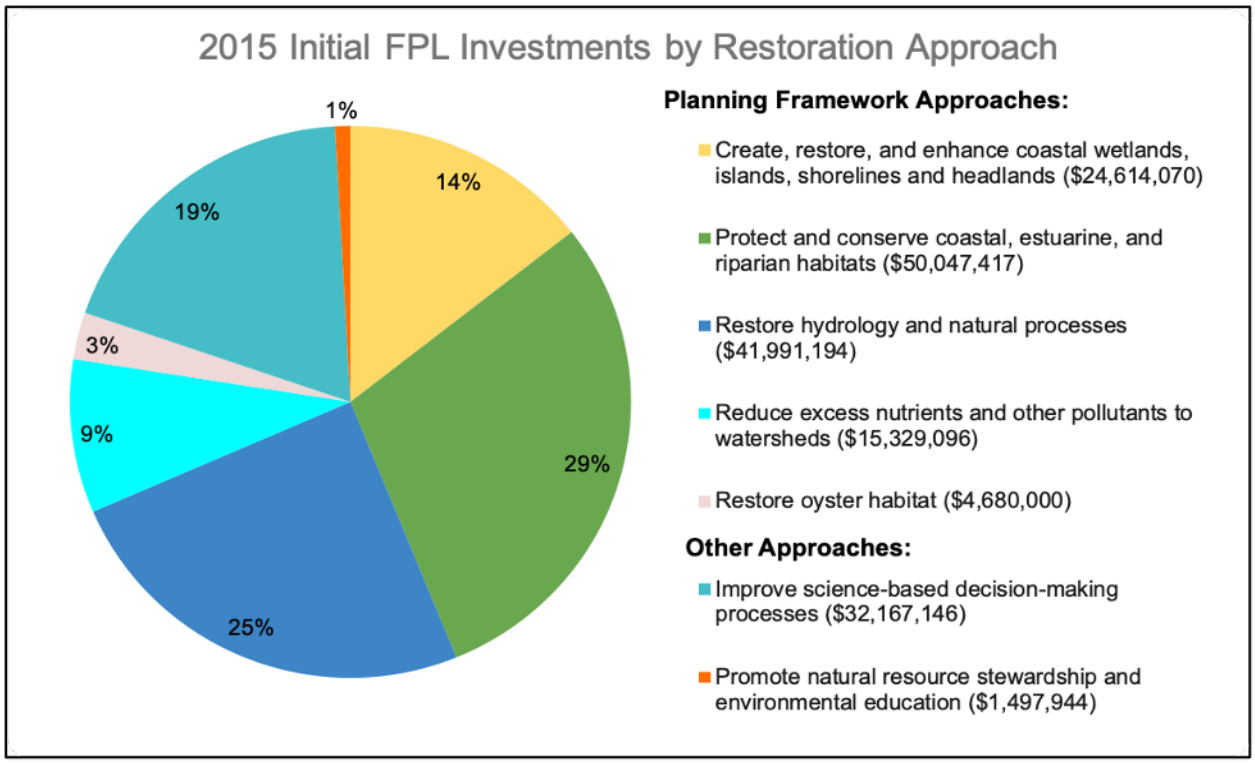
One of the most significant actions the Council has taken to improve performance was the development of the Council's 2019 Planning Framework which strategically links past and future restoration funding decisions to the overarching goals and objectives outlined in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update. The Planning Framework indicates priorities designed to continue building on previous investments, while expanding opportunities to meet all Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives in the future.

The Planning Framework provides one mechanism to view how the Council is prioritizing funding activities. As shown in Table 6, the top five approaches across all funding sources (FPL 1, FPL 2, 2021 FPL 3b and SEPs) are: Reducing Excess Nutrients and other Pollutants to Watersheds ($105.5M); Restoring Hydrology and Natural Processes ($89.6M); Improving Science-based Decision-Making ($81.5M); Increase, Restore, and Enhance Coastal Wetlands, Islands, Shorelines, and Headlands ($78.5M); and Protect and Conserve Coastal, Estuarine, and Riparian Habitats ($67M).

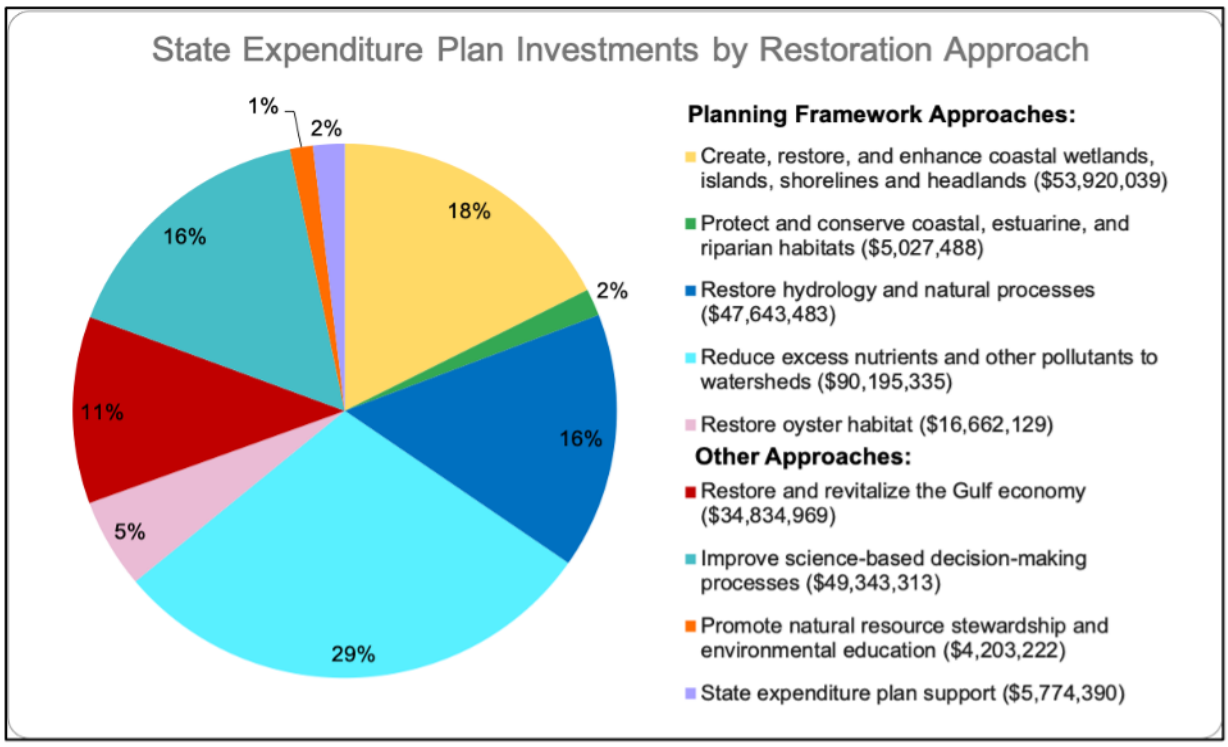
Table 6. List of Planning Framework Approaches by Council funding source and recipients.

Planning Framework Approach	Funding Source	Funding Amount	
Reduce Excess Nutrients and other Pollutants to Watersheds	FPL-1 – State		$12,284,136
	FPL-1 - Federal		$ 3,044,960
	SEP		$90,195,335
	Total	**$105,524,431**	
Restore Hydrology and Natural Processes	FPL-1 – State		$14,190,000
	FPL-1 - Federal		$27,801,194
	SEP		$47,643,483
	Total	**$89,634,677**	
Improve Science-Based Decision-Making Processes	FPL-1 – State		$19,699,763
	FPL-1 - Federal		$12,467,383
	SEP		$49,343,313
	Total	**$81,510,459**	
Create, Restore, and Enhance Coastal Wetlands, Islands, Shorelines	FPL-1 – State		$24,614,070
	SEP		$53,910,039
	Total	**$78,524,109**	
Protect and Conserve Coastal, Estuarine, and Riparian Habitats	FPL-1 – State		$33,874,500
	FPL-1 - Federal		$16,172,917
	SEP		$ 5,027,488
	FPL-3b - Federal		$11,971,250
	Total	**$67,046,155**	
Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy	SEP		$34,834,969
	Total	**$34,834,969**	
Restore Oyster Habitat	FPL-1		$ 4,680,000
	SEP		$16,662,129
	Total	**$21,342,129**	
Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education	FPL-1 – State		$750,000
	FPL-1 - Federal		$747,944
	SEP		$4,203,222
	Total	**$5,701,166**	
Commitment Planning Support	FPL-2		$10,493,880
	FPL-2 IAA		$10,333,596
	Total	**$20,827,476**	
State Expenditure Plan Support	PSEP		$4,259,172
	SEP		$1,515,218
	Total	**$5,744,390**	
	Grand Total		**$510,719,962**

Although the Planning Framework was not developed until 2019, categorization by Planning Framework Approach for the FPL 1 activities is instructive for identifying funding priorities.The 2015 Initial FPL focused efforts primarily in four Planning Framework approaches consisting of over 87% of all FPL 1 funding (Figure 10), including Protecting and Conserving Coastal, Estuarine, and Riparian Habitats (29%; $50M), Restoring Hydrology and Natural Processes (25%; $42M), Improving Science-Based Decision-Making Processes (19%; $32.2M) and Creating, Restoring and Enhancing Coastal Wetlands, Islands, Shorelines, and Headlands (14%; $24.6M).



The Spill Impact Component funding through FY 2021 can also be parsed by the Planning Framework approaches to identify primary funding priorities (Figure 11). Reduction of Excess Nutrients and Other Pollutants to Watersheds was the approach used with the highest frequency, representing 29% ($90.2M of $307.6M in approved SEP funding). The other four approaches receiving the most funding in descending order include: Create, Restore, and Enhance Coastal Wetlands, Islands, Shorelines, and Headlands (18%; $53.9M), Improve Science-Based Decision-Making Processes (16%; $49.3M), Restore Hydrology and Natural Processes (16%; $47.6M), and Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy (11%; $32M). The remaining 9% of the funding was categorized among the remaining six approaches.



6.3. Summary by Performance Metrics

Over its lifetime, the Council will invest over $3 billion in Gulf Coast ecosystem and economic restoration activities. These investments will not only advance the Council's vision of a healthy and productive Gulf ecosystem, but also result in diverse scientific and economic data observations which can be used to demonstrate the benefits of Council investments. The RESTORE Council recognizes the importance of comprehensive planning for the collection and compilation of data that can be compared across projects. Comparable data enables reporting at multiple scales, including project- and program-specific scales, as well as potential future larger-scale assessments across the Gulf. Understanding outcomes and impacts will further help to achieve tangible results and ensure that funds are invested in a meaningful way.

To help assess the success of Council-funded activities, each project or program must include an Observational Data Plan (ODP) that contains information on how monitoring data will be collected, managed, and made publicly available. In 2021, with the assistance of the CMAWG, the Council updated its Observational Data Plan (ODP) Guidelines to identify consistent metrics and parameters of success, identify appropriate monitoring protocols, and further define common standards for Council data collection and management. For each type of activity that the Council may fund, the updated ODP Guidelines provide recommendations on appropriate metrics and parameters to track success. Recommendations are broken out by each of the Council's Comprehensive Plan objectives, showing which objectives each metric and parameter may help track. Through these recommendations, selected metrics and parameters can be used to evaluate how funded activities are meeting the Council's goals and objectives and to track annual performance.

Taking advantage of opportunities to build programmatic and science efficiencies, the ODP Guidelines update was collaboratively developed to foster consistency in data collection and management within

the organization and across Gulfwide monitoring efforts. Recommendations were developed in coordination with Gulf restoration funding partners, including the Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) trustees and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), and build off of analyses from the 2015 Initial FPL funded Council Monitoring and Assessment Program. By fostering comparability and compatibility among robust datasets, this work will enable broader assessments of outcomes, support improvements to ecosystem models, and help address the uncertainties related to restoration, which in turn will inform adaptive management and Council decision-making related to investments.

The Council has currently identified a suite of performance-level metrics that are organized by the Planning Framework restoration approaches and techniques being implemented by a project or program. These metrics are used to monitor and evaluate the efficacy of projects and programs in meeting the mission goals and objectives of the Council and track annual performance. Based on the 2019 Submission Guidelines and 2021 ODP Guidelines, metrics selected should be:

- Objective;
- Quantifiable;
- Accompanied by targets (success criteria);
- Consistent across program activities (e.g., water quality benefits);
- Identified in proposals with details provided in application ODPs;
- Able to support the goals and objectives of the program or project.

The FPL and SEP projects funded during fiscal years 2016 through 2021 are already achieving results (Table 7). To date, Council funds have been used to acquire nearly 8,000 acres of land and restore 2,000 acres of wetlands and 6,410 acres of non-wetland areas, primarily in support of the Council's goal to Restore and Conserve Habitat. In addition, more than 36,000 acres have been enrolled under agricultural best management practices agreements. Land acquisition and improved management practices not only restore and conserve habitat, but can also improve water quality and quantity. Funds invested through the Council-SelectedRestoration and Spill Impact Components are also providing support for research and planning, monitoring activities, outreach and education, and providing economic benefits in support of the Council's goal to Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy.

Outreach through promoting natural resource stewardship and environmental education is an important component of the Council's efforts, as shown by almost 8,000 people being reached by outreach, training or technical assistance activities, while 1,734 users are engaged with online activities. The Council is also improving science-based decision-making processes by monitoring nearly 13,500 acres in 386 sites across the Gulf.

Table 7. Performance-level metrics results from projects and programs funded under the Comprehensive Plan Component and Spill-Impact Component Funding. The information in the table summarizes the accomplishments (for FY18 – FY 2021) reported as of September 30, 2021 by 2015 Initial FPL and SEP activities. For each metric measure, the associated primary Comprehensive Plan goal, objective, and Planning Framework Restoration Technique are provided.[1]

Goal	Objective	Technique	Metric Measure	Total
Restore and Conserve Habitat	Restore, Enhance and Protect Habitats	Land acquisition	Acres acquired in fee	7,958 acres
		Habitat Management and Stewardship	Agricultural best management practices (BMPs) - Acres under contracts/agreements	36,054 acres
			Habitat restoration – Acres with invasive species removed	1255 acres
			Habitat restoration – Acres of upland or other non-wetland habitat restored	6,410 acres
			Habitat restoration – Acres of wetland and shoreline habitat restored	2003 acres
			Habitat restoration - Acres SAV restored	607 acres
		Substrate placement	Habitat restoration - Oysters habitat	317 acres

[1] Note: These data are preliminary as most Council activities are in progress and final achievement numbers are not confirmed until award closeout. Some metric numbers may have changed from previous years after funding recipients provided updated numbers following data QA/QC.

Goal	Objective	Technique	Metric Measure	Total
Restore Water Quality and Quantity[2]	Restore, Improve and Protect Water Resources	Agriculture and forest management	Erosion Control – acres restored to reduce surface and/or stream channel erosion	40 acres
Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy	Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy	Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy	Number of temporary jobs created	317 jobs
All	Improve Science-based Decision-Making Processes	Increase monitoring capacities	Number of streams/sites being monitored	386 sites
			Acres being monitored	13,437 acres
All	Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education	Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education	Number of individuals reached by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities	~ 8 million[3] individuals
			Number of people enrolled to implement best management practices	341 individuals
			Number of users engaged online	1,734 users
			Number of participants that successfully completed training	466 participants

[2] Note: While some metrics may be organized under the "Restore and Conserve Habitat" goal, the restoration activities may also result in improved water quality (e.g. Agricultural BMP activities).

[3] A majority of the individuals reached were part of the AL SEP funded Seafood Marketing Campaign

7. Administrative Accomplishments

7.1. Financial Summary

Apportionments

The Council is funded in its entirety by the RESTORE Trust Fund and it serves as an expenditure fund to the Trust Fund. It does not receive appropriated funds, and all funding is Category B, mandatory funding. The Council's financial statements reflect the amount of the funds available to and used by the Council. Table 8 shows the Council's trust fund apportionments received in fiscal years 2013- 2021. An apportionment is an Office of Management and Budget approved plan on how to spend resources provided by a mandatory appropriation, an annual or supplemental appropriation act, or a continuing resolution as well as other sources of funding such as a Trust Fund. An apportionment contains the amounts available for obligation and expenditure. It also specifies and limits what obligations and expenditures can be made during specified timeframes. In fiscal year 2021, $222M in new apportionment funding was approved. Of this amount, $148.2M was used in support of Council Selected Administrative and Program Expenses and $73.6M was used to fund projects included in State Expenditure Plans as follows: Alabama $28M, Florida $45M, and Mississippi $600K.

Table 8. Trust Fund Apportionments Received Summary.

Trust Fund Balance (After Sequestration)	Council Selected Administrative Funds (6011)	Council Selected Projects Programs Funds (6012)	Total Comprehensive Plan	Spill Impact (6013)
TRUST FUND DEPOSITS	$21,805,783	$705,164,673	$726,970,456	$687,618,792
Apportionment FY13	360,000	-	360,000	-
Apportionment FY14	896,214	1,067,950	1,964,164	-
Apportionment FY15	1,241,229	2,307,158	3,548,387	-
Apportionment FY16	1,107,649	159,711,176	160,818,825	6,400,000
Apportionment FY17	1,375,568	4,078,906	5,454,474	70,800,000
Apportionment FY18	1,417,740	35,155,947	36,573,687	22,300,001
Apportionment FY19	1,445,181	10,034,211	11,479,392	94,310,000
Apportionment FY20	1,109,447	34,277,021	35,386,468	185,726,644
Apportionment FY21	1,734,224	146,472,386	148,206,610	73,623,810
Total Apportioned to the Council	10,687,252	393,104,755	403,792,007	453,160,455
Balance Available in Trust Fund	**$11,118,531**	**$312,059,918**	**$323,178,449**	**$234,458,337**

Five-Year Operational Costs Summary

To best serve the communities of the Gulf Coast region, the Council strives to implement the Comprehensive Plan and accomplish the requirements of the RESTORE Act in an effective and efficient manner, at the minimum cost possible in order to maximize the funds available for restoration projects and programs. The Council has managed its fiscal resources through a strategy of incremental growth corresponding to the development of the Council-Selected Restoration Component and Spill Impact Component programs.

Table 9 identifies each fiscal year's new apportionment for operations, recoveries from prior year obligations, current year and total revenue, funded obligations incurred, total cost of operations, and carry forward from prior and current year. Council approval is required for use of carryforward funds if an expense exceeds a certain threshold but has not been included in the approved annual operating budget.

Table 9. Revenue and Operational Cost History (dollars in millions)

Council Operational Cost History	Carry-forward from PY	New apportion-ment	Recoveries from PY obligations	Current year trust fund revenue	Total revenue	Funded obligations incurred	Total Cost of Operations	Carry-forward
FY16 Operational Costs	$ 922	$4.265	$ .374	$5.561	$5.738	$4.337	$4.514	$1.224
FY17 Operational Costs	$ 1.224	$ 5.454	$ .019	$ 6.697	$ 6.697	$ 4.608	$ 4.608	$ 2.089
FY18 Operational Costs	$2.089	$ 5.962	$ -	$ 8.051	$ 8.051	$ 5.447	$ 5.447	$ 2.604
FY19 Operational Costs	$ 2.604	$ 5.792	$ .007	$8.403	$ 8.430	$ 6.620	$ 6.780	$ 2.234
FY20 Operational Costs	$ 2.234	$ 6.381	$ .333	$8.948	$8.948	$ 7.945	$ 6.990	$2.229
FY21 Operational Costs	$ 2.229	7.639	$.023	$8.726	$8.726	$7.139	$7.707	$1.705

In FY 2021, $1,064,380 in carryforward funds were used to fund IAAs for the annual financial audit, procurement, accounting, budget and payroll services, translation services and GrantSolutions dashboards. In addition, carry-forward funds in the amount of $252,410 remaining from the $1.2M reserved for the Unified Solution (GrantSolutions and PIPER) to replace the Council's previous electronic grants managementsystem (the Restoration Assistance and Awards Management System or RAAMS) were carried into fiscal year 2021.

In fiscal year 2022 carryforward is planned to be used for future development of budget and reporting functionality enhancements in GrantSolutions. Excess fiscal year 2021 carry- forward funds will be applied to fiscal year 2022 operational requirements in lieu of requesting new funding from the Trust Fund.

Operations costs for the Council have consistently increased each year with three primary cost drivers, salaries and benefits costs, and contracts, and agreements for services, to include costs associated with the automated grant system. However, the Council follows an incremental approach to financial management and requests funds for only immediate operational needs.

The Council increases staff commensurate with the maturation of operations and the scope of grant and award funds administered. The number of full-time equivalents (FTE) in fiscal year 2016 was 17.7, and by the end of fiscal year 2021, Council staff positions had increased to 24 FTE.

Administrative Expenses

The RESTORE Act specifies that of the Council-Selected Restoration Component amounts received by the Council, not more than 3% of the funds may be used for administrative expenses, including staff. This is further detailed in the Treasury regulation implementing the Act at 31 CFR §34.204(b), "Limitations on administrative costs and administrative expenses" (as amended September 28, 2016), which provides that "Of the amounts received by the Council under the Comprehensive Plan [Council-Selected Restoration] Component, not more than three percent may be used for administrative expenses. The three percent limit is applied to the amounts it receives under the Comprehensive Plan [Council-Selected Restoration] Component before the termination of the Trust Fund. Amounts used for administrative expenses may not at any time exceed three percent of the total of the amounts received by the Council and the amounts in the Trust Fund that are allocated to, but not yet received by the Council under § 34.103."

The Council worked with OMB to segregate administrative expense funds through the apportionment process. The Treasury regulation implementing the Act at 34 CFR § 34.2 provides the definition of administrative expenses that guides the Council in properly classifying certain expenses as administrative and the remaining categories of expenses as programmatic.

The Council oversees projects and programs during the post-award period. Since the Council will cease operations upon the expenditure of all funds available from the Trust Fund, a long-term forecast for its administrative and operational expenses is developed based on the projected closeout date of all grants. Based on the Consent Decree payment schedule and the projected closeout timeframe for grants awarded, Council operations have been projected through 2042 to ensure that operational costs are managed in a fiscally prudent manner throughout the life of the program. This analysis projects that the cumulative administrative expense will be approximately $48.7M which is less than the $49.1M that will be available for such expenses from the aggregate current and future deposits into the Trust Fund (not including accrued interest).

Table 10 shows the funds deposited as of September 30, 2021, for the Council-Selected Restoration component, and the amount of funds available for administrative expenses. The amount apportioned for administrative expenses is well below the amount of administrative funds available in the Trust Fund and is equal to 3% of the total funds apportioned for the Council-Selected Restoration Component. Of the $737.6M, including interest, deposited into the Trust Fund for the Comprehensive Plan component, $726.9M was made available. Due to sequestration, $10.7M was withheld in fiscal year 2021 but these

funds will be returned at the start of fiscal year 2022. Of the $21.8M available for administrative expenses, $11.1M remains in the Trust Fund. Overall, 49% of the available administrative funds have been apportioned which equates to 1.5% of the total available trust funds.

Table 10: Three Percent Analysis.

STATUS OF 3% ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE FUNDS (*as of 09/30/2021)*	
Trust Funds-Comprehensive Plan	
Amount Available	$737,637,937
Sequestration for 2021	(10,778,489)
Total Amount Available	726,859,448
Administrative Expense Funds Available (Total Amount Available x 3%)	21,805,783
Total Administrative Funds Apportioned through 2021	(10,687,252)
Balance of Administrative Funds Remaining in the Trust Fund	**$11,118,531**

7.2. Grants Management

Grants and Data Systems

RESTORE Council staff follow all federal financial laws and regulations, including the adoption of standardized data structure under the Grants Reporting Efficiency and Agreement Transparency Act of 2019 (GREAT Act), which continue to be refined over time. To address these anticipated changes, the Council intentionally selected a shared federal service provider, the Health and Human Services (HHS) GrantSolutions system, to manage grant and IAA award data. In addition, the Council's Program Information Platform for Ecosystem Restoration (PIPER) system, which was developed under a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), to collect, store and manage scientific and programmatic data that GrantSolutions is not designed to handle, is customizable as needed to address standardized data structures and requirements as these are developed and refined. On March 16, 2020, the Council deployed this "unified solution" after ensuring a complete migration of key award data to each system.

Data collected for Council-funded activities can only be useful for reporting and evaluation if users are able to find the data, assess its utility, and understand how it was generated. To support this work, in FY2021, the Council continued to develop grant management solutions that were selected in fiscal year 2018 to replace the Council's previous electronic grants management system, the Restoration Assistance and Award Management System (RAAMS), which was losing vendor software support. To manage award data, the Council utilizes the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) GrantSolutions system (GrantSolutions). To address the need to house scientific programmatic data, the Council deployed the Program Information Platform for Ecosystem Restoration (PIPER) developed in FY2020 in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey. PIPER supports Council staff with the review of project/program proposals and applications, and tracks their continued progress toward meeting project/program goals and objectives through annual performance reporting. In FY2021 PIPER was expanded to also include pre and post-award milestones reporting and review. This addition to PIPER enables award recipients to easily access award

milestones information, and provide updates on project and programs milestone progress and financial information.

To enhance current and future use of data, Council staff and partners developed the Council Metadata Records Library and Information Network (MERLIN) in 2018. MERLIN is an online metadata records tool developed in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey and NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information. MERLIN houses metadata—records that describe information about data. The development of this tool supports the Council's 2018 approval of the use of the ISO 19115 metadata standard for all Council funded projects to promote consistency in the data collection for Council-funded activities. In FY2021 the Council continued its support of MERLIN, including providing training to award recipients on publishing metadata records in MERLIN as part of award closeout procedures.

To help award recipients navigate through the RESTORE Council's data and reporting systems in FY2021 the Council began developing a RESTORE Council Grants Management System Portal. The goal of the portal is to provide a "one stop shop" for award recipients to access grants management systems and user's guides and checklists. The Council plans to go-live with the Grants Portal in FY2022

Risk Mitigation, Compliance and Oversight Monitoring

All grant and IAA applications undergo a rigorous review by grant and program staff for compliance with two CFR 200, environmental laws, other statutory requirements, and best available science. All issues identified are collaborative resolved with the applicant using a team approach. A total of 29 applications were submitted and began the review process in FY2021, which resulted in a completion of 20 awards, 24 amendments were processed, and one award was closed out. The majority of awards were issued within 60 days of receiving a compliant application.

The Council compliance/oversight program is built upon understanding and assessing risk. Annual compliance/oversight plan was developed and successfully implemented in coordination with the Programs team. Almost 200 financial reports were reviewed in FY2021. A 100% review of Gulf Consortium payments was completed, comprising over 20 reviews of payment documentation with each of these completed within 30 days of submission. On-site financial compliance reviews were conducted with the Gulf Consortium and Louisiana. In addition, desk reviews of payment documentation were conducted for four grants and three IAAs.

To mitigate risk and improve the efficient application of limited monitoring resources, the Council staff developed and implemented the Grants Monitoring Risk Analysis and Screening Tool in FY2020 to evaluate the potential need for additional oversight for each Council award. This tool articulates a number of risk factors that could affect the Council's assistance awards and assigns weights to these risk factors based on likelihood and impact. The tool pulls in available data from the Council's grant system for each award and collects the assessment of Council grant specialists. The Tool provides an overall weighted risk score for each award that facilitates targeted selection of awards for advanced monitoring. In accordance with the RESTORE Council's Technical Oversight Procedures (revised April 2020) Council Grant and Program staff developed a monitoring plan and schedule for FY2021. Using the Grant Monitoring Risk Analysis and Screening Tool, a natural cluster of awards and agreements with an overall weighted risk score of 4.1 or above was identified, which were then reviewed for additional factors such as, but not limited to, whether they were at the end of the period of performance, whether they had received advanced monitoring in the previous year, any issues that had been identified for the award or the recipient, and other considerations.

Award oversight and monitoring must be responsive to evolving program needs, manageable in scope, cognizant of risk factors and strategic in order to be successful and efficient while being in sync with changing project schedules. These oversight interactions serve as collaborative opportunities for staff to provide technical assistance to Council members during implementation and for members to share challenges, lessons learned and their successes along the way as they are encountered during both restoration planning and implementation.

The COVID-19 pandemic and related impacts have been considered in the development of the FY2021 monitoring plan. The Office of Management and Budget has released guidance for federal assistance agencies to reduce the administrative burden of federal assistance where necessary. Travel was generally suspended during FY2021 which did result in cancelation of anticipated site visits (financial and field. In some cases, where applicable, technical, performance, and/or financial oversight monitoring was accomplished through alternative methods including desk reviews, virtual site visits using photos, reviewing reports and/or construction survey results, conference call check-ins, and/or virtual meetings with award recipients.

In addition to performing advanced oversight and monitoring, Council staff also periodically checks in on project/program status and provides additional technical assistance as needed to enhance program coordination and efficient award management. Grants staff reviews supporting documentation for 100% of funds drawn by the Gulf Consortium. Gulf Consortium awards subject to this requirement are listed in Table 15, along with information about reviews requested for draws in FY21. In addition, grants staff also reviews documentation of costs prior to releasing funds for acquisition of individual land parcels. Active awards under which lands may be acquired in FY21. are also listed in Table 15.

7.3. Enterprise Risk Management

Audits of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council
Three TOIG audits were completed during FY2021 with no findings related to financial management in accordance with accounting principles; no deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting considered material weaknesses; and no instances of reportable noncompliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements tested. Similarly, the Council's information security program and practices were found to be effective, and there were no findings under the Payment Integrity Information Act audit. The IPERA Review found that the Council was compliant with all of the applicable requirements set forth in PART IV-A.3 of Appendix C to OMB Circular No. A-123, Requirements for Payment Integrity Improvement (OMB M-18-20) and the Charge Card Assessment found that the overall risk of illegal, improper, or erroneous purchases and payments in Council's charge card program was low and the convenience check program as very low.

Also completed in FY2021 was a successful audit of the Data Quality Reporting Under the DATA Act including the completeness, accuracy, timeliness, and quality of the financial and award data submitted for publication on USASpending.gov and the Council's implementation and use of the Government-wide financial data standards established by OMB and Treasury. The FY2021 DATA Act reporting, including twice-monthly reporting of grants data by the Grants team, was found by the OIG auditors to meet standards for completeness, accuracy, timeliness and to be of excellent quality.

The following is a summary of audits by Treasury Office of Inspector General (TOIG) closed during FY2021 along with a brief summary of findings:

Closed TOIG Audits during FY2021:

- Financial Management: Audit of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council's Financial Statements for Fiscal Years 2020 and 2019 (OIG-21-008). Completed on November 16, 2020, noting the financial statements were fairly presented, in all material respects, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; no deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting that are considered material weaknesses; and no instances of reportable noncompliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements tested.
- Information Technology: The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 Evaluation Report for Fiscal Year 2020. Completed on October 26, noting the 2020 (OIG-CA-21-003) found the Council's information security program and practices were effective.
- Payment Integrity Information Act (PIIA) Audit –(OIG-21-027), was completed on May 11, 2021, with no findings.

TOIG Audits Ongoing as of **September 30, 2021**:

- Data Quality Reporting Under the DATA Act (Job Code A-GC-21-002), initiated on November 9, 2020. The objectives of this audit are to assess (1) the completeness, accuracy, timeliness, and quality of the financial and award data submitted for publication on USASpending.gov and (2) the Council's implementation and use of the Government-wide financial data standards established by OMB and Treasury. (FY2022 Exit Conference 10/25/2021)
- Information Technology: The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 Evaluation Report for Fiscal Year 2021 (OIG-CA-22-003). Entrance Conference 4/28/2021 (FY2022 Exit Conference 12/6/2021 – No Findings)
- Financial Statement Audit, A-FS-21-028 (job code) Entrance Conference April 28, 2021 (FY2022 Final Audit Report 11/15/2021; Exit Conference 12/6/2021 – No Findings)

In addition to the TOIG audits, the Council is also subject to audit and/or testing reviews from other agencies which include the following:

Other Completed Audits:

- Management and Performance Challenges (OIG-CA-21-002), completed October 7, 2020. The audit found that circumstances have significantly changed in how organizations accomplish their missions as they navigate through the Coronavirus 2019 Disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Public health measures to combat COVID-19 such as working remotely have been in practice by Council staff for some time. While the Council's operating environment may not have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as of this writing, we acknowledge that COVID-19 has impacted the numerous organizations that the Council interacts with to accomplish its work. In addition, the report included three repeat challenges from the prior year: Loss of Key Leadership Over Administration of Gulf Coast Restoration Activities; Federal Statutory and Regulatory Compliance; and Grant and Interagency Agreement Compliance Monitoring.
- Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services Fiscal Service *Purchase Card Audit*, February 19, 2021. OIG Recommendations were to document that mandatory sources aren't available through a memo, print screen, or notation on transaction. Updating current policy can address 508 compliance and tax exemption. Policies were updated to address recommendations. GCERC

Policies were accordingly.

*Other Ongoing Audits as of **September 30, 2021**:*

- Management and Performance Challenges for FY2022 (OIG-CA-22-001). Initiated on April 7, 2021. (FY2022 GCERC Response Letter to OIG 10/26/2021)

Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)
The Council complies with the requirements of OMB Circular A-123 Management's Responsibility for Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) and Internal Controls, as well as Improper Payments and Elimination and Recovery Act (IPERA), the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards), the President's Management Agenda, etc., as well as internally generated ERM requirements. The Council has established an ERM governance structure that begins with the Council with specific oversight responsibility assigned to the Audit Committee. The Executive Director is delegated responsibility for implementation and oversight of the ERM program and in turn, has assigned program development and execution responsibilities to the CFO/Director of Administration. The Executive Director has designated the Director of Administration as the agency Chief Risk Officer who is supported directly by a risk management specialist. Risk management and internal controls are managed by staff within finance, budget, IT and the grants and compliance, and internal controls are integrated into all elements of the organization.

The Council has implemented an integrated internal control framework to govern its operations, reporting and compliance and is currently developing its risk mitigation strategies, metrics, performance indicators, monitoring, analytics, communication, and remediation.

In the FY2021 Risk Profile update, the main focus for Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) was the top seven critical risks. Each risk was reviewed and it was determined that effective controls were in place. The Council continues to closely monitor the top seven risks and implement mitigation activities with the continued refinement and development of the Council Post-Award Grant/IAA Monitoring process and continued internal controls testing. The Council's "17 Principles of Internal Control Checklist" was updated in FY21. This annual checklist update is critical to demonstrate how the Council meets the requirements outlined in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) Green Book and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A123.

7.4. Other Administrative Updates

Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA)
The *Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014* (FISMA) requires federal agencies to have an annual independent evaluation performed of their information security program and practices to determine the effectiveness of such program and practices, and to report the results of the evaluations to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OMB delegated its responsibility to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for the collection of annual FISMA responses. DHS prepared the FISMA questionnaire to collect these responses (FISMA Reporting Metrics). Applicable OMB policy and guidelines, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) standards and guidelines were also considered.

A successful audit was achieved for the FY 2021 OIG Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) which requires each Federal agency to develop, document, and implement an agency-wide

program to provide information security for the information and systems that support the operations and assets of the agency, including those provided or managed by another agency, contractor, or other sources.

Freedom of Information Act Requests (FOIA)

During FY 2021, Council staff received four Freedom of Information Requests (FOIA). The average number of days needed to respond to these requests was 2.5 days. No funds were collected from the requesters.

8. Centers of Excellence Accomplishments

8.1. Background

The RESTORE Act dedicates 2.5 percent of the Trust Fund to the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program, administered by the Department of Treasury. These funds may be used to establish Centers of Excellence and by those Centers of Excellence for science, technology, and monitoring in one or more of the following disciplines:

- Coastal and deltaic sustainability, restoration, and protection, including solutions and technology that allow citizens to live in a safe and sustainable manner in a coastal delta in the Gulf Coast Region;
- Coastal fisheries and wildlife ecosystem research and monitoring in the Gulf Coast Region;
- Offshore energy development, including research and technology to improve the sustainable and safe development of energy resources in the Gulf of Mexico;
- Sustainable and resilient growth, economic and commercial development in the Gulf Coast Region; and
- Comprehensive observation, monitoring, and mapping of the Gulf of Mexico.

The RESTORE Act specifies who may apply to receive funds under the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program. The following are the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program eligible applicants for each state:

- In Alabama, the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council or such administrative agent as it may designate;
- In Florida, the Florida Institute of Oceanography;
- In Louisiana, the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board of Louisiana through the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana;
- In Mississippi, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality; and
- In Texas, the Office of the Governor or an appointee of the Office of the Governor.

Pursuant to the RESTORE Act, each Center of Excellence provides an annual report to the RESTORE Council with information regarding all grants, including the amount, discipline or disciplines, and recipients of the grants, and in the case of any grant awarded to a consortium, the membership of the consortium. This information is to be included in the Council's Annual Report to Congress. As of the date of this report, five Centers of Excellence have been established. Following are summaries of the activities from each program; Full annual reports for 2021 from each Center of Excellence are provided on the Council's website.

8.2. Alabama's RESTORE Act Center of Excellence

In December 2014, the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council (AGCRC) made available for public comment for 45 days draft Competitive Process documents. After consideration of meaningful input from the public, a final RFP was published in May 2015. As a result of the Final RFP, AGCRC received one proposal. After reviewing the proposal according to the qualifications and criteria described in the Final RFP, the AGCRC made a motion to accept the proposal submitted by the Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (MESC). MESC was founded to reduce redundancy in Marine Sciences in higher education

while serving as a vehicle for collaborative coastal studies. Member institutions include the following 23 public and private colleges and universities: Alabama A&M, Alabama State, Athens State, Auburn, Auburn University at Montgomery, Birmingham Southern, Huntingdon, Jacksonville State, Judson, Samford, Spring Hill, Stillman, Talladega, Troy, Tuskegee, Alabama, Alabama at Birmingham, Alabama in Huntsville, University of Mobile, Montevallo, North Alabama, South Alabama, and West Alabama.

Overview of focus of the COE

The focus of MESC, a consortium of Alabama universities, is to provide local, state, and federal officials, and interested citizens access to the findings of innovative research performed on the following priority areas: (1) Coastal and deltaic sustainability, restoration and protection, including solutions and technology that allow citizens to live in a safe and sustainable manner in a coastal delta in the Gulf Coast Region; (2) Coastal fisheries and wildlife ecosystem research and monitoring in the Gulf Coast Region; Sustainable and resilient growth, economic and commercial development in the Gulf of Mexico; and Comprehensive observation, monitoring, and mapping of the Gulf of Mexico. MESC will capitalize onthe diverse expertise of the scientists employed by the 23-member MESC colleges and universities, and bringing the state's best science talent to bear on these four focal areas.

Summary of the annual performance of the COE

MESC released RFP #1 on January 6th, 2021. In response to RFP #1, 40 full proposals were received in March 2021. The release of the RFP in January was accompanied by the launch of the ALCoE website. In September 2021, 10 projects were selected for funding totaling $4.3M. Brief descriptions of these 10 projects are included in the attachment at the end of this document.

Renovations to wet lab facilities at Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL), administrative home of the MESC began in 2021 and after delays due to hurricanes and COVID, are expected to be completed in 2022. Similarly, repairs to Alabama's Real-Time Coastal Observing System (ARCOS) were begun in 2021 and continue. Both the wet lab and ARCOS upgrades will enable and support the research funded through Alabama's Center of Excellence.

8.3. Florida's RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence

In 2021, the Florida RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Program (FLRACEP) was challenge with COVID-19 pandemic and personnel changes. Dr. William (Monty) Graham joined January 4, 2021, as the Director of the Florida Institute of Oceanography and the Principal Investigator for the FLRACEP program.

Dr. Graham spent the year learning and examining the FIO and reviewing the FLRACEP while staff was busy working with Treasury to ensure administrative tasks met their needs. The FLRACEP staff continues to monitor first year award of RFPIII- and RFIII.5, we have successfully gained approval and closed out FIO's initial award RCEGR0020002A. This award, previously funded ten (10) research projects from eight (8) Florida Centers of Excellence to address the Coastal Fish and Wildlife Research and Monitoring eligible activity under RFP-I. In addition, we continue to work with the RFP II Center of Excellence recipient on a long-term fisheries monitoring and technology development project.

During this year, the Program Management Team (PMT) determined that no additional Requests for Proposals (RFPs) would be issued until a permanent position to support the FLRACEP was in place and asked the current FIO personnel remain in place to monitor the Program and current CEs progress. The PMT was diligent in reviewing the personnel needed to facilitate, bridge and coordinate the scientific

aspects of the program. After much review, the PMT announced on October 1, 2021 the new Chief Scientist, Dr. Nicole Raineault who was recruited from Ocean Exploration Trust (OET), where she previously served as Chief Scientist and Vice President of Exploration and Science Operations to lead the FLRACEP program.

To-date, the Office of Gulf Coast Restoration has obligated over $8.8M to the FLRACEP program funding four RFPs since the inception of the program. With a fully staffed program, the PMT will be working hard to allocate and establish new Centers of Excellence in the coming years.

8.4. Louisiana's RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence

A Technical Memorandum (Tech Memo) for tracking the success metrics and federal reporting requirements, including reports to the U.S. Department of the Treasury from the first request for proposals (RFP1) was developed. LA-COE developed the Tech Memo for tracking the success metrics defined in Standard Operation Procedure Version 1 (SOP V1) to assess RFP1 project progress and performance based on information collected from proposals, final reports, and other deliverables. Success metrics were categorized into the following: (1) Competitive Grants Process, (2) Research Progress, (3) Research Accomplishments, and (4) Outcomes, and have been comprehensively evaluated using the methodology developed at the start of RFP1 grant. Further, key accomplishments and milestones (publications, presentations, and data published) from RFP1 projects are also summarized in this Tech Memo and have been posted on LA-COE website. A table of accomplishments and outcomes from RFP1 projects during this reporting period is included in the next section. RFP1 survey questions were designed and sent to principal investigators (PIs), TPOCs, and CPRA liaisons on September 18, 2020 to evaluate the performance of LA-COE operation during CEA1/RFP1, and their responses are also included in the Tech Memo.

The grant award for Phase 2 of the LA-COE was received from the U.S. Department of Treasury in June 2020. A Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) and The Water Institute of the Gulf was completed and approved by the Office of State Procurement in October 2020. Thus, activities related to this award did not occur before November 1st, 2021 due to delays in the approval and execution of a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement for Phase II (CEA2) of the RESTORE Act Center of Excellence for Louisiana (LA-COE). The planning for Request for Proposals (RFP2) started after November 1st, 2021.

The Request for Proposals for cycle two (RFP2) was released on February 15, 2021. CPRA and LA-COE developed more specific research activities under each of the five general and broad topical areas of the Research Needs document that also align with the RESTORE Act disciplines to obtain more targeted proposals. A total of 17 research activities were developed and included in section 3.0 of RFP2 document. In addition, the Collaborative Awards category was removed and only two categories were included RFP2, which are Graduate Student Awards and Research Awards. Letters of Intent (LOIs) were required for both award categories in RFP2. A live and recorded RFP2 question and answer webinar was held on February 26, 2021, which was posted to the LA-COE website after the webinar. LOIs were due on March 12, 2021 and a total of 36 LOIs were submitted, with eight in the Graduate Student Awards category and 28 in the Research Awards category. The LOI review comments were sent to PIs on April 5, 2021, with a total of 20 LOIs invited for full proposals. Full proposals were due on April 30, 2021.

To prepare for the full proposal review for RFP2, members of the Executive Committee (EC) for RFP2 were finalized in March including members from Louisiana State University, Tulane University, Nicholls State

University, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, University of New Orleans, Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium, Southeastern Louisiana, and Southern University. CPRA and LA-COE compiled a list of potential External Review Board (ERB) members based on the expertise that would support the 17 research activities for full proposal review. Based on recommendation from EC members, the LA-COE invited and contracted seven ERB members and hosted an ERB webinar on April 27, 2021. Meanwhile, four main subject matter experts were also invited and contracted for full proposal review.

The submitted 20 full proposals were assigned to independent reviewers in the LA-COE electronic review portal system including ERB members, SMEs, and SMEs from CPRA. Each proposal had four independent evaluations, which were submitted by reviewers on May 19, 2021. The LA-COE then coordinated with CPRA and ERB chair, conducting a two-day full proposal Review Panel Meeting (in virtual) to discuss the proposal review comments for each proposal with ERB members on June 9-10th, 2021. Finally, the ERB made final funding recommendations (based on a scale of 1-3) for each proposal at the end panel meeting based on review and discussion of the proposals, the SME reviews, and the CPRA reviews. A Recommendation Meeting was subsequently held on June 14th, 2021 with CPRA and LA-COE staff to discuss the ERB's recommendations and to develop a potential list of projects to fund, subject to concurrence by CPRA and LA-COE leadership. A Concurrence document was developed by the LA-COE and approved by CPRA to finalize which Graduate Student Awards and Research Awards would be granted. Lastly, principal investigators (PIs) were notified of the awards on July 15th, 2021 and then a public announcement was made via a joint LA-COE and CPRA press release on July 22nd, 2021. A total of eight awards were announced including four Graduate Student Awards, and four Research Awards. Contracting and research grants management procedures are being developed to help manage the funding process and subrecipients; with the funded projects expected to be executed in October 2021. The technical point of contact and CPRA Liaison were assigned to each project and approved by CPRA. The LA-COE RFP2 kickoff webinar is scheduled to be held virtually October 21st, 2021. All PIs are required to attend this kickoff meeting and co-PIs, TPOCs, and CPRA liaisons were also invited.

LA-COE has had regular meetings with CPRA (monthly and/or bi-monthly depending on schedules and quarantine), and phone calls as needed, and continues to be operated according to the Standard Operating Procedures Version 3 (SOP V3) including website maintenance, data management, coordination with other Centers of Excellence, and federal reporting requirements, including reports to the U.S. Department of the Treasury and other dissemination of information.

LA-COE moderated a State of Coast session titled "RESTORE Act Center of Excellence for Louisiana: Research to support Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan" with four presentations from RFP1 funded projects to highlight the LA-COE research findings on June 3, 2021. The LA-COE also collaborated with other Centers of Excellence on an article "Prospects for Gulf of Mexico Environmental Recovery and Restoration" released in June 2021 in the Oceanography magazine.

The LA-COE has also revamped its website by designing new pages for the dissemination of RFP1 results (e.g., final reports, publications, success metrics Tech Memo, and links for datasets) and for RFP2). Since 2016, LA-COE has released $5.3M in research funding, supported 36 students, generated seven theses and dissertations, 18 journal publications, and eight publicly available datasets. LA-COE has created a google scholar account to track all publications and citations from projects funded through the LA-COE. As publications, data collected and other deliverables continue to emerge from the funded research, these will be posted on the LA-COE website as well as on newsletter/social media. The final reports for each of the completed studies includes lists of all publications and datasets completed to date or expected in the

future, as well as presentations given at conferences and workshops to disseminate the results of the research.

8.5. Mississippi's RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence

Brief Description of the selected COE

In February 2015, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) made available for public comment for 45 days a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) describing the competitive selection process, rules, and policies. MDEQ prepared the draft RFP in accordance with state law and in compliance with 31 C.F.R. §34.700-708. Notice of the public comment and review period for the draft RFP was published in the Sun Herald and Clarion Ledger newspapers as well as online at www.restore.ms. After consideration of meaningful input from the public, a final RFP was published in April 2015. Notice of availability of the final RFP was published in the Sun Herald and Clarion Ledger newspapers on April 6, 2015, and April 13, 2015, as well as online at www.restore.ms. The deadline to submit proposals was May 7, 2015. As a result of the Final RFP, MDEQ received two proposals. After reviewing the proposals according to the qualifications and criteria described above, the Mississippi Based Restore Act Center of Excellence (MBRACE) was selected. MBRACE is a consortium of four Mississippi universities - Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, University of Mississippi and University of Southern Mississippi. The University of Southern Mississippi serves as the lead university for the consortium.

Overview of focus of the COE

The focus of MBRACE, a consortium of Mississippi's research universities, is a sound, comprehensive science- and technology-based understanding of the chronic and acute stressors, both anthropogenic and natural, on the dynamic and productive waters and ecosystems of the northern Gulf. The goals of MBRACE are: (1) serve as a focal point for new, long-term research and socioeconomic initiatives along the northern Gulf with relevance to Mississippi's resources; (2) serve the people of Mississippi and the northern Gulf Coast region with a scientifically based understanding of ecosystem status and trends (past to present, predictive) with special emphasis on improved forecasting abilities to ensure sustainable coastal and ocean ecosystems of the Gulf; and (3) work within a consortium of stakeholders including Mississippi's research universities under the Mississippi Research Consortium, state and federal agencies, local communities, private industry, and non-governmental organizations.

Summary of the annual performance of the COE

MBRACE continues to move the Center of Excellence program forward. The five-person Executive Steering Committee (ESC) comprised of leadership from the four MBRACE universities continues to work with the administrative team to execute the program. A Call for Proposals to fund research under the next Core Research Program (Core-2) as well as the first round of Competitive Research Proposals was developed. The Core-2 proposal, a proposal submitted by the University of Southern Mississippi, the University of Mississippi, Mississippi State University, and Jackson State University jointly was approved, and three competitive research projects were awarded. Sub-awards were executed; however, research activities were impacted by statewide university COVID restrictions. In October 2020, the U.S. Department of the Treasury issued an extension to the federal award to address COVID-related delays; the extended period of performance will expire in April 2023.

8.6. Texas' RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence

As the Texas Governor's appointee to the RESTORE Council, Toby Baker, Executive Director of the TCEQ, has established two Centers of Excellence in Texas in accordance with the requirements set forth in the RESTORE Act and U.S. Treasury regulations. On behalf of Baker and the Governor, TCEQ has received two awards from Treasury. In August 2020, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) continued to fund the previously competitively selected two consortia, the Texas A&M University Corpus Christi - Texas OneGulf Consortium and University of Houston (UofH) - Subsea Systems Institute. This report focuses on Grant II activities.

OneGulf

The mission of the Texas OneGulf (OG) Center of Excellence is to gather and improve knowledge about the Gulf of Mexico to inform decision-making around the challenges to environmental and economic sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico and its impact on the health and well-being of Texans and the nation. Texas OneGulf is designed with the capacity and flexibility to address all five disciplines denoted in Section 1605 of RESTORE. This Center has been awarded funding for operational purposes, has begun activities on one project, and is receiving project applications for a second project. Highlights for this reporting period include: Geospatial Framework and Analysis for Coastal Resilience, South Texas Coastal Bend project has commenced and have posted a Notice of Funding Available for a second project.

Subsea Systems Institute

The Subsea Systems Institute (SSI) represents a collaboration between the University of Houston, Rice University and NASA/Johnson Space Center. The mission of SSI is to improve the safety and efficiency of offshore energy development by conducting translational engineering and technology development for offshore energy production. The key outcomes from the work of the SSI are:

- Unbiased third-party validation to build public trust in the safety and operation of offshore energy production;
- Deployment of advantaged safest technologies for offshore energy development to ensure safety and operational excellence in offshore applications; and
- Attraction of talent for jobs and investment in the local, state and national economy and reinforce Houston and the state of Texas's reputation as the Energy Capital of the World.

An Advisory Board has been established to guide and support the strategic planning and technical direction of SSI. Membership is on a volunteer basis drawn primarily from industry entities related to their mission.

Table 16. The scope of SSI research activities includes the offshore technologies shown below:

Hardware	**Systems**
• Drilling ○ Risers ○ BOPs ○ Well Control • Wellbore ○ Integrity ○ Monitoring • AUVs	• Integrated Systems ○ Subsea Power ○ Automation ▪ Digitalization ▪ Sensors ▪ Robotics ○ Human Factors • Flow Assurance

	• Renewable Energy • Emissions Reduction • Materials • Decommissioning

All work of SSI focuses on discipline (3) of Section 1605 of the RESTORE Act "Offshore energy development, including research and technology to improve the sustainable and safe development of energy resources in the Gulf of Mexico."

Appendices

Appendix A – Council-Selected Restoration Component Activities Funded During FY21

Project Title: Comprehensive Living ShorelineMonitoring (Planning and Implementation)

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: $4,000,000 – Initial 2015 FPL | Federal Award ID Number: GT1CP21AL0001

Award Date: 1/22/2021 | End Date: 8/30/2026

Project Description: The State of Alabama's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) will execute a subrecipient agreement with the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) to develop a plan for monitoring and assessing the performance and efficacy of proposed and existing living shoreline projects in coastal Alabama. This comprehensive monitoring effort will develop a standard set of monitoring parameters and protocols to implement a five-year living shoreline monitoring program. Once implemented, the monitoring program will allow for robust comparisons across all monitored projects, as well as an accurate evaluation of their success relative to specific site conditions, providing valuable information to resource managers, project proponents, homeowners, and others interested in utilizing and promoting living shorelines techniques.

Project Title: Gulf of Mexico Habitat Restoration via Conservation Corps Partnerships/Youth Conservation Corps (BIA)

Council Member: Department of Interior

Award Amount: $300,000 – Initial 2015 FPL | Federal Award ID Number: IA1CP21CM0001

Award Date: 4/1/2021 | End Date: 09/01/2022

Project Description: Working closely with Tribes, the Bureau of Indian Affairs will support the creation of Tribal Youth Conservation Corps in the Gulf Coast region. Participants will benefit from employment opportunities working on conservation and restoration projects that also incorporate lessons in environmental education, history and culture. The program will not only help restore the Gulf but also provide meaningful job opportunities for youth, create powerful connections to nature and help prepare the next generation of environmental stewards. The original FPL 1 approved award for this project was amended by a Council vote in February 2020 to add an additional $300,000.00 to this project.

Project Title: Gulf of Mexico Conservation Enhancement Grant Program

Council Member: Environmental Protection Agency

Award Amount: $2,472,917 – Initial 2015 FPL | Federal Award ID Number: IA1CP21CM0002

Award Date: 8/25/2021 | End Date: 7/31/2026

Project Description: The Gulf of Mexico Conservation Enhancement Grant Program (GMCEGP) will provide funding assistance to land conservation organizations to enhance private/public partnerships that support land protection and conservation across the Gulf Coast region. Utilizing $2,472,917 in Council-Selected Restoration Component funding, the EPA will develop and administer the GMCEGP and will subaward funding to: (1) enhance land protection and conservation in priority landscapes, (2) improve habitats and water quality; and (3) enhance the understandings of the benefit of land protection to communities through focused outreach and education supporting conservation and stewardship. Eight conservation and restoration projects will be funded for implementation which include: Planting of Tenet Pond for Habitat Enhancement; Enhancing Conservation though Woody Vegetation Removal and Evaluation of the Impact of Novel Management Methods in Florida's Rare Coastal Wetland Ecosystem; Gulf Coast Land Conservation Assistance; Restoration and Rehabilitating the Ecological Functions in a Major Watershed and Sub-watershed in the Mississippi Gulf Coast Region; Restoration and enhancement of habitat for resident and migratory birds in the Barataria Basin, Louisiana; Calcasieu Lake and Sabine National Wildlife Refuge Oyster Reef Restoration Project; Galveston Bay Conservation Program; and the Texas Coastal Prairies Program. The expected program duration is five years.

Project Title: Gulf of Mexico Coast Conservation Corps (GulfCorps) Program

Council Member: Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Award Amount: $11,971,250 – FPL 3b

Federal Award ID Number: IA3CP21CM0001

Award Date: 7/26/2021

End Date: 12/31/2025

Project Description: This program will implement four additional years of the GulfCorps program. The GulfCorps is a collaboration among uniquely qualified conservation organizations that can provide the training, guidance, and networking opportunities for local young adults to gain employment in the restoration and conservation of lands and waters in Gulf of Mexico communities of all five Gulf states. The award will work with state and federal partners, and RESTORE Council members to achieve the primary goal of restoring and conserving habitat through a diversity of activities in the field and a secondary goal of enhancing community resilience through promotion of natural resource stewardship and environmental education. The award will continue to refine the infrastructure and experience and believe this will contribute to the creation of self-sustaining conservation corps beyond the award term. The GulfCorps program will accomplish tangible and meaningful conservation and restoration goals, and to develop a skilled, motivated, and environmentally aware workforce in the Gulf Coast region.

Appendix B - SEP Activities Funded During FY2021

Project Title: SEP #8: Aloe Bay/Mississippi Sound Water Quality EnhancementProject

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: $$11,845,000 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21AL0014

Award Date: 12/17/2020 End Date: 12/17/2025

Project Description: The Dauphin Island Water & Sewer Authority owns and operates a 0.98 MGD wastewater treatment facility. With funding of $11,845,000, a new Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) water reclamation facility will be designed and constructed, replacing the aging facility. Incorporating the latest technologies, the facility will improve water quality, conserving the health, diversity and resilience of coastal, estuarine and marine habitats. Focusing on long term sustainability, enhanced BNR & solids removal, improved disinfection techniques, removing suspended particulate through filtration and innovation in capacity improvements, this facility will serve the island's needs for wastewater treatment. The facility will reduce existing pollutant loads and prevent an increase in future pollutant loads to Aloe Bay and Mississippi Sound. A strong project management and oversight plan will mitigate construction risks associated with construction in a coastal environment and transitioning treatment services over to the new facility.

Project Title: SEP #19: Meaher Park Improvements

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: $3,553,500 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21AL0019

Award Date: 3/5/2021 End Date: 1/31/2023

Project Description: This two-year project will support the planning, design and implementation of 60 full-service campsites, including parking, bath house and utility infrastructure to Meaher State Park. In addition, six Recreational Vehicle (RV) park model cabins will be installed along with appropriate skirting, decking, steps, and/or ramps. Meaher State Park is very popular, and its campground frequently fills to capacity. From October 2007 through September 2017, Meaher State Park's campground occupancy rate averaged 78%, which includes weeks-long closures due to severe weather. Not only is the park situated on a major east-west highway corridor, it is also close to several large population centers. These new amenities will provide the opportunity for Alabama's citizens and guests to enjoy the abundant flora and fauna of the area, in addition to offering access to high-demand public outdoor recreation resources. All portions of the new amenities will be handicapped accessible and inclusive.

Project Title: SEP #21: Alabama Point Seawall Repair

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: $2,562,640 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21AL0021

Award Date: 4/6/2021 End Date:1/31/2024

Project Description: The purpose of the proposed project is to rebuild the existing Alabama Point seawall using a more resilient method of construction for the tidally influenced marine environment and protect the recent improvements on the upland portion of the "seawall park." The seawall and upland park areas have been damaged by storm surge and wave action. In 2016, the City of Orange Beach repaired the damaged parking areas, installed boardwalks, lighting and landscaping and re-opened the park to the public for recreation. Rebuilding the seawall will protect this public investment. The steel sheet pile seawall suffers corrosion due to repeated exposure to air as a result of tidal fluctuations, which has led to the development of holes in the sheets, permitting loss of backfill behind the wall. It has also created voids causing the surface improvements to collapse, creating both hazardous conditions and loss of access.

Project Title: SEP #6: City of Chickasaw Sewer Rehabilitation Project

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: $1.339,000 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21AL0024

Award Date: 4/26/2021 End Date: 3/30/2023

Project Description: The City of Chickasaw has identified several areas where the sewer collection lines are failing or have deteriorated due to age, shifting soils, and root intrusion, which results in excessive inflow and infiltration during wet weather events; the work will be performed by the City of Chickasaw. The project will include the engineering and design, installation of Cured-In-Place-Pipe (CIPP), and the replacement of infrastructure to reduce the wet weather flow volume requiring treatment at the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) located on Chickasaw Creek adjacent to the Mobile River. This project will support the restoration and protection of water quality of the Gulf Coast Region's fresh, estuarine, and marine water resources by reducing or treating nutrient and pollutant loading and improving the management of discharges to Chickasaw Creek, and ultimately, Mobile Bay.

Project Title: SEP #1-Environmental Restoration of Cotton Bayou & Terry Cove (Phase 1-Planning)

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: $515,000 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21AL0026

Award Date: 5/12/2021 End Date: 5/31/2024

Project Description: The Cotton Bayou/Terry Cove system is located in the heart of Orange Beach, AL and is a component of the larger Perdido Bay watershed which is connected to the Gulf of Mexico by Perdido Pass. The canals and other shallow waters of the Cotton Bayou/Terry Cove system have historically served as nursery habitat for aquatic and avian wildlife. Over time, the development and re-development has replaced much of the natural shoreline with seawalls and other structures, and sediment has accumulated in ways that disrupt natural hydrodynamic mixing. These and other unknown factors are contributing to water and sediment quality degradation; fluctuating temperature, salinity and dissolved oxygen concentrations; driving algal blooms, fish kills and other indicators of poor ecological health.

Project Title: SEP #13: Longevity, Stability & Water Quality Improvements, Bon Secour DMDA

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: $350,966 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21AL0016

Award Date: 12/17/2020 End Date: 7/15/2022

Project Description: This project will construct a structurally sound weir at the Bon Secour Dredge Material Disposal Area (DMDA) and is aligned with the Initial Comprehensive Plan goal to protect water quality of the Gulf Coast region's fresh, estuarine, and marine waters. The purpose of a DMDA is to ensure there are no downstream effects on wetlands or water quality. As dredge material is placed into the DMDA, the sediment settles to the bottom and an outlet structure releases clean water back into the watershed. The Bon Secour DMDA has been in use since the late 1980s, and the outlet structure at the site is significantly eroded. If the existing weir structure fails, the uncontrolled release of water would include massive amounts of sediments and thereby significantly impact water quality in the watershed and downstream wetlands. Currently, the site is releasing approximately 143 cubic yards (418,918 lbs) of sediment annually; however, should there be a catastrophic event, the site could release up to 740,473 cubic yards (2,169,215,653 lbs). Visual examination by engineers observed significant corrosion of the existing weir, and that inflow to the weir does not match outflow, indicating possible internal leakage, potentially creating conditions towards future catastrophic failure which will endanger downstream wetlands and water quality, as well as nearby properties.

Project Title: SEP #20 Mobile County Dirt Road Paving (Sediment Reduction)Program

Council Member: State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Award Amount: $10,395,914 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21AL0027

Award Date: 9/7/2021 End Date: 9/11/2026

Project Description: The purpose of this 5-year project is to protect water quality and the beneficial functions of the floodplain by developing and implementing a dirt road paving program to reduce the number of miles of unpaved roads in environmentally sensitive areas of south Mobile County. In addition, this project also includes stabilization of grass shoulders and ditches that erode and carry sediment into sensitive areas. The Mobile County Commission will manage all design, permit compliance and construction elements of this project.

Project Title: 24-1: Adaptive Planning and Compliance Project

Council Member: Gulf Consortium

Award Amount: $191,860 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21FL0020

Award Date: 3/5/2021 End Date: 2/29/2024

Project Description: This project will support an Adaptive Planning and Compliance Project in the State Expenditure Plan (SEP). This involves planning and financial accountability for the Gulf Consortium as it amends and implements Florida's SEP. Core activities of this project include developing SEP amendments as needed, conducting annual risk assessments, completing annual audits, and reviewing/improving policies and procedures. The project aligns with all Gulfwide Council goals, supports all Council objectives, and will impact the success of all projects in the Florida State Expenditure Plan, which are located among the 23 Gulf Coast counties of the State.

Project Title: 18-2: Portosueno Park Living Shoreline

Council Member: Gulf Consortium

Award Amount: $689,687 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21FL0022

Award Date:4/26/2021 End Date: 12/31/2024

Project Description: Manatee County, through the Florida Gulf Consortium, is requesting $689,687in Oil Spill Impact Component funding for the Portosueno Park Living Shoreline project. The Portosueno Park Living Shoreline Project will involve design, permitting, and construction of a living shoreline along an existing vertical seawall at Portosueno Park, on the east side of Palma Sola Bay; located on the west side of Manatee County, Florida. This project involves modifications to, or replacement of, the existing seawall; backfilling with clean sand and natural lime rock rip-rap; and planting with native species, including both mangroves and salt marsh species. The objectives of the project are to: (1) restore fish and wildlife habitat functions; (2) reduce pollutant loadings to Palma Sola Bay by treating stormwater runoff from adjacent residential areas; and (3) improve fishing and aesthetics for park users. This project will address Goal 1 and 2 of the RESTORE Comprehensive Plan Goals (Goal 1: Restore and Conserve Habitat, Goal 2: Restore Water Quality and Quantity). Additionally, this project addresses RESTORE Act Eligible Activity 1: Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region. Project duration is expected to be approximately four years with the preliminary design, final design, and construction effort lasting two years and two years of post-construction monitoring activities.

Project Title: 16-2: Wastewater Collection System Improvements – E&D

Council Member: Gulf Consortium

Award Amount: $2,085,262 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21FL0023

Award Date: 4/26/2021 End Date: 12/31/2022

Project Description: Pinellas County will use this funding for Wastewater Collection System Improvements – E&D phase of the project. The grant funding request is only for the final engineering and design stages for new wastewater collection systems in 15 mobile home parks (MHPs) in the unincorporated Lake Seminole and Lealman areas of the Pinellas County. From the Inflow & Infiltration (I&I) evaluation study performed using Pinellas County Utilities internal resources, design and construction solutions will be determined to cost-effectively reduce the rain-derived I&I and sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs), and thus lessen impacts to local waterbodies. The purpose of this project is to identify the sources of, and reduce, domestic wastewater I&I in the unincorporated Lake Seminole and Lealman areas of the Pinellas County. This project addresses the following RESTORE Council Comprehensive Goals; Goal 1: Restore and Conserve Habitat, Goal 2: Restore Water Quality and Quantity, and Goal 3: Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources. The primary goal of this project is to restore water quality and quantity; with the secondary goals of restoring and conserving habitat, and replenishing and protecting living coastal and marine resources. Additionally, this project addresses RESTORE Act Eligible Activity 1: Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf
Coast region.

Project Title: 1-1: Bayou Chico Contaminated Sediment Remediation Project

Council Member: Gulf Consortium

Award Amount: $1,121,773 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21FL0025

Award Date: 5/12/2021 End Date: 3/31/2024

Project Description: The Gulf Consortium, in collaboration with its subrecipient, Escambia County, will complete planning, design, engineering, and permitting for a contaminated sediment remediation project located in Bayou Chico in Escambia County, FL. Sediments in the bayou have been degraded by legacy contaminates, including PCBs, PAHs, Dioxins, and heavy metals. Escambia County has received partial funding through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection from the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council for planning, design, and permitting costs associated with the Bayou Chico Contaminated Sediment Remediation Project. This funding will supplement existing funds to support a fully permitted project ready for implementation. The project is anticipated to meet the following objectives: (1) improve sediment and water quality; (2) restore benthic invertebrate habitat and conditions for the recovery of submerged aquatic vegetation; and (3) enhance the economic and recreational opportunities along the working waterfront.

Project Title: 7-3: Apalachicola Bay Cooperative Dredging

Council Member: Gulf Consortium

Award Amount: $5,047,064 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21FL0029

Award Date: 8/5/2021 End Date: 12/31/2022

Project Description: The Gulf Consortium, in cooperation with its subrecipient, Franklin County, will partner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to provide maintenance dredging of two local channels, Eastpoint and Two Mile under USACE direction. Funding is requested for project management and construction (dredging) and surveying (only for Two-Mile Channel). While the primary focus of the project is maintenance dredging to restore navigation depths, RESTORE funds will also pay for costs associated with beneficial use placement of the dredged material to create marsh and provide shoreline protection. Franklin County is the direct subrecipient, and the USACE is a collaborating federal agency with Franklin County. The USACE will conduct and hold the permits for the dredging and placement activities. Both channels are federally authorized navigation channels, but the USACE did not receive enough congressionally allocated funds to complete the project. The two local channels, Eastpoint and Two Mile, have been dredged by the USACE before the project. Total RESTORE funding requested is for the amount of $5,047,064. The benefits of this project will be increased economic opportunities to the county, as well as navigation access and safe passage for boaters.

Project Title: 18-10: Kingfish Boat Ramp Renovation and Expansion –Construction

Council Member: Gulf Consortium

Award Amount: $4,538,586 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21FL0030

Award Date: 9/7/2021 End Date: 3/31/2023

Project Description: The Gulf Consortium is requesting $4,538,586 for Project 18-10 Kingfish Boat Ramp Renovation and Expansion, in collaboration with subrecipient, Manatee County. The project includes the renovation and expansion of the existing Kingfish Boat Ramp facility located on the north side of Manatee Avenue on the western landing of the Anna Maria Bridge in Manatee County. The main construction scope includes increasing the number of ramps, replacing the seawall, increasing the dock area, paving parking areas, and other associated property improvements detailed in the narrative. Kingfish Boat Ramp is the most heavily utilized boat ramp in Manatee County and has served the steadily increasing number of boaters in Manatee County since the 1960s. Major structural components of the facility include over 600-feet of concrete seawall, 350-feet of wooden docks and a 55-foot wide concrete launch ramp comprised of three launch lanes and a floating finger dock; all of which are nearing the end of their serviceable lifespan.

The construction phase for this project builds on the planning phase, which is currently being funded by Manatee County. The project is currently in the design phase (60%), and final plans are expected in fall 2021. This project is consistent with RESTORE Eligible Activity 10, Comprehensive Plan Goal 5, and Objective 8 (Florida-specific objective). This construction project is expected to take place from August, 2021 until March, 2023. Program duration is approximately 1.5 years.

Project Title: Houma Navigation Canal Lock Complex Project - Phase IConstruction

Council Member: State of Louisiana, Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority

Award Amount: $26,727,004 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21LA0018

Award Date: 2/5/2021 End Date: 3/1/2031

Project Description:
The Houma Navigation Canal ("HNC") Lock Complex ("Project"), is contained in the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan and 2021 Annual Plan (Project TE-113) as a hydrologic restoration project and is needed to reduce saltwater intrusion and distribute freshwater within the Terrebonne Basin, an area which is experiencing one of the highest rates of land loss in coastal Louisiana. Accordingly, this project will help limit the intrusion of salt water into freshwater marsh systems allowing for the maintenance of thousands of acres of wetlands which serve as critical wildlife habitat and nurseries for fisheries. The Project will also provide crucial flood protection by blocking storm surge as a key component of the Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Protection Project.

Implementation of the Project consists of three construction phases. This grant is requesting funding in the amount of $26,727,004 for Phase 1 which consists of Civil site work. During this phase, approximately 95% of the dredging for the Project will be completed. This amounts to approximately 1.2M CY of earthen materials that will be hydraulically excavated in order to construct the project which will be used to re-establish approximately 178 acres of brackish marsh habitat. Work will include placement of fill for the East Levee Tie-in (270 linear feet) and the West Levee Tie-in (345 linear feet) as well as placement of fill and wick drains for the Operations Area. The Shoreline Protection and Access Roads will also be completed during this phase. This Phase 1 work is projected to last approximately 300 days.

Project Title: Activity #9: Beneficial Use of Dredge Material for Marsh Creation andRestoration in Mississippi

Council Member: State of Mississippi, Department of Environmental Quality

Award Amount: $18,970,873 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21MS0015

Award Date: 12/17/2020 End Date: 11/30/2025

Project Description: The purpose of the Beneficial Use of Dredge Material for Marsh Creation and Restoration in Mississippi (Program) is to support the restoration and protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region by creating new marsh and restoring and enhancing existing marsh through the beneficial use (BU) of dredge materials. This Program will support coastal marsh creation and restoration and dredging needs in the three coastal counties and may utilize accumulated spoil materials and potential borrow areas to facilitate the material necessary for marsh creation and restoration. Activities will include the identification of marsh restoration sites and materials; engineering, design and permitting; and marsh construction. The Program will be administered by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Components of the Program may be implemented by MDEQ and/or eligible sub-recipients.

Project Title: Mississippi Beachfront Resilience

Council Member: State of Mississippi, Department of Environmental Quality

Award Amount: $4,998,347 Federal Award ID Number: GNSSP21MS0017

Award Date: 2/5/2021 End Date: 10/31/2024

Project Description: The purpose of the Mississippi Beachfront Resilience Program (Program) is to support the restoration and protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region through the restoration and development of sand dunes and protection of beaches with additional concrete boardwalk on Mississippi Gulf Coast beaches. The Mississippi Gulf Coast beaches are a unique coastal environment providing critical environmental and economic resiliency functions. This Program will mitigate beach erosion and promote the health and integrity of the beach ecosystem by utilizing methods which accelerate and maximize dune formation, such as planting native plants and installing sand fencing, and providing additional boardwalk to the existing concrete beach boardwalk/seawall system to provide resilience and mitigate sand migration. Activities will include the identification of sites and scopes of work; engineering, design and permitting; and implementation. The Program will be administered by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Components of the Program may be implemented by MDEQ and/or eligible sub-recipients.