

**Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council
Summary of Council Funding Approval
Carpenter Creek Bayou Texar Watershed Outfalls Project**

January 17, 2024

On January 17, 2024, the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council) voted to approve \$6,400,000 in implementation funding for the Carpenter Creek Bayou Texar Watershed Outfalls project, a component of the FPL 3b [Florida Water Quality Improvement Program](#). Background on this funding approval is provided below. Before voting on whether to approve funding, the Council requested stakeholder input during a 30-day public comment period which began on November 13, 2023 and concluded on December 13, 2023. The Council received no public comments on this proposed funding approval.

Background:

Pursuant to the *Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012* (33 U.S.C. § 1321(t) and *note*) (RESTORE Act), the Council is responsible for administering portions of *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill settlement funds for the purpose of restoring the environment and economy of the Gulf coast. The Council administers two funding programs, one of which is the Council-Selected Restoration Component, or “Bucket 2.” Under Bucket 2, the Council votes to approve Gulf ecosystem restoration projects and programs proposed by the Council members. Bucket 2 projects and programs approved for funding by the Council are included in what is referred to as a Funded Priorities List.

FPLs include activities in two categories. Category 1 activities are approved for Bucket 2 funding. Such approval requires a Council vote as set forth in the RESTORE Act. To be approved in Category 1, a project or program must have documentation demonstrating that all applicable environmental laws have been addressed. For example, a construction project would need documentation demonstrating compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other applicable laws.

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

Carpenter Creek Bayou Texar Watershed Outfalls Project

The Council voted to approve \$6,400,000 for implementation of the Carpenter Creek Bayou Texar Watershed Outfalls project (Bayou Texar project), located in Escambia County, FL, and

sponsored by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). This project will be implemented as a component of the FPL 3b Florida Water Quality Improvement Program.

To implement this project, FDEP will work with the City of Pensacola to improve existing infrastructure by seamlessly retrofitting five stormwater outfalls currently discharging untreated stormwater from 40 acres within the Carpenter Creek watershed into Bayou Texar. The project will install five treatment units consisting of either concrete or high-density polyethylene box or cylinder-like structures with a series of settling chambers whose primary function is to remove sediment, debris, trash, and their associated pollutants from stormwater. The box is then vacuum cleaned, and the material is properly disposed of, preventing the sediment, debris, and trash from entering Bayou Texar. The treatment units will be installed at the exit of existing drainage pipes underneath the roadway and discharged from the units through existing ditches or swales leading into the Bayou. Environmental benefits include improved water quality by capturing and treating stormwater runoff. Water quality analysis and pollutant load models reveal elevated nutrient concentrations at monitoring stations downstream of the outfalls. Existing infrastructure at the sites includes paved flumes leading from curb inlets directly into the Bayou. This project will improve existing infrastructure to provide new stormwater treatment, improve water quality, and protect water resources, with expected reductions in nutrient and sediment loadings to the Bayou.

To comply with the NEPA, the Council is adopting a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Categorical Exclusion which covers activities such as this project. FDEP has also completed additional environmental compliance coordination for the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida Division of Historical Resources. The Council has reviewed the above described [environmental compliance documentation](#) and finds that it addresses the environmental laws applicable to this action.

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