



Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

Funded Priorities List 3 - A Look Ahead

September 26, 2018

2:00 - 3:30 Central Time

Questions and Answers

1) Question (Victoria Sagrera, victoria.sagrera@nicholls.edu): Will participants receive this powerpoint after the webinar presentation?

RESTORE Council staff answer: This presentation was recorded and will be posted on the RESTORE Council website within 3 business days. If you registered for this webinar, you will receive an email with a link to the recorded presentation once it is posted.

2) Question (Sebastian O'Kelly, tarpon@hsgblaw-dc.com): How are you coordinating your efforts on project development with NFWF and the NRDA State TIGs?

RESTORE Council staff answer: The RESTORE Council is committed to collaborating with our National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Gulf Benefit Fund (NFWF GEBF) and Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) partners on shared restoration priorities. Such collaboration can help identify and address critical coastal needs and identify leveraging opportunities for specific projects and programs. Our collaboration with these partners includes regularly scheduled meetings that focus on issues of mutual interest (such as monitoring and adaptive management). Many RESTORE Council members are directly involved in NRDA and NFWF GEBF. The RESTORE Council anticipates that Funded Priority List (FPL) Planning Frameworks will facilitate further collaboration with potential funding partners by identifying areas of shared interest for future funding. The expectation is that this will lead to coordination on development and implementation of specific restoration projects and programs.

3) Question (Alina Shively, ashively@jenachoctaw.org): When in this schedule does Section 106 consultation with Tribes occur?

RESTORE Council staff answer: The timing for Section 106 consultation depends on the type of project being proposed for inclusion in the Funded Priorities List (FPL). For example, the RESTORE Council might approve a planning project in the FPL, including funds for environmental compliance and

consultation. In such cases, the consultation would occur *after* the planning funds have been approved. If the RESTORE Council seeks to approve implementation funding in the next FPL, any required Section 106 consultation must first be addressed by the member seeking the FPL funding.

4) Question (Chris Head, thead@pci-nsn.gov): Will you share this information/presentation at a later date?

RESTORE Council staff answer: This presentation was recorded and will be posted on the RESTORE Council website within 3 business days. If you registered for this webinar, you will receive an email with a link to the recorded presentation once it is posted.

5) Question (Steve Underwood, steve.underwood@neel-schaffer.com): Can you clarify what constitutes a Council member? Is that the State programs only or local governments as well? Maybe it would be easier to say who is not eligible to submit?

Council staff answer: The RESTORE Council membership is prescribed specifically by the RESTORE Act. It is represented by the Governors of the 5 Gulf States--Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, as well as the Secretaries of the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of the Army, and the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Only RESTORE Council members of these agencies are eligible to submit proposals for funding.

6) Question (Casi Callaway, callaway@mobilebaykeeper.org): Will the notes and the presentation be made available on the website and if yes, when?

Council staff answer: The slide presentation and the questions and answers will be posted on the website in video format in about 3 days. Additionally, we won't have a transcript of the presentation itself, but we will post a document that contains the questions that were asked today and the answers that were provided.

7) Question (Alisha Renfro, RenfroA@nwf.org): Looking at the timeline, where would any tweaks to the review process be? Will there be opportunity to comment on the review process?

Council staff answer: In terms of ability to comment, we will post our review process for public availability and viewing on the website. Evaluation of potential updates, such as best available science review, are being initiated now for evaluation by the RESTORE Council and will be ready by Summer 2019 when any changes to the process are implemented.

8) Question (Aida Bone, aidabone@stepscoalition.org): When will be the other opportunities to comment? Will this be the only opportunity to comment or will there be other opportunities?

Council staff answer: Throughout the Funded Priorities List (FPL) 3 process there will be formal opportunities for public engagement and comments, but additionally, if you have questions along the way, you are welcome to reach out to Keala Hughes, the Director of External Affairs and Tribal Relations, at keala.hughes@restorethegulf.gov.

9) Question (Christine Smith, chris@abnc.org): How do NGOs apply for project funding? We are in Texas. Are the funds distributed through TCEQ?

Council staff answer: Per the RESTORE Act and Treasury regulations, only RESTORE Council members can apply for FPL funding. However, RESTORE Council members can sub-award funds to third parties, including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), to meet the needs of the project. TCEQ is the Governor's designee to administer RESTORE in Texas.

10) Question (Andrew Whitehurst, andrew@healthygulf.org): Compared to the way public engagement has been done, what should we expect in new steps 1 and 2 with the member-led public meetings? Work tables? Facilitated? Weekdays or weekends?

Council staff answer: For Step 1, the member meetings will generally be tailored to the needs of each member and their stakeholders and will range from public meetings to technical, expert workshops. Several states are either introducing or continuing state-led summits, to discuss all of their restoration opportunities, including Bucket 2 (Council-Selected Restoration Component). For Step 2, which is the Planning Framework for Funded Priorities List (FPL) 3, we will be engaging in Council-led public meetings across all 5 Gulf states, and we anticipate that occurring sometime in Spring 2019.

11) Question (Sharon Niemczyk, sharon.niemczyk@cardno.com): Can you explain the process or comment about project submission? Did you mention that a project or program can only be submitted by a Council Member?

Council staff answer: Please see our answers above regarding Council member eligibility for funding application.

12) Question (MS Commercial Fisheries United, Inc., mcsfuwebs@gmail.com): What is the timeline for the selection, announcement, funding and implementation of the next round of projects under bucket 2?

Council staff answer: Project proposals will be submitted by RESTORE Council members in the Summer of 2019. Proposals will be reviewed, and reviews will be made available on the website by December 2019. The determination of which proposals get carried forward for inclusion in the draft Funded Priorities List (FPL) 3 will be made in Spring 2020.

13) Question (Ryan Fikes, fikesr@nwf.org): Can you please explain for people where external science review will come into play?

Council staff answer: This is an important aspect of meeting the RESTORE Council's requirements for application of best available science and something the RESTORE Council committed to in the Comprehensive Plan Update 2016 for revising and refining the external science review process that we will apply to Funded Priorities List (FPL) 3. The RESTORE Council is evaluating its best available science review process and remains committed to three external best available science reviews for each proposal received at the proposal submission stage.

14) Question (Aida Bone, aidabone@stepscoalition.org): Is the present opportunity to comment the only opportunity?

Council staff answer: Throughout the process there will be formal opportunities for public engagement and comments. If you have additional questions along the way, you are welcome to reach out to Keala Hughes, the Director of External Affairs and Tribal Relations, at keala.hughes@restorethegulf.gov.

15) Question (Aida Bone, aidabone@stepscoalition.org): Do you have a date for the next webinar / presentation?

Council staff answer: We will present this webinar again this evening at 6pm CST, but if you would like to receive automatic updates for future webinars and public meetings, you can subscribe to our eBlast on the [RESTORE Council website](#). Webinar announcements will be sent out to those selecting the Public Comment/Public Meeting Eblast subscription category.

16) Question (Alina Shively, ashively@jenachoctaw.org): Do you have an accurate list of areas of interest of Tribes, who claim the Gulf as their ancestral or current homelands?

Council staff answer: The RESTORE Council has a list of federally-recognized tribes that claim interest in lands across the Gulf coast. If you have additional questions about this, please contact Keala Hughes at keala.hughes@restorethegulf.gov.

17) Question (Aida Bone, aidabone@stepscoalition.org): Will category 2 and category 1 have an equal dollar value of projects?

Council staff answer: Not necessarily. The amounts in Category 1 and Category 2 will be determined by the RESTORE Council as it develops the Funded Priorities List (FPL), with public input. It depends on the type and status of the projects and programs submitted by the members. This will be determined as the document is developed. To clarify, the total amount of Categories 1 and 2 combined cannot exceed the total amount of funds available at the time of release of the FPL. If we release the FPL in the Summer of 2020, that dollar value will be approximately \$350 million.

18) Question (Edwin Ott, eott@biloxi.ms.us): Is the Bucket #2 (\$1.6 Billion) to be divided among the U.S. Gulf Coast States? or Is Bucket #2 (\$1.6 B) for Mississippi only?

Council staff answer: All 11 RESTORE Council Members are eligible to apply for Bucket 2 funds. These funds must be spent for the benefit Gulf of Mexico habitats and resources. There is not a specific allocation in Bucket 2 as you may be familiar with in other “buckets” of RESTORE funding. That is something that will be determined through proposal review and FPL 3 development.

19) Question (Edwin Ott, eott@biloxi.ms.us): Will specific federal and state agencies be selected for an 'external science review' team?

Council staff answer: The independent external best available science review of proposals will be conducted by a suite of academic, federal, and state experts, selected according to their expertise and lack of conflict of interest. Although we're still refining the science review process, we do anticipate that each proposal submitted for consideration of inclusion in FPL 3 will undergo a review by three separate, independent scientists.

20) Question (Aida Bone, aidabone@stepscoalition.org): How does the Council announce opportunities for NGO to participate in proposed contracts?

Council staff Answer: Opportunities for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) or other interested parties to participate in projects will be the responsibility of the individual Council members that sponsor the projects and programs. In some cases, members may seek such partnerships prior to development of the proposal that is submitted to the Funded Priorities List (FPL); in other cases they may seek such partnerships after the FPL has been approved and funding secured. In this case the member might announce competition for a contract.

21) Question (Caleb Dana, cdana@allenes.com): What will be the allowable eligible scope of projects and can they be economic vs environmental?

Council Answer: The RESTORE Act contains four priority criteria for the Council-Selected Restoration Component. These criteria direct Bucket 2 funds towards ecosystem restoration projects and programs, and emphasize activities that are large-scale, contained in existing restoration plans, address areas damaged by the spill, and achieve the greatest ecological return on the investment. While there is an economic component to the work we do, the work is ecological in nature.

22) Question (Chris Head, chead@pci-nsn.gov): Will Tribes not be included in this?

Council staff answer: The RESTORE Council is committed to inclusion of all Gulf Coast stakeholders, including Federally-recognized tribes. If you have questions about a specific tribe's involvement, please contact Keala Hughes at keala.hughes@restorethegulf.gov.

23) Question (Laith Alshamaileh, Englaith2@gmail.com): For the Centers of Excellence research grants programs are there dates by which these grants are advertised? My area of concern is Louisiana. This might be off topic but would appreciate a response.

Council staff answer: The Center of Excellence (COE) research grants are managed independently under Bucket 5 of the RESTORE ACT. Today's presentation is about Bucket 2. Bucket 5 is administered by the Treasury and goes through each of the States to provide funding for establishing Centers of Excellence. Louisiana's Coastal Restoration and Protection Authority (CPRA) is Louisiana's COE project sponsor and contract manager with ultimate responsibility over the COE. They've identified the Water Institute of the Gulf as the institution that will be supporting them in this work. CPRA works with LA-COE to develop the Standard Operating Procedures, Research Strategy, and Requests for Proposals, and is involved in aspects of proposal review and selection, depending on the specifics of any Request for Proposals issued. For additional information please visit: <https://thewaterinstitute.org/la-coe>.

24) Questions (Alisha Renfro, RenfroA@nwf.org): Will the project submission process be updated? As in, will the questions that those proposing projects are asked to answer be modified/more detailed than last time?

Council staff answer: The RESTORE Council does plan to update the submission guidelines, but does not have a firm date. We anticipate that the update could be complete in Spring 2019. The submission guidelines will in some instances be more detailed than the previous version and will include

lessons learned from the Initial Funded Priorities List (FPL) process. Some of the questions asked of projects will be the same, as they are set by law (e.g., priority criteria in RESTORE Act, Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives), with new information related to the planning framework. The RESTORE Council Staff anticipates adding additional questions, particularly those that relate to seeking information about how the proposal fits within the Planning Framework.

25) Question (Edwin Ott, eott@biloxi.ms.us): Are public comment periods going to include on-site presentations with one-on-one Q&A or will public comments only be received on-line or via email?

Council staff answer: For our process we have two formal public engagement comment periods, one for the Planning Framework for Funded Priorities List (FPL) 3 which would be Spring of 2019, and one on the draft FPL - Funding Strategy which would be roughly Spring 2020. The RESTORE Council anticipates holding both public meetings and public comment periods during these times. We will be going to each Gulf state with presentations during each public comment period. We are still developing the structure of those meetings but are committed to hearing all public questions and comments and being responsive.

26) Question (Scott Eustis, scott@healthygulf.org): To what extent will the Council consider projects that increase the resilience of Gulf Coast communities vulnerable to climate change and coastal flooding? Is there an Environmental Justice or social science review of projects?

Council staff answer: As a federal agency, the RESTORE Council is subject to all applicable federal executive orders (EO), including EO 12898 of 1994 regarding Environmental Justice for Low Income and Minority Populations. The RESTORE ACT defines the priority criteria through which projects/programs should be selected. Additionally, the RESTORE Council has identified five goals, one of which is "Enhance Community Resilience." The associated objective is "Promote Community Resilience" where members may "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" and "Promote ecosystem restoration that enhances community resilience through the re-establishment of non-structural, natural buffers against storms and flooding." The RESTORE Council members, as part of this Funded Priorities List (FPL) process, may submit proposals that are consistent with this Goal and Objective. The disciplines and expertise incorporated in the best available science review of FPL proposals will depend on the types of proposals submitted by the members.