Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

Incorporating People into Ecosystem Restoration

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Questions Addressed

- How does the RESTORE Council make decisions about funding?

- How does the Council incorporate social, economic & ecological components?

- What are the opportunities with the next iteration of the Comprehensive Plan?
Subtitle F: Gulf Coast Restoration
Sec. 1601: Resource and Ecosystem Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012

Civil Penalties

- 80% to RESTORE Act
  Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund
- 20% to Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund
Allocation of RESTORE Act Funds

Clean Water Act Penalties
$6.7B

Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund
$1.33B

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Trust Fund

- 35% Direct Component
  ~$1.86B

- 30% Council-Selected Restoration Component
  ~$1.6B*

- 30% Spill Impact Component
  ~$1.6B

- 2.5% NOAA Science Program
  ~$133.3M*

- 2.5% Centers of Excellence
  ~$133.3M*

* Supplemented by interest generated by the Trust Fund (50% RESTORE Council, 25% Science Program, 25% COE)
Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

- Independent federal entity

- Composition:
  - Governors of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi & Texas
  - Secretaries of Agriculture, Army, Commerce, Homeland Security, Interior, Administrator of the EPA

- Voting structure

- Funding to members
RESTORE Act

RESTORE Council is to Restore the Gulf
“without regard to geographic location”

4 Priority Criteria from the Act for Selecting Projects & Programs

1. Greatest contribution to restoring & protecting natural resources
2. Large-scale
3. Contained in existing restoration plans or programs
4. Restore long-term resilience to areas most impacted by DWH oil spill

All Projects & Programs are to be based on the
Best Available Science
• How does the RESTORE Council make decisions about funding?

• How does the Council incorporate social, economic & ecological components?

• What are the opportunities with the next iteration of the Comprehensive Plan?
Comprehensive Plan(s)

Goals

1. Restore & Conserve Habitat
2. Restore Water Quality & Quantity
3. Replenish & Protect Living Coastal & Marine Resources
4. Enhance Community Resilience
5. Restore & Revitalize the Gulf Economy

Update at least every 5 years as per the Act
Initial Funded Priorities List (FPL)

Development Process

Comprehensive Plan

Solicitation To Members

50 Proposals Submitted = 380 projects

Focus Areas
• Habitat
• Water Quality

Emphasis Areas
• Foundational
• Sustainable
• Likely to succeed
• Benefits the human community

Vetting:
* Eligibility
* Budget
* Best Available Science
* Environmental Compliance
* Priority & Commitment to Plan

Development of portfolios of projects for Initial Funded Priorities List

Funded Priorities List
• 10 watersheds
• Gulf-wide Foundational Projects
• $156.6M
Example Initial FPL “People” Projects

- **Bayou Dularge Ridge, Marsh & Hydrologic Restoration**
  - Federally Recognized Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana
  - Helps preserve cultural resources

- **Gulf of Mexico Habitat Restoration via Conservation Corps Partnerships**
  - Regional workforce-training program to support restoration
  - Tribal youth component

- **SeaGrant Education & Outreach**

Robert Smith/Photobiologist.com
Examples: The Council Incorporating People in Decisions

Comprehensive Plans & FPL(s)
- Public & Tribal review & comments
- Updates & Responses by Council

Tribal Policy
- Policy being developed with the Federally Recognized Tribes

Lessons Learned/360 Review
- Public webinar & polling-feedback on Initial Comp Plan & FPL process
- Update the Comp Plan & future FPL processes based on feedback
Lessons Learned from FPL Process

- Support for Goals & Objectives
- Enhance Council member collaboration
- Enhance coordination with other funding sources
- Retain the watershed/estuary approach
- Improve application of best available science
- Improve measurements of success
- Enhance public engagement & transparency
Comprehensive Plan Update

- Builds on successes, lessons, & provides strategic guidance
- Promotes collaboration
- Commits to update science review process
- Improve delivery of ecosystem science, monitoring, & data management across disciplines to report on restoration
- Adaptive Management Plan
- Positions Council for effective use of future funds
- Coordinates holistic, large-scale restoration
- Improves efficiency, effectiveness & transparency
Questions Addressed

• How does the RESTORE Council make decisions about funding?

• How does the Council incorporate social, economic & ecological components?

• What are the opportunities with the next iteration of the Comprehensive Plan?
“Healthy and sustainable ecosystems are essential for thriving and resilient coastal communities, cultures, economies, and societies which are built upon, and sustained by, natural ecosystem services”

In addition...

“Best Available Science” includes ecosystem science and social science
Commitment to Collaboration & Engagement: Science

- Science & Restoration Coordination Forum
- Collaborating with academic community on science & proposals
  - Exploring Council compliance with *Incorporating Ecosystem Services into Federal Decision Making*
  - Achieving the *Community Resilience & Economic Goals*
- Council Monitoring & Assessment Program-GOMA Community of Practice
- Collaboration Workshops
Important Role for People & the Ecosystem

- **Engagement:** Council will continue to engage stakeholders in restoration to inform decisions

- **Monitoring:** Monitoring is more than “what is in the water” i.e., need to see the big picture

- **Understanding:** Ecological, social, economic components are all important for understanding impact of large-scale restoration & using best available science to inform future restoration decisions

- **Communication:** An ecosystem function & services perspective can serve as lens to communicate results/context of successful restoration projects – helps answer the “So What?” question
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Update 2016
Restoring the Gulf Coast’s
Ecosystem and Economy

Get engaged by going to:
www.RestoreTheGulf.gov

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