



UPDATE

Conservation News for the Gulf of Mexico Region January 24, 2017

REMINDER: Our email addresses have changed!

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The Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation (Gulf Partnership) Receives Capacity Building Grant.

The Southeast Program of the Land Trust Alliance has awarded a \$24,000 grant to the Gulf Partnership to strengthen the communications and public engagement efforts of land trusts in the Gulf of Mexico region. The Gulf Partnership will use the grant to provide additional resources to land trusts so that they can educate landowners, policymakers and other stakeholders about the role that land conservation can play in addressing coastal challenges such as water quality, water quantity, flood protection, and habitat conservation. For more information, contact Julia Weaver at Julia.weaver@gulfpartnership.org.

Alabama Officials Invite Public Input on RESTORE and NRDA Funding Plans.

The Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, January 25, 2017 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at the Five Rivers Tensaw Theater to present its recently released Project Evaluation and Selection Process for Multiyear Implementation Plan (MIP) development for Bucket 1 of the RESTORE Act. As the AGCRC previously announced, the focus areas for the first round MIP will be **Economic and Infrastructure** projects and related **Planning Assistance**.

In addition, this meeting will include an opportunity for individuals to provide input on any of the project suggestions currently in the Alabama Coastal Restoration Project Suggestion portal. To view the project suggestions, click on [Alabama Coastal Restoration Project Suggestion Submittals](#). Contact Eliska Morgan for more information at (251) 380-7944 or eliska.morgan@dcnr.alabama.gov.

The [Alabama Trustee Implementation Group](#) has released its draft restoration plan for NRDA funding. The restoration activities proposed in this plan will compensate the public for lost recreational shoreline use opportunities in Alabama caused by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. The [Alabama plan](#) recommends funding for the following projects at an estimated cost of \$70.7 million:

- Gulf State Park Lodge and Associated Public Access Amenities Project - \$56,300,000
- Fort Morgan Pier Rehabilitation - \$3,075,000
- Laguna Cove Little Lagoon Natural Resource Protection - \$4,400,000
- Bayfront Park Restoration and Improvement (E&D only) - \$1,000,000
- Dauphin Island Eco-Tourism and Environment Education Area - \$4,000,000
- Mid-Island Parks and Public Beach Improvements (Parcels B and C) - \$1,900,000

Written public comments will be accepted through January 31, 2017 and public meetings will be held. For more information about the proposed projects and opportunities to provide feedback, please visit the [NRDA website](#).

NOAA to Host Webinar on 2017 Coastal Resilience Grant Opportunity on January 30, 2017.

The NOAA Coastal Resilience Grants Program will support two categories of activities: strengthening coastal communities and habitat restoration. Applicants can now submit proposals for both categories through the same funding opportunity.

Strengthening Coastal Communities: activities that improve capacity of multiple coastal jurisdictions (states, counties, municipalities, territories, and tribes) to prepare

and plan for, absorb impacts of, recover from, and/or adapt to extreme weather events and climate-related hazards.

Habitat Restoration: activities that restore habitat to strengthen the resilience of coastal ecosystems and decrease the vulnerability of coastal communities to extreme weather events and climate-related hazards.

Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, regional organizations, private entities, and local, state, and tribal governments. Typical award amounts will range from \$250,000 to \$1 million for projects lasting up to three years. Cost-sharing through cash or in-kind contributions is expected. Projects must be located in one or more of the 35 U.S. coastal states or territories.

Join representatives from the National Ocean Service and National Marine Fisheries Service for a short presentation on January 30 at 3:00 pm Eastern Time. Click here for more information: [NOAA Webinar Sign-in](#).

Mississippi Officials Announce NRDA Restoration Plan, Set February 10 Deadline for Public Comments.

The Mississippi Trustee Implementation Group released its Draft 2016-2017 Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment on December 27, 2016. The plan proposes the selection of three NRDA restoration projects:

- Graveline Bay land acquisition and Habitat Management;
- Grand Bay Land Acquisition and Habitat Management; and
- Upper Pascagoula River Water Quality Enhancement.

Comments on the draft plan are due February 10, 2017. For more information, visit the [Restore MS website](#).

Land Trust Alliance offers Webinar on Storytelling as a Powerful Tool in Land Trust Communications on February 15, 2017.

Storytelling can be a communicator's most powerful tool to increase engagement. Join the February 15 webinar to hear master story teller Andy Goodman present *Crafting Your Message: Best Storytelling on the Web*. Andy will showcase the best storytellers in the public interest community, and demonstrate how land trusts can enhance their storytelling impact and increase community engagement and connection. Space is limited so visit the Land Trust Alliance [website](#) to register.

Funding Opportunities.

NFWF Gulf Coast Conservation Grants Program Sets Deadline for January 26, 2017.

The Gulf Coast Conservation Grants Program (GCCGP) is a competitive grants program that supports priority conservation needs of the Gulf Coast that are not otherwise expected to be funded under NFWF's Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund or other funding opportunities associated with the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Specific priorities focus on **strengthening coastal resilience; advancing conservation and management on private lands** for wildlife and water quality; and **conserving living resources** by protecting and accelerating the recovery of key species dependent on the Gulf, including coastal birds, sea turtles, marine mammals, and oysters. For more information, see the full announcement [here](#).

Longleaf Stewardship Fund Announces 2017 Request for Proposals

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals to expand and enhance longleaf pine ecosystem restoration and management across longleaf pine's historical range. The Longleaf Stewardship Fund will award approximately \$4.0 – \$4.7 million in grants in FY 2017. This program has one annual application cycle and awards approximately 15-20 grants per year. Grants will be awarded in one of two categories: 1) Partnership-based, Large-Scale Restoration (Significant Geographic Areas) and 2) Strategic Restoration and Outreach. Proposals are due on Thursday, February 9, 2017. View the full announcement [here](#).

Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program Announces 2017 Grant Opportunity.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, State and Private Forestry, Cooperative Forestry staff, requests applications for the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (Community Forest Program or CFP). Local governments, qualified nonprofit organizations, and Indian tribes are eligible to apply. The purpose of the program is to establish community forests by protecting forest land from conversion to non-forest uses and provide community benefits such as sustainable forest management, environmental benefits including clean air, water, and wildlife habitat; benefits from forest-based educational programs; benefits from serving as models of effective forest stewardship; and recreational benefits secured with public access. Eligible lands are private forest that is at least five acres in size,

suitable to sustain natural vegetation, and at least 75 percent forested. The lands must also be threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. The deadline is February 17 and nonprofits must submit their applications through their State Forester. For more information, visit the [Community Forest Program](#) website.

Healthy Watershed Consortium Grant Program Deadline Set for February 1, 2017.

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (Endowment) seeks applications for the 2017 Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program. The goal of the program is to accelerate strategic protection of healthy, freshwater ecosystems and their watersheds. The primary focus for applicants should be protection and stewardship of the landscape that comprises the watershed, rather than restoration of degraded habitats or projects with a strictly water quality improvement outcome. For more information, read the full grant announcement [here](#).

The Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program Invites Proposals.

The Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program seeks to develop nation-wide-community stewardship of local natural resources, preserving these resources for future generations and enhancing habitat for local wildlife. Projects seek to address water quality issues in priority watersheds, such as erosion due to unstable streambanks, pollution from storm-water runoff, and degraded shorelines caused by development. The deadline for application is January 31, 2017. Read the full announcement [here](#).

EPA Environmental Justice Small Grants Program Sets January 31st Deadline for Applications.

The Environmental Justice Small Grants (EJSG) Program provides funding for eligible applicants for projects that address local environmental and public health issues within an affected community. For more information, visit [grants.gov](#).

North American Wetlands Conservation Act Standard Grants Program to Accept Proposals until February 24, 2017.

The Standard Grants Program is a competitive, matching grants program for projects that involve long-term protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands habitats for the benefit of all wetlands-associated migratory birds. Applicants should contact the [coordinator of the joint venture region](#) in which the project is located early in the process for guidance on developing their project and

proposal. Joint venture coordinators' prioritization of NAWCA proposals from their geographic region is a key element in the selection process. Find out how to connect with your joint venture [here](#). Find out more about the NAWCA Standard Grants Program [here](#).

Upcoming Events

State of the Gulf of Mexico Summit 2017 and Gulf of Mexico Alliance All-Hands Meeting to be held March 26 – March 30 in Houston, TX.

Leaders in academia, industry, NGO, and government with a stakeholder interest in the Gulf of Mexico are encouraged to attend. Over the next 15 years, the Gulf of Mexico will be the focal point for one of the largest restoration efforts ever conceived. More than \$20 billion in restoration funding will provide an unparalleled opportunity to effect positive change on a Gulf-wide scale. Adopting science-driven processes to guide and evaluate these efforts; linking environmental and human health and well-being to sustain the benefits of a healthier Gulf; and building international partnerships to ensure the future Gulf we all envision is the driving goal of the fourth State of the Gulf of Mexico Summit. For more information or to register, visit [here](#).

Webinar on Establishing Explicit Biological Objectives to Guide Strategic Habitat Conservation for the Gulf Coast to be offered on February 16, 2017.

If you are a Gulf Coast researcher, conservation planner, or wildlife biologist you will be interested in the results of this collaborative project among the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and four Gulf Coast Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (including the South Atlantic). Why? Because in its Vision for a Healthy Gulf of Mexico Watershed (2013), the USFWS lists an agreed set of biological objectives common to Gulf partners as foundational to achieve the vision. The goal of this project is to develop explicit biological objectives for each of 13 focal areas in the vision, along with associated conservation targets linked to specific habitat characteristics, all contained within a geospatial database. Click [here](#) for instructions for joining the webinar at 9:00 am CST.

University of Florida Levin College of Law to Host the 23rd annual Public Interest Environmental Conference on February 9 – 11, 2017 in Gainesville, FL.

The theme of the 2017 conference is land conservation. The conference will bring together legal practitioners, academics, policy makers, and private citizens to examine the challenges, concerns, and future of land conservation law and policy from a regional and national standpoint. For more information, visit the [conference webpage](#).

The 2017 Texas Land Conservation Conference and Lobby Day will be held March 1 – 3, 2017 in Austin, TX.

The Texas Land Trust Council has an excellent line-up of speakers and topics ranging from real estate to land stewardship, conservation easements and various funding programs, advocacy, historic preservation, conservation banking, [Deepwater Horizon oil spill funds](#), coastal conservation, and much, much, more! For more information and to register, visit the Texas Land Trust Council [website](#).

Weeks Bay Foundation Organizes Clean-up Day near Fairhope, AL on February 11, 2017.

Join the Weeks Bay Foundation and Thompson Engineering for a fun day paddling and getting the trash out of lower Fish River. Participants will meet at the Fish River boat ramp at 10am and the Thompson Barge will shuttle folks and their boats upstream. At the end of the day, you can paddle back down or hitch a ride back on the trash barge! For more information, or to sign up, call 251-990-5004 or email yael@weeksbay.org.

Restoration News by State, Courtesy of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance.

Alabama. Follow restoration activities with the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council (AGCRC) [here](#).

Mississippi. Mississippi officials are accepting submissions for its Beach Outfalls Challenge, a public prize challenge sponsored by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality which aims to improve water quality in the Mississippi Sound. For more information, please go to the [Beach Outfalls Challenge](#) website.

Florida. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) maintains a [website](#) complete with latest updates, resources, links, and newsletters, including an overview of Florida's response to the oil spill. Each impacted county engages directly with their communities through the [Gulf Consortium](#) and the Florida Association of Counties.

Louisiana. The State of Louisiana is represented by the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) on state and RESTORE Council restoration activities. View all news, activities and calendar notices on the [CPRA website](#).

Texas. Oil spill restoration information in Texas and related items can be found on the website www.restorethetexascoast.org.

The Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation is a coalition of more than two dozen land conservation organizations whose shared mission is to increase the pace, quality and permanence of voluntary land and water conservation in the Gulf of Mexico region. The Gulf Partnership is led by an Executive Committee comprised of leaders from our partner organizations. The Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain serves as our fiscal agent. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GulfPartnership> and visit our website at <http://gulfpartnership.org>. For more information regarding any item in this newsletter, contact Julia Weaver at 228-219-2279 or julia.weaver@gulfpartnership.org.