

RESTORE Act Direct Component

Multiyear Implementation Plan

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Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality

On Behalf of the State of Mississippi



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Introduction

Overview of the Oil Spill

On or about April 20, 2010, the mobile offshore drilling unit *Deepwater Horizon*, which was being used to drill a well for BP Exploration and Production, Inc. (BP) in the Macondo prospect (Mississippi Canyon 252 – MC252), experienced an explosion, caught fire, and subsequently sank in the Gulf of Mexico (the Gulf). This incident resulted in the discharge of oil and other substances into the Gulf from the rig and the submerged wellhead. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill (the Spill) is the largest oil spill in U.S. history. The Spill discharged millions of barrels of oil over a period of 87 days. In addition, well over one million gallons of dispersants were applied to the waters of the Spill area in an attempt to disperse the spilled oil. An undetermined amount of natural gas was also released to the environment as a result of the Spill. After several failed attempts to stop the release of oil, the well was declared “sealed” on September 19, 2010.

As a result of civil and criminal settlements with the parties responsible for the Spill, the State of Mississippi (Mississippi) has and will continue to receive funding from several sources to restore or benefit the natural resources or the economy of Mississippi, including, but not limited to funding received through the following: (1) the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA) and the corresponding Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA); (2) the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act (RESTORE Act); and (3) the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF).

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is the designated natural resource trustee under OPA-NRDA and the Governor’s designee for the RESTORE Act and NFWF GEBF for Mississippi.

RESTORE Act

On July 6, 2012, the President signed into law the RESTORE Act, Subtitle F of Public Law 112-141. The RESTORE Act makes available 80% of the Clean Water Act (CWA) civil and administrative penalties paid by the responsible parties for the Spill (i.e., BP and Transocean) for programs, projects and activities that restore and protect the environment and economy of the Gulf Coast region through the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund established in the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury). Within the RESTORE Act, there are five funding components (commonly referred to as “buckets”), which make funds available to each of the Gulf States in accordance with certain legal parameters. These components are:

- Direct Component (Bucket 1)
- Comprehensive Plan Component (Bucket 2)
- Spill Impact Component (Bucket 3)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Science Program (Bucket 4)
- Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program (Bucket 5)

The Direct Component, also referred to as Bucket 1, accounts for 35% of the funds available in the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund. Mississippi, as determined by the RESTORE Act, will receive 7% of the 35% allocation of the Direct Component. The amount currently available to Mississippi under the Direct

Component is \$56,355,114.21. The RESTORE Act requires Mississippi, through MDEQ, to prepare a Multiyear Implementation Plan (MIP) describing each activity, project or program for which Mississippi seeks funding under the Direct Component.

As defined in 31 C.F.R §34.303, the MIP includes a narrative description for each activity, project or program for which Direct Component funding is being sought. The narrative description demonstrates:

- The need, purpose and objectives of the activity;
- How the activity is eligible for funding and meets all requirements;
- Location;
- Budget;
- Milestones;
- Projects completion dates; and
- Criteria to evaluate the success of each activity.

Amendments to the MIP may be written as additional funds become available and as additional projects are identified for funding.

Eligible Activities for the Direct Component

The RESTORE Act dedicates 80% of any civil and administrative penalties paid under the Clean Water Act by responsible parties in connection with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Trust Fund for ecosystem restoration (environmental), economic recovery and tourism promotion in the Gulf Coast region. The RESTORE Act differs from other restoration funding sources [i.e., National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the natural resource damage assessment and restoration process (NRDA)] in that it specifically allows and anticipates that restoration projects will be developed for the restoration of natural resources and for the restoration of the economy, both of which were affected as a result of the Spill.

The objectives of the RESTORE Act are:

- To restore the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast States,
- To promote workforce development and job creation, and;
- To revive the economic health of the communities adversely affected by the Spill.

Accordingly, the eligible activities for the Direct Component cover both ecological and economic projects. The RESTORE Act defines eligible activities for which Direct Component funds may be used. The eligible activities, projects and programs as defined in 31 C.F.R §34.201 are:

- A. Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region;
- B. Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife and natural resources;
- C. Implementation of a federally-approved marine, coastal or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring;
- D. Workforce development and job creation;

- E. Improvements to or on state parks located in coastal areas affected by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill;
- F. Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure;
- G. Coastal flood protection and related infrastructure;
- H. Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast Region, including recreational fishing;
- I. Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast Region;
- J. Planning assistance; and
- K. Administrative costs.

Process of Prioritizing and Selecting Projects

Mississippi utilized two stakeholder-driven components to identify and prioritize projects for inclusion on the MIP. These are the GoCoast 2020 Commission and the Restoration Project Idea Portal.

GoCoast 2020 Commission

In 2012, Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant created GoCoast 2020 to serve as an advisory body to the Governor for the allocation of funds received by Mississippi under the RESTORE Act. GoCoast 2020 is comprised of more than one hundred business and community leaders and elected officials from across the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The GoCoast 2020 Commission formed committees, referred to as GoTeams, which focused on eight (8) key focus areas related to the eligible activities included in the RESTORE Act. The GoTeams are co-chaired by one executive director of a state agency and one local business or community leader. The GoTeams were tasked with developing a framework of recommendations for initiatives and projects related to these eight key focus areas: eco-restoration, economic development, infrastructure, research and education, seafood, small business, tourism and workforce development.

GoCoast 2020 engages leaders and solicits public input from the Gulf Coast Region to use as a road map that will ensure restoration of the Gulf's environmental resources; fuel important economic and infrastructure advances; and galvanize long range strategies related to education and research. Members of the commission distilled the thinking and passion of the community from the Gulf Coast Region into a living and lasting plan to preserve and advance the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

In January 2013, the GoCoast 2020 Commission produced a report with recommendations for RESTORE Act funding received by Mississippi. The report does not list specific projects; rather, it contains priorities and criteria against which projects should be considered. See the GoCoast 2020 Final Report for additional information at www.restore.ms.

The GoCoast 2020 priorities were developed around the eligible activities described in the RESTORE Act and provide a framework of recommendations that will accomplish the initiatives and priorities developed by the commission in the near term and for generations to come.

The priorities developed by each GoTeam include:

<p>Eco-Restoration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy water resources • Habitat conservation • Sustainable marine resources • Resilient coastal communities 	<p>Seafood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seafood promotion • Habitat development • Infrastructure • Seafood research • Commercial and recreational fishing • Education and training for a productive workforce
<p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset development and capacity • Enhancing broadband infrastructure • Education and training for a productive workforce • Enhance quality of life and business environment 	<p>Small Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of services to small business • Establishment of business resource centers, and an increase in tourism related small business
<p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job creation and/or retention • Enhancement of existing industries • Establishment of future revenue streams for operation and maintenance of developed infrastructure 	<p>Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase visitation to the Mississippi Gulf Coast • Increase return visits of Tourists • Provide great value for low cost, unique offerings and outstanding service • Provide a variety of family activities at a various price points
<p>Research and Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research priorities: fisheries, aquaculture, ecosystem-based management, Threatened, Endangered and Protected species, comprehensive observation, monitoring and mapping, habitat restoration, and coastal and ocean ecosystem forecasting • Education priorities: technology targeted programs, outreach programs to educate public, and infrastructure and technology upgrades for Science Technology Engineering and Math focused workforce 	<p>Workforce Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote workforce training programs • Implement programmatic curriculum for industry needs • Collaboration of education and training in all sectors of education

Additionally, the GoCoast 2020 report identified criteria that could be considered when developing potential projects. The criteria include a potential project’s ability to leverage other resources, foster collaborative effort across the Mississippi Gulf Coast and position the Mississippi Gulf Coast for economic improvements and growth.

The co-chairs used the priorities and criteria as filters for projects submitted for consideration for funding in the Restoration Project Idea Portal.

Restoration Project Idea Portal

Mississippi developed the Restoration Project Idea Portal (the Portal) on the web as an opportunity to collect project ideas from the Mississippi Gulf Coast's most important resource—the people. The Portal is hosted on the State's Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill restoration website: www.restore.ms. Any member of the public may submit an idea for restoration to the portal at any time. Project ideas can range from one line ideas to fully developed scopes of work. Submitters are asked to provide information including applicable project activities such as water quality, restoration, tourism and economic development as well as applicable resource benefits such as marine mammals and human use. Submitters have access to update or change their previously submitted project ideas via the web portal at any time.

Projects Identified and Prioritized

In 2015, Governor Bryant re-engaged the co-chairs of GoCoast 2020 and tasked the group with developing recommendations for projects by reviewing project ideas from the Portal against the priorities and criteria identified by GoCoast 2020.

At the time the GoCoast 2020 co-chairs were reconvened, there were more than 680 project ideas in the Portal. These project ideas were sorted using the project activities indicated by the submitter to correspond to a GoTeam's key focus area (eco-restoration, economic development, infrastructure, research and education, seafood, small business, tourism and workforce development). Project ideas that spanned multiple key focus areas were included for review by all applicable GoTeams.

Every project idea submitted in the Portal was reviewed against the key focus area priorities and criteria identified by GoCoast 2020 and described above. Recommendations for potential projects were then made to Governor Bryant for consideration of inclusion on the MIP.

The GoCoast 2020 Final Report discusses criteria and priorities used by the GoCoast 2020 Co-Chairs in developing recommendations for inclusion on the initial MIP. The GoCoast 2020 Final Report can be found here: www.restore.ms.

Project Development

MDEQ reviewed the project recommendations against the criteria for the Direct Component to ensure eligibility as set forth in the RESTORE Act and Treasury Regulations. Additionally, preliminary due diligence was performed to ensure that each of the projects presented on the MIP is sound and provides an economic or ecological benefit to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Preliminary due diligence included a review of anticipated project activities and cost estimates, to determine reasonableness and compliance with applicable rules, laws and regulations. A constructability review was also performed on projects with construction elements. The constructability review provided a summary of the construction elements including anticipated construction costs. The projects identified on the MIP were informed from a project idea(s) submitted in the Restoration Project Idea Portal.

Fiscal Responsibility

The State of Mississippi and MDEQ understand its fiduciary responsibilities under the RESTORE Act and are committed to maintaining the highest level of fiscal accountability and transparency. As part of preliminary due diligence, Mississippi performs risk assessments related to all Direct Component projects and sub-awards in order to identify and analyze relevant threats and exposures, including both internal and external factors, and any related consequences. An important part of this process includes

verifying that project sponsors have provided sound plans for financial control activities. Financial control activities include policies and procedures that were developed to ensure sound fiscal objectives are achieved and that any identified risks are appropriately mitigated. Key elements of these activities include budgetary control and monitoring, compliance monitoring, approving financial transactions, financial review, and assessment of internal controls. Compliance monitoring of sub-awards includes detailed monitoring plans developed and implemented for each sub-award to assess the effectiveness of sub-recipient compliance and internal controls over the life of a project through evaluation and any subsequent remediation.

MIP activities, which include non-RESTORE leveraged funding, must have such funds secured at the time of MDEQ grant application to Treasury. Should MDEQ agree to submit the application to Treasury without leveraged funding secured for any activity, a grant condition may be established requiring non-RESTORE leveraged funds to be secured prior to releasing any sub-awards. The obligation of MDEQ to proceed with any project is conditioned upon the availability of funds from state, federal and/or other funding sources. If the funds anticipated for the fulfillment of the project are at any time not forthcoming or insufficient, the project may remain on the MIP until funding is available or may be removed from the MIP. Funding for all projects included on the MIP is subject to approval by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Inclusion of a project on the MIP does not guarantee funding.

Public Review and Comment

Prior to submission to the Treasury, the MIP shall be published and made available for public comment and review for a minimum of forty-five (45) days to obtain broad-based participation from individuals, businesses, Indian tribes and non-profit organizations. Each activity on the MIP will be adopted after consideration of all meaningful input in accordance with 31 C.F.R §34.303(a)(8-9). The MIP will then be submitted to Treasury for review and approval.

MDEQ will make the MIP available for public comment and review in a manner that is consistent with other MDEQ-administered public comment periods related to *Deepwater Horizon*.

Proposed Activities

As a result of the 2013 Transocean settlement agreement, the amount currently available to Mississippi under the Direct Component is \$56,355,114.21. Modifications to an existing MIP(s) and/or an additional MIP(s) will be written when additional funds become available.

Mississippi is proposing eleven activities to be included on this MIP. The activities are:

Activity	Direct Component Funding Requested
Stennis International Airport Hangar	\$2,000,000
Port Bienville Trans-Loading Terminal Facility Completion	\$8,000,000
Improved Fiber Optic Infrastructure	\$5,000,000
Mississippi Aquarium	\$17,000,000
Jackson County Corridor Connector Road – Phase I	\$10,200,000
Work Ready Community Program	\$4,000,000
Accreditation Support for William Carey University School of Pharmacy	\$1,000,000
Off-Bottom Oyster Aquaculture Program	\$1,000,000
Strategic Stream Restoration	\$5,000,000
Planning Assistance – Project Management System	\$500,000
Planning Assistance – MIP Amendment Development	\$400,000

MIP Activity #1: Stennis International Airport Hangar

Eligibility of Activity Defined in 31 C.F.R. §34.201

This activity complies with the following eligible activity: *Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure.*

Location

Stennis International Airport
Hancock County, MS

Project Summary

This proposed project will provide additional infrastructure that will benefit the economy of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Region by constructing a hangar facility at Stennis International Airport. An additional hangar facility will benefit the economy by creating economic opportunities in Hancock County, including increased job opportunities.

Stennis International Airport is a unique facility in that its primary focus is the growth and development of the aeronautic industry in Hancock County. It is home more than 50 public and private entities that employ more than 150 local residents. Stennis International Airport is currently leased to capacity with no additional facilities available for new industry or expansion and growth of existing industry. The proposed project will support the need for increased capacity by constructing a new hangar facility that can accommodate new and existing tenants.

Direct Component funds will be used for planning and construction of the proposed hangar facility which would be approx. 24,000 square feet and include office space and may accommodate maintenance, repair, and overhaul operations for tenants. This project aligns with the economic development and infrastructure priorities developed by the GoCoast 2020 Commission.

This project is eligible under activity (f) Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure as defined in 31 CFR §34.201 and 33 USC §1321 (t)(1)(B)(i)(VI) of the RESTORE Act. This activity will be implemented by the Hancock County Harbor and Port Commission and will comply with the definition of infrastructure in 31 CFR §34.2.

Need

Stennis International Airport regularly receives inquiries seeking hangar space and is unable to meet those needs because the airport is currently at capacity. In order to maintain the needs of the existing tenants and to attract new tenants, an additional hangar facility is needed.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to accommodate and attract additional aeronautical industry opportunities to Hancock County that would bolster county and coastal economic development as well as provide technical and specialized jobs to the local community.

Objective

- Increase square footage of hangar capacity at Stennis International Airport to accommodate new tenant business or expansion of existing tenant business.

Budget and Leveraging of Funding

Based on a constructability analysis, total project cost is estimated at \$4,075,000.

- Total RESTORE Direct Component funding requested: \$2,000,000
- Non-RESTORE Leveraged Funding by Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission: \$2,075,000

Measure of Success and Milestones

- Stennis International Airport Hangar Measure of Success: Construction of approximately 24,000-square-foot state-of-the-art hangar facility at Stennis International Airport to increase available capacity.

In order to measure the success of this project the following milestones will be put in place:

- Finalization of hangar design.
- Initiation of hangar construction.
- Completion of hangar construction to increase available capacity.

Projected Completion Date

Projected completion date is July 2018.

MIP Activity #2: Port Bienville Trans-Loading Terminal Facility Completion

Eligibility of Activity Defined in 31 C.F.R. § 34.201

This activity complies with the following eligible activity: *Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure.*

Location

Port Bienville Industrial Park
Hancock County, MS

Project Summary

This proposed project will provide additional infrastructure that will benefit the economy of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Region by completing the construction of the trans-loading terminal facility at Port Bienville Industrial Park. The trans-loading terminal will allow for shipments to be moved from one mode of transportation to another.

Port Bienville Industrial Park is a 3,600-acre industrial park in Hancock County, Mississippi. The park is home to 13 leading industries employing more than 1,200 local area residents. Today, major industry has leased every piece of dock space in Port Bienville Industrial Park. Without additional dock space and improvements, industrial development in Hancock County will be severely hampered, as one of the Port's primary competitive advantages is the ability to transport raw material by barge. The proposed project will support the need for increased capacity by constructing additional dock space and extending rail service to the waterfront to accommodate tenants. This project will improve the terminal for use in trans-loading of materials and will support container-on-barge operations. The terminal may also be used to support supply vessels in the offshore industry.

Direct Component funds will be used for planning and constructing a bulkhead with mooring facilities and extending an existing rail line for use as a trans-loading terminal facility. The proposed project will foster regional economic growth by creating transportation and access efficiencies for existing and prospective industry. This project aligns with the economic development and infrastructure priorities developed by the GoCoast 2020 Commission.

This project is eligible under activity (f) Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure as defined in 31 CFR §34.201 and 33 USC §1321 (t)(1)(B)(i)(VI) of the RESTORE Act. This activity will be implemented by the Hancock County Harbor and Port Commission and will comply with the definition of infrastructure in 31 CFR §34.2.

Need

Port Bienville is in need of improvements to the current trans-loading terminal facilities to support current and additional tenants. Port Bienville regularly receives inquiries from companies considering the port's location, but has been unable to meet the needs due to lack of port infrastructure and capacity. Without additional dock space and improvements, industrial development in Hancock County will be severely hampered, as one of the Port's primary competitive advantages is the ability to transport raw material by barge.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to expand the port infrastructure to accommodate and attract tenants that would bolster county and coastal economic development as well as provide technical and specialized jobs to the local community.

Objective

- Improve trans-loading infrastructure at Port Bienville to accommodate new tenant business or expansion of existing tenant business.

Budget and Leveraging of Funding

Based on a constructability analysis, the total project cost is estimated at \$8,775,000.

- Total RESTORE Direct Component funding requested: \$8,000,000
- Non-RESTORE Leveraged Funding by Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission: \$775,000

Measure of Success and Milestones

- Completion of the trans-loading terminal facility at Port Bienville to increase available capacity.

In order to measure the success of this project the following milestones will be put in place:

- Completion of terminal facility improvement design.
- Initiation of construction.
- Completion of the trans-loading facility improvements to increase available capacity.

Projected Completion Date

Projected completion date is September 2019.

MIP Activity #3: Improved Fiber Optic Infrastructure

Eligibility of Activity Defined in 31 C.F.R. § 34.201

This activity complies with the following eligible activity: *Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure.*

Location

Jackson, Harrison and Hancock Counties, MS

Project Summary

This proposed project will provide additional infrastructure that will benefit the economy of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Region by identifying the needs to improve fiber optic infrastructure and applicable solutions within the region.

Traditionally, television and internet communications travel along copper or cable networks. Copper and cable networks are limited as to the speed at which data can travel. The amount and speed of data uploaded and downloaded is a primary factor affecting internet performance on these networks. Other limiting factors include distance from an information processing center and use by others sharing the same network infrastructure. Fiber optic networks are not affected by these factors. In a fiber optic network, data can be uploaded and downloaded at the same speeds resulting in a faster internet connection. Similarly, distance and shared infrastructure do not affect fiber optic network performance.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast Region has fiber optic networks in place that lack in infrastructure components such as end point connections. Where available, data is transmitted on the existing fiber optic networks but then transferred to copper or cable infrastructure which delivers data to the end user. This creates a bottleneck for data since speeds are slower on copper and cable networks. Fiber infrastructure needed to complete the end point connection has historically been the most expensive to build but is necessary to realizing the benefits of fiber optic infrastructure.

Fiber optic networks can have significant impacts on a community. Cities and towns across the country are seeing benefits related to economic development, workforce development and retention, as well as educational and research opportunities. This proposed project could benefit the economy of the Mississippi Gulf Coast by positioning it as a premier location for businesses and industry, as well as create new educational opportunities for Mississippi students. Additionally, fiber optic networks can be less expensive to maintain than copper or cable networks and are more durable. Fiber optic infrastructure has proven to be less susceptible to damage during weather events and accidents such as unintentional cuts. Unlike copper and cable network infrastructure, fiber optic networks can withstand multiple failures in the infrastructure without causing service outages.

Direct Component funds will be used to identify the needs (i.e.: planning) to improve fiber optic infrastructure and construct applicable infrastructure solutions. This project aligns with the economic development and infrastructure priorities developed by the GoCoast 2020 Commission.

This project is eligible under activity (f) Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure as defined in 31 CFR §34.201 and 33 USC §1321 (t)(1)(B)(i)(VI) of the RESTORE Act. This activity may be implemented by a consortium of cities and/or counties that may

own and operate the infrastructure and it will comply with the definition of infrastructure in 31 CFR §34.2.

Need

The Mississippi Gulf Coast Region has fiber optic networks in place that lack in infrastructure components such as end point connections. To support a diverse and sustainable economy, the Mississippi Gulf Coast needs improvements to the existing fiber optic infrastructure network.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to identify the needs and applicable solutions to improve fiber optic infrastructure on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. This proposed project could position the Mississippi Gulf Coast as a premier location for businesses and industry, as well as create new educational opportunities for Mississippi students.

Objective

- Identify needs and applicable solutions to improve fiber optic infrastructure.

Budget

Total estimated project cost is \$5,000,000.

- Total RESTORE Direct Component funding requested: \$5,000,000

Measures of Success and Milestones

- Identify the needs to improve fiber optic infrastructure.
- Construct applicable infrastructure solutions to fill the identified needs to better serve businesses and industry and students.

In order to measure the success of this project the following milestones will be put in place:

- Identification of needs in fiber optic infrastructure to enhance fiber optic capacity.
- Development of an action plan to apply appropriate solutions to the identified needs.
- Construct applicable infrastructure solutions.

Projected Completion Date

Projected completion date is November 2021.

MIP Activity #4: Mississippi Aquarium

Eligibility of Activity Defined in 31 C.F.R. § 34.201

This activity complies with the following eligible activities: *Promotion of tourism; Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure.*

Location

Gulfport
Harrison County, MS

Project Summary

The proposed project will support the construction of the Mississippi Aquarium, which will promote tourism in the Mississippi Gulf Coast Region by providing visitors with interactive science, education, interpretive and research opportunities for exploring marine habitats and fisheries in the Gulf ecosystem.

In the wake of recent disasters, the Mississippi Gulf Coast lacks diverse tourism opportunities. The City of Gulfport proposes the Mississippi Aquarium to be built along Highway 90 in downtown Gulfport, on approximately 14 acres of land owned by the city, which overlooks the \$40,000,000 redeveloped Jones Park and Small Craft Harbor. The proposed project is anticipated to have a significant impact on tourism and economic development across the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

In addition to the promotion of tourism along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the proposed Mississippi Aquarium will have the capacity to partner with universities and colleges to bring marine research and education programs to the aquarium. These partnerships may provide opportunities for veterinary students and marine science students to study a wide variety of habitats and marine life, including marine mammals. This will also provide veterinary support to the Mississippi Aquarium. The emphasis on interactive encounters and the focus of the ecological resources of the Mississippi Sound will enhance the public's awareness and appreciation of those resources and provide a wealth of ecological education and research opportunities in marine and coastal ecosystems.

Direct Component funds will be used for planning and construction of the proposed Mississippi Aquarium. The proposed Mississippi Aquarium is anticipated to be approximately 60,000 square feet with an estimated capacity of 400,000 gallons and may feature exhibits, attractions, event space, guest services, and marine life services. This project aligns with the economic development, tourism, infrastructure, and research and education priorities developed by the GoCoast 2020 Commission.

This project is eligible under activity (h) Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast Region, including promotion of recreational fishing; and (f) Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure as defined in 31 CFR §34.201, 33 USC §1321 (t)(1)(B)(ii)(I), and 33 USC §1321 (t)(1)(B)(i)(VI) of the RESTORE Act. This activity will be implemented by the City of Gulfport and will comply with the definition of infrastructure in 31 CFR §34.2.

Need

In the wake of recent disasters, Mississippi Gulf Coast lacks diverse tourism opportunities. The Mississippi Gulf Coast is in need of accessible family-related tourism opportunities that offer educational and recreational experiences.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to create an attraction that will result in a more extensive visitor experience in understanding the benefits of a healthy ecosystem and provide additional tourism opportunities on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Objective

- Promote tourism in the Gulf Coast Region by developing the Mississippi Aquarium.

Budget and Leveraging of Funding

Based on a constructability analysis, the total project cost is estimated at \$63,400,000.

- Total RESTORE Direct Component funding requested: \$17,000,000
- Non-RESTORE Leveraged Funding by Mississippi Legislative Appropriations: \$21,000,000
- Non-RESTORE Leveraged Funding by third-party sources: \$25,400,000

Measure of Success and Milestones

- Construction of approximately 60,000 square foot aquarium facility on the Mississippi Gulf Coast to provide a family-related tourism opportunity.

In order to measure the success of this project the following milestones will be put in place:

- Planning and completion of aquarium design.
- Initiation of construction.
- Completion of construction of the Mississippi Aquarium.

Projected Completion Date

Projected completion date is December 2020.

MIP Activity #5: Jackson County Corridor Connector Road – Phase I

Eligibility of Activity Defined in 31 C.F.R. § 34.201

This activity complies with the following eligible activity: *Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure.*

Location

St. Martin/D'Iberville area
Jackson County, MS

Project Summary

The proposed project will provide additional infrastructure that will benefit the economy of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Region by constructing an east-west corridor in Jackson County, running parallel to Interstate 10 (I-10) to the north along Mallett Road/Sangani Boulevard to Cook Road/Highway 609.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast has seen significant development near the intersection of I-10 and I-110 in recent years. Existing transportation networks have also developed in order to support the increase in traffic to the area; however, traffic congestion, system continuity and traveler safety are still pose challenges. The proposed project would provide support to the existing transportation networks by constructing 1.1 miles of road that would connect Mallett Road/Sangani Boulevard to Cook Road. This road would create a corridor providing an additional route in Jackson County to and from the area thereby reducing traffic congestion along the existing transportation networks, enhancing the safety of travelers, and increasing accessibility to existing developments.

Direct Component funds will be used for planning and construction of the proposed corridor connector road. This represents Phase I of a multi-phased project which would construct a multi-lane roadway. A significant amount of work has already been completed, including a full environmental assessment that identified the most advantageous route for the new road. Preliminary engineering and design has been initiated and right-of-way acquisitions are more than 92% complete, with 100% completion expected by the beginning of 2016. This project aligns with the economic development and infrastructure priorities developed by the GoCoast 2020 Commission.

This project is eligible under activity (f) Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure as defined in 31 CFR §34.201 and 33 USC §1321 (t)(1)(B)(i)(VI) of the RESTORE Act. This activity will be implemented by Jackson County and will comply with the definition of infrastructure in 31 CFR §34.2.

Need

Jackson County is in need of improvements to existing transportation networks in the area of intersection of I-10, Highway 67, and Highway 609 to ease traffic congestion, enhance traveler safety, and increase accessibility to existing retail developments.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to improve existing transportation networks.

Objective

- Decrease traffic congestion, enhance traveler safety, and improve access to existing retail developments in the area of I-10, Highway 67 and Highway 609.

Budget

Based on a constructability analysis, the total project cost is estimated at \$10,200,000.

- Total RESTORE Direct Component funding requested: \$10,200,000

Measure of Success and Milestones

- Construction of 1.1 miles of road creating a corridor between Mallett Road/Sangani Boulevard and Cook Road to ease traffic congestion.

In order to measure the success of this project the following milestones will be put in place:

- Completion of design of the of the corridor connector road.
- Initiation of construction of the corridor connector road.
- Completion of the 1.1 miles of corridor connector road.

Projected Completion Date

Projected completion date is December 2019.

MIP Activity #6: Work Ready Community Program

Eligibility of Activity Defined in 31 C.F.R. § 34.201

This activity complies with the following eligible activity: *Workforce development and job creation.*

Location

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
Harrison County, MS

Project Summary

This proposed project will support workforce development and job creation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast by creating the Mississippi Gulf Coast Work Ready Community Program. The project will develop and implement the Work Ready Community Program, including development of the curriculum, recruitment plans, and the work ready credential. The Work Ready Community Program will provide basic skills training that could lead to industry-specific training or potential employment/internship opportunities.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast has a diverse economy that provides a wide range of employment opportunities in industries such as the maritime, hospitality and energy sectors. A trained and educated workforce is critical to supporting and growing industries and the economy. Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC) proposes the Work Ready Community Program which will provide a range of skills development opportunities beginning with basic competency and employment skills, resulting in recognized credentials and the opportunity for additional training. The proposed project has two components; the credential component and the industry training component.

The credential component will be open to all. Over four weeks, participants will receive development skills training (math, reading, writing), employability skills training (interview skills, résumé development), and a skills assessment to help participants determine future training and employment options. A work ready credential, to be developed by MGCCC and local industries, will be awarded to participants that complete this component. Following completion of the credential component, participants may enter the workforce or continue to the industry training component. The industry training component offers participants skills training specific to local industries. Anticipated industries for skills training include, but are not limited to, personal services, advanced manufacturing, and transportation/oil and gas sectors. MGCCC will work with local industry to assist participants with employment opportunities following training completion. The credential component will be offered on a four week cycle at no cost to participants. The industry training component will admit participants twice per year with training programs lasting one to two years, depending on the industry. There will be no cost for the industry training component to participants during the grant period.

Direct Component funds will be used to develop and implement the Work Ready Community Program, including development of the curriculum, recruitment plans, and the work ready credential. The proposed project aligns with Mississippi Works, an economic development initiative of the Governor of Mississippi, the workforce development goals of the GoCoast 2020 Commission and the state's federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act plan.

This project is eligible under activity (d) Workforce development and job creation as defined in 31 CFR §34.201 and 33 USC §1321 (t)(1)(B)(i)(IV) of the RESTORE Act. This project will be implemented by the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.

Need

A workforce training program is needed to support the labor needs of existing and expanding industry sectors on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Purpose

The purpose of the program is to create a workforce training program to cultivate a more highly qualified workforce on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Objective

- Develop a workforce training program to provide basic and industry-specific training to coast residents.

Budget

Total estimated project cost is \$4,000,000.

- Total RESTORE Direct Component funding requested: \$4,000,000

Measure of Success and Milestones

- Implementation of the Work Ready Community Program to support the labor needs of existing and expanding industry sectors.

In order to measure the success of this project the following milestones will be put in place:

- Development of the program curriculum.
- Development of a participant recruiting plan.
- Completion of the program by participants.

Projected Completion Date

Projected completion date is December 2020.

MIP Activity #7: Accreditation Support for William Carey University School of Pharmacy

Eligibility of Activity Defined in 31 C.F.R. § 34.201

This activity falls under the following eligible activity: *Workforce development and job creation.*

Location

William Carey University—Tradition Campus
Harrison County, MS

Project Summary

This proposed project will support workforce development and job creation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast by hiring faculty and staff as part of the accreditation process for the William Carey University School of Pharmacy who will educate and train the future pharmacist workforce.

In January 2015, the Associated Press reported that Mississippi will see a workforce shortage of more than 400 pharmacists over the next two years. To support the need for future pharmacists, William Carey University plans to establish a School of Pharmacy at its Tradition Campus. The first step in establishing a pharmacy program is gaining accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE). The ACPE accreditation application requires a plan describing the proposed pharmacy program curriculum and the faculty and staff who will deliver the curriculum. Faculty and staff will be hired during the accreditation process. The proposed project will support William Carey University in gaining accreditation from ACPE.

Direct Component funds will be used to create jobs required for faculty and staff positions as part of the ACPE accreditation process. The proposed project will support the development of a professional degree program on the Mississippi Gulf Coast that will supplement the pharmacist workforce and is anticipated to create more than 40 faculty and staff jobs. This project aligns with the workforce development priorities developed by the GoCoast 2020 Commission.

This project is eligible under activity (d) Workforce development and job creation as defined in 31 CFR §34.201 and 33 USC §1321 (t)(1)(B)(i)(IV) of the RESTORE Act. This project will be implemented by William Carey University.

Need

It is anticipated that Mississippi will see a workforce shortage of more than 400 pharmacists over the next two years. Development of pharmacist workforce is needed to support this shortage.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to assist William Carey University in gaining accreditation for a pharmacy program. Once accreditation has been achieved, the School of Pharmacy at the Tradition Campus will be constructed and anticipates 60 pharmacy graduates annually, creating new jobs through faculty and support services.

Objective

- Support the development of the pharmacist workforce in the Gulf Coast Region by assisting William Carey University in hiring faculty and staff positions required to obtain accreditation for the School of Pharmacy.

Budget and Leverage of Funding

Total estimated project cost is \$4,000,000.

- Total RESTORE Direct Component funding requested: \$1,000,000
- Non-RESTORE Leveraged Funding by private donations to William Carey University: \$3,000,000

Measure of Success and Milestones

- Receipt of accreditation for the School of Pharmacy from the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education to address a shortage of pharmacists.

The milestones for this project are:

- Hiring appropriate faculty and staff.
- Development of curriculum.
- Receipt of accreditation.

Projected Completion Date

Projected completion date is December 2018.

MIP Activity #8: Off-Bottom Oyster Aquaculture Program

Eligibility of Activity Defined in 31 C.F.R. §34.201

This activity complies with the following eligible activity: *Workforce development and job creation.*

Location

Mississippi Sound
Jackson, Harrison and Hancock Counties, MS

Project Summary

This proposed project will support workforce development and job creation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast by creating an off-bottom oyster aquaculture workforce training program. The program will develop and implement a two phase program for qualified and interested individuals to learn the ecological, economic, and business components of initiating and maintaining an off-bottom aquaculture operation. The Off-Bottom Oyster Aquaculture Program will provide future oystermen and fishermen with the training needed to start an off-bottom oyster aquaculture operation.

The oyster industry along the Mississippi Sound is currently limited to harvestable reefs. Decreased density of harvestable oysters has limited the number of oystermen and fishermen engaged in this economic sector. Diversifying the oyster industry by training oystermen and fishermen in off-bottom aquaculture will support and grow the oyster industry and the overall Mississippi economy. The Off-Bottom Oyster Aquaculture Program will provide training in off-bottom oyster aquaculture operations, including business development and aquaculture methodologies, and will result in hands-on training on state-owned farms. Diversification of the oyster industry using off-bottom aquaculture techniques that use racks, cages, rafts, or longlines to grow oysters has proven very successful for enhancing workforce development and job creation in other states. The proposed project has two phases that will occur over a two year period. Phase 1 includes classroom and field education on aquaculture, business operations and demonstrations of off-bottom aquaculture techniques, while an optional Phase 2 allows participants a more hands-on opportunity to implement aquaculture methodologies.

Phase 1 of the Off-Bottom Oyster Aquaculture Program will be open to qualified and interested individuals who meet age, residency and work experience criteria that will be determined while developing the program curriculum. After completing Phase 1, participants will have the option to continue to Phase 2 of the program or open their own off-bottom oyster aquaculture operation. In Phase 2, participants will utilize off-bottom oyster aquaculture farms to continue training with instruction from the program to refine skills before beginning an individual operation. Oysters grown in the program may be transported to harvestable and non-harvestable oyster grounds to be available for harvest for the next growing season.

Direct Component funds will be used to develop and implement the Off-Bottom Oyster Aquaculture Program, including development of the curriculum and training materials. The proposed project aligns with the seafood, economic development, and workforce development priorities developed by the GoCoast 2020 Commission.

This project is eligible under activity (d) Workforce development and job creation as defined in 31 CFR §34.201 and 33 USC §1321 (t)(1)(B)(i)(IV) of the RESTORE Act. This project will be implemented by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

Need

The oyster industry along the Mississippi Sound is currently limited to harvestable reefs. Decreased density of harvestable oysters has limited the number of oystermen and fishermen engaged in this economic sector. An off-bottom oyster aquaculture program is needed to support training of the seafood and maritime workforce in alternative methods of oyster harvesting on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to create an off-bottom oyster aquaculture program to train and develop a new workforce that is able to support diversifying the oyster industry on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Objective

- Create an off-bottom oyster aquaculture program to provide training in alternative methods of oyster harvesting on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Budget

Total estimated cost is \$1,000,000.

- Total RESTORE Direct Component funding requested: \$1,000,000

Measure of Success and Milestones

- Implementation of the Off-Bottom Oyster Aquaculture Program to support training in alternative oyster harvesting methods.

In order to measure the success of this project the following milestones will be put in place:

- Creation of the program curriculum.
- Development of an off-bottom oyster farm for use in the program.
- Completion of the program by participants.

Projected Completion Date

Projected completion date is December 2020.

MIP Activity #9: Strategic Stream Restoration

Eligibility of Activity Defined in 31 C.F.R. §34.201

This activity complies with the following eligible activity: *Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystem, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region.*

Location

Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties, MS

Project Summary

This proposed project will restore and protect natural resources by supporting strategic stream restoration on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Coastal stream degradation and water quality improvement are pervasive problems across the Mississippi coastal counties. Water quality entering the Mississippi Sound can be improved with strategic stream restoration projects. Common threats and stressors to coastal streams are urban development, invasive species and sedimentation which impact ecological function and decrease water quality moving into the Mississippi Sound.

The proposed project will leverage the Coastal Stream and Habitat Initiative project funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF). The NFWF GEBF project partnered with The Nature Conservancy and Audubon Mississippi to engage stakeholders across the Mississippi landscape to examine and formulate a plan to restore coastal streams. Nine streams were targeted in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties. The outcome of the NFWF GEBF project will be a set of coast-wide restoration strategies and actions for coastal streams to improve ecosystem health, integrity, and downstream water quality. These strategies and actions will be used to inform restoration activities conducted in this proposed project.

Investing in stream restoration provides multiple ecological benefits including water quality improvements, habitat restoration and enhancement, improved storm water management, and enhanced outdoor recreation areas for residents and tourists. Restoration actions associated with stream restoration could encompass but are not limited to, land conservation strategies, habitat restoration actions of invasive species management, reconnecting streams with floodplains, creating riparian buffers of native plant species, as well as wetland creation and restoration within the stream channel. Restoration measures could also include hydrological restoration of original channel shapes, recontouring stream banks, and creating impoundments to reduce scour and erosive power of streams during storm events. Some restoration actions will require additional planning and engineering and design before implementation.

Direct Component funds will be used for planning, engineering and design, and implementation of stream restoration actions on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. This project aligns with the eco-restoration priorities developed by the GoCoast 2020 Commission.

This project is eligible under activity (a) Restoration and protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast Region as defined in 31 CFR §34.201 and 33 USC §1321 (t)(1)(B)(i)(I) of the RESTORE Act. This project will be implemented by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

Need

Coastal streams and watersheds have been impacted by urban development, hydrologic alterations, erosion, invasive species and other factors that have led to a decrease in water quality entering into the Mississippi Sound.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to implement coastal stream restoration strategies in the three Mississippi coastal counties to improve water quality entering the Mississippi Sound, as well as increase ecosystem function of the streams.

Objective

- Reduce water quality impairments entering the Mississippi Sound, enhance ecological function, improve stormwater management, and provide residents and tourists natural areas for outdoor recreation across the Mississippi coastal landscape.

Budget

Total estimated project cost is \$5,000,000.

- Total RESTORE Direct Component funding requested: \$5,000,000

Measure of Success and Milestones

- Enhanced ecological functioning of Mississippi coastal streams.

In order to measure the success of this project the following milestones will be put in place:

- Identification of restoration actions for stream improvements.
- Implementation of applicable restoration actions.

Projected Completion Date

Projected completion date is January 2020.

MIP Activity #10: Planning Assistance – Project Management System

Eligibility of Activity Defined in 31 C.F.R. § 34.201

This activity complies with the following eligible activity: *Planning assistance*.

Location

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
Jackson, Mississippi

Project Summary

This proposed project will provide planning assistance to support the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) in the development of a project management system.

As the state's lead agency for oil spill recovery and restoration, MDEQ oversees numerous projects carried out in the Gulf Coast Region. Projects generate information pertaining to proposals, planning, funding, development, correspondence, and monitoring. The proposed project management system will support the need for a platform to manage and access project information, and provide for the collection of information for projects primarily designed to restore and protect the Gulf Coast Region.

Direct Component funds will be used to provide planning assistance to MDEQ for the development of a project management system. Requirements of the system will be developed to fit the needs of Direct Component projects. The system will be used for projects funded outside of the Direct Component. If unique requirements are identified, the associated costs will be allocated to the projects/funding sources that will benefit.

This project is eligible under activity (j) Planning assistance as defined in 31 CFR §34.201 and 33 USC §1321 (t)(1)(B)(i)(VIII) of the RESTORE Act. This project will be implemented by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and will comply with the definition of planning assistance in 31 CFR §34.2.

Need

Restoration projects will generate large amounts of information and data such as proposals, grant applications, grant awards and contracts, financial information, project designs, and monitoring information. To assist in the management of projects and information, MDEQ needs a dedicated system designed to capture and store project information.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide planning assistance to MDEQ to develop a dedicated and integrated software system designed to assist MDEQ in the review of grant applications, award of grants, monitoring of grant awards, audit compliance, and management of project information.

Objectives

- Collect and organize project information for management of projects primarily designed to restore and protect the Gulf Coast Region.

Budget

Total estimated cost is \$500,000.

- Total RESTORE Direct Component funding requested: \$500,000

Measures of Success and Milestones

- Creation of the project management system that is operational and generates reports.

In order to measure the success of this project the following milestones will be put in place:

- Process design and documentation.
- Software design.
- Development and testing of the system.

Projected Completion Date

Projected completion date is June 2021.

MIP Activity #11: Planning Assistance – MIP Amendment Development

This proposed project will provide planning assistance to support the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) in the development of MIP Amendments.

Planning assistance will be used to support MDEQ in the development of MIP amendments. The RESTORE Act requires the state to develop a MIP describing the projects, programs, and activities for which Mississippi will seek funding under the Direct Component. Amendments to an existing MIP will be developed as additional funding for projects becomes available. Activities involved in the development of a MIP include identifying and evaluating potential projects, programs, and activities for eligibility, development of project components, review of reasonableness, stakeholder and public engagement, and development of the MIP narrative.

Direct Component funds will be used to provide planning assistance for the development of MIP amendments.

This project is eligible under activity (j) Planning assistance as defined in 31 CFR §34.201 and 33 USC §1321 (t)(1)(B)(i)(VIII) of the RESTORE Act. This project will be implemented by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

Need

As additional funds become available under the Direct Component, amendments to an existing MIP will be needed to identify projects, programs and activities for funding.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide planning assistance to MDEQ to develop amendments to an existing MIP.

Objectives

- Support the development of amendments to an existing MIP as needed.

Budget

Total estimated cost is \$400,000.

- Total RESTORE Direct Component funding requested: \$400,000

Measures of Success and Milestones

- Completion of amendments to an existing MIP that meets requirements.

In order to measure the success of this project the following milestones will be put in place:

- Identification of eligible projects, programs and activities.
- Engagement of the public and stakeholders.
- Public comment period.
- Completion and submission to Treasury.

Projected Completion Date

Projected completion date is June 2021.