

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science, Observation,
Monitoring, and Technology Program

NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program



*Virtual
Engagement Sessions
2013*

Session Outline

- **Program overview**
- **Open question and answer**
- **Questions for participants**

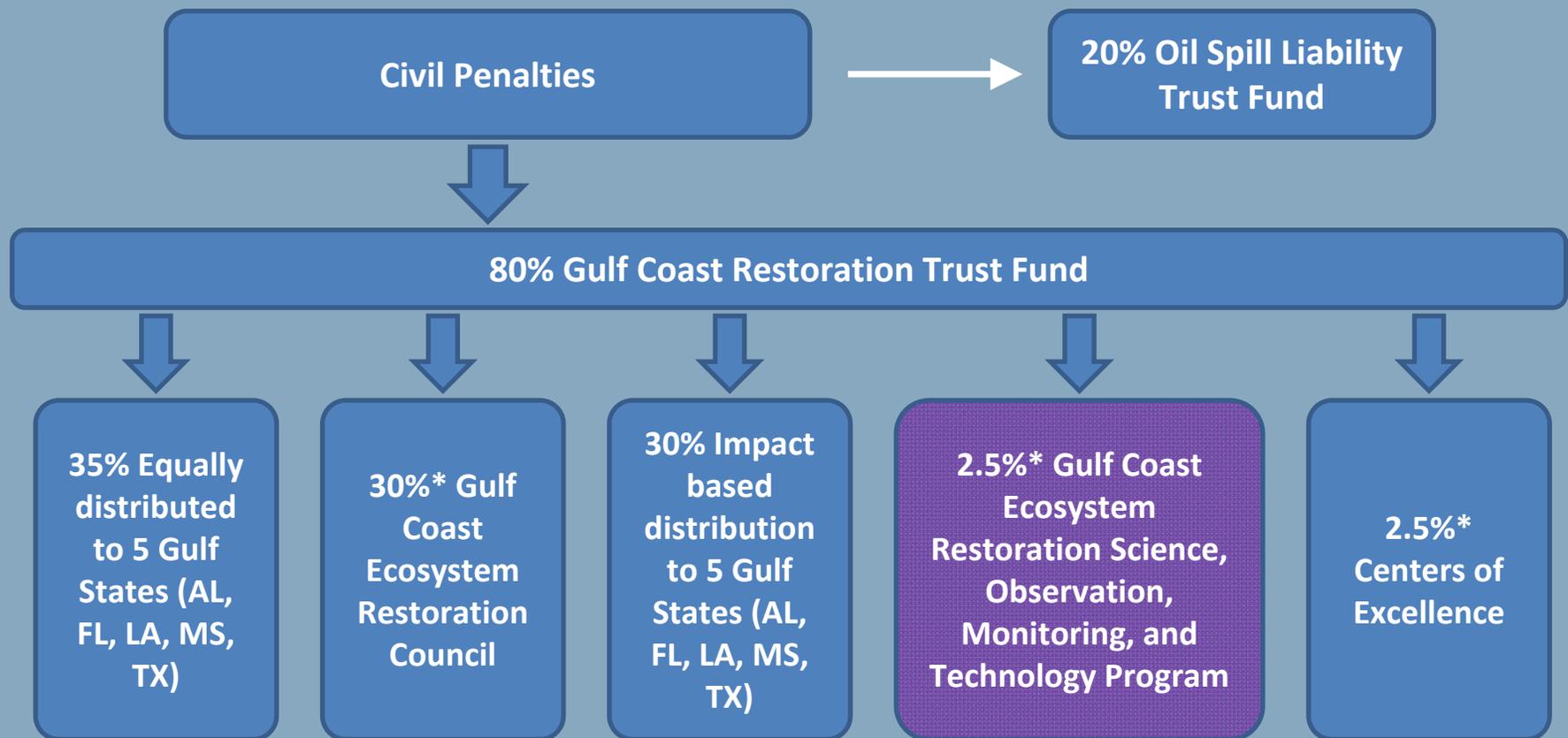
What is the Program?

- Following the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, Congress passed the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies (RESTORE) of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012; P.L. 112-141.
 - Under Section 1604, NOAA has been designated with responsibility to establish a Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science, Observation, Monitoring, and Technology Program (NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program)
- Legislative Intent: “To carry out research, observation, and monitoring to support the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem, fish stocks, fish habitat, and the recreational, commercial, and charter fishing industry in the Gulf of Mexico.”

Legislative Requirements

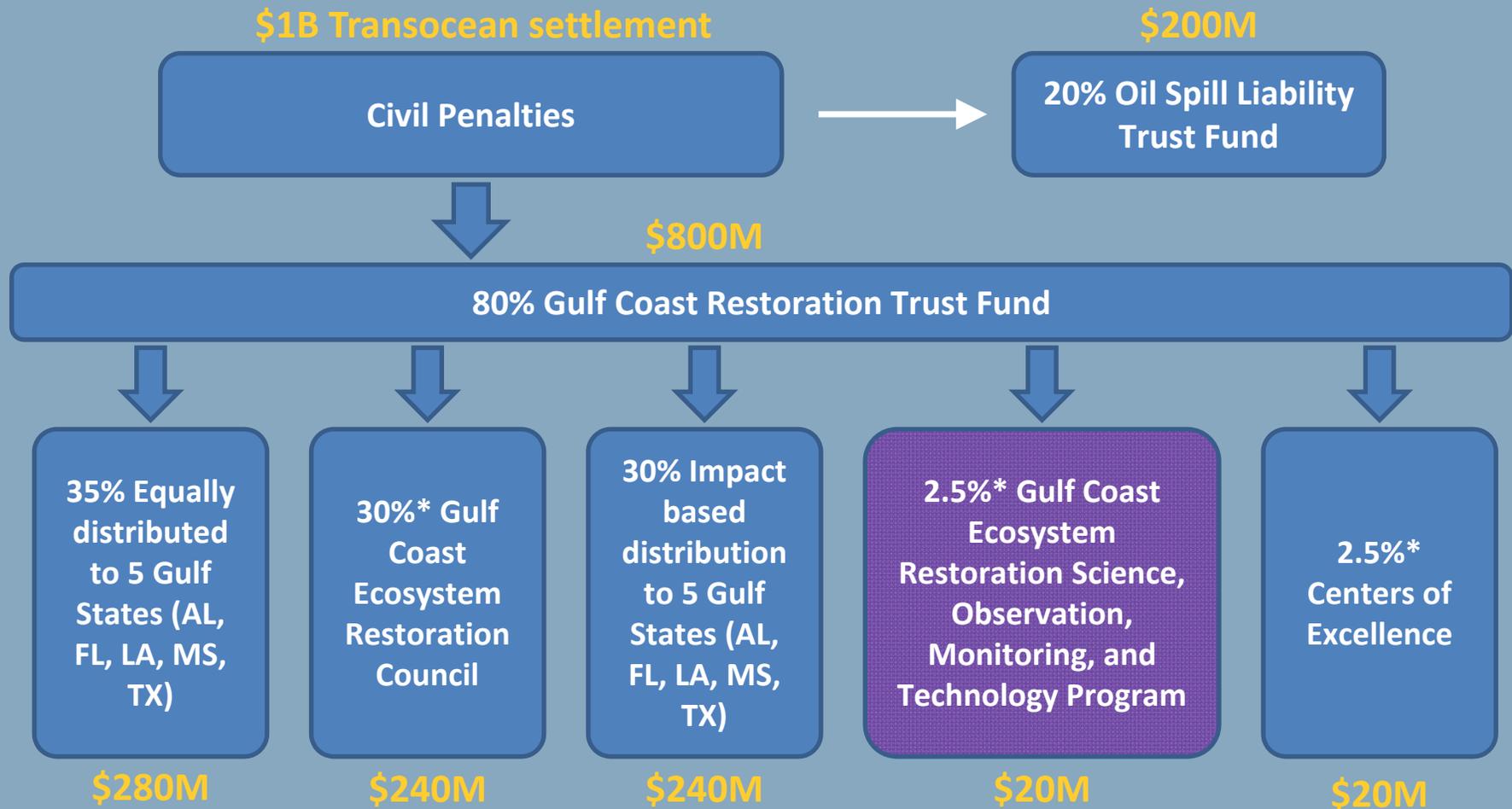
- Coordinate with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Consult with Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC)
- Priority shall be given to integrated, long-term projects that
 - build on, or are coordinated with, related research activities
 - address current or anticipated marine ecosystem, fishery, or wildlife management information needs
- Funds may not be used for
 - any existing or planned research led by NOAA, unless agreed to in writing by the grant recipient
 - Implementation of existing regulations or initiation of new regulations by NOAA
 - Development of or approval of a fisheries catch share program

Distribution of Clean Water Act Civil Penalties per the RESTORE Act



***Supplemented by interest generated by the Trust Fund (50% to Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, 25% to Science Program, 25% to Centers of Excellence)**

Distribution of Clean Water Act Civil Penalties per the RESTORE Act



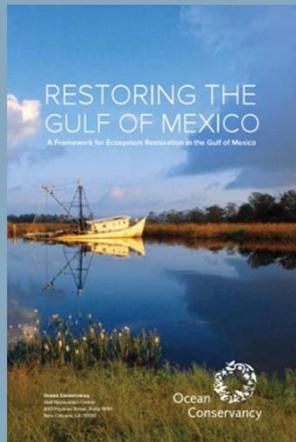
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Oversight and Responsibility

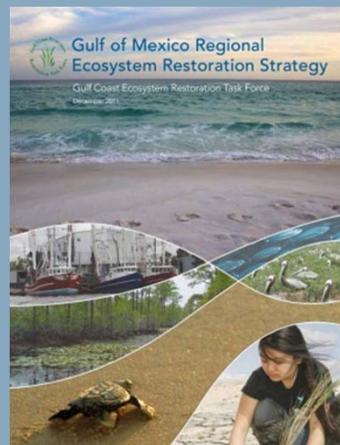
- Administratively located within NOAA's National Ocean Service
 - Gulf-based director (Russ Beard – acting)
 - Program staff from across NOAA and USFWS
 - Program implementation (engagement and science planning)
- Internal oversight board of senior NOAA and US Fish and Wildlife Service science leadership
 - Provide guidance on Program implementation
- External advisory body
 - Working Group under NOAA's Science Advisory Board
- Independent external review board
 - Assess program's effectiveness every 3-5 years

Engagement, Coordination and Development of Science Plan

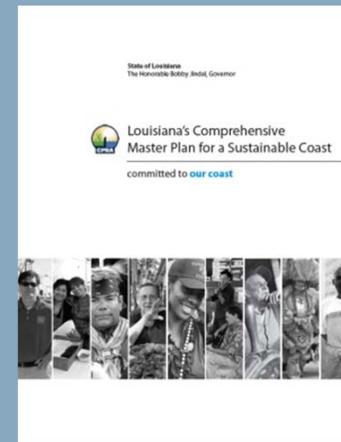
NOAA has conducted over 100 meetings with stakeholders including representatives from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, universities, federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations for input.



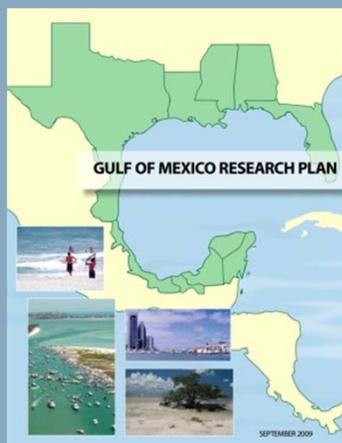
The Ocean Conservancy



The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force

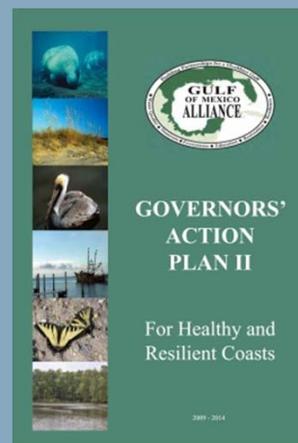


Louisiana Comprehensive Master Plan

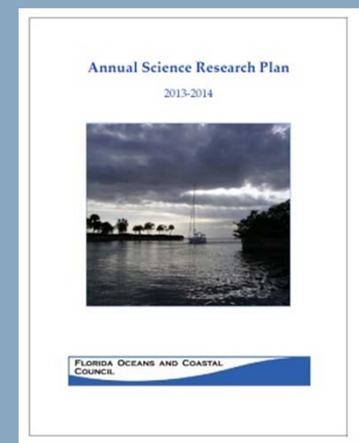


Sea Grant Research Plan

Gulf Governors Action Plan



Florida Ocean Council – Annual Science Research Plan



The Program goals, focus areas, science & research priorities have and will continue to be informed by existing plans and activities addressing the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem.

Goals (proposed)



Support Healthy, Diverse & Resilient Coastal Habitats



Promote Healthy, Diverse & Sustainable Living Coastal & Marine Resources



Support Sustainably Managed Fisheries



Support Healthy, Sustainable, & Resilient Coastal Communities able to adapt to a changing environment

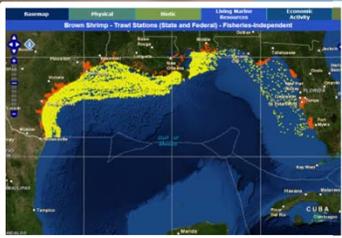


Support Healthy and Well-managed Offshore Environments

Focus Areas



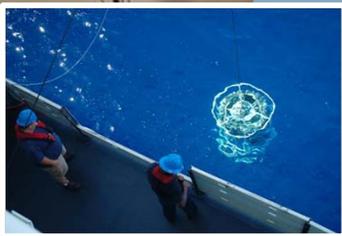
“State of Health” of the Gulf, incorporating environmental, socio-economic, & human well-being benefits & elements



“Integrated analysis and synthesis of existing and new data” to advance the state of ecological knowledge through the search for patterns and principles



“Ecosystem processes, functioning and connectivity” through integrative field and laboratory studies



“Holistic approaches to observing & monitoring” with advanced technologies to monitor fisheries & other natural resources, & data integration tools focused on the observing needs in the Gulf of Mexico

Short-term Priorities (proposed)

- Synthesis of current scientific understanding and management needs
- Conceptual models of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem showing linkages among the system components
- Assess initial needs/requirements for a robust Gulf of Mexico observing system, building upon currently available observing assets and requirements in the Gulf



Input from Previous Engagement

- Facilitated public engagement session prior to the Gulf of Mexico Alliance All Hands Meeting; June 24, 2013, Tampa, FL
 - Summary report of comments and input released on our website
- Consensus on several points:
 - **Clarification:** Many of the participants felt they needed more information about aspects of the NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program
 - **Coordination:** A key theme for all the groups was the need for the NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program to act in coordination with other Gulf of Mexico initiatives
 - **Communication:** The participants want to be kept informed about the NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program
 - **Accountability:** Many of the people expressed the desire that the NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program assist in monitoring the progress of the Gulf of Mexico restoration efforts



Current and Future Activities

Current

- Seeking input on short-term priorities
- Developing Science Plan Framework
- Seeking input on Science Plan Framework

Future

- Finalize short-term priorities
- Develop and release Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) to address short-term priorities
- Develop Science Plan

NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program

Contact Information

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Thank You

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