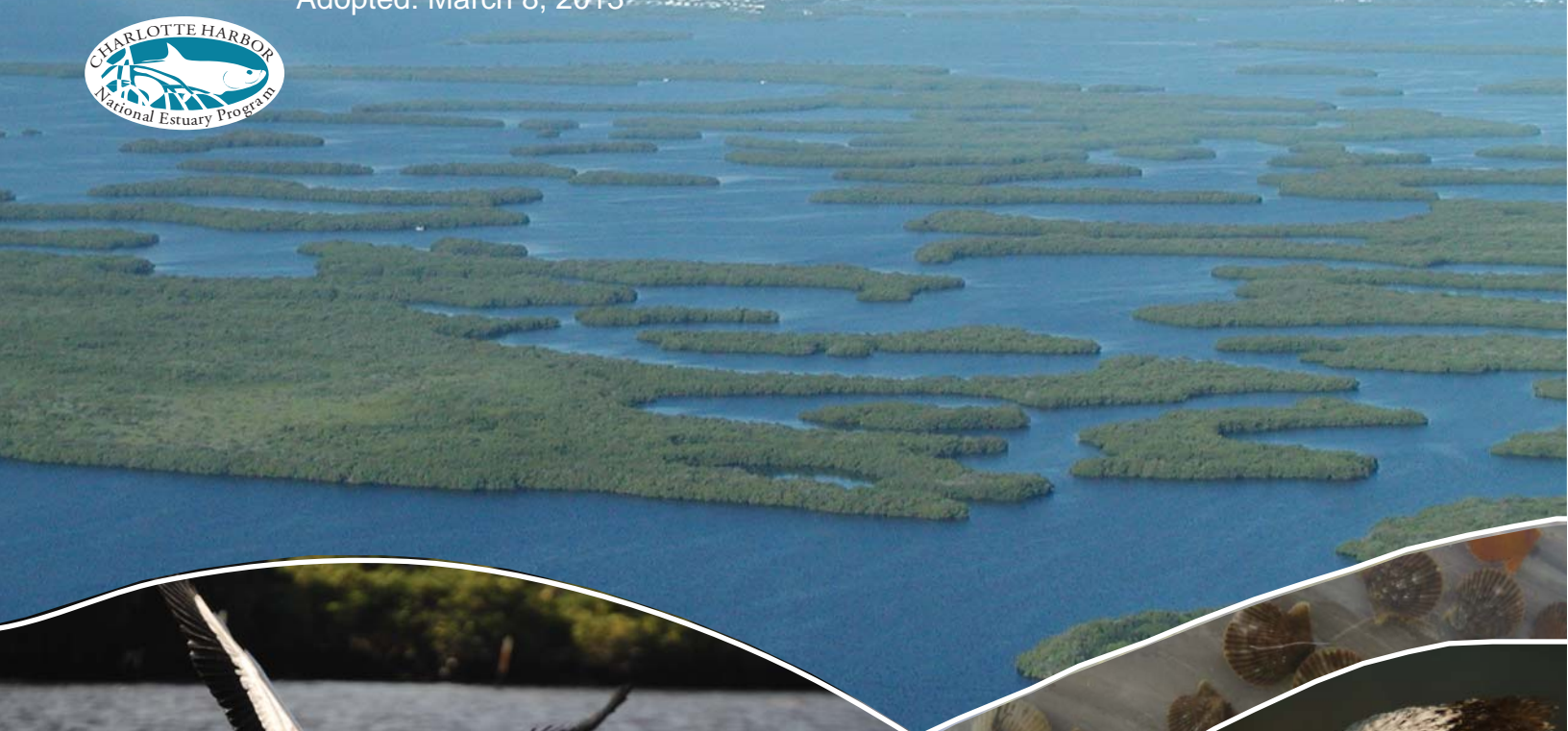


Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan



Joint Florida Gulf National Estuary Programs

Adopted: March 8, 2013





Cover Photo Credits:

- Mangrove Islands:* Lisa Beever, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
Wood stork in flight: Whitney Gray, Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
Juvenile scallops: Judy Ott, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
Billy Creek Filter Marsh: Lisa Beever, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
Royal tern: Bryon Chamberlin, Tampa Bay Estuary Program volunteer
Loggerhead turtle hatching: Eve Haverfield, Turtle Time, Inc.
Young people restoring a salt marsh: Stephanie Sherman, Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	1
2. Introduction	5
3. Restore and Conserve Habitats	13
4. Restore Water Quality	17
5. Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	21
6. Enhance Community Resilience	25
7. Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy	27
8. Recommendations	29
Appendix	33

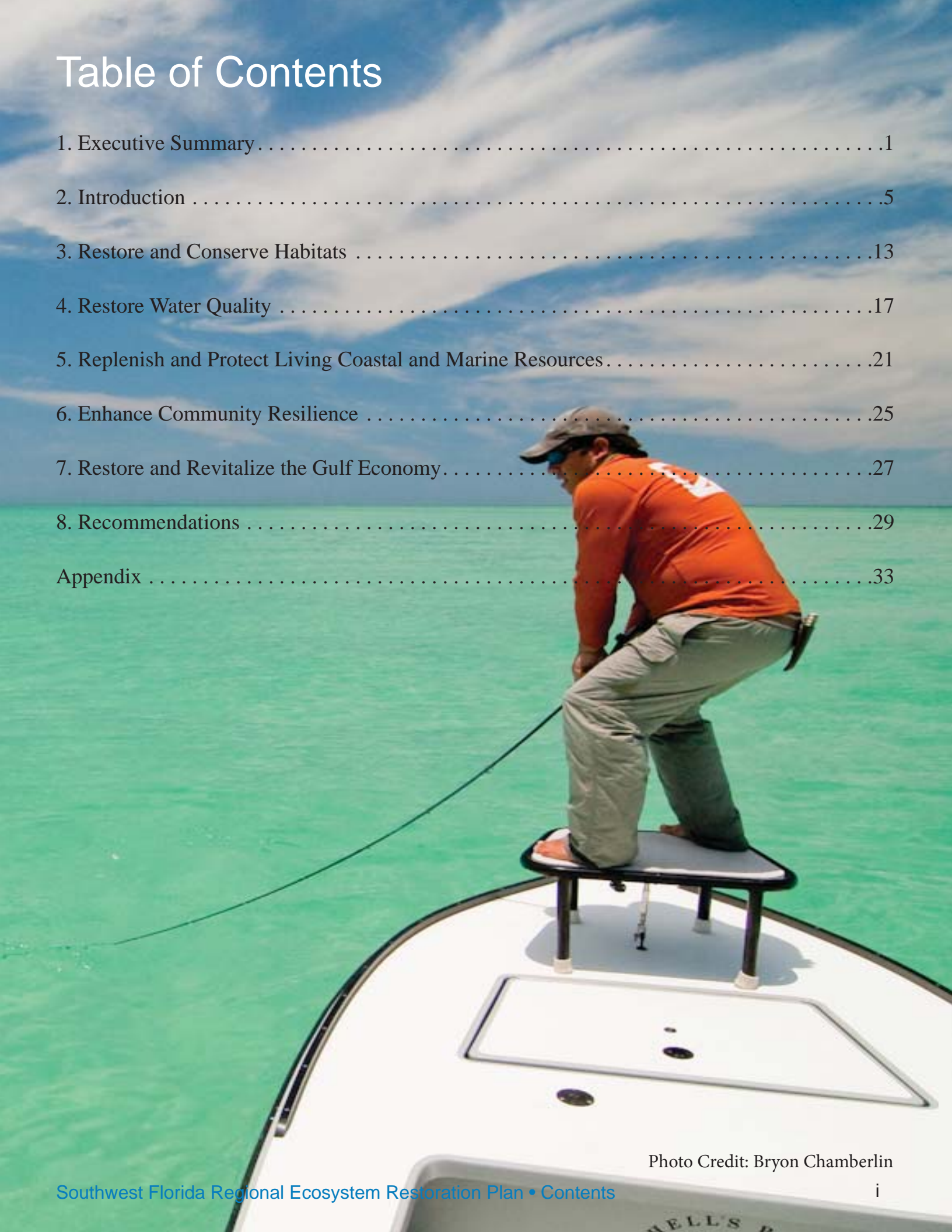


Photo Credit: Bryon Chamberlin



March 8, 2013

Dear Members of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council:

The National Estuary Programs (NEPs) were authorized by Congress in the Water Quality Act of 1987 with the purpose of developing and implementing science-based Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (CCMPs) for estuaries of national significance. In Southwest Florida, three contiguous estuaries of national prominence (Tampa Bay, Sarasota Bay and Charlotte Harbor) are vital to providing resiliency to Gulf of Mexico marine resources.

Last August, the three Southwest Florida National Estuary Programs agreed to develop one list of priority environmental projects for consideration by the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council and the State of Florida. Cities, counties, non-profit organizations, universities and other institutions were invited to submit project information. The 280 proposals received were rigorously reviewed, vetted and ranked by technical and science advisers, using criteria defined by the Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem Restoration Strategy and the RESTORE Act. The final regional ranked list was approved on March 8, 2013 by the elected officials and agency representatives comprising our Policy Boards.

The projects proposed herein expand on work identified in the CCMPs, which are specifically outlined in the RESTORE Act as funding mechanisms for implementation. The Southwest Florida NEPs have a proven track record of success in protecting and restoring Southwest Florida ecosystems and Gulf of Mexico resources.

Our Boards found that putting forward one list of environmental projects will provide a unified vision that presents the priority environmental restoration and research needs of more than half of Florida's Gulf Coast (stretching from the Big Bend region to the Everglades) and approximately 20% of the total US Gulf coast.

We are pleased to provide the attached *Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan*, for your consideration for inclusion in the Council's Comprehensive Plan. Activities in the Regional Plan include large-scale coastal habitat restoration, land acquisition, and water quality enhancement, as well as environmental monitoring, assessment and education programs. More than 100 projects, submitted by 50 entities, are included in the highly ranked projects recommended for the first 3 years of funding. Also included is a link to the searchable electronic database of all the projects and submitted project summary forms.

The three Southwest Florida NEPs offer our continued assistance to your teams. Our federally authorized programs and CCMPs provide a means of enhancing coordination and implementation of the Gulf Council's Comprehensive Plan in our areas. We look forward to working with you and your teams in continuing the restoration and recovery of the vibrant and abundant natural resources of our coasts and Gulf.

Holly Greening, Director

Tampa Bay Estuary Program

hgreening@tbep.org

Mark Alderson, Director

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

mark@sbep.org

Lisa B. Beever, Director

Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

lbeever@swfrpc.org



Photo by Stephanie Sherman,
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

1. Executive Summary

The *Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan* (Regional Plan) was prepared by the three National Estuary Program (NEPs) on Florida’s Gulf Coast: Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP), Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) and the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP). The Regional Plan was developed to advise the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council) and the State of Florida regarding restoration needs in Southwest Florida as they make Gulf-wide decisions under the 2012 RESTORE Act. Furthermore, the plan provides a regional vision for restoration needs for any partnership interested in the health of Southwest Florida’s natural resources.

The Regional Plan is based on the December 2011 *Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy* (Restoration Strategy) and the January 2013 document, *The Path Forward to Restoring the Gulf Coast* (Path Forward). The Path Forward describes how the Council will develop a Comprehensive Plan for Gulf Coast Restoration, required under the RESTORE Act to oversee the spending of the Clean Water Act fine from the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill. This Regional Plan implements the Restoration Strategy precisely as envisioned.

Florida Gulf Coast NEPs used their broad community-based partnerships with citizens, scientists, resource managers, businesses, industries and elected officials to formulate the Regional Plan. Fifty-three (53) organizations submitted 280 restoration and related projects, totaling three billion dollars. Projects were organized according to Restoration Strategy goals and major actions. Projects were ranked according to RESTORE Act prescribed criteria, quality of the applications and a small adjustment for the submitting organizations’ top two projects to provide for geographic distribution. The ranking resulted in a 3-year priority plan, a 10-year plan and list of project recommended for other funding sources.

The Florida Gulf Coast NEPs are required by Section 320 of the Clean Water Act to adopt Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (CCMPs). The CCMP are federally approved, authorized and required by Congress. The Regional Plan implements the CCMPs utilizing partnerships as specified in the Clean Water Act.

The five overarching goals for Gulf Coast restoration are to:

- Restore and Conserve Habitat
- Restore Water Quality
- Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources
- Enhance Community Resilience
- Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy

Table 1: 3-Year Plan Summary, \$10 Million per Project Cap Applied

Goal	Major Action	Number of Projects	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	3-Year Total capped
Restore and Conserve Habitat	Land Acquisition	7	30,450,000	15,465,000	946,450	46,861,450
Restore and Conserve Habitat	Coastal Habitat Restoration	30	4,625,000	17,468,000	14,069,555	36,162,555
Restore Water Quality	Nutrients/ Dissolved Oxygen	13	20,850,000	21,196,904	38,838,100	80,885,004
Restore Water Quality	Stormwater	16	5,231,918	6,788,306	8,656,180	20,676,404
Restore Water Quality	Freshwater Flows	13	14,198,000	11,073,000	11,200,000	36,471,000
Restore Water Quality	Water Quality Monitoring	12	12,964,397	3,233,003	2,877,229	19,074,629
Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	Replenish Animal Population	2	5,860,277	211,350	216,801	6,288,428
Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	Reefs and Other Coastal Environments	13	5,830,376	15,377,400	5,010,263	26,218,039
Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species	11	784,860	1,686,806	1,082,208	3,553,874
Enhance Community Resilience	Comprehensive Coastal Programs	1	100,000	200,000	200,000	500,000
Enhance Community Resilience	Analytical Tools for Planning	1	200,000	200,000	100,000	500,000
Enhance Community Resilience	Environmental Education	9	1,242,876	1,419,912	2,072,010	4,734,798
Total		128	102,337,704	94,319,681	85,268,796	281,926,181

The 3-Year Regional Plan recommends a ten million dollar cap on requested funds for each individual project submitted. In doing so, geographic distribution of projects are enhanced without overwhelming anticipated funding. At the time of this writing, rules from the Treasury Department concerning RESTORE Act funds have not been issued, the Clean Water Act fine amounts have not been identified and additional guidance from the Council concerning funding is not available. Therefore, we present both requested amounts and capped amounts within the Regional Plan.

Table 1 summarizes the Regional Plan, with a ten million dollar cap on projects. One-hundred and twenty eight of the 280 restoration and related projects were recommended for the 3-year plan. Projects are distributed among each of the Restoration Strategy four goals and supports the fifth goal, “Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy” adopted by the Council.

Table 2: 3-Year Plan Summary, based on original requested funding

Goal	Major Action	Number of Projects	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	3-Year Total uncapped
Restore and Conserve Habitat	Land Acquisition	7	58,750,000	44,203,280	20,946,450	123,899,730
Restore and Conserve Habitat	Coastal Habitat Restoration	30	5,325,000	18,268,000	15,569,555	39,162,555
Restore Water Quality	Nutrients/ Dissolved Oxygen	13	33,850,000	229,596,904	313,838,100	577,285,004
Restore Water Quality	Stormwater	16	5,231,918	6,788,306	8,656,180	20,676,404
Restore Water Quality	Freshwater Flows	13	23,198,000	211,073,000	206,670,000	440,941,000
Restore Water Quality	Water Quality Monitoring	12	12,964,397	13,233,003	2,877,229	29,074,629
Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	Replenish Animal Population	2	5,860,277	211,350	216,801	6,288,428
Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	Reefs and Other Coastal Environments	13	5,830,376	9,127,400	30,010,263	44,968,039
Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species	11	784,860	1,686,806	1,082,208	3,553,874
Enhance Community Resilience	Comprehensive Coastal Programs	1	100,000	200,000	200,000	500,000
Enhance Community Resilience	Analytical Tools for Planning	1	200,000	200,000	100,000	500,000
Enhance Community Resilience	Environmental Education	9	1,242,876	1,419,912	2,072,010	4,734,798
Total		128	153,337,704	536,007,961	602,238,796	1,291,584,461

Table 2 summarizes the 3-Year Regional Plan, with projects receiving full requested funding. Full funding is 4.5 times the cost with the cap in place. Three projects account for \$846,400,000 (84%) of the difference between Table 1 and Table 2: C43 Reservoir (\$395,000,000), Pasco County Reclaimed Water (\$328,400,000), and Lee County Conversion of Septic to Central Sewer (\$123,000,000).



TBEP

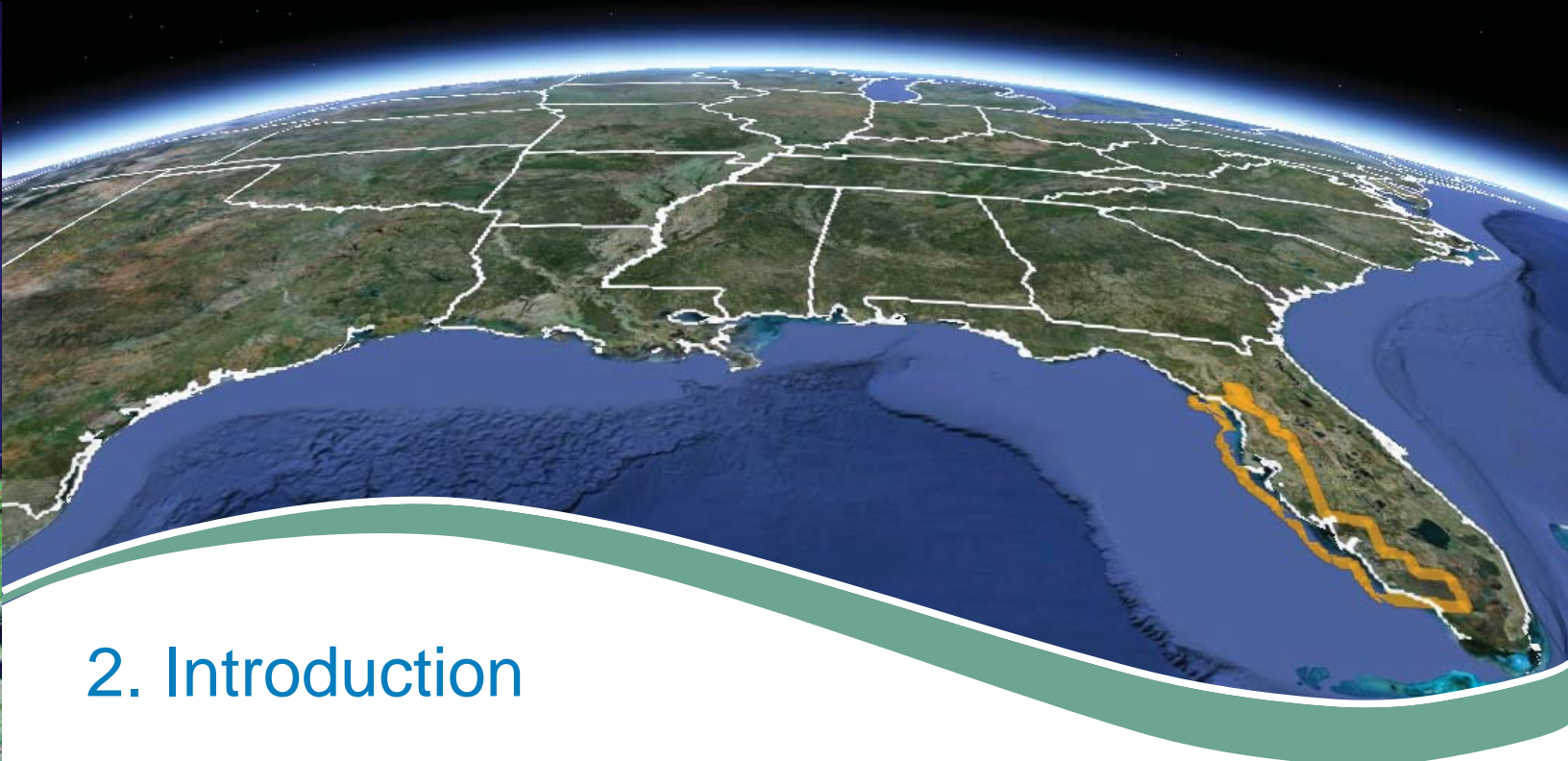
CHNEP

SBEP

RBNERR

Gulf of Mexico

Map 1



2. Introduction

Southwest Florida is approximately 20% of the Gulf of Mexico coast. It is an important and diverse location on the Gulf, extending from temperate, springfed systems near the Big Bend and south to the subtropics and the Everglades. This area includes three estuaries of national significance as well as a National Estuarine Research Reserve. The Clean Water Act Amendments of 1987, section 320, created the National Estuary Program (NEP) which are based on designated estuaries of national significance. The Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (RBNERR) is one of 28 reserves established through the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, as a partnership program between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the coastal states. All are authorized federal programs. Furthermore, NEPs are required by the Clean Water Act to adopt Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (CCMPs). The CCMPs are federally approved, authorized and required by Congress. The three NEPs on Florida's Gulf Coast include Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP), Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) and the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP). NEPs are partnership programs which work with citizens, scientists, resource managers, agency heads and elected officials to develop local solutions to complex environmental problems. They are both consensus-based and science-driven.

Through their partnerships, which include the Southwest Florida Water Management District and Everglades Restoration, the NEPs coordinated and prepared a Regional Plan for southwest Florida, from Levy County south to include Collier County. This area is shown with an orange boundary in the maps to the left and above.

The *Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan* (Regional Plan) is based on the *Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy* (Restoration Strategy). The Restoration Strategy was prepared by the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force in accordance with Executive Order 13554. The executive order was issued on October 5, 2010, in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon disaster and oil spill earlier that year. The strategy states "The next and most important step is to prioritize projects that put the strategy into action and generate substantive results." This Regional Plan implements the restoration strategy precisely as envisioned. The Florida Gulf NEPs have evoked their partnership of people, communities, businesses, industries and other stakeholders invested in the Gulf of Mexico to identify and prioritize restoration needs. The Regional Plan implements the CCMPs utilizing partnerships as specified in the Clean Water Act.

The five overarching goals for Gulf Coast restoration are to:

- Restore and Conserve Habitat
- Restore Water Quality
- Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources
- Enhance Community Resilience
- Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy

Background

The National Estuary Program (NEP) was authorized by Congress in the Water Quality Act of 1987 with the purpose of developing and implementing science based Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (CCMPs) for estuaries of national significance. In southwest Florida, three contiguous estuaries of national prominence (Tampa Bay, Sarasota Bay and Charlotte Harbor) are vital to the providing resiliency to Gulf of Mexico marine resources. The projects proposed herein expand on work in implementing CCMPs as specifically outlined in the Restore Act as funding mechanisms for implementation. The southwest Florida NEPs have a proven track record of success in protecting and restoring southwest Florida ecosystems and Gulf of Mexico.

Geography

The Regional Plan was developed for southwest Florida (see map 1) extending from Levy through Collier County. The area includes three estuaries of national significance, the Springs Coast to north and portions of the Everglades system to the south. Eleven of the twenty three coastal counties in Florida are represented in this plan. The coastline approximates 20% of the US Gulf of Mexico shoreline. Scientists have suggested this coastline to be of substantial importance with respect to Gulf of Mexico fishery for spawning and juvenile fish habitat, as well as for coastal resiliency.

There are two major estuaries (Charlotte Harbor and Tampa Bay) with necklaces of barrier islands forming lagoon systems (Sarasota, Lemon and Naples Bay) throughout the region. There are seven inlets between Tampa Bay and Charlotte Harbor alone providing valuable spawning grounds for recreational and commercial fishery. Sport fishing in these lagoons and estuaries is among the best in the United States. The barrier islands and coastal mainland are mostly developed from north Tampa to Charlotte Harbor and south. Land acquisition programs in Florida have preserved fairly large tracks with remaining open lands at a premium.

Key Ecological Problems and Issues

Priority problems from the Southwest Florida NEP CCMPs include water quality degradation, hydrologic alteration and habitat degradation. All three NEP have based water quality initiatives on living resources such as seagrass. Hydrology and saltwater habitats represent strategic components of the CCMPs.

Nutrients/Seagrass:

Nutrient enrichment resulting in loss of seagrass habitat is a persisting problem throughout the region that is being addressed through the CCMPs. In response, the three NEPs have developed numeric nutrient criteria (NNC) and pollutant loading goals to meet established seagrass targets regionally; these NNC have been approved by Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and U. S. Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) during the last calendar year. Projects proposed in this plan continue efforts to manage and reduce nitrogen to meet the NNC and established seagrass targets. Since the establishment of the NEPs, there have been major increases in seagrass and wetland habitats regionally due to nutrient management and wetland restoration initiatives.

Hydrology: In the 1920s, drainage districts were established throughout southwest Florida to effectively drain freshwater marsh. In the Sarasota area for example, ditches approximating 10 foot deep were dug to the center of extensive sawgrass marshes and ponds to eliminate the marsh for agricultural uses; and later development. Similar drainage networks were created throughout the region changing natural watersheds and water flow. As development occurred, these networks were used to transport stormwater. Reestablishing natural water flow is a priority for improving Gulf resiliency.

Saltwater Wetlands: Coastal developments (canal communities) were constructed throughout the region during the 1950s and 1960s eliminating valuable mangrove habitats. Many of the mangrove wetlands were mosquito



Photo by: Marea Dorian,
Dorian Photography, Inc.

Southwest Florida NEPs have linked water quality improvements to seagrass restoration.

ditched and fragmented reducing ecological function. Protecting existing natural wetland systems and restoring the ecological function of altered wetlands is a priority in the CCMPs. Establishing the ecological balance of available habitats throughout the Bay's is also a feature of the CCMPs – maintaining the balance – to maximize productivity.

Goals

The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council) was set up by the RESTORE Act to oversee the spending of the Clean Water Act fine from the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The Council is required by the Act to develop a Comprehensive Plan for Gulf Coast Restoration by July 6, 2013. On January 29, 2013, the Council released *The Path Forward to Restoring the Gulf Coast* (Path Forward) as an initial step in developing a more detailed Comprehensive Plan. The initial Comprehensive Plan aims to provide an integrated approach to Gulf restoration by setting out high-level guidance focused on restoration of natural resources and the jobs, communities, and economies those resources support. To provide this guidance, the initial Comprehensive Plan will adopt and expand on the four overarching Task Force Strategy goals:

- Restore and Conserve Habitat;
- Restore Water Quality;
- Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources; and
- Enhance Community Resilience.

In addition to these four goals, the initial Comprehensive Plan will include a fifth goal:

- Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy.

This fifth goal will focus on reviving and supporting a sustainable Gulf economy to ensure that those expenditures by the States authorized in the Act under the State allocation and the oil spill restoration impact allocation can be considered in the context of comprehensive restoration. Together, these five goals provide the overarching framework for an integrated approach for Gulf region-wide restoration.

The goals are consistent with the Florida Gulf NEP's CCMPs, required under the Clean Water Act.

Process to Develop the Regional Plan

In December 2012, a joint meeting of the decision-making bodies of the three Florida Gulf NEPs (Policy Board or Policy Committee) approved a process to develop a *Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan* (Regional Plan), for consideration by the State, Counties and Federal Council as an element of the Council's Comprehensive Plan. Key elements of the Joint Policy Board process included:

- The geographic scope of the Regional Plan stretches from the coastal counties from Levy through Collier County
- Ranking and prioritizing projects submitted for consideration should utilize the RESTORE Council's criteria and the Florida state priorities identified in the Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy
- Prioritizing projects should also take into consideration geographic distribution of projects and requested funds
- A seven-member Work Group, consisting of the three NEP Directors, a member of each of the Management Boards (of resource managers) and a Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) representative, was charged with developing recommendations on priorities and ranks, and assigning preliminary scores (High, Medium, Low, or Recommended for other funding sources) for consideration by the Joint Management Boards.
- Joint Management Board recommendations were provided to the Joint Policy Board, for their final decision.

Publicly-noticed meetings of the Work Group were held on January 28 and 29, and February 11, 2013 to initiate and complete the selection process. The Joint Management Board recommended approval of the process on February 20, 2013. The Joint Policy Board approved the process and resulting plan on March 8, 2013. All meetings were noticed (1) in the Florida Administrative Register, (2) through direct notice to the three National Estuary Program Board members and all applicants and (3) on websites of the three NEPs.

Southwest Florida National Estuary Program Policy Board Members

Tampa Bay Estuary Program

Hon. Steve Kornell, City of St. Petersburg	Hon. Betsy Benac, Manatee County
Hon. Paul Gibson, City of Clearwater	Hon. Kevin Beckner, Hillsborough County
Hon. Mary Mulhern, City of Tampa	Ms. Wendy Griffin, Southwest Florida Water Management District
Hon. Charlie Justice, Pinellas County	Mr. Tom McGill, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Hon. Michael Gallen, Manatee County	Hon. Lynn Larsen, Town of Longboat Key
Hon. Charles Hines, Sarasota County	Mr. Jeff Greenwell, Florida Dept of Environmental Protection
Hon. Patrick Roth, City of Bradenton	Mr. Albert Joerger, Southwest Florida Water Management District
Hon. Suzanne Atwell, City of Sarasota	Ms. Becky Allenbach, US EPA, Region 4

Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

Mr. Doug Mundrick, US EPA, Region 4	Mr. Jon Iglehart, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Hon. Joseph Fink, City of Arcadia	Hon. Bill Truex, Charlotte County
Hon. Adrian Jackson, City of Bartow	Hon. Grady Johnson, Hardee County
Hon. Stephen McIntosh, City of Bonita Springs	Hon. Larry Kiker, Lee County
Ms. Connie Jarvis, City of Cape Coral	Hon. Michael Gallen, Manatee County
Hon. Joseph Kosinski, Town of Fort Myers Beach	Mr. Jeff Spence, Polk County
Hon. Cheryl Cook, City of North Port	Hon. Charles Hines, Sarasota County
Hon. Kim Devine, City of Punta Gorda	Ms. Patricia M. Steed, Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Hon. Mick Denham, City of Sanibel	Dr. Philip Stevens, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
Hon. David Sherman, City of Venice	Mr. Phil Flood, South Florida Water Management District
Mr. Mike Britt, City of Winter Haven	Mr. Don McCormick, Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
	Mr. Bryan Beswick, Southwest Florida Water Management District

A step-wise process was implemented, with the goal of selecting projects with the highest degree of meeting RESTORE Act criteria and improving the quality of Southwest Florida coastal and Gulf natural resources.

Step 1. Submitted projects were sorted by Restoration Strategy goals and major actions.

Step 2. Projects not directly addressing RESTORE Act criteria were recommended for other sources of funding. Project types recommended for other sources of funding included:

- Recreational amenities, boat ramps, navigational canal dredging
- Compressed gas station, biosolids to energy
- Public safety initiatives
- Research: Funding research institutes, climate change threats, sediment baseline or contamination studies (NRDA); creating research institutes; C-43 research element;
- Flooding relief, drainage
- Operating/maintenance costs for: lake management; stormwater facilities; street sweeping materials management; septic system maintenance; upgrade wastewater treatment plant equipment or collection systems; fleet vehicle wash
- Submitted by private firm or private citizen
- Already fully funded
- Is fine-based fund.

Step 3. Following sorting of the projects into categories and setting aside the projects recommended for other sources of funding, the Work Group defined Selection Criteria and a scoring process which selects for projects with the highest degree of meeting criteria and improving quality of the Southwest Florida coasts and Gulf natural resources, taking into account potential funding sources, quality of the proposal and applicant ranking.

- (1) Value added- the quality of the project, in particular the degree that the project meets the approved criteria and improves the quality or quantity of the coast and Gulf natural resources (1 is highest, 5 is lowest.)
- (2) Are there existing funding programs that could likely support this project? (1 is no, 2 is yes)
- (3) Quality/completion of proposal (1 is high, 2 is not as complete)
- (4) Applicants ranking (1 for highest applicant rank, 2 for second highest applicant rank, 3 for third or greater applicant rank). If a project is not ranked because it was included in the previously-permitted project list, the rank given was 1.

Step 4. A score for each of the four Selection Criteria for each project was assigned by the Work Group, working collectively on each individual project proposal. Individual project Selection Criteria scores were summed, providing a cumulative Raw Group Score for each project. Potential Raw Group Scores range from 4 (highest ranked) to 12 (lowest ranked).

Step 5. Several groups of local projects were bundled into regional projects which received a higher raw score. These individual projects were rescored as elements of a regional project. By bundling smaller projects into regional projects, the distribution of highly-ranked projects was increased.

Step 6. To be consistent with the RESTORE Act criteria, projects were grouped into two categories:

- Highly-ranked projects (scores of 8 or lower) which can be initiated within the first 3 years.
- The remainder of the projects of eligible projects were identified for a 10 year planning horizon.

Step 7. The Joint NEP Policy Committee members recommended a cap for each individual project's requested need at \$10 million dollars. Enactment of the \$10 million dollar cap allows limited funds to be used in a larger number of projects and locations, thus increasing distribution of projects. At the time the Regional Plan was approved, the rules from the Treasury Department were unavailable. Given the uncertainty of possible funding limits, members recommended that the project funding as submitted by the organization be displayed.

Regional Plan Approval

Pursuant to resolutions adopted by each of the three NEP Policy Boards, an executive committee was empowered to approve the Regional Plan projects and ranking. The seven-member committee was comprised of two County Commissioners from each of the three NEP Policy Boards and one Governing Board member of the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The resolutions allowed alternates.

On March 8, 2013, membership of each of the three NEP Policy Boards met at the Sarasota County Technical Institute Conference Center. Twenty-five elected officials and top agency heads each representing at least one Policy Board attended the meeting. The seven-member Executive Committee voted unanimously to:

- Approve Joint Management Board recommendations for 3-year and 10-year projects in the Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan, with revisions by the City of Bradenton.

The entire membership in attendance provided additional guidance including:

- Recommend that NEP Directors submit the list of ranked projects with a \$10 million cap on total project need in order to maximize geographic distribution.
- Recommend that the database be submitted to the FDEP with the original total project costs. The document submitted to FDEP and the Council should include the original total project costs, with the \$10 million cap on needed project cost as an alternative/recommendation.
- Incorporate revisions as directed by Joint Policy Board
- Identify ‘previously authorized’ projects in a separate table, if Treasury Guidelines are available.
- If Treasury Guidelines are not available by April 1st, identify projects which were permitted by July 2012 but not yet fully funded in a separate table.
- Finalize Regional Plan, including 3-year and 10-year plan elements. The plan was approved March 8, 2013.
- Submission will go to the Council. Directors will also submit to the Regional Plan to FDEP to work collaboratively with the State of Florida and to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.



Policy Board members and NEP Directors after adoption of the Regional Plan on March 8, 2013



Photo by James W. Beaver III
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

A Vision of Regional Ecosystem Restoration

The Southwest Florida NEPs have developed a regional vision for ecosystem restoration with several striking components:

- Landscape connections. Southwest Florida NEPs work with partners to develop continuous greenways and corridors to allow movement of people, animals and water.
- Restore the balance. Southwest Florida NEPs recognize that losses of some habitat types, such as low-salinity tidal marshes, have been disproportionately greater than for others, such as mangrove forests. While seeking to maximize recovery of those habitats hardest hit by development activities, “restoring the balance” also calls for preserving and enhancing existing mangrove and marsh communities through land acquisition, invasive species eradication and regulatory protections.
- Water quality that is protective of living resources. Southwest Florida NEPs established targets to restore seagrass acreage. Seagrass is a critical habitat within southwest Florida estuaries. Nutrient pollution resulted in phytoplankton (e.g. algae) growth which reduced light reaching seagrass. The deep-edge of the seagrass beds began to die without the required light. Each NEP established seagrass targets and identified maximum chlorophyll, nitrogen and phosphorus levels needed to restore and protect seagrass.
- Restore natural freshwater inflow to our estuaries and coasts: Alteration in the amount and timing of fresh water delivered to the estuaries and coasts has resulted in some Southwest Florida estuaries receiving too much water and others not enough, and to changes in the natural pulses of freshwater inflow. The changes in total freshwater flows and more extreme high or low flows can impact oyster, seagrass and juvenile fish populations. Restoration of a more natural delivery of freshwater, both amount and timing, is critical to maintain healthy coastal and estuarine waterways.
- Involve the public in estuarine and coastal restoration and protection: The southwest Florida NEPs emphasize the importance of environmental education and stewardship to the long-term health of our coastal waters and watersheds by creating a constituency of informed, involved citizens.
- Build partnerships to achieve significant restoration. Southwest Florida NEPs work with citizens, scientists resource managers and elected officials to achieve region-wide ecosystem improvements. Just one example is adoption of Urban Fertilizer Ordinances. Each coastal City and County in the NEPs’ jurisdiction adopted Urban Fertilizer Ordinances, tailored to the wet and dry season climate of southwest Florida. This has resulted in removal of hundreds of tons of nitrogen and phosphorus annually from southwest Florida waterways annually.

These components follow the goals of the Restoration Strategy and the objectives of the NEP CCMPs.

Gulf of Mexico

Priority Projects

Goals

-  Habitat
-  Water Quality
-  Living Resources
-  Resilience

Map 2





Photo by Holly Greening
Tampa Bay Estuary Program

3. Restore and Conserve Habitats

The Gulf Coast has endured extensive damage to key coastal habitats such as wetlands, coastal prairies and forests, estuaries, seagrass beds, natural beaches and dunes, and barrier islands. Within this goal, a major focus is to work with Gulf Coast stakeholders to expedite implementation and improve the effectiveness of state and federal programs related to landscape-scale resource management, habitat conservation and restoration strategies.

The Restoration Strategy identified significant habitat restoration and conservation challenges for the Gulf of Mexico. For southwest Florida, these challenges include habitat loss from increased development, resource management, alterations to hydrology, sea-level rise, hurricanes and tropical storms. Healthy ecosystems provide functions that improve coastal resilience. NEPs provide a comprehensive watershed-based approach to the management of tapestry of habitats connected by the thread of water.

Major actions identified in the Restoration Strategy include:

- Prioritize ecosystem restoration in the Gulf of Mexico by ensuring that social, environmental and economic outcomes are fully considered in all river management decisions, and by placing it on equal footing with other priorities such as navigation and flood damage risk reduction.
- Improve current sediment management practices to maximize to the extent practicable and ecologically acceptable the quantity and effective use of sediments by taking a “strategic use” approach to sediment management.
- Restore and preserve more natural river processes of sediment and freshwater distribution.
- Expand the network of state, federal and private conservation areas to ensure healthy landscapes that support the environment and culture of the region and the diverse services provided by the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem.
- Restore and conserve coastal and near-shore habitats, with a focus on marshes, mangroves, seagrasses, barrier islands, natural beaches and dunes, and coastal forests and prairies.

Southwest Florida organizations submitted nine projects to expand the network of land conservation areas (Land Acquisition) and 55 projects to restore and conserve coastal and near-shore habitats (Coastal Habitat Restoration). The joint Florida NEPs recommended seven priority land acquisition and 30 priority coastal habitat restoration projects. Tables 3 and 4 display the specific projects. Note that some projects were bundled for presentation within this document and to recognize increased regional value of like projects reviewed as a group.

Table 3: Land Acquisition Projects

Projects	Year 1 capped	Year 2 capped	Year 3 capped	Total 3-yr capped	Year 1 uncapped	Year 2 uncapped	Year 3 uncapped	Total 3-yr uncapped	Total Request
Edison Farms Trust	10,000,000			10,000,000	33,300,000			33,300,000	33,300,000
Lemon Bay Watershed	1,950,000			1,950,000	1,950,000			1,950,000	1,950,000
Little Sarasota Bay Watershed		10,000,000		10,000,000		23,738,280		23,738,280	23,738,280
Manatee County Natural Resource Program	5,000,000	5,000,000		10,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	15,000,000	50,000,000
Manatee-Hillsborough Conservation Corridor		465,000	946,450	1,411,450		465,000	946,450	1,411,450	1,581,000
Strategic Coastal Land Acquisition Project	10,000,000			10,000,000	15,000,000	15,000,000	15,000,000	45,000,000	90,000,000
Whitaker Bayou Greenway	3,500,000			3,500,000	3,500,000			3,500,000	3,500,000
Total	30,450,000	15,465,000	946,450	46,861,450	58,750,000	44,203,280	20,946,450	123,899,730	204,069,280

Large, landscape scale connections improve wildlife and habitat diversity, foster natural freshwater distribution and assist with management. The photo of Babcock Ranch State Preserve below shows cypress sloughs, cypress domes and open water as components within a pine flatwood that has recently been managed with fire. Strategically placed land conservation through acquisition of title or conservation easement coupled with restoration yield big rewards in water quality, wildlife diversity and tourism benefits.

Map 3 displays designated Aquatic Preserves, managed by the State of Florida and existing conservation lands managed by governments and non-profit organizations.



Table 4: Coastal Habitat Restoration Projects

Projects	Year 1 capped	Year 2 capped	Year 3 capped	Total 3-yr capped	Year 1 uncapped	Year 2 uncapped	Year 3 uncapped	Total 3-yr uncapped	Total Request
Childs Park Wetland Creation & Education	50,000	200,000	0	250,000	50,000	200,000		250,000	400,000
Cooper's Point Restoration	0	0	100,000	100,000			100,000	100,000	500,000
Duette Preserve Longleaf Pine Restoration	0	843,894	285,450	1,129,344		843,894	285,450	1,129,344	1,375,869
Fruit Farm Creek Mangrove Restoration	500,000	500,000	400,000	1,400,000	500,000	500,000	400,000	1,400,000	1,400,000
Hatchett Creek Shoreline and Waterway	0	480,000	0	480,000		480,000		480,000	480,000
Hillsborough Co. Exotic Plant Removal	2,500,000	4,000,000	3,500,000	10,000,000	2,500,000	4,000,000	6,000,000	12,500,000	20,000,000
Lemon Bay Habitat Restoration	200,000	1,050,000	0	1,250,000	200,000	1,050,000		1,250,000	500,000
Long-term enhancement of mangrove wetlands	50,000	700,000	1,500,000	2,250,000	500,000	700,000	1,500,000	2,700,000	50,000
New St. Petersburg Pier Underwater Feature	60,000	250,000	250,000	560,000	60,000	250,000	250,000	560,000	900,000
Newman Branch Creek Phase III Fisheries	100,000	145,000	0	245,000	100,000	145,000		245,000	245,000
Robinson Preserve II Restoration - MC List 2	550,000	3,700,000	50,000	4,300,000	550,000	3,700,000	50,000	4,300,000	4,450,000
Rock Ponds Ecosystem Restoration Project	0	3,579,106	3,579,105	7,158,211		3,579,106	3,579,105	7,158,211	7,158,211
Sarasota Bay Wetland and Coastal Habitat	150,000	150,000	150,000	450,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	450,000	750,000
Sarasota County Coastal Barrier Island Program	70,000	1,195,000	1,380,000	2,645,000	70,000	1,195,000	1,380,000	2,645,000	3,480,000
Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve North	100,000	500,000	500,000	1,100,000	100,000	500,000	500,000	1,100,000	1,200,000
Smokehouse Bay Preserve mosquito ditch	90,000	0	0	90,000	90,000			90,000	90,000
Tampa Port Authority–McKay Bay Parcel	70,000	100,000	0	170,000	70,000	100,000		170,000	100,000
Tampa Port Authority – Tampa Bypass Canal	100,000	75,000	0	175,000	100,000	75,000		175,000	150,000
Terra Ceia Ecosystem Restoration – Phase 2	0	0	2,375,000	2,375,000			2,375,000	2,375,000	4,750,000
Ulele Springs Restoration Project	35,000	0	0	35,000	35,000			35,000	35,000
Total	4,625,000	17,468,000	14,069,555	36,162,555	5,075,000	17,468,000	16,569,555	39,112,555	48,014,080

Gulf of Mexico



Map 3





Photo by Maran Hilgendorf
Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

4. Restore Water Quality

The Gulf of Mexico experiences numerous water quality problems, including excess nutrients, altered sediment inputs, pathogens, and mercury and other pollutants. One of the most prevalent signs of such problems in the Gulf of Mexico is hypoxia—low oxygen levels in the water—which can result from excess nutrients in the water and other factors. Within this goal, a major focus is to reduce the amount of nutrients flowing into the Gulf and to undertake other measures to enhance water quality.

Major actions identified in the Restoration Strategy include:

- Decrease and manage excess nutrient levels in the Gulf through the development and implementation of state nutrient reduction frameworks.
- Focus restoration actions in priority watersheds to address excess nutrients in coastal waters and reduce hypoxic conditions.
- Reduce pollutants and pathogens from stormwater flows and other sources.
- Improve the quality and quantity of freshwater flow into priority estuaries to protect their health and resiliency.
- Coordinate and expand existing water quality monitoring efforts supporting adaptive management of programs and projects designed to improve water quality.
- Collaborate with Mexico to assess and reduce emissions from oceangoing vessels in the Gulf that degrade water quality.

Southwest Florida organizations submitted 22 projects to address excess nutrients in coastal waters and reduce hypoxic conditions (Nutrients and Dissolved Oxygen Reduction), 56 projects to reduce pollutants and pathogens from stormwater flows (Stormwater), 26 projects to improve the quality and quantity of freshwater flow (Freshwater Flow) and 14 projects to coordinate and expand existing water quality monitoring efforts (Water Quality Monitoring). The joint Florida NEPs recommended 13 priority nutrient and dissolved oxygen projects, 16 priority stormwater projects, 13 priority freshwater flow projects and 12 priority water quality monitoring projects.

Tables 5, 6, 7 and 8 display the specific priority projects. Note that some projects were bundled for presentation within this document and to recognize increased regional value of like projects reviewed as a group.

Table 5: Nutrients and Dissolved Oxygen Reduction Projects

Projects	Year 1 capped	Year 2 capped	Year 3 capped	Total 3-yr capped	Year 1 uncapped	Year 2 uncapped	Year 3 uncapped	Total 3-yr uncapped	Total Request
Longboat Key Wastewater Forcemain	1,000,000	1,000,000	8,000,000	10,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	14,000,000	16,000,000	16,000,000
Pine Island Water & Sewer Service		700,000	2,238,100	2,938,100		700,000	2,238,100	2,938,100	2,938,100
Reclaimed Water System Expansion	250,000	1,725,000	1,225,000	3,200,000	250,000	1,725,000	1,225,000	3,200,000	5,150,000
Regional Reclaimed Water Interconnection	8,400,000	1,600,000		10,000,000	8,400,000	160,000,000	160,000,000	328,400,000	800,000,000
Charlotte County Central Sewer Expansion	500,000	3,400,000	4,900,000	8,800,000	500,000	3,400,000	4,900,000	8,800,000	16,070,000
Septic Tank replacement	10,000,000		20,000,000	30,000,000	23,000,000	50,000,000	129,000,000	202,000,000	379,900,000
Sugarmill Woods Wastewater Treatment		7,696,904		7,696,904		7,696,904		7,696,904	7,696,904
SWWRF Process for Nitrogen Removal		2,950,000		2,950,000		2,950,000		2,950,000	2,950,000
City, Sarasota Reclaimed Water Recharge	200,000	275,000	725,000	1,200,000	200,000	275,000	725,000	1,200,000	8,300,000
City of Sarasota Deep Injection Well & Pump	500,000	1,850,000	1,750,000	4,100,000	500,000	1,850,000	1,750,000	4,100,000	4,100,000
Total	20,850,000	21,196,904	38,838,100	80,885,004	33,850,000	229,596,904	313,838,100	577,285,004	1,243,105,004



Photo by James W. Beever III
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

The Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Treatment Park provides world renown recreation and birding opportunities

Table 6: Stormwater Projects

Projects	Year 1 capped	Year 2 capped	Year 3 capped	Total 3-yr capped	Year 1 uncapped	Year 2 uncapped	Year 3 uncapped	Total 3-yr uncapped	Total Request
City of Bonita Springs Stormwater Plan	633,562	315,000	345,000	1,293,562	633,562	315,000	345,000	1,293,562	2,213,562
City of Bradenton Stormwater Plan	0	250,000	500,000	750,000		250,000	500,000	750,000	3,000,000
Deertown Gully Outfall Improvements	0	1,225,000	0	1,225,000		1,225,000		1,225,000	1,225,000
Delaney Creek LID Improvements	0	0	100,000	100,000			100,000	100,000	750,000
Gulfport - 49th Street Stormwater Retrofit	0	1,356,000	340,000	1,696,000		1,356,000	340,000	1,696,000	1,696,000
Pollutant Reduction by Sanibel Island Partners	680,000	500,000	500,000	1,680,000	680,000	500,000	500,000	1,680,000	1,680,000
Martin Luther King Park Project	0	250,000	0	250,000		250,000		250,000	250,000
Prospect Lake Expansion	900,000	0	0	900,000	900,000			900,000	450,000
Springs Stormwater Improvement	368,356	442,306	206,180	1,016,842	368,356	442,306	206,180	1,016,842	1,673,607
Stormwater Retrofit Feasibility Study	250,000	250,000	250,000	750,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	750,000	1,250,000
Urban LID Implementation	0	200,000	800,000	1,000,000		200,000	800,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
West Marsh Project	300,000	0	5,115,000	5,415,000	300,000		5,115,000	5,415,000	5,415,000
Westshore Waterways Improvement, phase 2	2,100,000	2,000,000	500,000	4,600,000	2,100,000	2,000,000	500,000	4,600,000	5,000,000
Total	5,231,918	6,788,306	8,656,180	20,676,404	5,231,918	6,788,306	8,656,180	20,676,404	25,603,169



Water management districts, counties and cities throughout southwest Florida have committed to providing high quality stormwater projects, such as the Celery Fields Regional Stormwater Treatment Park shown to the left. These projects are designed to provide highly cost effective nutrient removal. However, they also provide quality habitat for wildlife including migrating birds. These organization have found that they have the opportunity to provide treated stormwater, recreational opportunities, acclaim from tourists (including positive reviews on Internet sites) and recreation opportunities for their residents. Stormwater treatment parks, such as Billy’s Creek filter marsh in Fort Myers, can also provide environmental justice components.

Table 7: Freshwater Flow Projects

Projects	Year 1 capped	Year 2 capped	Year 3 capped	Total 3-yr capped	Year 1 uncapped	Year 2 uncapped	Year 3 uncapped	Total 3-yr uncapped	Total Request
Alligator Creek Habitat Restoration Project	0	500,000	0	500,000		500,000		500,000	500,000
Babcock Ranch Park Hydrologic Restoration	250,000	425,000	425,000	1,100,000	250,000	425,000	425,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir	10,000,000	0	0	10,000,000	19,000,000	200,000,000	195,000,000	414,000,000	395,000,000
Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative	970,000	5,000,000	4,030,000	10,000,000	970,000	5,000,000	4,500,000	10,470,000	15,000,000
Coral Creek Ecosystem Restoration	230,000	250,000	620,000	1,100,000	230,000	250,000	620,000	1,100,000	900,000
Dona Bay Environmental Restoration	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	3,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	3,000,000	3,750,000
Manatee River Minimum Flow	550,000	550,000	0	1,100,000	550,000	550,000		1,100,000	1,100,000
Moving Water South	100,000	800,000	2,500,000	3,400,000	100,000	800,000	2,500,000	3,400,000	2,100,000
North Belle Meade Spreader Swale	0	500,000	500,000	1,000,000		500,000	500,000	1,000,000	7,000,000
North Golden Gate Estates Flowway	0	900,000	1,000,000	1,900,000		900,000	1,000,000	1,900,000	4,900,000
Six Mile Cypress Slough hydrologic restoration	0	40,000	25,000	65,000		40,000	25,000	65,000	65,000
Southwest Lehigh Weirs Project	1,028,000	1,028,000	0	2,056,000	1,028,000	1,028,000		2,056,000	2,056,000
Sweetwater Creek Improvement Project	70,000	80,000	1,100,000	1,250,000	70,000	80,000	1,100,000	1,250,000	1,100,000
Total	14,198,000	11,073,000	11,200,000	36,471,000	23,198,000	211,073,000	206,670,000	440,941,000	434,571,000

Table 8: Water Quality Monitoring

Projects	Year 1 capped	Year 2 capped	Year 3 capped	Total 3-yr capped	Year 1 uncapped	Year 2 uncapped	Year 3 uncapped	Total 3-yr uncapped	Total Request
Regional Ambient Monitoring Program	12,964,397	3,183,003	2,877,229	19,024,629	12,964,397	13,183,003	2,877,229	29,024,629	31,231,884
Warm Mineral Springs Data Summary	0	50,000	0	50,000		50,000		50,000	50,000
Total	12,964,397	3,233,003	2,877,229	19,074,629	12,964,397	13,233,003	2,877,229	29,074,629	31,281,884



5. Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources

Living coastal and marine resources are showing visible signs of distress, such as depleted species populations and degraded habitats. Within this goal, a major focus is to promote sustainable resource management that focuses on actions to conserve and restore viable populations of living coastal and marine resources and their coastal and offshore environments.

Major actions identified in the Restoration Strategy include:

- Restore depleted populations of living coastal and marine resources.
- Conserve and protect offshore environments.
- Restore and protect oyster and coral reefs, and other coastal environments.
- Coordinate and expand existing Gulf monitoring efforts to track sentinel species and sites.
- Minimize, and eliminate where possible, invasive species that impact the Gulf of Mexico.

Southwest Florida organizations submitted eight projects to restore depleted populations of living coastal and marine resources (Animal Populations), 19 projects to restore and protect oyster and coral reefs, and other coastal environments (Reefs and Other Coastal Environments) and 13 projects to track sentinel species and sites (Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species). The joint Florida NEPs recommended 2 priority animal populations projects, 13 priority reefs and other coastal environment projects and 13 priority monitoring and assessment of sentinel species projects.

Tables 9, 10 and 11 display the specific priority projects. Note that some projects were bundled for presentation within this document and to recognize increased regional value of like projects reviewed as a group.

Table 9: Animal Populations

Projects	Year 1 capped	Year 2 capped	Year 3 capped	Total 3-yr capped	Year 1 uncapped	Year 2 uncapped	Year 3 uncapped	Total 3-yr uncapped	Total Request
Cross Florida Barge Canal Boat Ramp (Manatee avoidance)	5,700,000	0	0	5,700,000	5,700,000			5,700,000	5,700,000
Southwest Florida Bay Scallop Stabilization	160,277	211,350	216,801	588,428	160,277	211,350	216,801	588,428	2,409,881
Total	5,860,277	211,350	216,801	6,288,428	5,860,277	211,350	216,801	6,288,428	8,109,881

Table 10: Reefs and Other Coastal Environments

Projects	Year 1 capped	Year 2 capped	Year 3 capped	Total 3-yr capped	Year 1 uncapped	Year 2 uncapped	Year 3 uncapped	Total 3-yr uncapped	Total Request
Alafia Bank Bird Sanctuary Living Shoreline	900,000	900,000	0	1,800,000	900,000	900,000		1,800,000	1,800,000
Bayshore Boulevard Seawall Oyster Domes	233,663	233,662	233,663	700,988	233,663	233,662	233,663	700,988	894,650
Chassahowitzka Spring Dredging Restoration	439,600	395,000	0	834,600	439,600	395,000		834,600	1,247,800
Coastal island bird monitoring & protection	40,000	0	0	40,000	40,000			40,000	40,000
Crystal River – Kings Bay Sediment Removal	250,000	9,750,000	0	10,000,000	250,000	3,500,000	25,000,000	28,750,000	28,750,000
Ft Desoto Recirculation Phase II	55,000	345,000	0	400,000	55,000	345,000		400,000	400,000
Greater Tampa Bay Bird Islands Restoration	250,000	250,000	250,000	750,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	750,000	750,000
Oyster Reef Restoration	3,662,113	3,503,738	4,526,600	11,692,451	3,662,113	3,503,738	4,526,600	11,692,451	28,502,819
Total	5,830,376	15,377,400	5,010,263	26,218,039	5,830,376	9,127,400	30,010,263	44,968,039	62,385,269

Table 11: Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species

Projects	Year 1 capped	Year 2 capped	Year 3 capped	Total 3-yr capped	Year 1 uncapped	Year 2 uncapped	Year 3 uncapped	Total 3-yr uncapped	Total Request
Applied Seagrass Assessment	76,000	393,500	300,000	769,500	76,000	393,500	300,000	769,500	1,594,500
Benthic Habitat Mapping of Coastal Ecosystem	330,000	330,000	330,000	990,000	330,000	330,000	330,000	990,000	1,980,000
Snook & Redfish Water Structure Remediation	0	15,000	20,000	35,000		15,000	20,000	35,000	180,000
Seagrass Monitoring	107,220	626,666	110,568	844,454	107,220	626,666	110,568	844,454	2,034,806
Tampa Bay Benthic Monitoring Program	121,640	121,640	121,640	364,920	121,640	121,640	121,640	364,920	1,216,407
Tampa Bay Coastal Habitat Assessment	150,000	200,000	200,000	550,000	150,000	200,000	200,000	550,000	1,150,000
Total	784,860	1,686,806	1,082,208	3,553,874	784,860	1,686,806	1,082,208	3,553,874	8,155,713

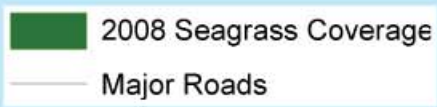
Map 3, on the next page, displays seagrass coverage map completed in 2008 by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) for the NEP areas. Seagrasses are vital to manatees, scallops and other coastal animal populations. Seagrass is a defined habitat with unique qualities. Year 2008 was the latest map for the SFWMD area. Since that date, SWFWMD maintained its commitment for biennial seagrass mapping within the NEP areas. Updates to the SFWMD area map and north of the TBEP study area are needed.

The photograph below demonstrates volunteer oyster restoration.



Photo by Catherine Corbett
Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

Gulf of Mexico



Map 4



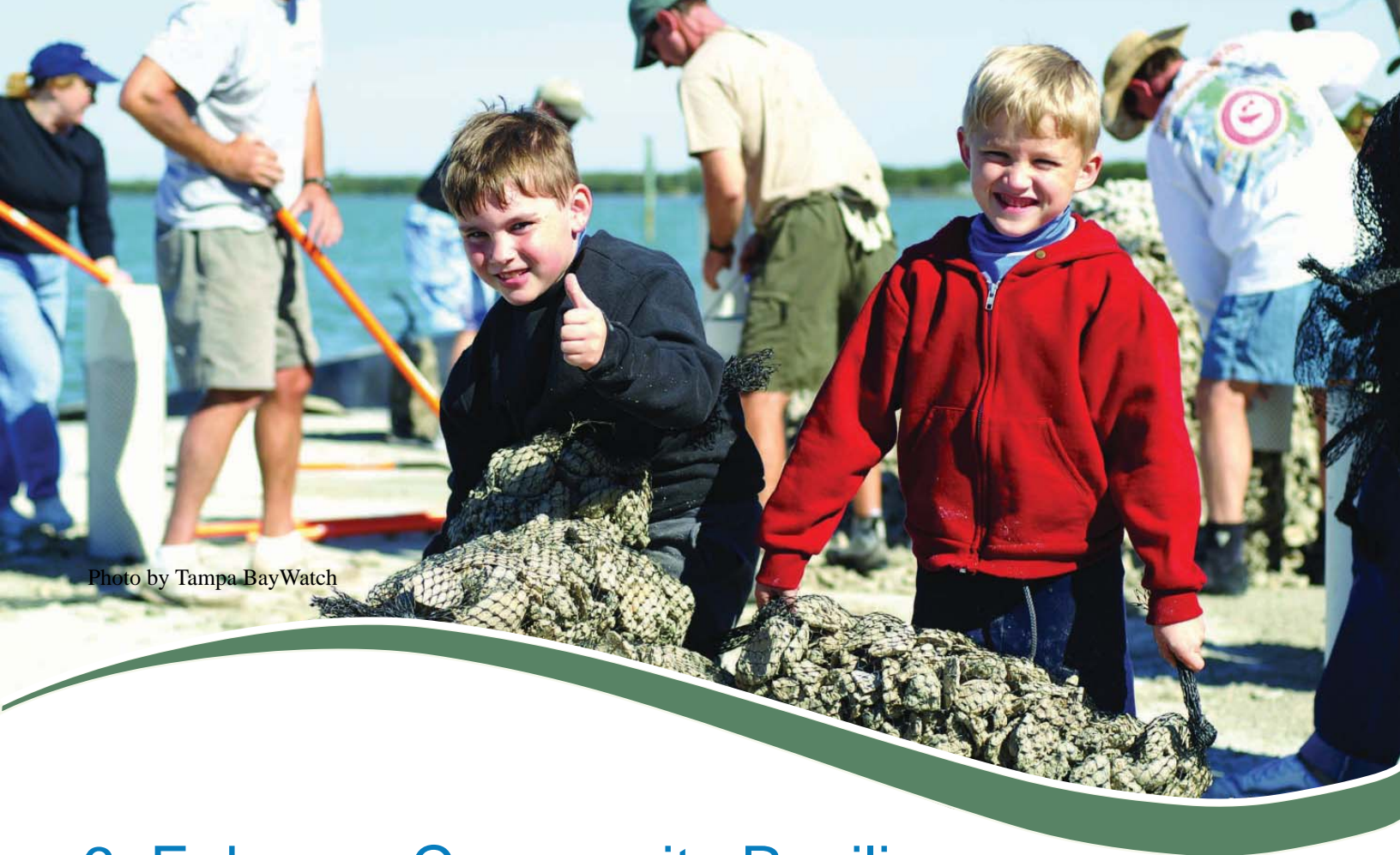


Photo by Tampa BayWatch

6. Enhance Community Resilience

Gulf Coast communities face a number of pressing challenges, such as storm risk, sea-level rise, land loss, depletion of natural resources, and compromised water quality. Within this goal, a major focus is to integrate the creation of resilient communities with ecosystem restoration through the development of comprehensive coastal planning programs.

Major actions identified in the Restoration Strategy include:

- Develop and implement comprehensive, scientifically based, and stakeholder-informed coastal improvement programs.
- Provide analytical support tools to enhance community planning, risk assessment and smart growth implementation.
- Enhance environmental education and outreach.

Southwest Florida organizations submitted one project to implement stakeholder-informed coastal improvement programs (Comprehensive Coastal Programs), one project to provide analytical support tools (Comprehensive Analytical Tools) and 11 projects to enhance environmental education and outreach (Environmental Education). The joint Florida NEPs recommended the priority comprehensive coastal program project, the priority comprehensive analytical tool project and nine priority environmental education projects.

Tables 12, 13 and 14 display the specific projects. Note that some projects were bundled for presentation within this document and to recognize increased regional value of like projects reviewed as a group.

Table 12: Comprehensive Coastal Programs

Projects	Year 1 capped	Year 2 capped	Year 3 capped	Total 3-yr capped	Year 1 uncapped	Year 2 uncapped	Year 3 uncapped	Total 3-yr uncapped	Total Request
Resilient and Consistent Florida Coastal Elements	100,000	200,000	200,000	500,000	100,000	200,000	200,000	500,000	500,000
Total	100,000	200,000	200,000	500,000	100,000	200,000	200,000	500,000	500,000

Table 13: Comprehensive Analytical Tools

Projects	Year 1 capped	Year 2 capped	Year 3 capped	Total 3-yr capped	Year 1 uncapped	Year 2 uncapped	Year 3 uncapped	Total 3-yr uncapped	Total Request
Environmental Services Provided by the Gulf	200,000	200,000	100,000	500,000	200,000	200,000	100,000	500,000	500,000
Total	200,000	200,000	100,000	500,000	200,000	200,000	100,000	500,000	500,000

Table 14: Environmental Education

Projects	Year 1 capped	Year 2 capped	Year 3 capped	Total 3-yr capped	Year 1 uncapped	Year 2 uncapped	Year 3 uncapped	Total 3-yr uncapped	Total Request
Be Floridian Fertilizer Education Campaign	0	150,000	150,000	300,000		150,000	150,000	300,000	750,000
Pollutant reduction by on-site inspections	67,876	69,912	72,010	209,798	67,876	69,912	72,010	209,798	439,050
FISH Preserve Interpretation Plan	0	0	675,000	675,000			675,000	675,000	675,000
Regional NEP Education Program	900,000	900,000	900,000	2,700,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	2,700,000	11,800,000
Stormwater Pond Education	275,000	300,000	275,000	850,000	275,000	300,000	275,000	850,000	1,275,000
	1,242,876	1,419,912	2,072,010	4,734,798	1,242,876	1,419,912	2,072,010	4,734,798	14,939,050



Photo by Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau

7. Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy

The Council identified a fifth goal for inclusion in their Comprehensive Plan: Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy. This fifth goal focuses on reviving and supporting a sustainable Gulf economy to ensure that those expenditures by the States authorized in the Act under the State allocation and the oil spill restoration impact allocation can be considered in the context of comprehensive restoration.

Southwest Florida has developed with a sustainable economic foundation of agriculture, fisheries and tourism. This “three legged stool” was successful for much of the 20th century. This foundation was made precarious by an over-dependence upon rapid non-sustainable construction speculation in this century. Since the turn of the century, the people and businesses of our region are reeling from the consequences of suburban sprawl, housing market volatility and economic downturn, coupled with increasing climate change and storm hazard vulnerability.

Currently, Southwest Florida is dependent on tourism, the healthcare industry, agriculture and construction for the majority of its employment. Although the housing bubble, financial crisis and global agricultural markets created severe hardships for this region, tourism expenditures have increased annually over the last several years. The Southwest Florida economy is interdependent with a healthy environment, especially with clean water.

The annual survey conducted by the Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau reveals that a “clean, unspoiled environment” is consistently a greater influence to travel decisions to Southwest Florida than “convenient location,” “good value for the money,” “upscale accommodations” and many other factors. Since tourism is the number one employer in many southwest Florida communities, accounting for 1 of every 5 jobs, a healthy environment is economically critical. Many new southwest Florida residents became acquainted to the area as tourists, ultimately supporting construction and healthcare activity.

The Federal government uses a standard of one job per \$100,000 to estimate job creation from funded projects. At that rate, the implemented Regional Plan represents approximately 1,000 jobs annually for the first three

years. Upon implementation of most Regional Plan projects, additional longterm jobs are inherent for operations and maintenance of the projects, as well as for improved tourism and ecosystem services.

Ecosystem Services are the multitude of resources and processes that are supplied by natural ecosystems. “Ecosystems Services” refers to a wide range of natural processes that help sustain and fulfill human life, such as:

- Purification of air and water
- Detoxification and decomposition of wastes
- Pollination of crops and natural vegetation
- Cycling and movement of nutrients
- Protection of coastal shores from erosion by waves
- Moderation of weather extremes and their impacts
- Provision of aesthetic beauty and intellectual stimulation that lift the human spirit.

The United Nations 2004 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment grouped ecosystem services into four broad categories:

- Provisioning, such as the production of food and water
- Regulating, such as the control of climate and disease
- Supporting (Habitat), such as nutrient cycles and crop pollination
- Cultural (Socio-economic), such as spiritual and recreational benefits

In a study prepared by the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation and the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council for the Dunn Foundation (in press), total ecosystem services values ranged from \$53 per acre for fallow cropland to \$443,898 per acre for a swimming beach (in 2012 dollars). Common restored and created habitats within the Regional Plan include total ecosystem service values of \$255,495 per acre for mangrove swamps, \$93,829 per acre for continuous seagrass, \$46,914 per acre for patchy seagrass and \$39,623 per acre for oyster bars. Total increase in projected total ecosystem service values is estimated in the tens of billions of dollars.

Furthermore, a recent study completed by Sarasota Bay Estuary Program demonstrated that area home values (Sarasota and Manatee County) estimated at \$100 billion have value added due to proximity to the Bay and Gulf at \$3.6 billion. The region supports a wide diversity of industry including the Ports of Tampa and Manatee as well as one of the largest commercial fishing fleets (with international trade) in the Gulf (at Cortez) in Sarasota Bay.



Photo by Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau

Swimming beaches provide total ecosystem service values of over \$400,000 per acre.




Photo by Lee County Visitor
and Convention Bureau

8. Recommendations

The Southwest Florida National Estuary Programs (NEPs) are uniquely qualified to assist the Council and State of Florida in coordinating and implementing the Council's Comprehensive Plan. Our long history (20+ years) has fostered strong and broad community partnerships comprised of citizens, local and state governments, regulators, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics and Federal agencies focused on science-based solutions to address impacts to estuarine and coastal natural resources. The non-regulatory regional collaborative approach developed by the Southwest Florida NEPs has a proven track record of successfully implementing Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (CCMPs), developing regional nutrient criteria recommendations (subsequently adopted by the State and EPA), and conducting watershed-scale habitat and water quality restoration programs. We are recognized as honest brokers in developing and facilitating complex multi-entity processes to address common restoration goals.

The NEPs have scientific/technical expertise and facilitation capabilities to assist in implementing the Gulf Restoration Plans, including stakeholder partnership, scientific expertise, community education and outreach, monitoring, and regulatory support at the regional level. In addition, the NEPs provide:

- Efficient regional implementation of federal and state programs through CCMPs
- Facilitation and leveraging multiple entities to improve regional water quality, implement habitat restoration and improve aquatic life
- Community-supported, federally authorized Comprehensive Conservation Plans to build upon
- Strong regional constituents (public and private)
- Effective outreach strategies
- Solid program management structures in place
- Long histories of facilitating solutions to improve and protect our estuaries
- Proven track record of successful water quality and habitat restoration and protection
- Experienced grant and program administrators.

This section summarized our recommendations for the long-term program of restoration. The first three years are summarized in the executive summary (Table 1 and 2) The appendix provide additional information regarding all recommended projects.

Previously Authorized Projects

The RESTORE Act requires the Council to prepare a list of “previously authorized projects” that have not yet commenced. The Southwest Florida NEPs have opted to define previously authorized projects as those that had permits prior to July 6, 2012. Of the 236 recommended projects, submitting organizations reported that 15 had received permits by that date.

Submitting Organization	Title	Action Title	Requested Funding
Coastal Resources Group, Inc. (CRG)	Fruit Farm Creek Mangrove Restoration Project	Coastal Habitat Restoration	\$1,400,000
Southwest Florida Water Management District	Rock Ponds Ecosystem Restoration Project	Coastal Habitat Restoration	\$7,158,211
Lee County	Smokehouse Bay Preserve mosquito ditch backfilling	Coastal Habitat Restoration	\$90,000
Manatee County	SWWRF Process Modification for Nitrogen Removal	Nutrients/DO	\$2,950,000
City of North Port	Major canal dredging	Stormwater	\$3,841,680
City of Clearwater	Prospect Lake Expansion	Stormwater	\$450,000
Lee County	Ten Mile Canal Filter Marsh Phase II	Stormwater	\$2,000,000
East County Water Control District	Southwest Lehigh Weirs Project	Freshwater Flows	\$2,056,000
Lee County	Fichter’s Creek Restoration	Freshwater Flows	\$1,000,000
Lee County, South Florida Water Management District	C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir	Freshwater Flows	\$395,000,000
Lee County, Division of Natural Resources	Tarpon Reef	Replenish Animal Population	\$590,519
Charlotte County	Capt. Jeff Steele Memorial Artificial Reef Habitat Enhancement	Replenish Animal Population	\$500,000
Southwest Florida Water Management District	Chassahowitzka Spring Dredging Restoration Phases I and II	Reefs and Other Coastal Environments	\$1,247,800
Tampa Bay Watch, Inc.	MacDill AFB Oyster Reef Creation Project	Reefs and Other Coastal Environments	\$167,000
Florida Gulf Coast University	Tidal Caloosahatchee River: Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Restoration, Enhancement and Monitoring	Reefs and Other Coastal Environments	\$2,313,536
Total			\$420,764,746

After rules are provided by the Treasury Department regarding RESTORE Act funding, more will probably be understood regarding definitions of “previously authorized projects.” At that point, the southwest Florida NEPs can assist the Council in identifying such projects for southwest Florida.

Table 16: 10-Year Plan Summary

Goal	Major Action	Number of Projects	Capped at \$10 million/project	As Requested
Restore and Conserve Habitat	Land Acquisition	9	\$54,797,840	\$211,836,120
Restore and Conserve Habitat	Coastal Habitat Restoration	55	\$84,161,711	\$85,360,554
Restore Water Quality	Nutrients/ Dissolved Oxygen	22	\$143,580,194	\$1,341,775,254
Restore Water Quality	Stormwater	56	\$146,395,344	\$160,632,109
Restore Water Quality	Freshwater Flows	26	\$93,203,250	\$507,926,250
Restore Water Quality	Water Quality Monitoring	14	\$29,982,953	\$33,376,828
Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	Replenish Animal Population	8	\$9,313,773	\$10,450,400
Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	Reefs and Other Coastal Environments	19	\$43,778,827	\$78,354,474
Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species	13	\$8,243,676	\$8,513,243
Enhance Community Resilience	Comprehensive Coastal Programs	2	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Enhance Community Resilience	Analytical Tools for Planning	1	\$500,000	\$500,000
Enhance Community Resilience	Environmental Education	11	\$9,514,050	\$15,539,050
Total		236	\$624,471,618	\$2,455,264,282

The Regional Plan recommends a ten million dollar cap on requested funds for each individual project submitted. In doing so, geographic distribution of projects are enhanced without overwhelming anticipated funding. At the time of this writing, rules from the Treasury Department concerning RESTORE Act funds have not been issued, the Clean Water Act fine amounts have not been identified and additional guidance from the Council concerning funding is not available. Therefore, we present both requested amounts and capped amounts within the Regional Plan.

Table 16 summarizes the 10-year Regional Plan, with a ten million dollar cap on projects and without the cap (as requested). Two-hundred and thirty six (236) of the 279 restoration and related projects were recommended for the 10-year plan. Projects are distributed among each of the Restoration Strategy four goals and supports the fifth goal, “Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy” adopted by the Council.

Table 17: 3-Year Plan Summary				
Goal	Major Action	Number of Projects	Capped at \$10 million/project	As Requested
Restore and Conserve Habitat	Land Acquisition	7	\$46,861,450	\$123,899,730
Restore and Conserve Habitat	Coastal Habitat Restoration	30	\$36,162,555	\$39,112,555
Restore Water Quality	Nutrients/ Dissolved Oxygen	13	\$80,885,004	\$577,285,004
Restore Water Quality	Stormwater	16	\$20,676,404	\$20,676,404
Restore Water Quality	Freshwater Flows	13	\$36,471,000	\$440,941,000
Restore Water Quality	Water Quality Monitoring	12	\$19,074,629	\$29,074,629
Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	Replenish Animal Population	2	\$6,288,428	\$6,288,428
Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	Reefs and Other Coastal Environments	13	\$26,218,039	\$44,968,039
Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources	Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinel Species	11	\$3,553,874	\$3,553,874
Enhance Community Resilience	Comprehensive Coastal Programs	1	\$500,000	\$500,000
Enhance Community Resilience	Analytical Tools for Planning	1	\$500,000	\$500,000
Enhance Community Resilience	Environmental Education	9	\$4,734,798	\$4,734,798
Total		128	\$281,926,181	\$1,291,534,461

Table 17 summarizes the 3-year Regional Plan, with a ten million dollar cap on projects and without the cap (as requested). One-hundred and twenty eight (128) of the 279 restoration and related projects were recommended for the 3-year plan. Projects are distributed among each of the Restoration Strategy four goals and supports the fifth goal, “Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy” adopted by the Council.



Appendix

The Appendix is the table of projects that are approved for the *Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan* (Regional Plan). The Regional Plan projects are organized by Goals and Major Actions approved in the *Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy* (Restoration Strategy). The Restoration Strategy was prepared by the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force in accordance with Executive Order 13554.

The table includes the project title, submitting organizations, funding needed, whether the project is recommended for the 3-year plan or a 10-year plan and a raw group score. The group score provides some sense of priority, with the lower score representing higher priority.

The Southwest Florida National Estuary Programs (NEPs) offer these projects for consideration by the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council) and the State of Florida regarding restoration needs in Southwest Florida as they make Gulf-wide decisions under the 2012 RESTORE Act. However, we encourage the use of this plan and the projects herein for consideration by any funding source.

The database with project details, including tables, queries and reports prepared to generate the Regional Plan, can be downloaded at:

www.tbep.tech.org/DATA/RESTORE_ACT/SWFRER_Plan_3-8-2013.accdb

or

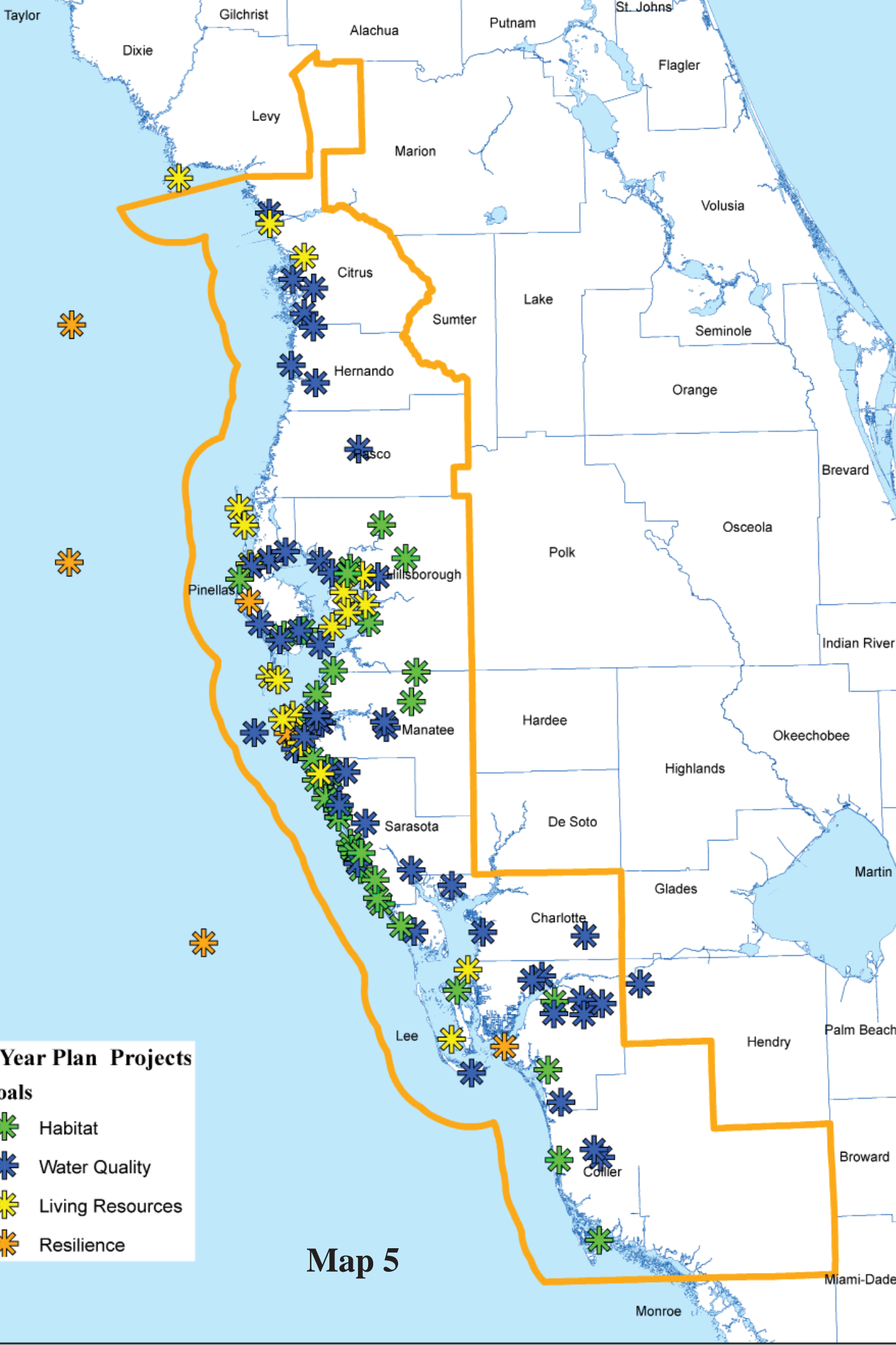
www.chnep.wateratlas.usf.edu/upload/documents/SWFRER_Plan,%203-8-2013.accdb

3-Year Plan Projects

Goals

-  Habitat
-  Water Quality
-  Living Resources
-  Resilience

Map 5



Final 3-Year and 10-Year Plans by Action

Approved March 8, 2013

Appendix

* Raw Group Score = The summed project criteria scores. Potential raw group scores range from 4 (highest ranked) to 12 (lowest ranked). See text for definition.

Action	Funding Category	Submitting Organization	Title	* Raw Group Score	Needed
Coastal Habitat Restoration					
3Yr		Manatee County	Robinson Preserve II Restoration - MC List 2	5	\$4,450,000.00
3Yr		SWFWMD	Rock Ponds Ecosystem Restoration Project	5	\$7,158,211.00
3Yr		City of Venice	Hatchett Creek Shoreline and Waterway Restoration	6	\$480,000.00
3Yr		Coastal Resources Group, Inc. (CRG)	Fruit Farm Creek Mangrove Restoration Project	6	\$1,400,000.00
3Yr		Ecosphere	Newman Branch Creek Phase III Fisheries Habitat Restoration	6	\$245,000.00
3Yr		SBEP	Sarasota Bay Wetland and Coastal Habitat Restoration	6	\$750,000.00
3Yr		City of Clearwater	Cooper's Point Restoration and Access Improvement Project	7	\$500,000.00
3Yr		Ecosphere	Ulele Springs Restoration Project	7	\$35,000.00
3Yr		Hillsborough County	Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation's Re	7	\$20,000,000.00
3Yr		Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program	Smokehouse Bay Preserve mosquito ditch backfilling	7	\$90,000.00
3Yr		Sarasota County	North Jetty Beach	7	\$40,000.00
3Yr		Sarasota County	Manasota Beach	7	\$40,000.00
3Yr		Sarasota County	Blind Pass Beach	7	\$30,000.00
3Yr		Sarasota County	Brohard Beach	7	\$40,000.00

Action	Funding Category	Submitting Organization	Title	* Raw Group Score	Needed
3Yr	Sarasota County		Turtle Beach	7	\$150,000.00
3Yr	Sarasota County		Siesta Beach	7	\$2,500,000.00
3Yr	Sarasota County		Nokomis Beach	7	\$40,000.00
3Yr	Sarasota County		Palmer Point Park	7	\$20,000.00
3Yr	Sarasota County		Venice Beach	7	\$20,000.00
3Yr	Sarasota County		Caspersen Beach	7	\$100,000.00
3Yr	Sarasota County		North Lido Beach	7	\$500,000.00
3Yr	Tampa Port Authority		Tampa Port Authority – McKay Bay Parcel Habitat Restoratio	7	\$100,000.00
3Yr	City of St. Petersburg		Childs Park Wetland Creation & Education Project,	8	\$400,000.00
3Yr	City of St. Petersburg		New St. Petersburg Pier Underwater Feature	8	\$900,000.00
3Yr	Florida Gulf Coast University		Long-term enhancement of tropical mangrove wetland ecosys	8	\$50,000.00
3Yr	Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program		Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve North wetland enhancemen	8	\$1,200,000.00
3Yr	Manatee County		Duette Preserve Longleaf Pine Restoration though Silviculture	8	\$1,375,869.00
3Yr	Southwest Florida Water Management District		Lemon Bay Habitat Restoration Project	8	\$500,000.00
3Yr	SWFWMD		Terra Ceia Ecosystem Restoration – Phase 2	8	\$4,750,000.00
3Yr	Tampa Port Authority		Tampa Port Authority – Tampa Bypass Canal Habitat Restorat	8	\$150,000.00
10yr	City of Clearwater		Stevenson Creek Estuary Mangrove Planting Project	9	\$200,000.00
10yr	City of St. Petersburg		Bay Vista Park Beach Restoration	9	\$300,000.00
10yr	City of St. Petersburg		Boyd Hill Nature Preserve Wetlands Restoration	9	\$170,000.00
10yr	City of St. Petersburg		Grandview Restoration Project	9	\$600,000.00

Action	Funding Category	Submitting Organization	Title	* Raw Group Score	Needed
	10yr	City of Tampa	Beachfront Parks Restoration Improvements	9	\$10,800,000.00
	10yr	City of Tampa, DPW-Stormwater Engineering	Watrous Canal Rehabilitation and Enhancement	9	\$1,500,000.00
	10yr	New College of Florida	New College Estuarine Beach Restoration	9	\$20,000.00
	10yr	Pinellas County Parks & Conservation Resources	Ft. De Soto Park North Beach Dune Habitat Restoration	9	\$8,000,000.00
	10yr	Sarasota County	Ted Sperling Park at South Lido Beach	9	\$750,000.00
	10yr	SWFWMD	Palm River Restoration Project Phase II, East McKay Bay in Ta	9	\$500,000.00
	10yr	Tampa Bay Estuary Program	Tampa Bay Environmental Fund Program	9	\$1,750,000.00
	10yr	Town of Longboat Key	Longboat Pass Inlet and Surrounding Shoreline Improvements	9	\$5,000,000.00
	10yr	City of Clearwater	Clearwater Beach Dune Restoration and Relocation	10	\$150,000.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	North Shore Park Beach Restoration	10	\$1,900,000.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	Maximo Park Shoreline Restoration	10	\$250,000.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	Maximo Park Intertidal Restoration	10	\$350,000.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	Lassing Park Beach Restoration	10	\$300,000.00
	10yr	Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast	Restoration of Essential Habitats for Juvenile Tarpon and Sno	10	\$148,474.00
	10yr	Hernando County BOCC	Pine Island Park and shoreline improvements	10	\$270,000.00
	10yr	Hillsborough County	Feasibility Study and Design to Rehabilitate Mined Lands withi	10	\$2,000,000.00
	10yr	Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program	Buttonwood Preserve wetland enhancement	10	\$63,000.00
	10yr	Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program	Galt Preserve mangrove reconnection	10	\$75,000.00
	10yr	Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program	Charlotte Harbor Buffer Preserve coastal wetland enhanceme	11	\$250,000.00
	10yr	Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program	Deep Lagoon Preserve Restoration including drainage canals	11	\$500,000.00

Action	Funding Category	Submitting Organization	Title	* Raw Group Score	Needed
	10yr	Manatee County	Manatee County Ecosystem Restoration Task Force	11	\$1,500,000.00
Comprehensive Analytical Tools for Planning					
	3Yr	SWFRPC	Environmental Services Provided by the Gulf of Mexico	8	\$500,000.00
Comprehensive Coastal Programs					
	3Yr	SWFRPC	Resilient and Consistent Coastal Elements for Florida's Gulf C	6	\$500,000.00
	10yr	Pinellas County Parks & Conservation Resources	Comprehensive Management & Resiliency Plans for Pinellas C	10	\$5,000,000.00
Environmental Education					
	3Yr	Tampa Bay Estuary Program	Be Floridian Fertilizer Education Campaign	5	\$750,000.00
	3Yr	Florida west Coast NEPs	Regional NEP Education Program	7	\$10,000,000.00
	3Yr	FISH Preserve - Manatee County - Historical Records Libr	FISH Preserve Interpretation Plan	8	\$675,000.00
	3Yr	Lee County Natural Resources	Neighborhood Environmental Stewardship Training	8	\$375,000.00
	3Yr	Manatee County	Enhance Community Resilience – Pollutant reduction from bu	8	\$439,050.00
	3Yr	Pinellas County, Florida	Pinellas County Adopt-A-Pond Program	8	\$900,000.00
	3Yr	SBEP	PIER/Bay Guardians Watershed Education	8	\$900,000.00
	3Yr	SBEP	Virtual Watershed Tours	8	\$450,000.00
	3Yr	SBEP	Bay Roamer's Guide	8	\$450,000.00
	10yr	Tampa Bay Estuary Program	Regional Volunteer Restoration Program	9	\$450,000.00
	10yr	New College	Sea Level Rise in Southwest Florida: Raising Minds about Risin	10	\$150,000.00
Freshwater Flows					
	3Yr	Collier County	North Golden Gate Estates (NGGE) Flowway Restoration Pr	5	\$4,900,000.00

Action	Funding Category	Submitting Organization	Title	* Raw Group Score	Needed
3Yr		Lee County Natural Resources, SFWMD	C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir	5	\$395,000,000.00
3Yr		SFWMD, Lee County	Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative/NW Lee County Surfac	5	\$15,000,000.00
3Yr		Sarasota County	Dona Bay Environmental Restoration	6	\$3,750,000.00
3Yr		Babcock Ranch Inc. (BRI) Board (501.c.3)	Babcock Ranch State Preserve Hydrologic Restoration – Tidal	8	\$1,100,000.00
3Yr		Collier County	North Belle Meade Spreader Swale	8	\$7,000,000.00
3Yr		East County Water Control District	Southwest Lehigh Weirs Project	8	\$2,056,000.00
3Yr		East County Water Control District	Moving Water South	8	\$2,100,000.00
3Yr		Hillsborough County	Sweetwater Creek Improvement Project	8	\$1,100,000.00
3Yr		Lee County Parks and Recreation	Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve hydrological restoration	8	\$65,000.00
3Yr		Manatee County	Manatee River Minimum Flow	8	\$1,100,000.00
3Yr		Southwest Florida Water Management District	Coral Creek Ecosystem Restoration on the Cape Haze Penins	8	\$900,000.00
3Yr		Southwest Florida Water Management District	Alligator Creek Habitat Restoration Project Phase III in Punta	8	\$500,000.00
10yr		City of Tampa, DPW-Stormwater Engineering	Poinsetta Stormwater Pump Station Improvements	9	\$1,000,000.00
10yr		Collier County	Henderson Creek Diversion Pump Station	9	\$5,700,000.00
10yr		Collier County	South I-75 Canal Spreader Swale	9	\$3,100,000.00
10yr		Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program	Telegraph Creek Drainage Repairs	9	\$400,000.00
10yr		Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program	Caloosahatchee Creeks Preserve creek and wetland restorati	9	\$500,000.00
10yr		Lee County Natural Resources	Stumper Jumper Ranch Land Acquisition	9	\$1,482,250.00
10yr		Lee County Natural Resources	Four Corners/Florida Citrus Land Acquisition	9	\$7,500,000.00
10yr		Lee County Natural Resources	North Fort Myers Surface Water Master Plan	9	\$26,000,000.00

Action	Funding Category	Submitting Organization	Title	* Raw Group Score	Needed
10yr		Lee County Natural Resources	Fichter's Creek Restoration	9	\$1,000,000.00
10yr		Sarasota County	Removal of Agricultural Dam from Phillippi Creek	9	\$5,000,000.00
10yr		Lee County Natural Resources	Buckingham FGCU Watershed Restoration	10	\$1,000,000.00
10yr		Lee County Natural Resources	South Lee County Surface Water Plan	10	\$20,373,000.00
10yr		Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program	Bob Janes Preserve wetland restoration	11	\$300,000.00

Land Acquisition

3Yr		Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast	Strategic Coastal Land Acquisition Project: Facilitating Coastal	6	\$90,000,000.00
3Yr		Manatee County	Manatee-Hillsborough Conservation Land Corridor	6	\$1,581,000.00
3Yr		Lee County Natural Resources	Edison Farms Trust Land Acquisition	7	\$33,300,000.00
3Yr		Sarasota County	Land Acquisition – Lemon Bay Watershed	7	\$1,950,000.00
3Yr		City of Sarasota Public Works	Whitaker Bayou Greenway Park and Watershed Restoration	8	\$3,500,000.00
3Yr		Manatee County	Manatee County Natural Resources Department Acquisition	8	\$50,000,000.00
3Yr		Sarasota County	Land Acquisition – Little Sarasota Bay Watershed	8	\$23,738,280.00
10yr		Caloosahatchee River Citizen Association	Beautiful Island acquisition	9	\$6,500,000.00
10yr		Sarasota County	Land Acquisition - Myakka River Watershed Restoration	11	\$1,266,840.00

Monitoring and Assessment of Sentinal Species

3Yr		University of South Florida	Benthic Habitat Mapping of the Southwest Florida Coastal Eco	6	\$1,980,000.00
3Yr		Department of Integrative Biology, USF , Tampa	Enhanced monitoring of seagrass in Tampa Bay and Sarasota B	7	\$1,425,000.00
3Yr		Tampa Bay Estuary Program	Tampa Bay Critical Coastal Habitat Assessment	7	\$1,150,000.00
3Yr		EPC	Tampa Bay Benthic Monitoring Program	8	\$1,216,407.00

Action	Funding Category	Submitting Organization	Title	* Raw Group Score	Needed
3Yr		Florida Fish & Wildlife Research Institute, Florida Fish &	Effects of Water Control Structures on Juvenile Snook and Re	8	\$180,000.00
3Yr		Manatee County	Restore and Conserve Habitat - Sarasota Bay Seagrass Monito	8	\$107,182.00
3Yr		Mote Marine Laboratory	Predicting and Monitoring Seagrass Restoration Success – The	8	\$169,500.00
3Yr		Pinellas County	Random stratified seagrass sampling of Boca Ciega Bay and Fe	8	\$166,000.00
3Yr		Pinellas County	Clearwater Harbor and St. Joseph Sound Seagrass Monitoring	8	\$166,000.00
3Yr		SWFMWD	District Seagrass Mapping Project	8	\$1,250,000.00
3Yr		Tampa Bay Estuary Program	Tampa Bay Interagency Seagrass Monitoring Program	8	\$345,624.00
10yr		EPC	Hardbottom Inventory and Analysis to Improve Essential Fish	9	\$93,530.00
10yr		Pinellas County	Northern Pinellas County Baseline Benthic Survey	9	\$264,000.00
Nutrients/DO					
3Yr		Manatee County	SWWRF Process Modification for Nitrogen Removal	5	\$2,950,000.00
3Yr		Charlotte County Utilities	Restoration of Water Quality in the Impaired Waters of Char	7	\$16,070,000.00
3Yr		Pasco County Utilities	Regional Reclaimed Water System Interconnection and Ecosys	7	\$800,000,000.00
3Yr		Town of Longboat Key	Longboat Key Wastewater Subaqueous Forcemain Replaceme	7	\$16,000,000.00
3Yr		Citrus County Board of County Commissioners	Sugarmill Woods Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion a	8	\$7,696,904.00
3Yr		City of Clearwater	Sewer System Expansion	8	\$27,500,000.00
3Yr		City of Safety Harbor	DeSoto Estates Sanitary Sewer Project	8	\$1,000,000.00
3Yr		City of Sarasota	The City of Sarasota's Comprehensive Environmental Protecti	8	\$8,300,000.00
3Yr		City of Sarasota Public Work/Utilities	The City of Sarasota's Comprehensive Environmental Protecti	8	\$4,100,000.00
3Yr		City of St. Petersburg	Reclaimed Water System Expansion	8	\$5,150,000.00

Action	Funding Category	Submitting Organization	Title	* Raw Group Score	Needed
	3Yr	Hernando County BOCC	Pine Island Water & Sewer Service	8	\$2,938,100.00
	3Yr	Lee County Natural Resources	Conversion of Septic Systems to Sewer	8	\$323,000,000.00
	3Yr	Sarasota County	Sarasota Bay Restoration Project/Phillippi Creek Septic Syste	8	\$28,400,000.00
	10yr	Citrus County Board of County Commissioners	Homosassa Wastewater Collection System – Phase 5	9	\$3,000,000.00
	10yr	City of Clearwater	Groundwater Replenishment Project	9	\$9,000,000.00
	10yr	City of Tampa	Reclaimed Water Main Extension to N/W Hillsborough Coun	9	\$22,410,000.00
	10yr	City of Tampa	Reclaimed Water Main Extension to S/C Hillsborough County	9	\$22,410,000.00
	10yr	Sarasota County	Siesta Key Master Pump Station and Force Main	9	\$5,400,000.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	Albert Whitted Wastewater Pump Station and Force Main	10	\$33,662,000.00
	10yr	Hernando County BOCC	Oakley Island Waste Water Infrastructure Installation	10	\$338,250.00
	10yr	Lee County Natural Resources	Palmona Park Water Quality Improvement	10	\$450,000.00
	10yr	Lee County Natural Resources	Hendry Creek West Branch Water Quality Improvement Proj	10	\$2,000,000.00

Reefs and Other Coastal Environments

	3Yr	Audubon Florida	ALAFIA BANK BIRD SANCTUARY LIVING SHORELINE RES	6	\$1,800,000.00
	3Yr	SWFWMD	Chassahowitzka Spring Dredging Restoration Phases I and II	6	\$1,247,800.00
	3Yr	The Nature Conservancy	Restoration and Mapping of Oyster Reef Habitat in Southwest	6	\$24,700,000.00
	3Yr	FDEP/TBAP	Ft Desoto Recirculation Phase II	7	\$400,000.00
	3Yr	Tampa Bay Watch, Inc.	MacDill AFB Oyster Reef Creation Project	7	\$167,000.00
	3Yr	University of Florida	Restoration of Florida's Big Bend Oyster Reefs	7	\$1,360,819.00
	3Yr	Audubon Florida	Greater Tampa Bay Bird Islands Shoreline Restorations	8	\$750,000.00

Action	Funding Category	Submitting Organization	Title	* Raw Group Score	Needed
3Yr		Citrus County Board of County Commissioners	Crystal River – Kings Bay Sediment Removal	8	\$28,750,000.00
3Yr		Clearwater Audubon Society	Coastal island bird monitoring and protection	8	\$40,000.00
3Yr		Manatee County	Robinson Preserve Oyster Bars and Nesting Areas	8	\$285,000.00
3Yr		SBEP	Oyster Reef Restoration and Enhancement in Sarasota Bay	8	\$250,000.00
3Yr		Tampa Bay Watch, Inc	McKay Bay Oyster Reef Creation Project	8	\$1,740,000.00
3Yr		Tampa Bay Watch, Inc	Bayshore Boulevard Seawall Oyster Dome Fields	8	\$894,650.00
10yr		DEP Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves	Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves' Restoration of Mollusca	9	\$1,952,420.00
10yr		Audubon Florida	Coastal Bird Perpetual Management Fund	10	\$10,000,000.00
10yr		Florida Gulf Coast University, Coastal Watershed Institute	Tidal Caloosahatchee River: Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (10	\$2,313,536.00
10yr		SCCF	Submersed vascular macrophyte restoration and monitoring i	10	\$515,802.00
10yr		Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission/FWRI	Seagrass Restoration and Forage Resource Enhancement for	11	\$325,000.00
10yr		SWFWMD	Homosassa Springs Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration	11	\$862,447.00

Replenish Animal Population

3Yr		Citrus County Board of County Commissioners	Cross Florida Barge Canal Boat Ramp	6	\$5,700,000.00
3Yr		Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission - FWRI	Southwest Florida Bay Scallop Stabilization	7	\$2,409,881.00
10yr		Charlotte County	Capt. Jeff Steele Memorial Artificial Reef Habitat Enhancement	10	\$500,000.00
10yr		EPC	Artificial Reef Community Monitoring Program	10	\$50,000.00
10yr		Lee County, Division of Natural Resources	Tarpon Reef	10	\$590,519.00
10yr		Manatee County	Larry Bordon Artificial Reef Habitat Enhancement	10	\$500,000.00
10yr		Pinellas County, Division of Solid Waste	Pinellas County Near Shore Artificial Reef Construction Proje	10	\$450,000.00

Action	Funding Category	Submitting Organization	Title	* Raw Group Score	Needed
	10yr	SBEP	Sarasota Bay Inshore Artificial Reef Enhancement	10	\$250,000.00
Stormwater					
	3Yr	City of Palmetto	Martin Luther King Park Project	6	\$250,000.00
	3Yr	City of Bonita Springs	City of Bonita Springs Storm Water Plan Implementation	7	\$2,213,562.00
	3Yr	City of Clearwater	Prospect Lake Expansion	7	\$450,000.00
	3Yr	City of Gulfport	Gulfport - 49th Street Stormwater Retrofit	7	\$1,696,000.00
	3Yr	East County Water Control District	West Marsh Project	7	\$5,415,000.00
	3Yr	SCCF Marine Lab	Habitat Restoration for Wildlife and Pollutant Reduction by th	7	\$1,680,000.00
	3Yr	City of Bradenton	City of Bradenton Stormwater Facility Plan Water Quality Im	8	\$3,000,000.00
	3Yr	City of Tampa, DPW-Stormwater Engineering	Westshore Waterways Improvement - Phase II	8	\$5,000,000.00
	3Yr	City of Venice	Deertown Gully Outfall Improvements	8	\$1,225,000.00
	3Yr	Hillsborough County	Delaney Creek LID Improvements	8	\$750,000.00
	3Yr	Manatee County	Stormwater Basin Master Plan - Stormwater Retrofit Feasibilit	8	\$1,250,000.00
	3Yr	Sarasota County	Urban LID Implement	8	\$1,000,000.00
	3Yr	SWFWMD	Hunter Springs Water Quality Improvement Project	8	\$354,803.00
	3Yr	SWFWMD	Weeki Wachee Springs Stormwater Catchment and Capture	8	\$81,180.00
	3Yr	SWFWMD	Homosassa Springs-Pepper Creek Restoration	8	\$375,000.00
	3Yr	SWFWMD	Three Sisters Springs Wetland Treatment Project	8	\$862,624.00
	10yr	Citrus County Board of County Commissioners	Homosassa Southfork Water Quality Improvement Project –	9	\$7,180,000.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	Mile Creek Watershed Study	9	\$200,000.00

Action	Funding Category	Submitting Organization	Title	* Raw Group Score	Needed
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	Clam Bayou Watershed Study	9	\$300,000.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	8th S/S, 44th S/S & Vicinity Stormwater Drainage Improvemen	9	\$3,780,000.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	Jungle Lake Stormwater Drainage Improvements R-I-I	9	\$6,700,000.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	Salt Creek Restoration Phase I	9	\$1,170,000.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	Salt Creek Restoration Phase II	9	\$1,170,000.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	Snell Isle Blvd & Rafael Blvd. NE SDI	9	\$1,500,000.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	Tinney Creek Sediment Sump	9	\$227,500.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	20th Street District SDI	9	\$23,000,000.00
	10yr	City of St. Petersburg	Booker Creek Watershed Study	9	\$200,000.00
	10yr	City of Tampa	43rd Street Stormwater Outfall Regional Improvements	9	\$20,000,000.00
	10yr	City of Tampa	Park/Stormwater Pond Restoration Projects	9	\$2,550,000.00
	10yr	City of Tampa	Hillsborough River Shoreline Restoration Projects	9	\$9,700,000.00
	10yr	City of Tampa, DPW-Stormwater Engineering	Conley Box Culvert Rehabilitation	9	\$750,000.00
	10yr	City of Tampa, DPW-Stormwater Engineering	Whatley Ditch Rehabilitation	9	\$500,000.00
	10yr	Hillsborough County	Delaney Creek Lateral B Improvements	9	\$1,100,000.00
	10yr	Lee County Natural Resources	Ten Mile Canal Filter Marsh Phase II	9	\$2,000,000.00
	10yr	Sarasota County	Sarasota Bayfront Water Quality Improvements	9	\$8,000,000.00
	10yr	Sarasota County	Lemon Bay Watershed Waterway Restoration	9	\$1,000,000.00
	10yr	Sarasota County	Hudson Bayou Restoration	9	\$1,000,000.00
	10yr	Sarasota County	Sarasota Bayfront Sediment Removal	9	\$10,000,000.00

Action	Funding Category	Submitting Organization	Title	* Raw Group Score	Needed
	10yr	SWFWMD	Robles Park Water Quality Improvement Project	9	\$1,250,000.00
	10yr	SWFWMD	Weeki Wachee Springs State Park Canoe Launch Road stabiliz	9	\$165,760.00
	10yr	SWFWMD	Hillsborough River Water Quality Improvement Project in Ta	9	\$1,000,000.00
	10yr	City of Clearwater	Golf Course Pond Expansion	10	\$150,000.00
	10yr	City of Clearwater	Old Gateway Neighborhood Stormwater Improvements	10	\$750,000.00
	10yr	City of Clearwater	Smallwood Circle Stormwater Improvements	10	\$750,000.00
	10yr	City of Clearwater	Druid Road Stormwater Improvements	10	\$250,000.00
	10yr	Hernando County BOCC	Rogers park parking lot improvements	10	\$350,000.00
	10yr	Lee County Natural Resources	Nalle Grade Stormwater Park	10	\$1,500,000.00
	10yr	Lee County Parks and Recreation	Sanibel Causeway Drainage Repairs	10	\$2,000,000.00
	10yr	Pinellas County	Pinellas County Cross Bayou Watershed Flood Control, Wat	10	\$5,000,000.00
	10yr	Pinellas County	Pinellas County Roosevelt Creek Watershed Best Managemen	10	\$8,794,000.00
	10yr	Sarasota County	Whitaker Bayou Restoration	10	\$3,900,000.00
	10yr	Sarasota County	Little Sarasota Bay Watershed Waterways Restoration	10	\$1,000,000.00
	10yr	Sarasota County	10th Street Outfall Stormwater Treatment	10	\$2,000,000.00
	10yr	City of Bradenton	New Street Sweeper	11	\$250,000.00
	10yr	City of Clearwater	Annexation and Improvement of County Ponds (Lake Carol a	11	\$50,000.00
	10yr	City of North Port	Major canal dredging	11	\$3,841,680.00

Water Quality Monitoring

	3Yr	NEPs-RAMP	Regional Trust Fund for Biological and Water Resource Monit	5	\$20,000,000.00
--	-----	-----------	---	---	-----------------

Action	Funding Category	Submitting Organization	Title	* Raw Group Score	Needed
3Yr	EPC		Water Quality Monitoring: Supporting Adaptive Management	6	\$1,700,000.00
3Yr	Pinellas County		Pinellas County Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program wi	6	\$2,345,510.00
3Yr	Manatee County		Restore Water Quality - Hydrologic Monitoring Network	7	\$304,986.00
3Yr	Manatee County		Restore Water Quality - Stream Condition Index Program	7	\$359,988.00
3Yr	Manatee County		Restore Water Quality: Monitoring Regional Trends in Atmos	7	\$300,181.00
3Yr	Manatee County		Restore Water Quality - Regional Water Quality Monitoring	7	\$2,138,607.00
3Yr	Pinellas County		Pinellas County Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program in	7	\$623,490.00
3Yr	City of North Port		Warm Mineral Springs, Sarasota County, Florida:	8	\$50,000.00
3Yr	Pinellas County		Installation, Data Collection, and Maintenance of flow Stations	8	\$348,130.00
3Yr	Pinellas County		Pinellas County Biological Monitoring	8	\$843,000.00
3Yr	SWFWMD		Project COAST-Water Quality Monitoring (Hernando, Citrus	8	\$2,267,992.00
10yr	Tampa Bay Estuary Program		Improving Tidal Creek Management & Restoration Options th	9	\$1,219,944.00
10yr	SBEP		Regional Tidal Creek Water Quality Supplemental Monitoring	10	\$875,000.00



Tampa Bay Estuary Program

263 13th Ave South, Suite 350

St. Petersburg, FL 33701

727-893-2765

www.tbep.org



**SARASOTA BAY
ESTUARY PROGRAM**
Restoring Our Bays

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

111 South Orange Avenue, Suite 200W

Sarasota, Florida 34236

941-955-8085

www.sarasotabay.org



Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

1926 Victoria Avenue

Fort Myers, FL 33901

239-338-2556

Toll-free 866-835-5785

www.CHNEP.org