

## **NOAA-led RESTORE Act Science Plan webinar notes 11-13-14**

Link to presentation: <https://mmancusa.webex.com/mmancusa/ldr.php?RCID=51420dcadc99efef3a59f89a0dbc32de>

**Presenter:** Roger Helm, Senior Scientist US Fish and Wildlife Service

### **Major Points Covered**

- Development of the [draft Science Plan](#) for the NOAA-led RESTORE Act Science Program, which receives 2.5% of 80% of the Clean Water Acts funds resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill (as well as 25% of interest on all funds) - this is known as "bucket 4."
- Further information about the Program and a link to the plan can be found at <http://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/>.
- Mission: to initiate and sustain an integrative, holistic understanding of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem and support, to the maximum extent practicable, restoration efforts and the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem including its fish stocks, fishing industries, habitat, and wildlife through ecosystem research, observation, monitoring, and technology development.
- Continuous coordination among independent science & restoration programs in the Gulf region is critical.
- 10 long-term priorities of the Science Program
- Comments on the draft plan due by Dec 15, 2014: all are encouraged to comment via e-mail ([noaarestorescience@noaa.gov](mailto:noaarestorescience@noaa.gov)). Written comments can be submitted to Dr. Becky Allee at NOAA OCM, Gulf of Mexico Division, Bldg. 1100, Rm 232, Stennis Space Center, MS, 39529.
- The Science Program collaborates with but does not work at the direction of the RESTORE Science Council.

### **Presentation Summary**

Currently \$20 million in the Gulf Science Program, but that does not include any penalties from BP, which will be higher.

## **10 Long-term priorities**

Each project will have an outcome (management actions), output (report or other information) and key activities for implementation. Projects will also include requirements for outreach and sharing of information.

1. increased resilience & vulnerability of coupled social ecological systems
2. management-ready ecosystem models
3. improve forecasting of climate change and weather effects
4. understanding of watershed, nutrient and sediment flows
5. understanding of coastal and living marine resources, food web dynamics, habitat utilization, protected areas, and carbon flow
6. social & environmental data on status and health of ecosystems, including humans
7. system-wide indicators of Gulf Coast environmental and socioeconomic conditions
8. decision support tools needed to monitoring and adaptively manage habitat/wildlife
9. network/integrate monitoring programs
10. technologies to improve monitoring

## **3 short-term priorities**

- inventory/assess existing Gulf ecosystem models
- Identify health/condition indicators of Gulf of Mexico ecosystem
- Assess monitoring & observation needs, recommend Gulf-wide network

Want to work with others Gulf-wide to further refine and understand:

- ecosystem & living marine resources management
- climate change and extreme weather impacts on sustainability of restoration
- integration of social/behavioral/economic science into restoration & management

Total currently available \$2-2.5 mil, projects completed in 1-2 years.

### **Draft Timelines (subject to change)**

- Final Science Plan by Jan 2015
- Draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment by Jan 2015; final after comment period by spring 2015
- Federal funding opportunity end of Nov 2014; initial awards spring 2015
- Develop second funding opportunity 2016

This is a huge opportunity for the Gulf region, science, and the American people. The program is dedicated to sharing of information and transparency. Replication as part of the scientific process is fine, duplication of programs and projects is not.