Priority & Commitment To Plan Evaluation

Bucket 2 – Council Selected Restoration Component

PROPOSAL TITLE

Alabama Living Shorelines Restoration and Monitoring Project

PROPORAL NUMBER

AL-4

LOCATION

Mobile and Baldwin Counties, Alabama

SPONSOR(S)

Alabama

TYPE OF FUNDING REQUESTED (Planning, Technical Assistance, Implementation)

Planning/Technical Assistance/Implementation

REVIEWED BY:

Ebonye T. Allen

DATE:

30 January 2015

A. Comprehensive Plan Goals

Of the goals addressed by the proposal, which is the single primary goal?
Proposals should discuss how the proposed activity is designed to address the primary goal.
Check one:

- (●) Restore and Conserve Habitat – Restore and conserve the health, diversity and resilience of key coastal, estuarine and marine habitats.
- ( ) Restore Water Quality – Restore and protect water quality of the Gulf Coast region's fresh, estuarine and marine waters.
- ( ) Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources – Restore and protect healthy, diverse and sustainable living coastal and marine resources.
- ( ) Enhance Community Resilience – Build upon and sustain communities with capacity to adapt to short- and long-term changes.
- ( ) Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy – Enhance the sustainability and resiliency of the Gulf economy.

Notes:

As stated in the proposal submission, Alabama seeks RESTORE Council funds to build upon existing living shoreline successes in the state while also advancing the science behind this type of work. The Alabama Living Shorelines Restoration and Monitoring Project would promote the use of Living Shorelines techniques to restore and protect eroding estuarine shorelines in coastal Alabama. Specifically, the project seeks to: 1) complete final design and install living shoreline techniques covered under the Alabama general permit at a highly publicly visible location (Boggy Point Boat Ramp in Orange Beach, Baldwin County, AL); 2) complete final design, engineering, permit modifications (if needed) and implementation of living shorelines techniques to augment existing work at Point aux Pins in Mississippi Sound (Mobile County, AL); 3) conduct

B. Comprehensive Plan Objectives

Proposals must clearly identify which objectives the proposal will address

1. Restore, Enhance, and Protect Habitats

- [x] YES
- [ ] NO
- [ ] Not articulated
- [ ] N/A

2. Restore, Improve, and Protect Water Resources

- [x] YES
- [ ] NO
- [ ] Not articulated
- [ ] N/A

3. Protect and Restore Living Coastal and Marine Resources

- [x] YES
- [ ] NO
- [ ] Not articulated
- [ ] N/A

4. Restore and Enhance Natural Processes and Shorelines

- [x] YES
- [ ] NO
- [ ] Not articulated
- [ ] N/A

Notes:

8. Of these objectives which is the single primary objective the proposal addresses?

Check one:

- (●) Restore, Enhance, and Protect Habitats
- ( ) Restore, Improve, and Protect Water Resources
- ( ) Protect and Restore Living Coastal and Marine Resources
- ( ) Restore and Enhance Natural Processes and Shorelines
- ( ) Promote Community Resilience
- ( ) Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education
- ( ) Improve Science-Based Decision-Making Processes

C. RESTORE Act and Comprehensive Plan Priority Criteria

All proposals must explain if the proposal addresses one or more of the priority criteria as established by the RESTORE Act and Initial Comprehensive Plan and, if so, how.

1. This project is projected to make the greatest contribution to restoring and protecting the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region, without regard to geographic location within the Gulf Coast region.

(●) YES ( ) NO ( ) Not articulated ( ) N/A

2. This is a large-scale project/program that is projected to substantially contribute to restoring and protecting the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast ecosystem.

( ) YES ( ) NO ( ) Not articulated (●) N/A

3. This project is contained in existing Gulf Coast State comprehensive plans for the restoration and protection of natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region.

(●) YES ( ) NO

4. This project will restore long-term resiliency of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands most impacted by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.

(●) YES ( ) NO

5. Promote Community Resilience

(●) YES ( ) NO ( ) Not articulated ( ) N/A

6. Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education

(●) YES ( ) NO ( ) Not articulated ( ) N/A

Notes:

As indicated in the proposal, the sponsor proposes to implement additional living shorelines projects in Alabama while also undertaking a comprehensive monitoring program designed to gain information on effectiveness of various techniques for varied shoreline conditions. While the proposed activities are local to Alabama and not considered large scale, these types of efforts are not unique to Alabama and the efforts proposed could be scaled to a Gulf-wide extent. The proposed monitoring efforts, in particular, will provide information that can be applied to shoreline restoration efforts Gulf-wide in order to inform best available science and emergence of best design practices throughout the Gulf. As stated in the submission, these efforts are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Habitat Conservation and Restoration Team

D. Comprehensive Plan Commitments

All proposals must demonstrate how the proposal will achieve any or all of the commitments in the Comprehensive Plan. The commitments in the Comprehensive Plan are as follows:

Does the proposal articulate how it will achieve the following commitments in the comprehensive plan?

1. Science-based Decision-Making

(●) YES ( ) NO ( ) Not articulated

Notes:

As detailed in the proposal, the proposed restoration project component builds upon current knowledge of shoreline restoration work in Alabama and targets planning, design, and implementation of projects in areas of immediate restoration need. Concurrently, the monitoring component of this proposal seeks to conduct a comprehensive field assessment of existing techniques that have been deployed in Alabama over the years in order to advance the scientific case for best practices. The submission sponsor expects to employ the expertise of coastal engineers as well as coordination with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Habitat Conservation and Restoration Team (HCRT), who is currently drafting a living shoreline technical manual.

2. Regional Ecosystem-based Approach to Restoration

(●) YES ( ) NO ( ) Not articulated

Notes:

This project is part of the larger Gulf-wide movement to promote living shorelines as preferred alternatives to shoreline armoring with seawalls or bulkheads. The submission states that similar projects are in development and/or being implemented in Louisiana, Florida, Texas and Mississippi. As stated in the submission, these efforts are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Habitat Conservation and Restoration Team (GOMA-HCRT) to promote Living Shorelines techniques across the five Gulf States; and goal ERP-2 of the federally approved Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program. Lessons learned from these proposed restoration and monitoring efforts will advance the current knowledge of the effectiveness of certain living shoreline

3. Engagement, Inclusion, and Transparency

(●) YES ( ) NO ( ) Not articulated

Notes:

As indicated in the proposal, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) will leverage efforts by project partners, such as the nationally recognized Discovery Hall Program at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, to promote the results of these efforts. The Discovery Hall Program provides education and outreach in marine sciences that targets K-12 students and teachers. Additionally, the ADCNR and project partners conduct project presentations at local, regional and national events, such as Bays & Bayous, Restore America’s Estuaries, Weeks Bay NERR Coastal Training Program classes and similar venues.

4. Leveraging Resources and Partnerships

(●) YES ( ) NO ( ) Not articulated

Notes:

As indicated in the proposal, ADCNR will actively partner with Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL), Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP), The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and other resource agencies on the planning, design and implementation of this project. These partnerships will leverage the knowledge and technical expertise of their respective staffs. The living shoreline work proposed for Point Aux Pins and Coffee Island build upon previous efforts at those locations, leveraging the prior efforts of multiple coastal restoration partners.

5. Delivering Results and Measuring Impacts

(●) YES ( ) NO

Notes:

As indicated in the proposal, Alabama is committed to design and implementation of living shoreline techniques in areas where significant shoreline loss is occurring. The submission proposes to conduct comprehensive monitoring of existing living shoreline projects. These techniques are highly varied and past monitoring efforts are limited in scope. Alabama seeks not only to measure success of independent projects but also to conduct a comparative analysis of the variety of techniques currently employed in order to determine which are most effective given certain coastal conditions.

E. Meeting Commitments and Tracking and Measuring Progress

1. Does the proposal articulate how it will meet and achieve its commitments?

(●) YES ( ) NO ( ) Not articulated

2. Does the proposal have a plan for tracking and measuring progress?

(●) YES ( ) NO

Notes:

The project proposal includes a request for funds to develop a comprehensive monitoring program for existing and proposed living shoreline projects in Alabama. While some aspects of these projects have been monitored for a number of years, none has a long-term monitoring plan in place which would allow for comparisons of the varied techniques that have been employed in diverse conditions. As detailed in the proposal, existing monitoring plans include a series of physical, hydrological, chemical and ecological metrics indicative of environmental health. The monitoring data that currently exists for these nine projects is fragmented, with numerous gaps due to funding inconsistency. Many of the monitoring efforts are now stalled and were only intended to cover a short time period pre- and post-implementation. Moreover, the existing monitoring efforts have been

F. Proposal Emphasis Areas

Does the submission describe how the proposed project or program addresses the following four considerations:

1. Is the proposed activity **foundational** in the sense that the project or program forms an initial core step (or steps) in addressing a significant ecosystem issue, and can future activities be tiered to substantially increase the benefits?

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) Not articulated

Notes:

The proposal submission anticipates this project will provide valuable living shorelines monitoring and efficacy data which will inform decision makers on the proper design and siting of living shoreline projects. This data may also help inform policy and regulatory decisions and frameworks, insuring that living shorelines are appropriately regulated.

2. Will the proposed activity be **sustainable** over time?

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) Not articulated

Notes:

As detailed in the proposal, the monitoring effort proposed here is designed to provide a baseline to determine the effectiveness of various living shoreline techniques under variable shoreline conditions. This will provide insight into the sustainability of existing projects and will help ensure that future efforts implemented throughout the Gulf region are more sustainable.

3. Is the proposed activity **likely to succeed**?

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) Not articulated

Notes:

As indicated in the proposal, ADCNR and its project partners have collectively and independently implemented similar projects in the past decade and there are few if any risks and uncertainties associated with the overall implementation of this project.

4. Does the proposed activity **benefit** the human **community**?
(examples of benefits may include, but are not limited to: how a project will utilize local workers, how a project will benefit geographically or socially vulnerable communities, how a project will benefit the natural resources critical to natural-resource dependent industries such as fisheries, tourism, etc.)

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) Not articulated

Notes:

Alabama's estuarine interior waterways foster important coastal habitats such as oyster reefs, submerged grassbeds, and emergent marsh wetlands, that serve as important nursery habitat for several commercially and recreationally important finfish and shellfish. These coastal wetlands are also recognized for the natural protections they provide to adjacent uplands against shoreline erosion and flooding events.