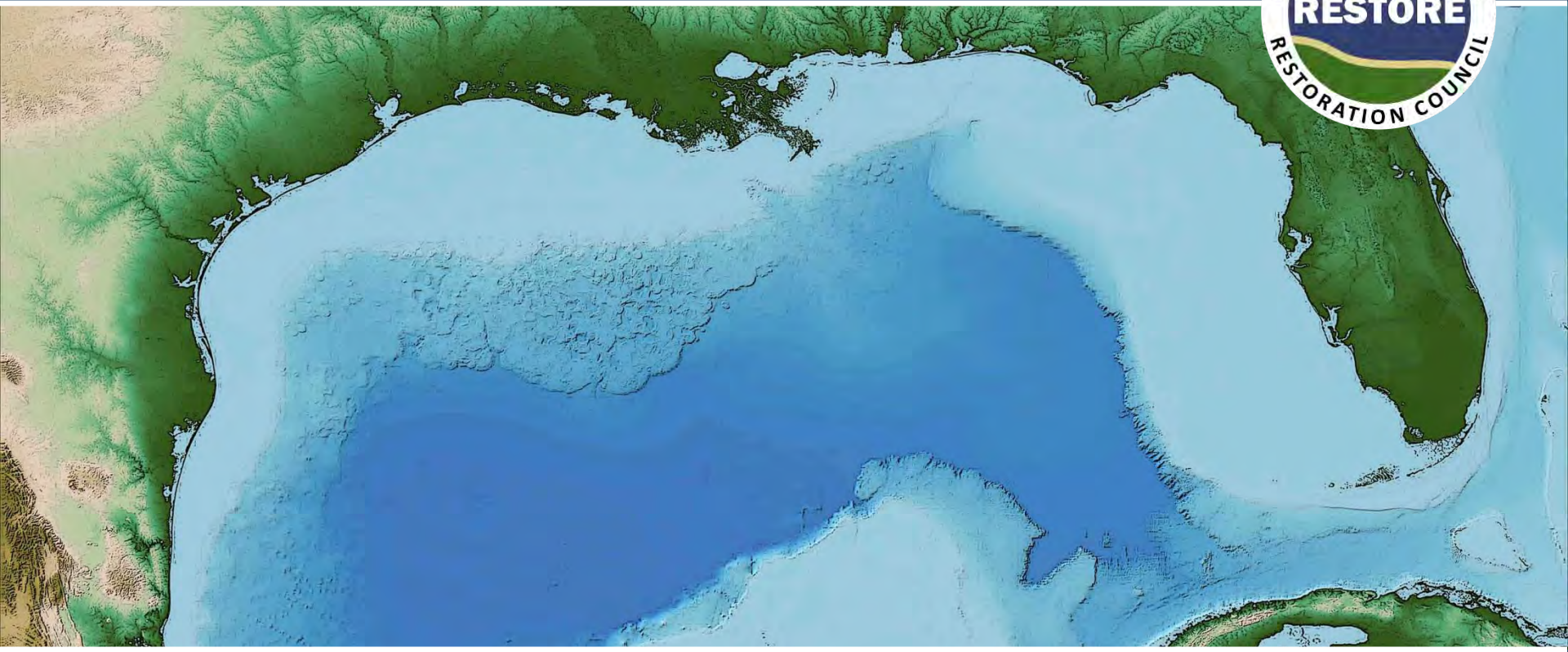


Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

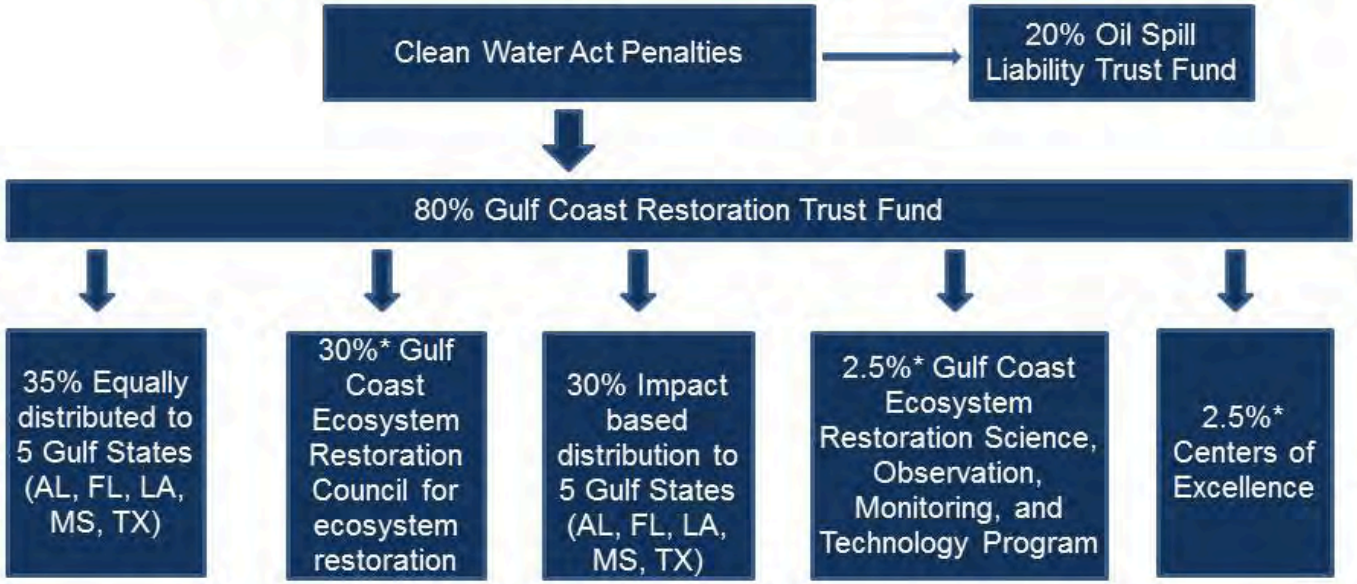
September 15, 2015

RESTORE Act

- Signed into law July 6, 2012
- Dedicates 80% of Clean Water Act civil & admin penalties resulting from Deepwater Horizon oil spill to the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund
- Created the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council with responsibility over 60% of the Trust Fund

Allocation of Funds

Allocation of Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund



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

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

The 11-member RESTORE Council is comprised of:

- Governors from the five (5) affected Gulf States
- Secretary of the Department of Commerce (Chair)
- Secretary of the Department of Agriculture
- Secretary of the Department of the Army
- Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency
- Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security
- Secretary of the Department of the Interior

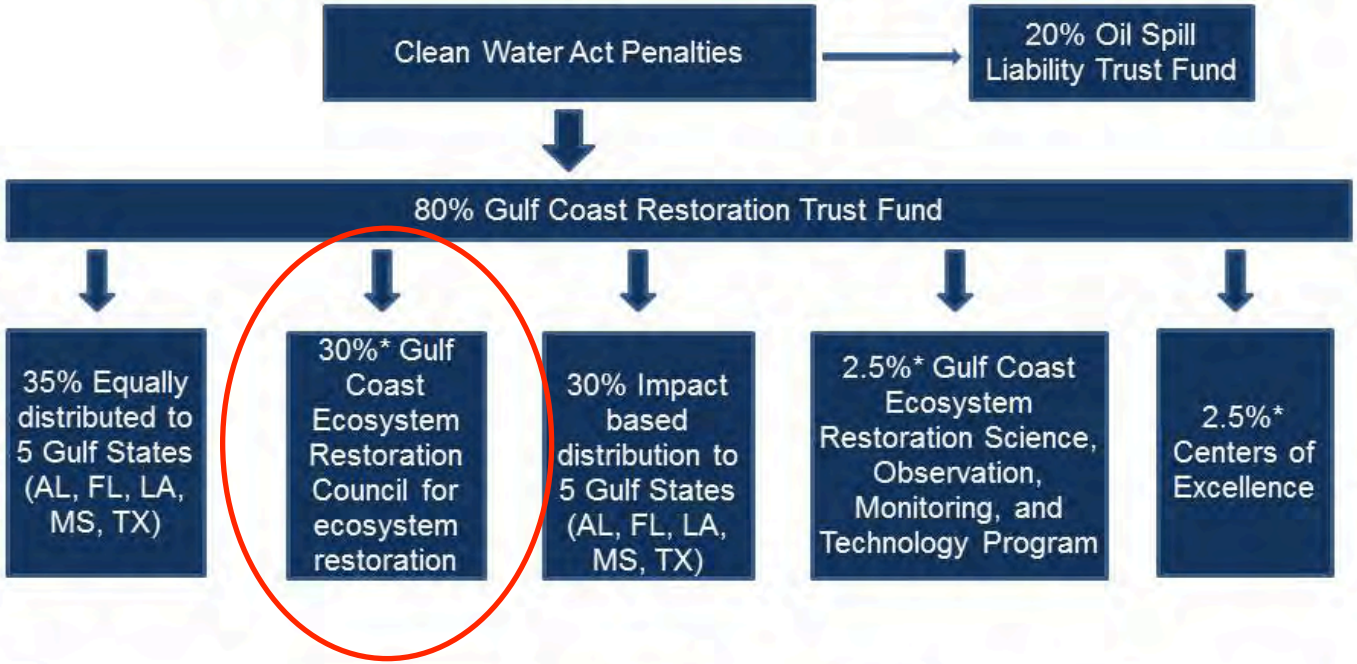
Funding

- **Settlement with Transocean for $1 billion Clean Water Act civil penalties**
  - 80% or $800 million plus interest is available in the Trust Fund

- **On July 2, BP announced Agreements in Principle with the US & Gulf States**
  - Provides for $5.5 billion Clean Water Act penalty
  - Payable over 15 years
  - Terms are subject to a Confidentiality Order
  - Will not become final until a Consent Decree is negotiated, made available for public review & approved by the court

Bucket 2

Allocation of Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund



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

Bucket 2 Requirements

- **Council to restore the Gulf "without regard to geographic location"**

- **4 Priority Criteria from the Act:**
  - Provide the greatest contribution to restoring & protecting the natural resources of the Gulf
  - Large-scale
  - Build upon existing coastal restoration plans or programs
  - Provide for long-term ecosystem resilience to areas most impacted by the DWH oil spill

Process for Project Selection

August 2014: Council invited Members to submit up to 5 proposals each

50 proposals with 380 "Components" submitted

All proposals & "Context Reports" posted on web

Context Reports Evaluated Projects By:

- Eligibility
- Budget
- Consistency with the Act & Initial Comprehensive Plan
- Best Available Science
- Environmental Compliance

Focus & Emphasis Areas

Focus Areas

- Habitat
- Water Quality

Emphasis Areas

- Foundational
- Sustainable
- Likely to succeed
- Benefits the human community

Initial Draft Funded Priorities List (FPL)

- **Focus on 10 Key Watersheds**
- **Highly-Leveraged**
- **Lay the Groundwork for the Future by Supporting Large-Scale Planning Projects**
- **Foundational Restoration Investments**

Highly Leveraged Draft FPL

- If all Category 1 & 2 activities were fully implemented, this Draft FPL would build upon or leverage approximately **$1.27 billion** additional restoration investments.

- **That means that every $1 the Council spends from Bucket 2 would build upon *$7* of prior, concurrent, or future investments.**

Draft Funded Priorities List: Two Categories

Category 1

- Proposed for funding in final FPL
- Includes planning & on-the-ground restoration
- Applicable environmental laws addressed (e.g. NEPA)

Category 2

- Priorities for further review & potential future funding
- Additional analysis needed, including environmental compliance
- Have planning components in Category 1

Draft Funded Priorities List: Some Highlights

- **Conserve 9,400 acres of coastal habitat**
- **Plug 11 abandoned oil & gas wells**
- **Backfill 16.5 miles of abandoned oil & gas canals**
- **Eliminate the use of 16,000 pounds of fertilizer annually**
- **Reduce pollutant loads by 60,000 pounds annually**
- **Invest in Gulf-wide science, coordination, planning, & restoration training programs**

Our Partners Include

- NFWF
- NRDA Trustees
- CIAP
- CWPPRA
- Knobloch Foundation
- Migratory Bird Conservation Fund
- The Conservation Fund
- TNC
- GOMRI
- Audubon
- Wildlife MS
- Several Local Cities & Counties
- USM

10 Key Watersheds

Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Laguna Madre

Why this is a Key Watershed

- Only hyper saline coastal lagoon in North America
- Supports rare & endangered species (e.g. Kemp's Ridley Turtle & Piping Plover) & fragile habitat

Ecological Stressors

- Habitat fragmentation from regional land uses
- Water quality/quantity & invasive species

Council Restoration Activities

- Land acquisition (co-funded with Knobloch)
- Hydrologic restoration of coastal wetlands
- Plugging abandoned oil & gas wells

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Matagorda Bay

Why this is a Key Watershed

- Biodiversity "hot spot" & diverse habitats
- Supports a wide variety of endangered species (e.g. whooping crane)
- Ecotourism industry

Ecological Stressors

- Development risk & potential habitat fragmentation
- Water quality & quantity

Council Restoration Activities

- Unique opportunity to conserve by land acquisition
- Adjoining leveraging with NFWF (Powderhorn Ranch)

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Galveston Bay

Why this is a Key Watershed

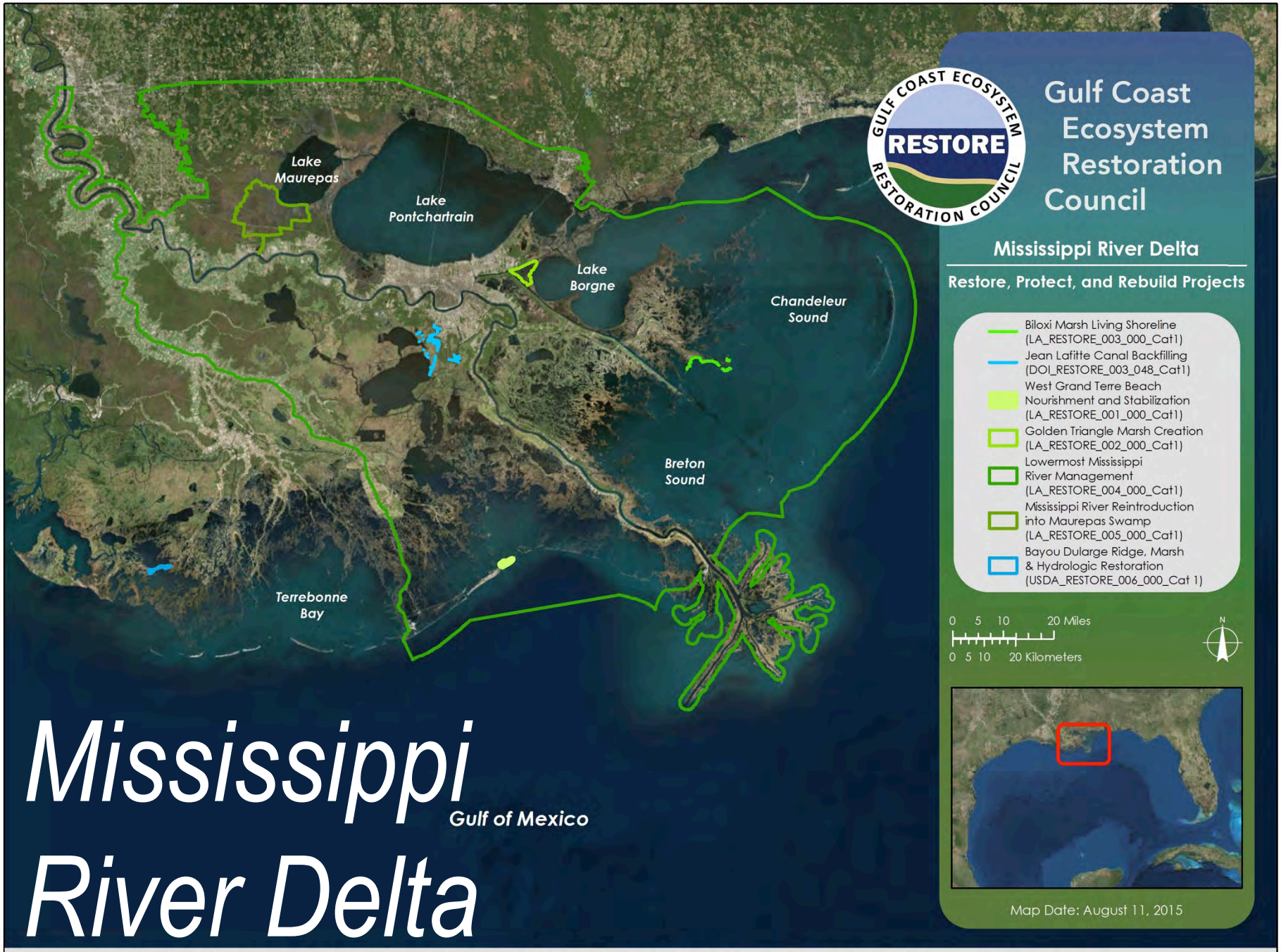
- 7th largest estuary in U.S.
- Supports migratory birds & threatened & endangered species
- Supports robust fishing

Ecological Stressors

- Coastal development
- Water quality & quantity

Council Restoration Activities

- Riparian buffers to support habitat & water quality restoration
- Planning for beneficial use of dredged sediment



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Mississippi River Delta

Why this is a Key Watershed

- Worlds 7th largest delta
- One of the most productive estuaries in the world
- Critical role in the nation's energy & economic security

Ecological Stressors

- Land loss crisis (combination of factors)
- Hurricanes

Council Restoration Activities

- Build upon investments made by the state in its Coastal Master Plan
- Large-scale planning supports river diversion, marsh restoration, & barrier islands
- Study to support more holistic management of the Lower MS River

Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Mississippi Sound

Why this is a Key Watershed

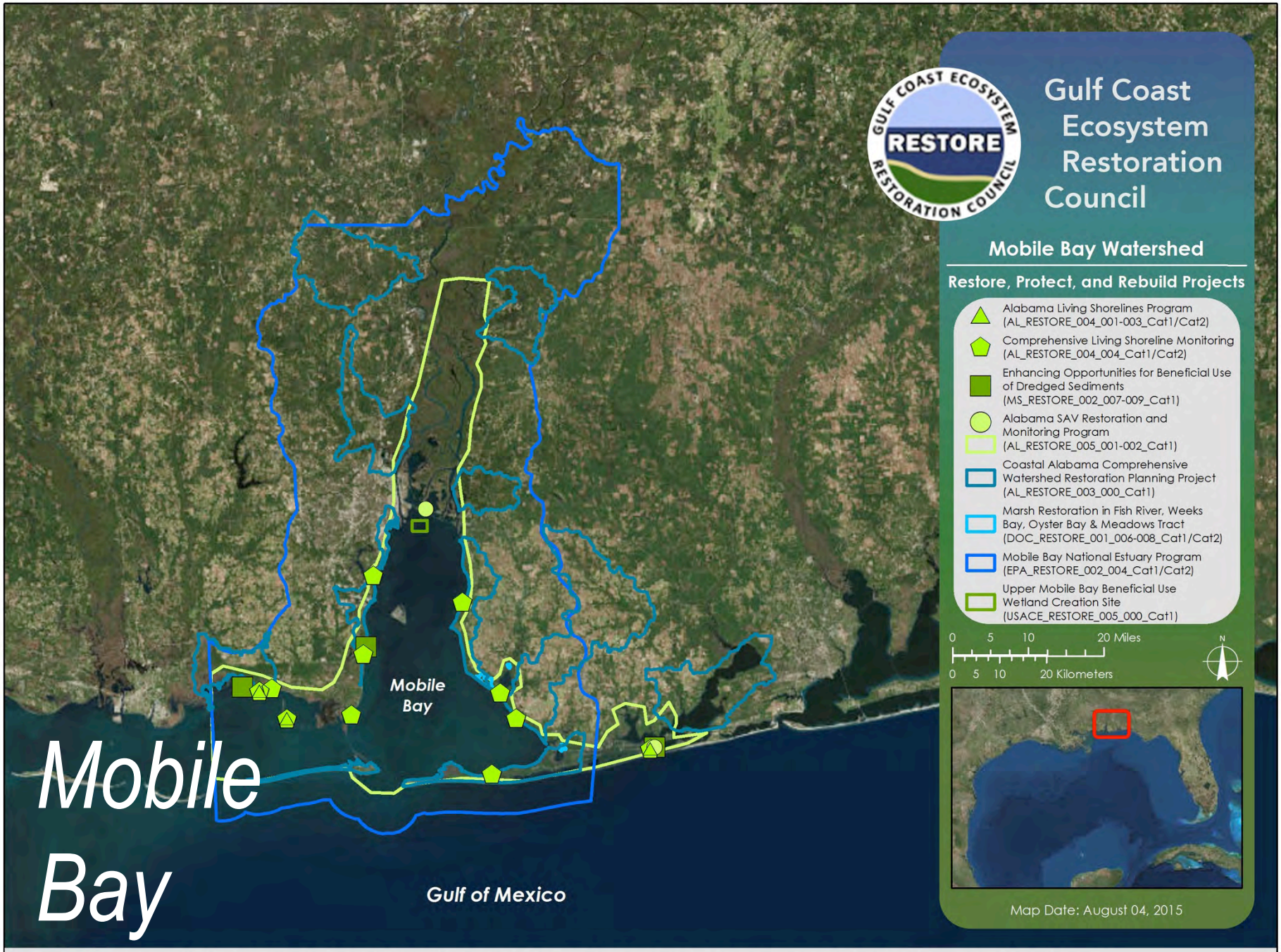
- Diverse estuaries, bays, bayous, tidal rivers & creeks
- Ecological diversity that support commercial & recreational fishing & a nationally important oyster industry
- Largest undammed river in Lower 48 (Pascagoula)

Ecological Stressors

- Habitat loss, fragmentation & water quality

Council Restoration Activities

- Connecting fragmented habitat (e.g. Grand Bay, DeSoto National Forest, Gulf Islands National Seashore)
- Beneficial use to create wetlands
- MS Sound Estuary Program
- Education & Outreach pilot



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Mobile Bay

Why this is a Key Watershed

- Ranks 5th in the U.S. in biodiversity & 1st east of MS River
- Robust ecotourism-including coastal & deep sea fishing

Ecological Stressors

- Land-use conversion, shoreline hardening, invasive species, & water quality degradation

Council Restoration Activities

- Supporting the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
- Watershed planning
- Living shoreline & SAV restoration & monitoring
- Beneficial use of dredged sediments to restore wetlands
- Marsh restoration

Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Pensacola Bay

Why this is a Key Watershed

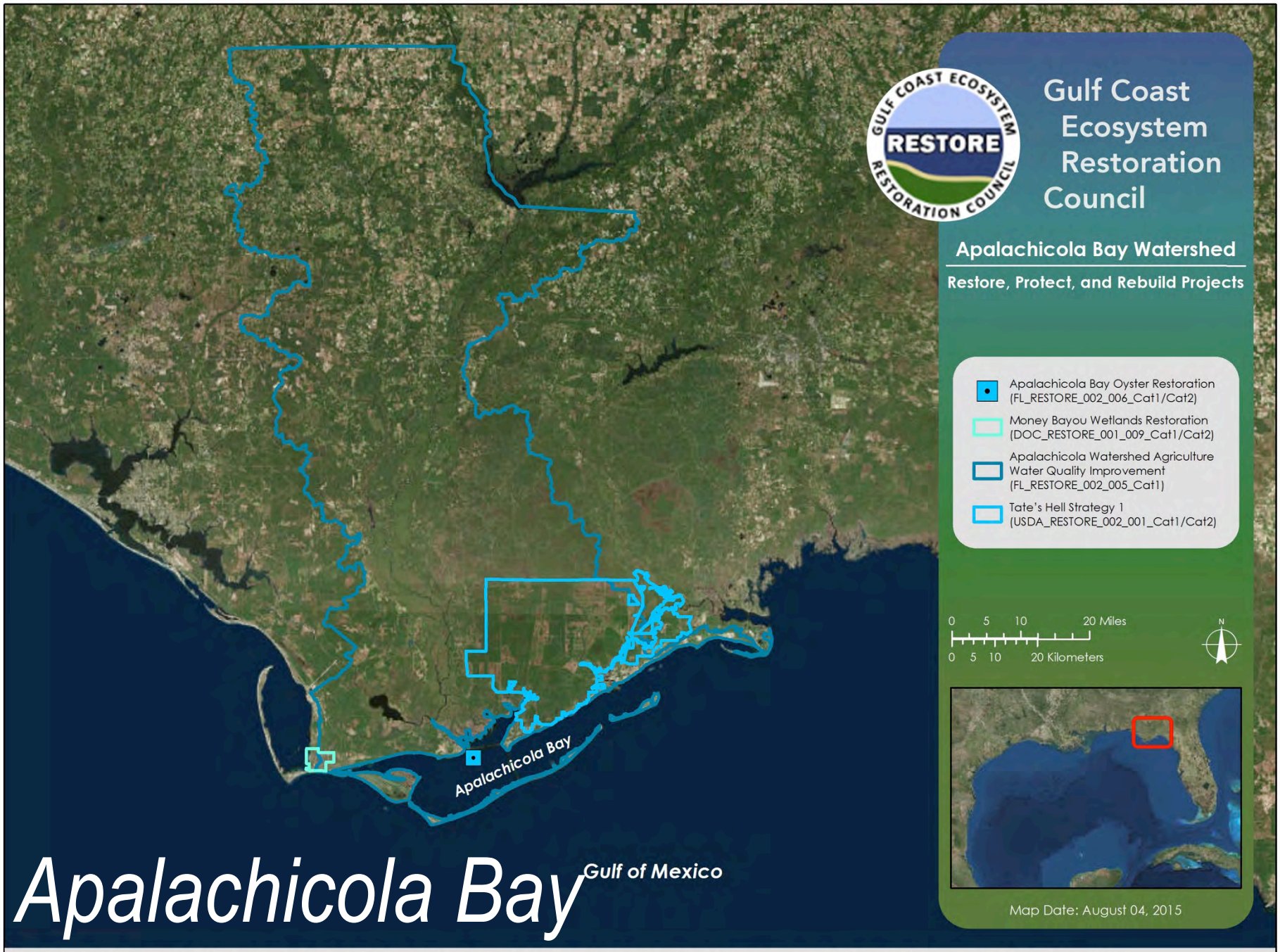
- Diverse habitats support more than 200 species of fish & shellfish, including rare, imperiled, or threatened plant & animal species

Ecological Stressors

- Urban development & water quality degradation resulting in decreased oyster habitat & harvest areas & SAV habitat

Council Restoration Activities

- Implement stormwater/wastewater projects
- Planning for contaminated sediment removal to improve water quality & habitats
- Living shoreline restoration



Apalachicola Bay

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Apalachicola Bay

Why this is a Key Watershed

- One of the most productive estuaries in the country, famous for its oysters
- Designated environmentally sensitive resource (e.g. NERR, Outstanding Florida Water, Florida Aquatic Preserve, & International Man & the Biosphere Program)

Ecological Stressors

- Water quality & quantity

Council Restoration Activities

- Working with participating landowners to improve water quality & quantity
- Hydrologic restoration of coastal wetlands & forest
- Oyster restoration building off of NRDA Early Restoration

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Suwannee Watershed

Why this is a Key Watershed

- Covers over 7,700 miles
- Big Bend Region includes one of the two largest contiguous seagrass beds in the U.S.
- Sustains premier FL scallop population & variety of wildlife

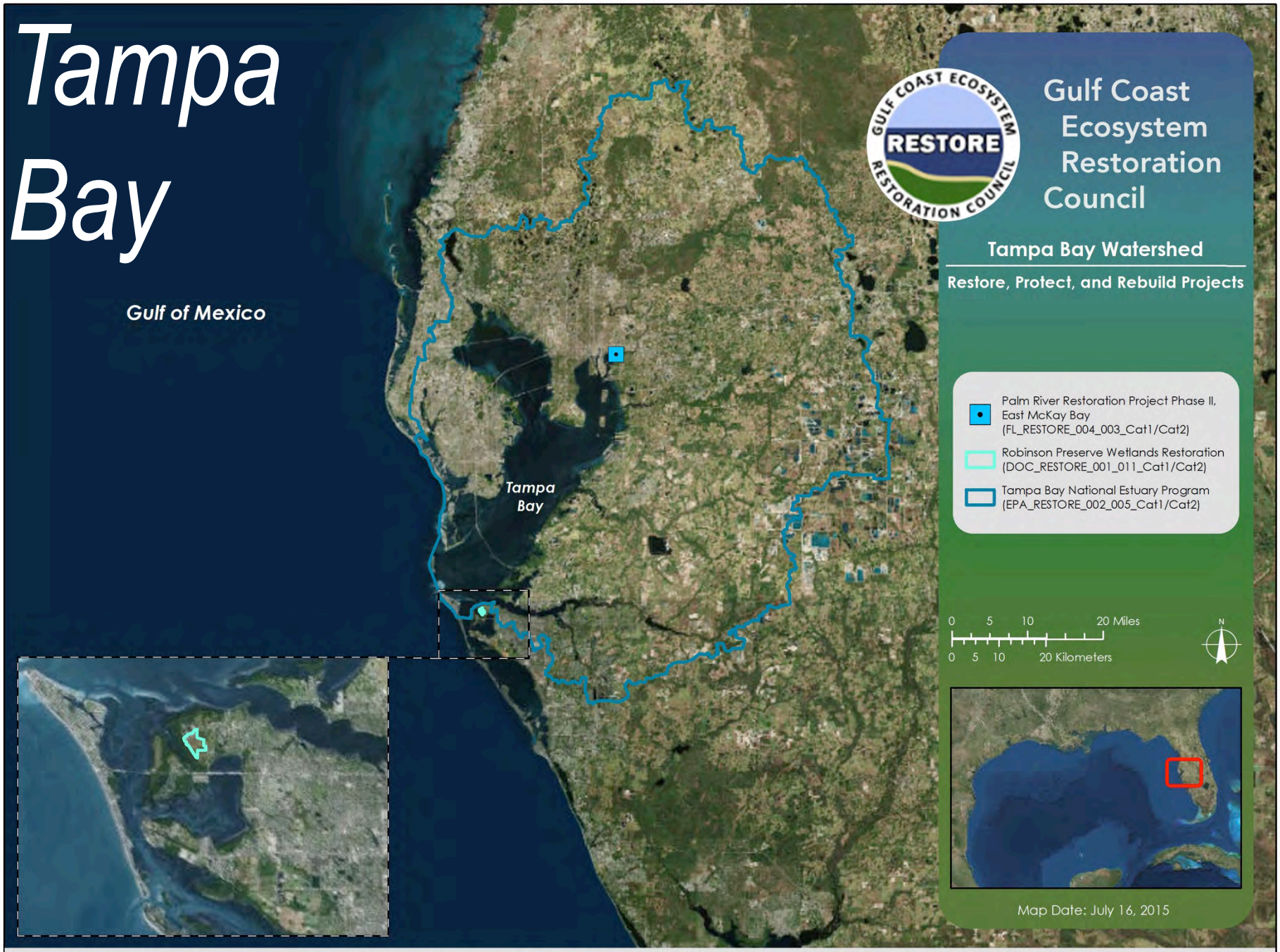
Ecological Stressors

- Water quality & quantity

Council Restoration Activities

- Working with private landowners to improve water management
- Activities will decrease fertilizer application & improve freshwater inflows

Tampa Bay



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Tampa Bay

Why this is a Key Watershed

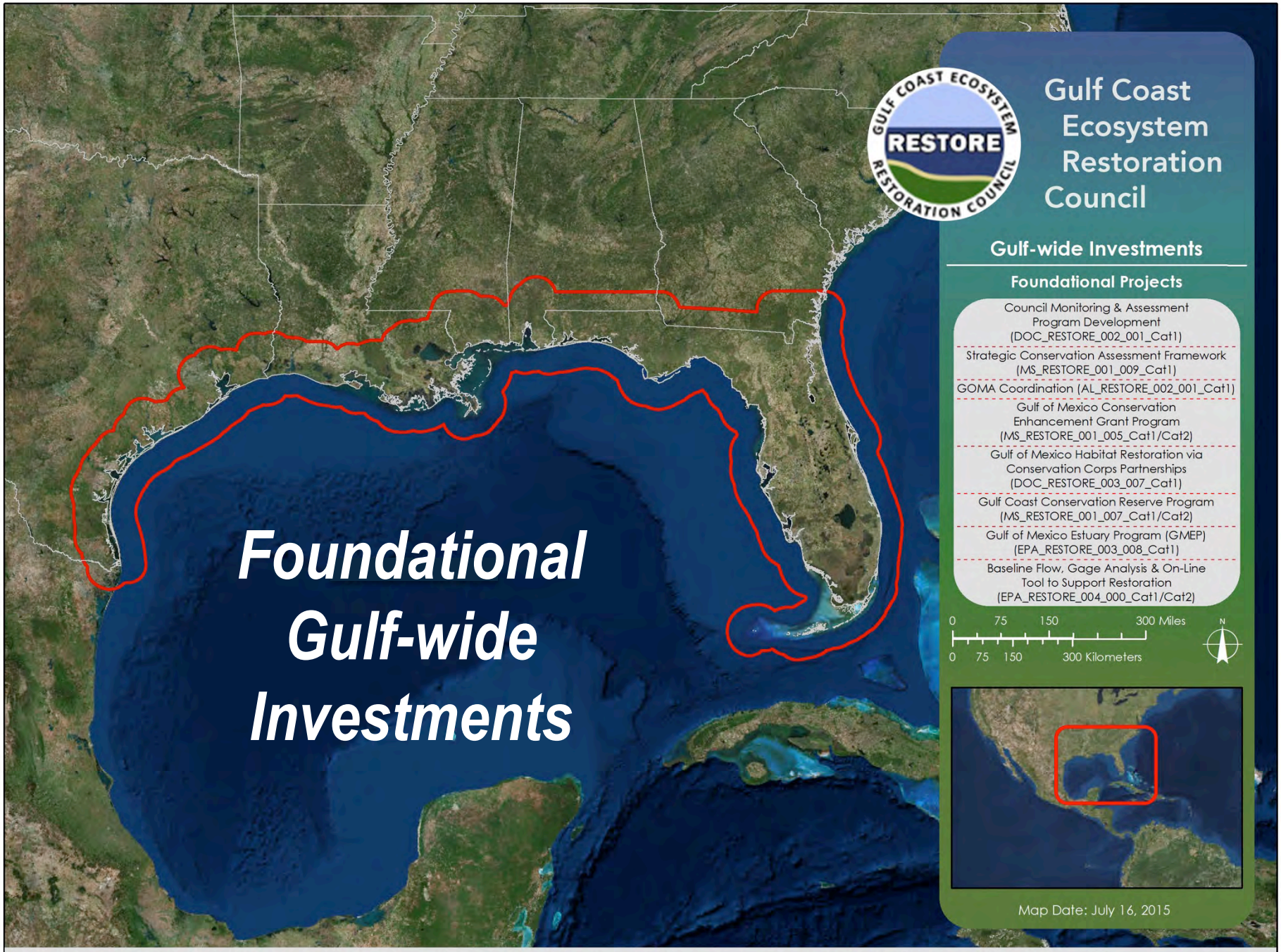
- Largest open water estuary in FL at nearly 400 miles
- Supports manatees, wading birds, & over 200 species of fish

Ecological Stressors

- Urban development & stormwater runoff

Council Restoration Activities

- Supporting highly successful Tampa Bay NEP
- Habitat restoration, water quality improvement, & mitigation of erosion along the Palm River
- Hydrologic restoration of Robinson Preserve



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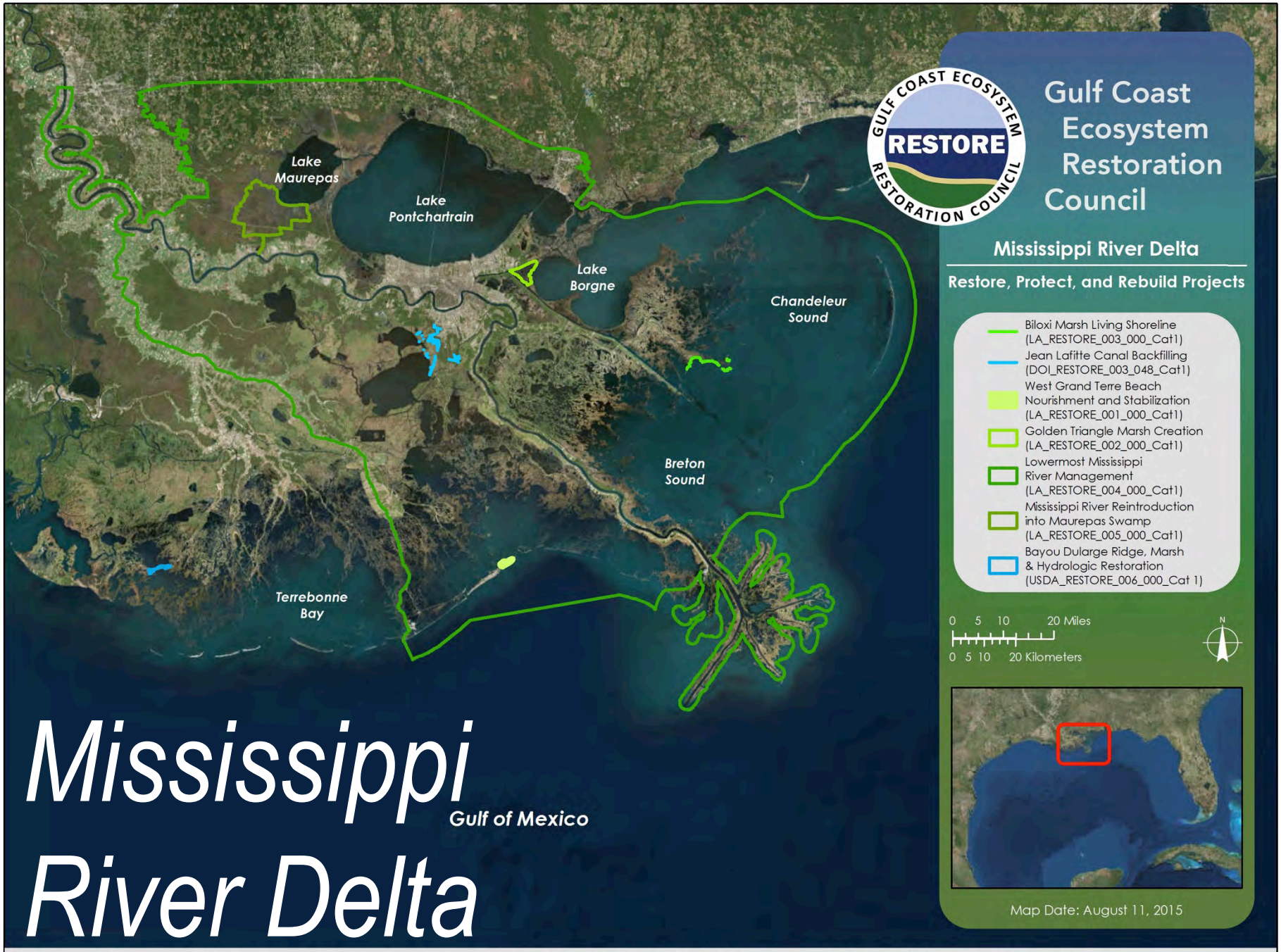
Foundational Gulf-wide Investments

- **Gulf-wide grant program to address habitat & water quality/ quantity**
- **Support science-based decision making**:
  - Planning tools to support habitat & water quality/quantity restoration
  - Restoration monitoring & coordination
- **Gulf Coast Conservation Corps Program**:
  - Equip local workforce with knowledge & skills to implement & manage restoration projects
  - Work with Federally-recognized Tribes to provide a tribal youth program



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Proposed LA Projects

Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline

- **Cost:** $3.2M
- **Sponsor:** LA
- **Status:** Planning
- **If funded for implementation:** would create 47,000 ft of living shoreline

Proposed LA Projects

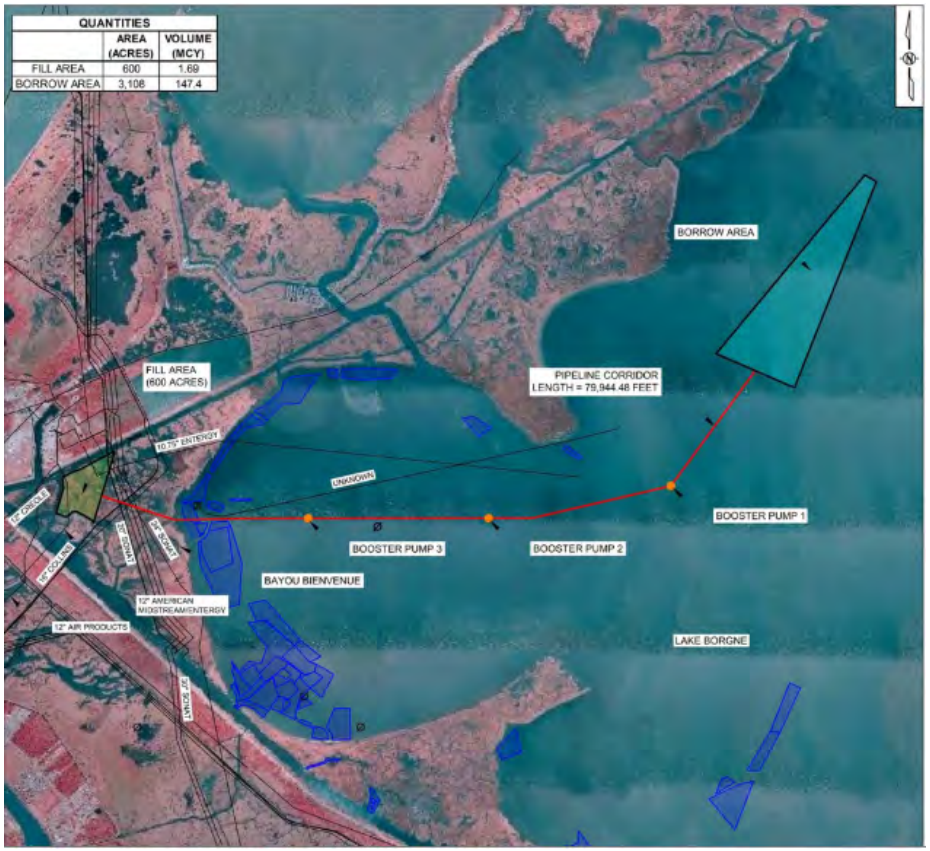
West Grand Terre Beach Nourishment

- **Cost:** $7.3M
- **Sponsor:** LA
- **Status:** Planning
- **If funded for implementation:** would enhance dune & back-barrier marsh habitat to provide storm surge and wave attenuation

Proposed LA Projects

Golden Triangle Marsh Creation

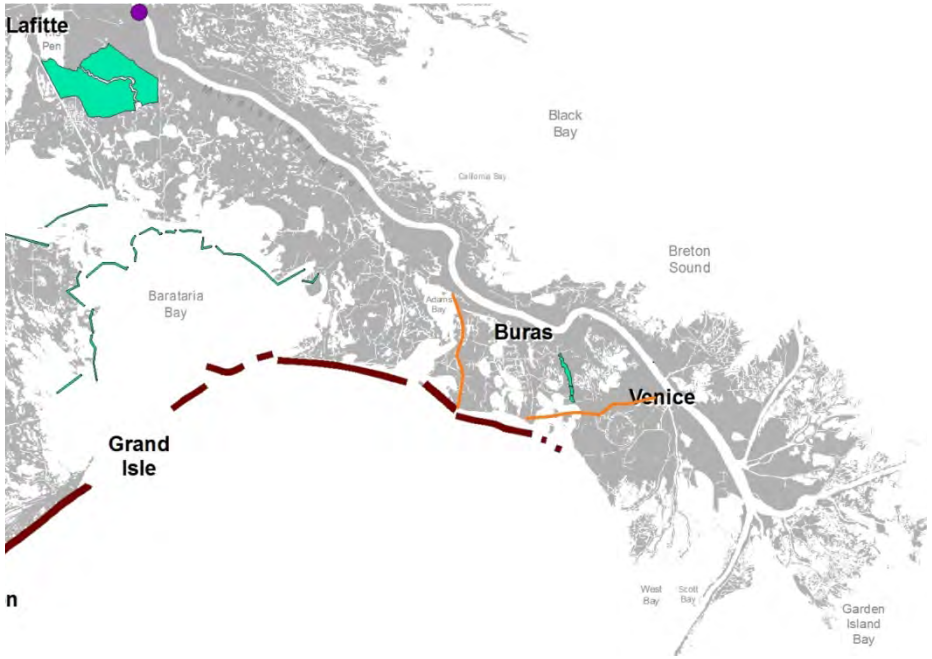
- **Cost:** $4.4M
- **Sponsor:** LA
- **Status:** Planning
- **If funded for implementation:** would restore ~600 acres of wetland



Proposed LA Projects

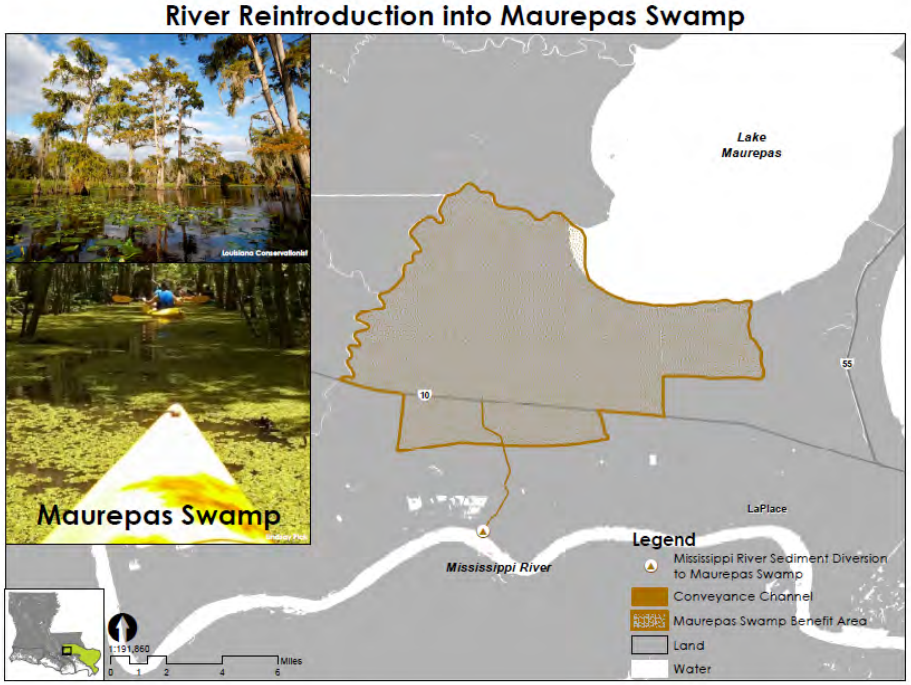
Lowermost Mississippi River Management

- **Cost:** $9.3M
- **Sponsor:** LA
- **Partner:** USACE
- **Status:** Planning



Proposed LA Projects

MS River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp



- **Cost:** $14.2M
- **Sponsor:** LA
- **Status:** Planning
- **If funded for implementation:** would restore & enhance ~45,220 acres of forested wetland

Proposed LA Projects

Jean Lafitte Canal Backfilling

- **Cost:** $8.7 M
- **Sponsor:** DOI
- **Status:** Implementation
- **If funded:** Backfill ~16.5 miles of canals

Proposed LA Projects

Bayou Dularge Ridge, Marsh & Hydrologic Restoration

- **Cost:** $5.2M
- **Sponsor:** USDA on behalf of the Federally Recognized Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana
- **Status:** Planning
- **If funded for implementation:** would result in ~540 acres of marsh & ridge habitat

Next Steps

- **Hold Public Meetings in all Five Gulf States**
- **Take Public Comment on the Draft FPL**
- **Carefully Review Public Comment**
- **Make Changes to the FPL as appropriate**
- **Hold a Public Meeting to Vote on Approval of Final FPL**

Comments Due By: Sept. 28, 2015

Submit online: www.RestoreTheGulf.gov

Mail: Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council
Draft FPL Comments
Hale Boggs Federal Building, Suite 1117
New Orleans, LA 70130

Email: draftfplcomments@restorethegulf.gov

Thank You

For More Information Visit:
www.RestoreTheGulf.gov