

PRESS RELEASE

FUNDING SELECTION ANNOUNCED FOR TEXAS COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Innovative projects across the Texas coast to receive funding for completion

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Contact: Karina Erickson Press
Secretary Texas General Land Office
(512) 475-5144
Karina.Erickson@GLO.Texas.Gov

AUSTIN — The Texas General Land Office has designated a total of twenty-two projects for funding under the Texas Coastal Management Program (CMP) Grant Cycle 25.

Seventeen of these projects, approximating \$2 million in federal funds, will improve the management of the state's coastal resources and ensure the long-term ecological and economic productivity of the coast.

The CMP focuses on five primary issues of concern to coastal communities:

- Public access enhancement
- Applied research and data collection
- Coastal resiliency enhancement
- Coastal planning and community engagement
- Coastal non-point source pollution control

Funding for these projects is provided through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). These projects will commence in October of 2020 and are outlined below:

CMP Grant Cycle 25: Project Summary By County

Coastwide

Texas High School Monitoring Program

The University of Texas at Austin, Bureau of Economic Geology will engage students and teachers who live along the coast in the study of the natural beach environment. Middle and high school students, teachers, and scientists will work together to gain a better understanding of dune and beach dynamics. Students and teachers will learn how to measure the topography, recognize and map the vegetation and shoreline, and observe weather and wave conditions. By participating in an actual research project, the students will obtain an enhanced science education. Furthermore, public awareness of coastal processes will be heightened, and the students' efforts will provide coastal communities with valuable data on shoreline change.

Texas Citizen Planner: Local Community Planning for Resiliency and Mitigation

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will continue the Texas Citizen Planner, an education program for locally elected officials. The core curriculum revolves around planning, natural resources, and risk reduction. This phase of the project will fund two workshops and the development of course materials.

Calhoun County

Boggy Bayou Nature Park Improvements

Calhoun County will use funding to protect the natural environment and enhance public access to Boggy Bayou Nature Park in O'Connor, TX. They will install a swing gate to keep cars out of the area when its flooded, install bollards to protect the marsh from being driven on, install a kayak launch, and elevate the access road.

Cameron County

Adolph Thomae Jr. Park Educational Pavilion

Cameron County will construct a 40' x 48' pavilion that will include picnic tables, trash cans, interpretive signage and kiosks that will educate the public on the County's coastal resources and sustainability practices.

San Benito Wetlands Project – Phase 4

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will continue to build wetlands to treat waste water effluent from San Benito to reduce pollutant loads entering the Arroyo Colorado. Phase 4 will: 1) enhance public access and education, 2) enhance wetland habitat, 3) determine amounts of pollutants diverted from the Arroyo Colorado, 4) determine seasonal water levels to maximize wildlife usage and ecotourism potential, 5) involve the public in bird counts and development of a bird checklist, and 6) initiate ecotourism.

Whitecap Circle Beach Access Development

The City of South Padre Island will build a parking lot and ADA beach access point (with bathrooms) in at the Whitecap Circle Beach Access Point on South Padre Island.

Galveston County

Assessment of Optimal Sea Turtle Nesting Sites along the Texas Coast

Texas A&M University - Galveston will investigate the optimal beach nesting conditions for sea turtles in Texas. This research can then be used when considering future beach and dune restoration projects to ensure the restoration techniques used optimize sea turtle nesting.

Clear Creek Connections Paddle Trail – Kayak Launches

The City of League City (the City) will add two new kayak launch sites to their Clear Creek Connections Paddle Trail, one at Kansas Avenue and another at the Dr. Ned & Fay Dudley Nature Center. The City will place floating kayak launch systems at both sites, create vehicle and trailer parking, build handicap access ramps and walkways to access the water and install education and interpretive signage.

Galveston Bay Foundation Oyster Shell Recycling Program – Citizen Science, Engagement, and education

Galveston Bay Foundation will continue their shell recycling program within the Galveston and Houston metro areas. For this iteration of the project, they will partner

with Texas A&M University – Galveston to implement monitoring of restored oyster reefs.

Multifaceted Approach to Addressing Nonpoint Source pollution in Galveston County
Galveston Bay Foundation will implement a nonpoint source (NPS) pollution reduction program at certain locations within the Galveston metro highly susceptible to pollutant loading. They will also do homeowner workshops related to NPS pollution in the Galveston area in the hopes of educating the public about best practices to reduce pollutant runoff into adjacent waters.

Quantifying Erosion and Pollution from Rainfall Runoff on Urbanized Beaches –
Galveston Island Study

Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station at Texas A&M University – Galveston will study how coastal rainwater runoff affects beach erosion and solid transport processes in Galveston. This data will help with the State's efforts towards implementation of the coastal nonpoint source pollution program.

Harris County

Bayou Riparian Corridor Restoration: Clear Creek

Bayou Preservation Association, Inc. will complete Phase II (16.5 acres) of restoration of Challenger Seven Memorial Park near League City. This project would remove invasive species from the banks of Clear Creek.

Nueces County

Redhead Pond – Adjacent Tract Acquisition

The City of Corpus Christi will acquire 24 acres of Redhead Pond (wetlands) in Corpus Christi. This project is expected to result in improved water quality, reduced nonpoint source pollution, and re-establishment of freshwater marshes.

Philip Dimmit Municipal Fishing Pier Repairs

The City of Corpus Christi will fix the Philip Dimmit Municipal Fishing Pier that closed in 2018. This would greatly enhance public access and recreation to the water.

Shell Bank: Enhancing Coastal Resiliency through Shell Recycling, Habitat Restoration, and Service

The Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi will continue their oyster recycling program. For this iteration of the project, they will add two new restaurants and work towards implementing the Texas Coastal Resiliency Master Plan projects R3-1, Goose Island State Park Habitat Restoration and Protection and R3-27, Copano Bay Oyster Reef Restoration.

Tern Rookery Island Protection and Restoration, Phase I: Feasibility Study & Alternatives Analysis

Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program will conduct a feasibility and alternatives analysis for a Tern Island restoration / erosion control structure. Tern Island is an important bird rookery that has been shrinking in size. The goal of this project is to complete construction-ready designs. This is a Coastal Resiliency Master Plan project (R3-12).

Texas Gulf Region Cooperative Weed Management Area: Dune Management & Restoration on Mustang Island

The Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program will remove Brazilian Peppertree from Mustang Island dunes in Port Aransas, TX. They will then replant the dunes with native vegetation to ensure the health of the dune system for decades to come.

The five remaining CMP projects under Grant Cycle 25 are designated as “Projects of Special Merit.” These projects are funded through the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) and will commence in 2020.

These projects will:

- Help the state acquire new land for coastal protection
- Identify the source of water pollution problems
- Plan future restoration projects to enhance overall resiliency of the coast.

The GOMESA funded projects are as outlined below:

CMP Grant Cycle 25: GOMESA Funded Project Summary By County

Coastwide

Assessing Coastal Change in Support of the 2023 Texas Coastal Resiliency Master Plan

The Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi will build upon the General Land Office’s 2019 Texas Coastal Resiliency Master Plan. This project will further demonstrate potential benefits of projects by modeling before and after project impacts to the coast. Results from this project will feed into the development of the 2023 Coastal Resiliency Master Plan.

The Texas Coastal Collaborative – A Dynamic Approach to Hazard Mitigation, Resiliency, and Nonpoint Source Pollution Control

Texas State University will focus on best practices for nonpoint source pollution control and community ordinance adoption to tackle pollution. This project is a collaborative between the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, Texas Sea Grant, and Texas Community Watershed Partners and aims to deliver vital services to coastal jurisdictions. This partnership draws on the strengths of each entity with offering planning and technical assistance that result in enhancements to water quality, community resilience, and floodplain management.

Cameron

Removal of Derelict Queen Isabella Causeway – Creation of an Artificial Reef in SW Gulf of Mexico

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – Artificial Reef Program will conduct an engineering & design analysis for the removal of the old Queen Isabella causeway and the creation of an artificial reef using recycled concrete. The old Queen Isabella causeway was built in 1954 and retired 20 years later. As the causeway is slowly degrading, removal now will save money in the future and create new reef habitat for fish.

Galveston

Dollar Bay Wetland Creation, Restoration, and Acquisition (R1-16)

The Galveston Bay Foundation proposes to acquire 102 acres of wetlands near Dollar Bay in Texas City at 50% appraised value. Restoration of these wetlands have already been funded by the National Wildlife Foundation, the Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act and others but can only occur upon acquisition. This is a Master Plan project (R1-16).

Kleberg

An Integrated Assessment of Nutrient Loadings to Baffin Bay, Texas

The Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies at Texas A&M University

– Corpus Christi will quantify nutrient loadings to Baffin Bay from multiple potential sources. The main goal of this project is to identify the main sources of nutrients in order to help prioritize watershed restoration activities.