

GBEP Clean Water Act Section 320 and State Funded Projects

FISCAL 2026 SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING APPROVED PROJECT SUMMARIES

1. Native Channel Revegetation and Habitat Restoration within the Double Bayou Watershed

Grantee: HARC/GTRI

Funding Recommendation: \$123,848

Total Project Cost: \$625,882

Leveraging: \$502,035 [\$495,035 (Cash/In-kind, Secured); \$7,000 (In-kind, Potential)]

CCMP Actions: NPS-1, NPS-3, PHA-3, PHA-3, HC-2

Summary: This project implements best management practices, in support of the Double Bayou Watershed Protection Plan, by restoring 60 acres of native coastal prairie vegetation through streambank and upland habitat restoration to reduce nonpoint source pollution, including fecal indicator bacteria and nutrients. By piloting the use of native vegetation for channel revegetation, the project demonstrates a scalable, cost-effective approach that improves water quality, supports public health, and enhances coastal protection through erosion control, habitat restoration, and flood risk reduction.

2. Feasibility Study for a Bioretention Wetland Demonstration Site

Grantee: University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL)

Funding Recommendation: \$39,274

Total Project Cost: \$40,774

Leveraging: \$1,500 (In-kind-Secured)

CCMP Actions: NPS-3, HC-3, SC-1, SC-2, FWI-2, FWI-3, SPO-1, SPO-2, SPO-3, SPO-4, PEA-2, PEA-3, RES-1, RES-2, RES-3, RES-6, RES-8

Summary: The UHCL Environmental Institute of Houston proposes a 9-month feasibility study to determine the feasibility, scope, and cost of converting an under-utilized retention basin located on the UHCL campus into a bioretention storm water wetland that will be used as a demonstration site, research and training site, and public-invited green space.

3. Building Coastal Resilience on Bolivar Peninsula (Bolivar Flats Acquisition)

Grantee: Houston Audubon (HA)

Funding Recommendation: \$250,000

Total Project Cost: \$6,224,465

Leveraging: \$4,020,000 [\$2,805,000 (Cash, Secured); \$1,215,000 (Cash, Potential)]

CCMP Actions: HC-1, HC-2, HC-3, SC-1, SC-2

Summary: The project will protect critical habitat on Bolivar Peninsula. Specific targets include adding 52 acres to Bolivar Flats through acquisition, providing protection for Bolivar Flats that would be threatened by the housing development, and creating a safe place for over 25 bird species to rest, nest, and raise their young. A 30-lot housing development and subdivision that is directly adjacent to Bolivar Flats poses an imminent threat to critical habitat. Without immediate protection, the ecological integrity of Bolivar Flats will be irrevocably damaged by the harmful effects of construction. Houston Audubon has signed a contract for \$6 million to purchase the property and protect it in perpetuity by adding the acreage to Bolivar Flats. **Note: Purchase needed by the deadline of January 15, 2026; a gap loan will be secured should funding be approved.**

4. Tidwell Park Riparian Restoration Project

Grantee: City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD)

Funding Recommendation: \$120,000

Total Project Cost: \$120,000

Leveraging: ~\$60,000 (In-kind, Potential)

CCMP Actions: NPS-3, HC-2, HC-3, SC-1, SC-2, SPO-1

Summary: The Tidwell Park Riparian Restoration Project involves enhancement of forested riparian habitat within a 56-acre City of Houston Nature Preserve along Halls Bayou. The restored habitat will improve water quality within Halls Bayou, remove invasive species that are negatively impacting the native forest, and improve habitat for native wildlife. The park now contains a mix of native and invasive trees and understory plants, with some areas containing high volumes of invasive species and poor habitat quality. While many of the large canopy trees are native, significant canopy cover was lost in Hurricane Beryl. HPARD will restore Tidwell Park by removing non-native species and creating a forest composition of native canopy, understory, shrub and herbaceous species. This will enhance the riparian forest along approximately 2,500 linear feet of Halls Bayou.

FISCAL 2027 SECTION 320/STATE FUNDED PROJECT SUMMARIES

1. How's the Water - Public Health Risk Awareness Outreach Campaign

Grantee: H-GAC

Funding Recommendation: \$99,304

Total Project Cost: \$274,075

Leveraging: ~\$174,772 (In-kind, Potential)

CCMP Actions: NPS-2, PHA-1, PHA-2, PHA-3, PHA-4, PHA-5, SPO-1, SPO-2, SPO-3, PEA-2, PEA-3, ACS-2, ACS-3

Summary: The objective of this proposal is to develop and implement a community-centered public outreach campaign that increases awareness and understanding of water quality impairments and health advisories among communities in the lower Galveston Bay watershed. Focus will be given to watersheds with impairments and/or advisories, and with high rates of contact recreation and wild-caught fish consumption, to empower residents to make informed risk decisions and take actions to improve water quality.

2. Effect of Native Plants on Soils of Constructed Stormwater Drainages: Pilot Study Expansion

Grantee: UHCL

Funding Recommendation: \$108,958

Total Project Cost: \$138,958

Leveraging: \$30,000 (In-kind, Secured)

CCMP Actions: NPS-3, SC-1, FWI-2, RES-6

Summary: In 2025, UHCL partnered with the Harris County Soil and Water Conservation District (HCSWCD) and Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) to implement a pilot study evaluating the soil composition in two bioswales and a retention basin planted with native vegetation. Due to limitations in funding, only one set of paired-soil samples at each site was included as part of the study design to effectively and efficiently gather baseline data. Here, we propose expanding the pilot study survey efforts to address HCSWCD and HCFCD's primary goal of gathering data related to stormwater quality benefits based on soil composition in areas with native plant communities.

3. Improving Contact Recreation for Galveston Bay

Grantee: Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF)

Funding Recommendation: \$110,883

Total Project Cost: \$138,003

Leveraging: \$27,120 (In-kind, Secured)

CCMP Actions: NPS-1, NPS-2, PS-1, PS-2, PHA-2, PHA-3, SPO-1, SPO-3, SPO-4, PEA-1, PEA-2, RES-4

Summary: The objective of this project is to raise public awareness of contact recreation standards and the available resources that help individuals make informed decisions about where to safely recreate in local waterways. This will be achieved by expanding the reach of existing tools, translating educational materials into additional languages, and empowering community members to serve as stewards and advocates for water quality protection efforts.

4. Fiscal 2027-2028 Conservation Assistance Program

Grantee: GBF

Funding Recommendation: \$250,000 (\$125,000 fiscal 2027, \$125,000 fiscal 2028)

Total Project Cost: \$250,000

Leveraging: TBD (\$13,300,000 leveraged in fiscal 2025)

CCMP Actions: HC-1, HC-2, HC-3, SC-1, SC-2

Summary: The current iteration of the Conservation Assistance Program (CAP) was initiated in 2011, with previous iteration dating back to 2002. This proposal includes funding to continue the program and build upon successful land conservation efforts in the Galveston Bay Watershed and complete the ongoing projects underway. The overall goal of the CAP is to support GBEP and its partners' efforts to preserve wetlands, prairies, and other important coastal habitats to protect the long-term health and productivity of Galveston Bay. CAP will continue to accomplish these goals by (a) Identifying priority conservation properties with the help and consensus of conservation partners; (b) Building funding strategies through grant identification, grant writing, and fundraising; (c) Working with willing sellers to negotiate fee simple or conservation easement transactions; (d) Carrying out legal, title, and other due diligence transaction support; and (e) Finalizing the sale and transfer of title to a third-party organization or government entity. **Note: 1,825 acres of coastal habitat were conserved through the CAP in fiscal 2025.**

5. The 11th Addition to the Coastal Heritage Preserve (26-00044)

Grantee: Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD), in partnership with Artist Boat

Funding Recommendation: \$117,308

Total Project Cost: \$3,920,215

Leveraging: \$2,820,215 (Cash, Potential)

CCMP Actions: HC-1, HC-3, SC-1, SC-2, FWI-3, SPO-1, SPO-2, PEA-1, PEA-2, PEA-3

Summary: The objective of this project is to purchase and conserve in perpetuity approximately 40 acres of coastal habitats. The purchased tract would be added to and be managed as part of the 1,039-acre (another ongoing project would add another 164 acres - 10th Addition) Coastal Heritage Preserve. The overall conservation benefits of the proposed project, combined with existing and ongoing coastal habitat restoration and protection efforts within West Galveston Bay will help to maintain and improve the physical and biological integrity of the coastal ecosystem along the southern shoreline of West Galveston Bay and Galveston Island including protecting and restoring functions that enhance water quality and ultimately protecting West Galveston Bay's long term productivity and biodiversity.

6. Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge Tall Grass Prairie and Freshwater Wetlands Restoration

Grantee: Texas RICE

Funding Recommendation: \$50,000

Total Project Cost: \$80,000

Leveraging: \$30,000 (Cash/In-kind, Secured)

CCMP Actions: NPS-1, NPS-3, NPS-4, HC-2, HC-3, SC-1, SC-2

Summary: The objective of this project is to restore and enhance 500 acres of native prairie and freshwater wetlands on the Jocelyn Nungaray (formerly Anahuac) National Wildlife Refuge by eliminating woody and invasive species using approved and selective herbicides. Texas RICE will also plant at least 50 acres of abandoned farmland into tall grass prairie by using a locally collected mix. The mix will include a wide list of forbs and grasses.

7. Shoreline Restoration at Galveston Island State Park and Prairie Restoration/Wetland Creation at the University of Houston Coastal Center

Grantee: TPWD, in partnership with University of Houston Coastal Center (UHCC)

Funding Recommendation: \$200,000

Total Project Cost: \$700,000

Leveraging: \$450,000 (Cash, Secured)

CCMP Actions: NPS-1, NPS-3, NPS-4, HC-2, HC-3, SC-1, SC-2, SPO-1, SPO-2, SPO-3

Summary: The objective of this project is twofold: 1) to restore eroding shoreline on the bayside of Galveston Island State Park by transporting and placing oyster shell material excavated from UHCC property in La Marque, TX and 2) restore the oyster shell excavation site by undertaking a coastal prairie restoration on approximately 7.62 acres as well as an approximately 1.0 acres of wetland which will be connected by channel to an existing pond. The excavation site is contained within a 23-acre site where brush will be cleared and controlled.

8. Regional Watershed Education and Outreach

Grantee: GBF

Funding Recommendation: \$197,161

Total Project Cost: \$203,621

Leveraging: \$6,460 (Cash/In-kind, Secured)

CCMP Actions: NPS-1, NPS-2, PS-1, SPO-1, SPO-2, SPO-3, SPO-4, PEA-1, PEA-2, PEA-3

Summary: The objective of this project is to provide multifaceted watershed education to audiences across the lower Galveston Bay Watershed, expanding the reach of existing programs and amplifying knowledge among all participants. The encompassing nature of this 2-year project reaches 18,200 kindergarten to 12th grade (K-12) students, K-12 teachers, education and outreach practitioners, volunteers, and community members through the six project components.

9. Cultivating Watershed Resilience Ambassadors through Civic Science in Grades 6-12

Grantee: Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELFF)

Funding Recommendation: \$185,794

Total Project Cost: \$216,734

Leveraging: \$30,940 (Cash, Secured)

CCMP Actions: NPS-2, NPS-4, PS-1, HC-2, SPO-1, SPO-2, SPO-3, SPO-4, PEA-2, PEA-3, ACS-1

Summary: This project aims to empower middle and high school students in Greater Houston to become watershed resilience ambassadors through immersive, place-based science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) education, research, and hands-

on activities. Applying CELF's Civic Science Inquiry to Action framework, the program will engage teachers, students, and community stakeholders in teacher professional development, student-led watershed-based community assessments, field trips for data collection and stewardship actions, culminating student-driven Watershed Resilience Summits modeled on CELF's Student Symposium approach, and paid summer internships, thereby cultivating a generation of committed environmental stewards with workforce ready skills, and promoting equity in addressing local watershed health and climate resilience challenges.

10. Fiscal 2026-2027 River, Lakes, Bays 'N Bayous Trash Bash® (26-00038)

Grantee: H-GAC

Funding Recommendation: \$10,000

Total Project Cost: \$80,000 (Annual average)

Leveraging: \$70,000 (Cash/In-kind, Potential)

CCMP Actions: NPS-1, NPS-2, SPO-1, SPO-2, SPO-3, PEA-1, PEA-2

Summary: The River, Lakes, Bays 'N Bayous Trash Bash® - the largest, single day volunteer-based waterway cleanup - is set to celebrate its 33rd annual event in 2027. This proposal seeks support for coordination of the event to allow for continuation of its award-winning cleanup efforts in the lower Galveston Bay watershed and its efforts to introduce educational resources to more stakeholders.

11. Connecting Communities to Houston's Prairie Ecosystems

Grantee: HPARD

Funding Recommendation: \$100,000

Total Project Cost: \$100,000

Leveraging: TBD (In-kind, Potential)

CCMP Actions: HC-2, HC-3, SC-1, SC-2, SPO-1, PEA-2, PEA-3

Summary: HPARD will lead a community-focused project to restore native prairie habitat and engage residents through volunteer stewardship events across six City of Houston parks. The project will connect new audiences to Houston's natural habitat through outreach, education, and workforce development, while advancing ecological goals of existing prairie restoration sites.

12. Wings of Discovery: Teaching STEAM through Birds and Journaling

Grantee: UHCL

Funding Recommendation: \$82,464

Total Project Cost: \$82,464

Leveraging: \$0

CCMP Actions: HC-3, SPO-1, SPO-2, PEA-1, PEA-2, PEA-3

Summary: Birds and nature journaling can provide a gateway to teaching STEAM subjects, encourage a connection to nature, and foster environmental literacy. We will provide five days of teacher education for ten K-12 teachers (priority to middle school teachers), stipends for teachers, classroom supplies, and fund a bird habitat improvement project on the campus where they teach.

13. Mercury Accumulation in Bottlenose Dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), A Sentinel Species for Estuarine and Human Health

Grantee: GBF

Funding Recommendation: \$59,973

Total Project Cost: \$75,000

Leveraging: \$15,000 (In-kind, Secured)

CCMP Actions: NPS-2, SC-1, SPO-1, SPO-2, SPO-3, SPO-4, PEA-1, PEA-2, PEA-3, RES-2, RES-5, ACS-1, ACS-2

Summary: The goal of this study is to assess mercury concentrations in Galveston Bay bottlenose dolphins, an estuarine sentinel species. The expected results of elevated concentrations of mercury compared to other dolphin populations, could result in a focus of resources to Galveston Bay to further investigate legacy contaminants, and will better inform restoration and conservation projects that benefit dolphin and human health in the Galveston Bay ecosystem.

14. Coastal Ocean Acidification Monitoring Program in Galveston Bay

Grantee: United States Geological Survey (USGS)

Funding Recommendation: \$130,000

Total Project Cost: \$130,000

Leveraging: \$0

CCMP Actions: RES-2, RES-3, ACS-1, ACS-2

Summary: USGS will continue the operation of a long-term, continuous monitoring program to extend understanding of baseline conditions and analyze estuary stressor scenarios for carbonate system stressors to develop a framework for coastal acidification in Galveston Bay. The framework will guide implementation of ocean and coastal acidification planning to build Galveston Bay's resilience.

15. Sea Aggie Turtle Patrol – Gulf Center for Sea Turtle Research

Grantee: TAMUG

Funding Recommendation: \$111,347

Total Project Cost: \$ 161,892

Leveraging: \$50,545 (Cash, Secured)

CCMP Actions: HC-3, SC-2, SPO-1, SPO-2, SPO-3, SPO-4, PEA-1, PEA-2, PEA-3, RES-1, RES-3, RES-7, RES-8, ACS-1, ACS-2

Summary: The primary goals of the Sea Aggie Sea Turtle Patrol are to 1) restore sea turtle populations by increasing the recruitment of Kemp's ridley hatchling to the adult population, and by reducing sea turtle egg and hatchling mortality through continued support for nest detection and protection efforts, and 2) Educate the public, students, and scholars on the conservation of sea turtles in Galveston Bay, the role sea turtles play in the Galveston Bay lower watershed ecosystem, the need to create a resilient coastal environment, and to create marine conservation stewards in the community.

The objective of this proposal is to support the operation of the Sea Aggie Sea Turtle Patrol Program, which plays a vital role in protecting the critically endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle and other threatened and endangered species along the upper Texas coast. The program focuses on early detection of nesting activity, nest protection, and monitoring beaches for undetected nests and emerging hatchlings, while also engaging students, volunteers, and the community in meaningful conservation work and raises awareness, creates public stewardship, and contributes data to regional and Gulf-wide efforts. The Sea Aggie Sea Turtle Patrol also provides data to the Gulf Center for Sea Turtle Research's Marine Debris Program and the Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Program.

16. Developing a Tool to Assess Black Mangrove Distribution: A Pilot Study in Galveston Bay

Grantee: UHCL

Funding Recommendation: \$74,108

Total Project Cost: \$74,108

Leveraging: \$0

CCMP Actions: SC-1, SC-2, FWI-2, RES-1, RES-6, RES-8, ASC-1, ACS-2

Summary: This year, a special interest group comprising representatives from the five Gulf states identified the need to compile comprehensive mangrove distribution data across the region. UHCL will use mangrove distribution in Galveston Bay to pilot creation of an assessment tool that combines citizen-science observations, deep-learning model development, a customizable online reporting tool, and agency data integration to assess the current distribution of black mangroves.

GBEP Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Funded Projects

FEDERAL FISCAL 2026 IIJA PROJECT SUMMARIES

1. State of the Bay Fifth Edition

Grantee: HARC/GTRI

Funding Recommendation: \$36,000; GBEP Total: \$395,184

Total Project Cost: \$395,184

Leveraging: \$0

CCMP Actions: All

Summary: The State of the Bay, Fifth Edition will incorporate information from GBEP's Regional Monitoring Database, Estuary Resilience Action Plan, and Habitat Mapping portal, along with data and monitoring information available through 2025. The State of the Bay, Fifth Edition will present an analysis of 2-3 key priority focus themes currently impacting the Galveston Bay ecosystem and its stakeholders, as selected by the stakeholder-led subcommittees. **Note: Additional funding is needed to host a stakeholder workshops requested by GBEP.**

2. Coastal Heritage Preserve – A Platform for Conservation and Education, Connecting the Karankawa Kadla to Ancestral lands and Cultivating Stewardship Through Teacher Guided Outdoor Learning

Grantee: Artist Boat

Funding Recommendation: \$150,000

Total Project Cost: \$17,385,265

Leveraging: \$17,035,265

CCMP Actions: NPS-2, HC-1, HC-3, SC-1, SC-2, FWI-3, SPO-1, SPO-3, SPO-4, PEA-1, PEA-2, PEA-3

Summary: The objective of this project is twofold: 1) to purchase, in fee simple, and conserve in perpetuity approximately 204 acres of coastal habitats to be added to and managed as part of the 1,039-acre *Preserve* bringing it to 1,243 acres in partnership with Galveston Independent School District holding fee title and Artist Boat holding a perpetual conservation easement, and 2) Master plan, design, and deliver the *Karankawa and Teacher Guided Outdoor Learning Center* for curated public access which will include a 3-mile interpretive trail (t-head blinds, boardwalks, and bridges), permeable parking for bus/vehicles/bikes and ADA bathrooms, a gateway shade structure for Karankawa Kadla and educational purposes, welcome kiosk and rule signage, 12 storytelling interpretive trail panels/signs, and Interpretive Guide and Curriculum for 4th grade teachers meeting Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards in Social Studies with companion educational trunks with required supplies and materials to utilize the trail system and interpretive signage, and teacher professional development.

3. Understanding Upstream Impacts – Community Engagement and Citizen Science on the Katy Prairie

Grantee: CPC

Funding Recommendation: \$137,197

Total Project Cost: \$225,000

Leveraging: \$75,000

CCMP Actions: FWI-2, FWI-3, SPO-1, PEA-2, RES-1

Summary: This project will restore and manage 2,570 acres of native prairie and wetland habitat while engaging K-12 students and adults in hands-on, place-based environmental education. Through citizen science, targeted monitoring, and collaborative research, it will improve water quality, enhance flood resilience, and strengthen the ecological health of the Cypress Creek Watershed and Galveston Bay.

4. Resiliency in Education and Nature-based Solutions – Phase II

Grantee: GBF

Funding Recommendation: \$384,603 GBEP Total: \$720,603

Total Project Cost: \$1,184,604

Leveraging: \$760,000

CCMP Actions: NPS-2, PHA-2, HC-2, HC-3, SC-2, FWI-3, SPO-1, SPO-3, SPO-4, PEA-1, PEA-2, PEA-3, RES-4

Summary: GBF proposes to implement a three-year, multi-faceted project to complete the demonstration site features at the Trinity Bay Discovery Center (TBDC) initiated under Phase I, TCEQ Contract No. 582-25-0053 [*Resiliency in Education and Nature-based Stormwater Infrastructure (25-00053)*]. To ensure the resilience of the education facility, GBF will expand the living shoreline and continue terrestrial and freshwater wetland habitat restoration, resulting in up to 3.50-acres of restored habitat, while also showcasing nature-based solutions to the community through ongoing educational programming and volunteer events (e.g. field experiences for student groups, teacher workshops, water monitoring training, rain barrel workshops, volunteer planting opportunities). While visiting TBDC, participants will experience the full expanse of the demonstration site by accessing the newly refurbished coastal forest trail on the southern side of the property.

5. Herman Brown Park Riparian Restoration and Community Engagement Project – Phase II

Grantee: HPARD

Funding Recommendation: \$200,000 GBEP Total: \$495,000

Total Project Cost: \$1,260,000

Leveraging: TBD (In-kind, Potential)

CCMP Actions: NPS-3, HC-3, SC-1, SC-2, SPO-1

Summary: Building on previous work [*Herman Brown Park Riparian Restoration and Community Engagement Project (25-00058)*], in Phase II HPARD will restore 166 acres of riparian forest habitat within Herman Brown Park, which is adjacent to Hunting Bayou. The habitat restoration will improve wildlife habitat, enhance the ecosystem services of these areas, and provide community engagement during the restoration process.