

**Hannah Sodolak**

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**From:** Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation <julia.weaver@gulfpartnership.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 16, 2020 3:38 PM  
**To:** Hannah Sodolak  
**Subject:** Conservation News for April 16, 2020



## Conservation News for the Gulf of Mexico Region

April 16, 2020

**The Land Trust Alliance (Alliance) invites land trusts to join #MyHappyPlace campaign in advance of May 5th Giving Tuesday Now.**

Giving Tuesday, the global charitable giving movement, has added a new event this year in response to the COVID-19 emergency. The new event is titled Giving Tuesday Now and will be held on May 5, 2020.

In this time of uncertainty and isolation, the land trust community knows that getting outside is more important than ever. The Alliance invites us to remind our communities that nature is still open and is a great source of refreshment and solace for those who are facing difficult circumstances.

Starting on April 15 and continuing through Giving Tuesday Now on May 5, the Alliance will be posting photos of the beautiful places land trusts are protecting. Land trusts and land conservation partners can join the effort by posting photos of your happy places over the course of the next three weeks! Simply post beautiful, interesting and eye-catching photos of land, people, flora or fauna, using the hashtags #MyHappyPlace and #Land4All. Whether this is land that is open to the public or not, we want to show the world how land can improve our lives. And if you post a photo of a spot that is protected by a land trust, use the hashtag #LandTrust. [Read more...](#)



#MyHappyPlace

## Save the Date!

Gulf Coast Land Conservation Conference

September 14 - 16, 2020

The Courtyard Marriott

Gulfport, Mississippi

### Support the 2020 Gulf Coast Land Conservation Conference as a sponsor or exhibitor.

The [Gulf Coast Land Conservation Conference](#), hosted by the Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation, is the premiere gathering of land conservation practitioners in the Gulf of Mexico region. The theme of the 2020 Annual Conference is *Why Land Conservation Matters*. Become a [conference sponsor and exhibitor](#) and share your message with more than 120 land conservation practitioners. Sponsors and exhibitors will receive visibility and recognition before, during and after the event and will enjoy networking opportunities with colleagues, customers and decision-makers.

2020 is a milestone year – the region will be marking 10 years of restoration efforts since the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster. The conference will include discussions on lessons learned from the first 10 years of restoration efforts. 2020 is also the year in which we join with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance to *Embrace the Gulf*, a year-long campaign to raise awareness about the value, sustainability, and beauty of the region. [Find out more...](#)

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**The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) releases *Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Partnership Five-Year Report: Working with Private Landowners to Advance Gulf Restoration Goals*.**

The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Partnership was launched in 2014 to support voluntary, incentive-based private lands conservation in seven priority Gulf Coast landscapes. NFWF and NRCS have each committed \$50 million, for a planned total impact of more than \$100 million. Under the partnership, NFWF and NRCS are using their respective authorities – NFWF’s Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, as well as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – to support complementary projects, the synergies of which will leave lasting conservation legacies in priority landscapes across the five Gulf States.

To date, the partnership has invested more than \$73 million in projects that will restore, enhance or protect more than 250,000 acres, over half of which are wetlands. More than 15,000 acres are being enrolled in perpetual conservation easements. Read the full report [here](#).

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**Louisiana Approves Plan to Restore and Conserve Wetlands, Coastal and Nearshore Habitats.**

The Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group [has approved the Final Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment #6](#) that will restore and conserve wetlands, coastal, and nearshore habitats. The final plan includes three projects, which together, will create or restore more than 1,900 acres of marsh, beach, and dune habitat and protect more than 11.5 miles of shoreline:

- West Grand Terre Beach Nourishment and Stabilization project: Creates and restores beach habitat, dune habitat, and intertidal marsh habitat and protects shoreline along Barataria Pass and Barataria Bay on West Grand Terre Island in Jefferson and Plaquemines Parishes. The estimated cost of the project is \$92,500,000.
- Golden Triangle Marsh Creation project: Restores approximately 774 acres of broken marsh and open water through marsh creation to help buffer storm surge and provide estuarine habitat for Lake Borgne in Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes. The estimated cost of the project is \$50,000,000.
- Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline project: Creates oyster barrier reef along eastern shore of Biloxi Marsh to provide oyster habitat, reduce erosion, and prevent further marsh deterioration in Jefferson Parish. The estimated cost of this project is \$66,600,000.

The selected projects are intended to continue the process of using restoration funding to restore and conserve wetlands, coastal, and nearshore habitats injured by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The total estimated cost of the selected projects is approximately \$209 million. [Learn more >>](#)

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**Governor Ivey Announces National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Projects in Alabama.**

Governor Kay Ivey recently announced that NFWF awarded nearly \$24 million from its Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF) to four new projects in the state of Alabama. The Alabama projects address high-priority conservation needs, including the acquisition and protection of important wetland habitats. The number of awards from the GEBF in the state of Alabama now stands at 34, with a total value of nearly \$215 million. All projects were selected for funding following extensive consultation with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR).

Alabama received funding for two important land acquisitions:  
*Blackwater River South Tract Acquisition*

This project, in partnership the Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust, will acquire and permanently protect 2,300 acres of coastal habitat at the confluence of the Blackwater and Perdido rivers. The subject tract includes four miles of frontage along both rivers, more than 1,200 acres of wetlands, and a 90+ acre

lake. Wetlands and other diverse habitat types found on the property support a variety of bird species and other wetland-dependent species.

Protection of the subject property will maintain water quality in the Perdido estuary and the living coastal and marine resources it supports. Once acquired, the property will be conveyed to the Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust. The project builds upon previous acquisition investments made within the area by the Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, ADCNR, and other partners in Florida which are working together to protect this important river corridor. The acquisition was facilitated by The Conservation Fund.

#### *Lower Halls Mill Creek Protection*

This \$2,687,000 project, administered by the Mobile County Commission, will acquire and permanently protect approximately 300 acres of wetland habitat in the Dog River Watershed. The target acquisition area in Lower Halls Mill Creek comprises one of the largest contiguous undeveloped areas of bottomland hardwood wetlands remaining in the watershed. Acquisition of this tract will preserve unique tidally influenced marshes in the Dog River Watershed that support many species of shellfish, finfish, birds, and other wildlife of the type directly impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Protection of these natural wetland areas will ensure continued protection of downstream water quality and wetland habitats in the Dog River Watershed.

For more information on coastal restoration projects in Alabama from all Deepwater Horizon funding sources, please visit <https://www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org/>.

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### **RESTORE Council announces initiation of proposals for next round of funding (FPL 3b).**

The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (RESTORE Council) announces the initiation of proposals development as part of the proposed second phase of the RESTORE Council's Funded Priorities List (FPL) 3. This phase is known as FPL 3b.

The Council approves projects and programs for funding through development of FPLs for Bucket 2 of the RESTORE Act funding. Per the requirements of the RESTORE Act, only Council members may submit proposals. The window for Council Members will be open March 9, 2020 through 11:59 pm CT April 24, 2020. [Read more...](#)

#### **How do land conservation projects get considered?**

Land conservation organizations should make sure that their proposed projects are in their State's portal. Update projects as needed. They should also be in contact with a Council member to explain how their project will help meet the RESTORE Council's [goals](#). Visit the Gulf of Mexico Alliance [webpage](#) on DWH funding sources to see the list of state-managed portals.

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### **Land and Water Conservation Fund allocations announced.**

U.S. Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt recently announced that \$227,125,000 will be distributed from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to all 50 states, five U.S. territories and the District of Columbia for specified park and outdoor recreation and conservation projects. This represents an increase of \$57 million over last year's LWCF allocation.

These funds are awarded through federal matching grants that leverage public and private investment in America's state and local public parks. The LWCF was established by Congress in 1964 to ensure access to outdoor recreation resources for present and future generations, and to provide money to federal, state and local governments to purchase land, water and wetlands for the benefit of all Americans. Funds are also used to permanently conserve outdoor recreation areas for public use and enjoyment.

The Gulf States allocations are below:

Alabama	\$3,424,130
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Florida	\$10,338,170
Louisiana	\$3,505,185
Mississippi	\$2,663,271
Texas	\$12,841,022

## Spotlight on Forest Resources

### US Forest Service issues report on surface drinking water from State and private forests.

Forests provide the most stable and highest quality water supplies among all land uses. The Southern United States is heavily forested, and most of the forests are owned and managed by State and private entities, thus it is critical to understand the role of forest lands in providing water across the region, the fastest growing in the Nation. In late March, the U.S. Forest Service released the report [Quantifying the Role of State and Private Forest Lands in Providing Surface Drinking Water Supply for the Southern United States](#). The report includes data and analysis highlighting the importance of southern state and private forests in providing drinking water to downstream communities. The report also includes stand-alone summaries for each southern state.

### Now is the Time to Provide State Forest Action Plan Input!

Southern state forestry agencies are currently in the process of finalizing and adopting their state Forest Action Plans. State Forest Action Plans assess all forested lands and include strategies to conserve, protect, and manage the forest resources. These plans are also the basis for setting state priorities for forest stewardship funding and technical assistance, and will provide objectives and actions to drive forest management in your state for the next 10 years.

Our colleagues at the Southeastern Partnership for Forests and Water encourage us to reach out to our state forestry agency (see contacts below) to ask them to ensure that forest management continues to protect the drinking water sources that we all depend on. [Read more...](#)

State Forest Action Plan Contacts:

Alabama Forestry Commission  
Rick Oates, RF, State Forester  
[rick.oates@forestry.alabama.gov](mailto:rick.oates@forestry.alabama.gov)

Florida Forest Service  
Jarek Nowak, Ph.D.  
[Jaroslaw.Nowak@FDACS.gov](mailto:Jaroslaw.Nowak@FDACS.gov)

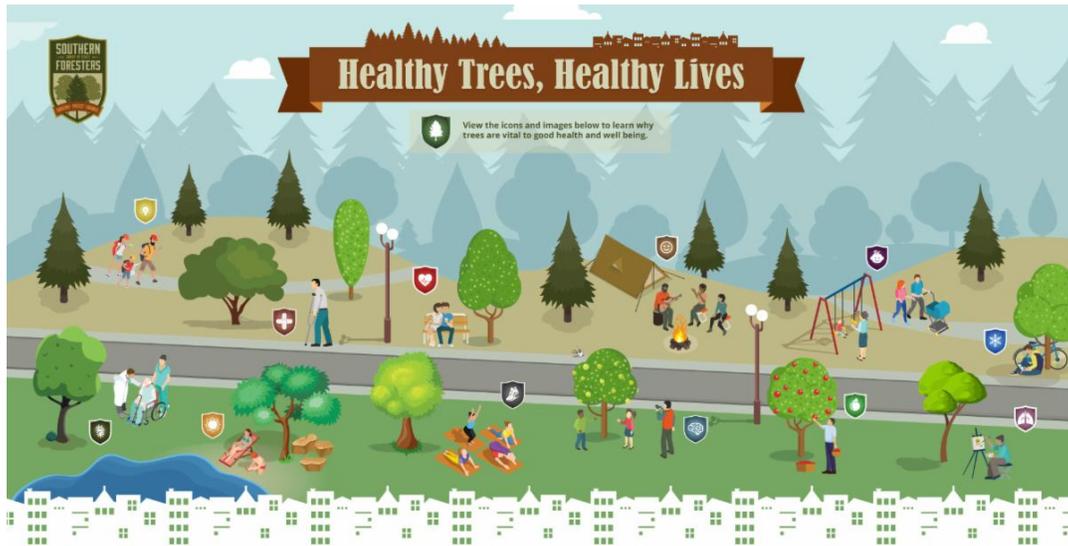
Mississippi Forestry Commission  
Todd Matthews  
[tmatthews@mfc.ms.gov](mailto:tmatthews@mfc.ms.gov)

Texas A&M Forest Service  
Hughes Simpson, Texas A&M Forest Service  
[hsimpson@tfs.tamu.edu](mailto:hsimpson@tfs.tamu.edu)

### Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF) shares research findings on the positive impact that trees have on human health.

SGSF provides a handy infographic with links to current research regarding how human health can be improved by the trees in our communities. This connection could impact many aspects of our personal and community lives; such as the placement of and access to greenspaces, medical regimes and prescriptions, school playtime and learning environments, economic development and urban planning,

environmental justice, lifestyles and values. [Read more](#) and find out how this research can support your land conservation efforts.



## Partner Spotlight

### **American Farmland Trust launches Farmer Relief Fund.**

The coronavirus pandemic is impacting businesses that rely on direct contact with their customers, including farmers and ranchers that primarily sell their products through farmers markets and to restaurants, schools, and other institutions.

To help directly support farmers impacted by the current crisis, AFT launched a new [Farmer Relief Fund](#) that will make grants of up to \$1,000 to small and mid-sized direct-market farmers. Applications and information are available in both Spanish and English. Applications are due by April 23!

## Job Opportunities

### **Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program seeks Estuary Outreach Specialist.**

This is a multiple task position that integrates knowledge and skills associated with communication, outreach and education, administrative management, and natural resource conversation.

The position requires a candidate that is detail and outcome oriented, well-organized, able to handle a fast-paced work environment, skilled at multi-tasking, works well in a dynamic team environment and has exceptional interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills. This is a high public visibility position that requires exceptional professional standards for public service and community engagement. [Read more...](#)



## Funding Opportunities

### **The Wildlife Conservation Society announces Climate Adaptation Fund grant opportunity.**

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is pleased to announce a new round of grantmaking through its Climate Adaptation Fund, a program that supports projects that implement effective interventions for wildlife and ecosystem adaptation to climate change. The Climate Adaptation Fund is made possible through the generous support of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Awards will be made to non-profit conservation organizations for applied, on-the-ground projects focused on implementing priority conservation actions designed to help wildlife and ecosystems adapt to climate change at a landscape scale. [Read more...](#)

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### **U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) invites proposals for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).**

NRCS will invest up to \$50 million in fiscal year 2020 to fund a unique, partner-led approach to addressing natural resource concerns at local, regional, and landscape scales. Through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program's (RCPP) Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA), NRCS is authorized to fund up to 15 projects where partners will be given greater liberty to manage an RCPP project and the associated relationships with participating producers and landowners.

NRCS will execute AFAs through agreements with eligible lead partners. Lead partners will be responsible for contracting directly with eligible producers and landowners to implement conservation activities on the ground.

NRCS is looking for AFA project proposals now through May 18. Proposals must be submitted through the RCPP portal at <https://nrcs-sites.secure.force.com/>. [Read more...](#)

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### **The United States Department of Agricultural Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) is now accepting applications for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).**

This program consists of two components: the Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) option and the Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) option. The ALE assists conservation organizations to prevent the conversion of productive working lands to non-agricultural uses and maximizes protection of land devoted to food production. The WRE option restores, protects, and enhances enrolled wetlands and improves wildlife habitat. Eligible WRE lands include farmed or prior-converted wetlands that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored.

Applications are currently being accepted and can be obtained anytime at your [local field office](#) or available [online](#).

## Upcoming Events

### **Gulf of Mexico Alliance has cancelled the All Hands Meeting is slated for June 22 - 25 in Biloxi, Mississippi.**

Out of an abundance of caution, GOMA is canceling the 2020 All Hands Meeting scheduled for June. Anyone that has already registered will soon be receiving a refund. For more information, contact Events Coordinator [Devany Tyler](#).

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### **Heirs Property webinar offered by North Carolina State University Extension Forestry.**

Family land ownership has always been a significant source of intergenerational wealth across the country. For land trusts, protecting family owned land in their service areas has many conservation and related benefits. Still, family property owned as heirs property, i.e. with multiple owners, outwardly presents obstacles for conservation. Through this session, participants will gain an understanding of the legal structure of heirs property, the values around this ownership model and opportunities for engagement with heirs property owners that support natural resource conservation and community. This engaging workshop will provide a cultural and historical context of why families own property as heirs property, demystify the legal structure of heirs property ownership, consider strategies to stabilize ownership and then look at ways land trusts can engage with heirs property owners to protect natural resources on their land the rough best practices, conservation easements, and acquisitions. Participants will learn about asset mapping as a tool for community level support and engagement with heirs property owners.

Get instructions on how to obtain Continuing Education Credits.

Session Details: May 21, 2020 1:00 pm US/Eastern Duration: 01:00

[Learn more here...](#)

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### **Apply Key Concepts, Science, and Tools in Climate Adaptation to Your Regional Work.**

*Adapting to a Changing Gulf Region* training is a free web-based course for natural resource managers and conservation professionals working along the Gulf Coast. Applications for the course will be accepted beginning in April. The course is being offered from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA), and the American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP).

[Download flyer and contact information about the course.](#)

Find out more about the [Climate Community of Practice](#).

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