

Dear Colleague,

I would like to invite you to consider participating in a unique opportunity to be directly involved in the independent science review of Gulf Coast ecosystem restoration projects and programs being considered for funding pursuant to the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act (RESTORE Act). Enacted in 2012, the RESTORE Act dedicates eighty percent of Clean Water Act civil and administrative penalties associated with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to ecosystem restoration, economic recovery, and tourism promotion in the Gulf Coast region. The RESTORE Act also created the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council), which is charged with using a portion of those funds to implement high priority ecosystem restoration projects and programs across the Gulf. The Council is to ensure the projects and programs it funds are of the highest scientific quality.

To that end, the Council is seeking highly qualified volunteers to conduct independent, external science reviews of proposed restoration projects and programs. Volunteers must have substantial academic and/or professional experience related to ecosystem restoration. The Council values volunteers with advanced degrees relevant to ecosystem restoration, but is also interested in volunteers whose experience might be derived more from on-the-ground implementation of coastal restoration projects and programs. The Council will likely be considering a wide variety of proposed activities, ranging from marsh and oyster reef restoration, habitat preservation, and hydrologic restoration to Gulf-wide programs to enhance water quality, fisheries, and community resilience. Given the wide range of potential projects and programs to be reviewed, the Council is seeking volunteers with backgrounds in biology, ecology, geology, oceanography, and more. The Council will seek to match the qualifications of the volunteers to the types of projects and programs to be reviewed.

The ultimate amount of funding the Council will administer remains unknown pending the outcome of ongoing litigation. However, the Council will soon be developing a list of priority projects for funding currently available. The Council anticipates that its members (comprised of five Gulf States and six federal agencies) will submit up to fifty project and/or program proposals for possible inclusion in this initial list of priorities. The review of these proposals is scheduled to take place between November 2014 and March of 2015. Each proposal would be reviewed by three independent experts: one located within the state in which the proposed project or program is to be implemented, one located within one of the five Gulf States other than the state in which the proposed project or program is to be implemented, and one located outside the Gulf coast region. Individual reviewers will be asked to review a subset of the proposed projects and programs, with the ultimate amount being determined by the types of proposals received, the location of the proposed projects and programs, and the availability and expertise of the given reviewer. Prior to distribution of projects and programs for review, I will hold a teleconference with the volunteers to orient them on the background, process, and expectations for the review.

You would not necessarily be disqualified from becoming a reviewer if you are also advocating for or plan to submit a proposal to a Council member for funding pursuant to the RESTORE Act, or if you think you might have some other potential conflict of interest. The RESTORE Council has a clear conflict of interest policy and will address such issues when assigning proposals to reviewers. Also, please note that the identities of reviewers will not be disclosed to Council members or the general public. The content of reviews will be available to Council members and the general public, as will the qualifications of the reviewers. However, the names and affiliations of reviewers will remain anonymous. For your convenience, requests and submission of

reviews will be done electronically using email and simple web forms. You will always have the option to decline to review a specific proposal at the time you are asked. Agreeing to participate in this peer review process does NOT obligate you to complete any reviews.

If you are interested in serving as a volunteer peer reviewer, we request that you complete a very short application that will help us match reviewers with appropriate expertise and qualifications to submitted proposals. Simply complete the application attached in this pdf and send it and your CV to restorecouncil@restorethegulf.gov by October 17, 2014. Please put "Science Review Application" in the subject line of your return email. Please consider forwarding this application to other qualified individuals to help ensure we reach the best candidates for these voluntary peer reviews.

Thanks for your consideration of this request. Your help is greatly appreciated, and is needed to ensure success in Gulf Ecosystem restoration. If you have any questions on any of this, please contact me at 228-688-3026; or Kristen Laursen at 727-551-5754.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Russ Beard", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Russ Beard
Science Coordinator
Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

cc: Kristen Laursen

RESTORE Council Science Reviewer Application

Name

Address

Your email address

Phone Number

1. Where are you physically located?

2. Where do your research, restoration, or community activities take place?

Are they Gulf of Mexico based?

yes no

If yes, in what state do you do most of your work?

3. Field of expertise:

a. What is your specialty field of expertise?

b. Would you consider yourself a general restoration ecologist?

yes no

c. Anything else you would like to add?

4. Who is your employer and what are your affiliation(s)?

5. What is your level of education?

***Please attach a copy of your vitae when returning this completed application to:
restorecouncil@restorethegulf.gov***