

Final Evaluation Findings

Texas Coastal Management Program

June 2014 to August 2022

Published March 2023



Office for Coastal Management
National Ocean Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
United States Department of Commerce

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Summary of Findings

Section 312(c) of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA, 16 U.S.C. § 1451 *et seq.*) requires the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to conduct periodic evaluations of the performance of states and territories with federally approved coastal management programs. This evaluation examined the operation and management of the Texas Coastal Management Program administered by the Texas General Land Office, the designated lead agency, for the period from June 2014 to August 2022. The evaluation focused on three target areas: coastal grants program administration, coordination with network agencies, and coastal resilience initiatives.

The findings in this evaluation document will be considered by NOAA in making future financial award decisions concerning the Texas Coastal Management Program. The evaluation came to these conclusions:

Accomplishment: The Texas General Land Office has consolidated coastal grants program funding through the coastal management program and established a plan for prioritizing projects to increase efficiency and effectiveness of funding from a variety of sources.

Accomplishment: The Coastal Protection Division has adopted innovative methods to ensure that the coastal grants program operates efficiently and includes a broad range of coastal communities.

Accomplishment: Under the guidance of the Texas General Land Office, the Texas Coastal Advisory Coordination Council and the Technical Advisory Committee have become valuable resources for maximizing the impact of governmental resources and reducing duplication of efforts.

Accomplishment: The Texas General Land Office has updated procedures and guidance to ensure that the state will continue to benefit from the federal consistency provisions of the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Accomplishment: The Texas General Land Office has developed integrated processes to ensure adequate and timely reviews of federal activities in the coastal zone.

Accomplishment: The Texas General Land Office has created collaborative partnerships to educate coastal decision makers to support the implementation of the Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program.

Accomplishment: The Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program was approved by NOAA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in May of 2022. (See further discussion under Focus Area 2: Coordination with Networked Agencies.)

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Texas General Land Office to reach out to communities that have the need to address coastal problems but that have not traditionally sought funding to address these issues.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Coastal Protection Division to continue to pursue improvements to critical database and information infrastructure to ensure the continued success of the coastal management program.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Texas General Land Office to only seek funding for small capital projects under Section 306A of the CZMA when timing will not be an issue.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Texas General Land Office to continue working with NOAA to finalize federal consistency rule updates and to establish a more routine program update schedule to ensure that the state's enforceable policies reflect legislative and regulatory changes.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Texas General Land Office to continue to promote living shorelines and to identify ways to simplify and expedite the permitting process for living shoreline projects where appropriate.

This evaluation concludes that the Texas General Land Office is successfully implementing and enforcing its federally approved coastal management program, adhering to the terms of the federal financial assistance awards, and addressing coastal management needs identified in section 303(2)(A) through (K) of the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Program Review Procedures

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) evaluated the Texas Coastal Management Program in fiscal year 2022. The evaluation team consisted of Ralph Cantral, evaluation team lead; Kristin Ransom, coastal management specialist and site liaison; and Rebecca Allee, senior scientist, all from NOAA's Office for Coastal Management; and Mark Hogan, coastal resource scientist supervisor, Louisiana Coastal Management Program. The support of Coastal Protection Division staff members was crucial in conducting the evaluation, and their support is most gratefully acknowledged.

NOAA sent a notification of the scheduled evaluation to George P. Bush, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office, published a notice of "Intent to Evaluate" in the *Federal Register* on August 8, 2022, and notified members of the Texas congressional delegation. The coastal management program also posted a notice of the public meeting and opportunity to comment.

The evaluation process included a review of relevant documents and a survey of stakeholders, which helped identify three target areas for the evaluation: coastal grants program administration, coordination of networked agencies, and coastal resilience initiatives. A site visit was conducted and the evaluation team held meetings with staff members and group discussions with stakeholders and program staff members about the target areas. In addition, a virtual public meeting was held on Wednesday, August 17, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. to provide an opportunity for members of the public to express their opinions about the implementation of the program. Stakeholders and members of the public were also given the opportunity to provide written comments. A summary of the written comments received and the NOAA Office for Coastal Management's responses are included in Appendix A. NOAA then developed draft evaluation findings, which were provided to the Texas General Land Office for review, and the agency's comments were considered in drafting the final evaluation findings.

Final evaluation findings for all coastal management programs highlight the program's accomplishments in the target areas and include recommendations, which are of two types.

Necessary Actions address programmatic requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act or its implementing regulations at 15 C.F.R., Part 923, and of the state coastal management program approved by NOAA, and the terms of any grant or cooperative agreement funded under the Coastal Zone Management Act. Necessary actions must be carried out by the date specified. Failure to address necessary actions may result in a future finding of non-adherence and the invoking of interim sanctions, as specified in the Coastal Zone Management Act §312(c).

Recommendations are actions that the office believes would improve the program but which are not mandatory. The state is expected to have considered the recommendations by the time of the next evaluation or dates specified.

Evaluation Findings

The Texas Coastal Management Program coordinates the activities of a network of eight natural resource agencies whose authorities are included in the approved program. The core staff in the Texas General Land Office (GLO) is advised by the Coastal Advisory Coordination Council composed of state agency leadership and representatives of local government, coastal businesses, and coastal residents. The program has a strong presence in the coastal area through permitting, planning, and grants.

Coastal Grants Program Administration

The General Land Office's Coastal Protection Division coordinates a grants program that incorporates a number of funding sources in addition to the funds received through the cooperative agreement with NOAA. The inclusion of these additional funds in the coastal program stems from one of the strategies prepared under the 2016-2020 Assessment and Strategies Report using CZMA Section 309 funding. This strategy proposed to consolidate the various coastal resource funding streams to better coordinate projects and reduce duplication of effort. As a result of this change, the coastal management program staff now oversees the administration of more than \$80 million dollars each year. These funds come from a variety of federal, state, and local sources, including Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA), Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act (CEPRA), and Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA).

In 2017, the General Land Office released the Texas Coastal Resiliency Master Plan, an effort to create a framework for long-range planning and to communicate priorities for actions to protect, enhance, and restore the resources of the Texas coast. This first iteration of the plan focused primarily on nature-based projects to mitigate and ameliorate the impacts of coastal hazards. A second, broader plan was released in 2019. The updated plan added considerations for more traditional infrastructure projects as well as encouraging a focus on research and modeling to better understand future conditions, including storm surge inundation and sea level rise. A third iteration of the plan is to be released in 2023, with plans to issue an updated plan every four years. This timing would allow coordination with legislative sessions, thus providing valuable guidance for funding decisions.

The inclusion of the additional sources of funding and the priorities set out in the Texas Coastal Resiliency Master Plan have greatly multiplied the impacts of the funds that the state receives annually through NOAA cooperative agreements. These process improvements have also enabled NOAA funding to serve as an incubator for more extensive projects. By providing funding for specific activities such as the planning and design work necessary for larger, more impactful projects, coordination and collaboration among the networked agencies has increased. This consolidated approach has also increased opportunities for coastal communities and resource managers to pursue new initiatives using innovative approaches.

Accomplishment: The Texas General Land Office has consolidated coastal grants program funding through the coastal management program and established a plan for prioritizing projects to increase efficiency and effectiveness of funding from a variety of sources.

During this evaluation period, the Coastal Protection Division has placed a focus on ensuring that projects that are funded are not only helpful at their completion, but are adaptable as conditions and resources change. To encourage the usefulness of grant products, the General Land Office has also formed coastal issue teams that align staff expertise with specific topics such as water quality, long-term planning, permitting, and grants. As an example, research grants for data collection and modeling are supported by technical advisors from the agencies to ensure that the results can be successfully transferred to resource managers in a timely manner. During this evaluation period, the division has also concentrated on improving internal management systems by updating and enhancing critical database and information infrastructure.

A recent initiative of the Coastal Protection Division has been to explore methods for targeting funding to coastal counties that rarely seek funding to address coastal issues. This approach will build upon the successful annual grant workshops that seek to inform communities of the availability of funding and allow for one-on-one consultations about specific needs. Since 2019, these workshops have expanded to include information and technical assistance related to funding available through both the coastal program and the Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act.

Accomplishment: The Coastal Protection Division has adopted innovative methods to ensure that the coastal grants program operates efficiently and includes a broad range of coastal communities.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Texas General Land Office to reach out to communities that have the need to address coastal problems but that have not traditionally sought funding to address these issues.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Coastal Protection Division to continue to pursue improvements to critical database and information infrastructure to ensure the continued success of the coastal management program.

The evaluation team also learned that construction and acquisition projects have been difficult to accomplish within cooperative agreement timelines due to special award conditions related to environmental compliance. Other funds administered by the Coastal Protection Division may have fewer time constraints and may be more appropriate for these small capital projects.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Texas General Land Office to only seek funding for small capital projects under Section 306A of the CZMA when timing will not be an issue.

Coordination with Networked Agencies

The primary tool for coordinating the eight networked agencies of the Texas Coastal Management Program is the Coastal Advisory Coordination Council. The council membership is composed of representatives of the General Land Office, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the Railroad Commission of Texas, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Department of Transportation, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, Texas Sea Grant, and Texas Water Development Board. Four additional public members, representing coastal communities and businesses are appointed by the governor.

To ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of coastal program projects, the General Land Office has also created coastal issue teams composed of agency representatives with expertise on specific issues that need coordination. To date, four issue teams have been created. The water quality team was essential to the completion and approval of the Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program and is currently focused on developing and implementing strategies to ensure the success of the program. The grants team is involved in updating guidance for the annual funding cycle as well as ensuring that the projects funded are targeted to meeting the goals and priorities of the various agencies and of the approved Texas Coastal Management Program. The long-term planning team is actively involved in preparing both the Section 309 Assessment and Strategies Report and the Texas Coastal Resiliency Master Plan. The regulatory team meets monthly and is primarily focused on large-scale projects that involve federal agencies that raise concerns related to federal consistency.

The evaluation team learned from the members of the advisory council and the issue teams that the coordination process is working well. Representatives from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality expressed their view of the importance of the coastal management program because the Commission on Environmental Quality does not have a dedicated group to look at specific coastal issues. Council members from the Texas Railroad Commission and the Water Development Board spoke of the usefulness of the grants program in allowing them to identify not only environmentally sensitive areas, but also where activities might have impacts or create conflicts with coastal communities and the general public.

Accomplishment: Under the guidance of the Texas General Land Office, the Texas Coastal Advisory Coordination Council and the Technical Advisory Committee have become valuable resources for maximizing the impact of governmental resources and reducing duplication of efforts.

One of the most important tools available through the Texas Coastal Management Program is the federal consistency process. During this evaluation period, the General Land Office devoted a significant level of effort to developing new federal consistency procedures. These changes are being prepared as revisions to Texas Administrative Code Chapter 506, and will streamline

the process to align with NOAA's federal consistency regulations in 15 CFR Part 930. A significant change to the process is in including additional federal assistance activities in the federal consistency review process. The implementation of the new guidelines will be accompanied by a new federal consistency guide and associated training.

Accomplishment: The Texas General Land Office has updated procedures and guidance to ensure that the state will continue to benefit from the federal consistency provisions of the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Federal consistency determinations are based on the statutes and regulations that are included in the federally approved Texas Coastal Management Program. To be effective in managing the coast's natural, cultural, and historic resources, the enforceable policies must adapt to new conditions and emerging issues. As laws and regulations are amended to reflect current and future conditions, amendments to the approved coastal management program must be submitted for approval before they may be used for federal consistency review. These program changes are most effective when submitted on a routine basis.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Texas General Land Office to continue working with NOAA to finalize federal consistency rule updates and to establish a more routine program update schedule to ensure that the state's enforceable policies reflect legislative and regulatory changes.

The Coastal Protection Division continues to coordinate closely with federal agencies on projects in the coastal zone. One key effort has focused on participating on interagency coordination teams created by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District. These groups allow the Coastal Protection Division to work with a variety of stakeholders and ensure coordination of the state's goals and priorities with the planning and implementation of federal navigation projects, as well as research efforts such as the Galveston Bay Shoreline Erosion Feasibility Study.

Another significant need for collaboration with state and federal agencies has been coordinating the review of proposals for deepwater ports. During this evaluation period, the General Land Office received six applications for review from the Maritime Administration (MARAD). The review is similar to the federal consistency process, so the reviews are conducted simultaneously. The two processes operate under different time schedules as well as different requirements as to what constitutes a complete application. Because many of the materials needed for the federal consistency review may not be submitted with the application package, the Coastal Protection Division must coordinate closely with both MARAD and the applicants to ensure that the state's response is both timely and complete.

Accomplishment: The Texas General Land Office has developed integrated processes to ensure adequate and timely reviews of federal activities in the coastal zone.

The Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program was finalized and approved by NOAA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency during this evaluation period. Various components of the program will be implemented through partnerships with the agency members of the Texas Coastal Advisory Coordination Council, as well as an expanded network that includes the Meadows Center at Texas State University, Texas Sea Grant, Texas A&M University Extension, Texas Community Watershed Partners, and a private consulting firm, Doucet and Associates. This initiative provides technical assistance to coastal communities in the 18 coastal counties to integrate a variety of best management practices to restore and protect coastal resources while addressing water quality and flood management issues. Although the current approach is voluntary and incentive-based, the longer-term goal is to encourage policy changes at the local level.

Accomplishment: The Texas General Land Office has created collaborative partnerships to educate coastal decision makers to support the implementation of the Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Texas General Land Office to continue efforts to bring about policy changes at the local level to ensure the effective implementation of the Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program.

Coastal Resilience Initiatives

The Texas Coastal Resiliency Master Plan, adopted in 2017 and updated in 2019, created a framework for long-range planning and to communicate priorities for actions to protect, enhance, and restore the resources of the Texas coast. The plan focuses on addressing a number of threats to coastal communities, including beach erosion and dune degradation, storm surge, and coastal flooding. The projects that are prioritized in the plan are intended to reduce habitat loss, protect public health by reducing impacts to water quality and quantity, and ensure public safety.

In October 2021, the General Land Office initiated efforts to develop a Texas Sediment Management Plan that would assist in the implementation of the resiliency master plan and the Texas Coastwide Erosion Response Plan prepared under the Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act (CEPRA). The sediment plan is intended to provide guidance on sand resource allocation, management, and conflict resolution. An interagency workshop was held in November 2021 to discuss the status of existing knowledge, known data gaps, policy needs, and future actions. This initiative is an essential step, as sediment sources will be needed for many of the coastal protection and habitat restoration efforts proposed in the resiliency master plan.

Accomplishment: The Texas General Land Office has developed a coastal resiliency master plan and identified elements critical for its implementation.

During this evaluation period, the General Land Office placed increased emphasis on living shorelines and held a number of workshops to educate stakeholders about the benefits of this technique. Using feedback from those workshops, the Coastal Protection Division worked with the Harte Research Institute at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi campus to develop the Guide to Living Shorelines in Texas and the Texas Living Shoreline Site Suitability Tool. The guide offers a step-by-step guide to installing a living shoreline as well as case studies explaining how the various techniques have worked in different locations. The online tool takes into consideration shoreline type, depth profile, erosion rates, fetch, wave energy, and distance from the nearest channel and offers recommendations for types of shoreline protection appropriate to specific locations. The division also conducted an inventory of living shoreline projects that have been completed throughout the coastal area, providing an important resource to promote living shorelines to coastal residents, contractors, and engineering firms. The General Land Office also amended the Texas Code Chapter 155 to include a definition of living shorelines, thus making this approach to shoreline management an eligible activity.

Accomplishment: The Texas General Land Office has undertaken several initiatives to promote living shorelines as a viable alternative to shoreline hardening.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Texas General Land Office to continue to promote living shorelines and to identify ways to simplify and expedite the permitting process for living shoreline projects where appropriate.

Implementation of General Requirements

Nonpoint Source Pollution Control

The 2015 evaluation findings for the Texas Coastal Management Program contained one necessary action:

Necessary Action: The TX CMP must work with the NOAA Office for Coastal Management to develop and submit a work plan with interim benchmarks and a timeline for meeting the goals and objectives it has identified as important to the coastal nonpoint source pollution program by September 30, 2015. The documentation indicating how Texas met the outstanding conditions must be submitted no later than June 30, 2019.

Accomplishment: The Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program was approved by NOAA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in May of 2022. (See further discussion under Focus Area 2: Coordination with Networked Agencies.)

Program Administration

The evaluation team learned that the Coastal Protection Division may be understaffed in certain areas. For example, the Beach and Dune Program processes more than 500 permit applications each year with only two staff members, and the Adopt-a-Beach coordinator works with 27 volunteer coordinators across the coastal area. Similarly, the number of projects seems to be increasing as specific funding sources make more funds available, yet the staffing level has remained constant. Ensuring appropriate workloads for program staff can be a major contributor to staff satisfaction and retention. The General Land Office may want to conduct a staffing analysis to ensure that staffing levels allow tasks to be handled effectively and to encourage staff retention.

Evaluation Metrics

Beginning in 2012, state coastal management programs began tracking their success in addressing three evaluation metrics specific to their programs. The evaluation metrics include a five-year target and provide a quantitative reference for each program about how well it is meeting the goals and objectives it has identified as important to the program. In 2018, coastal programs began a new five-year period and set targets specific to their programs for two performance measures from the existing Coastal Zone Management Performance Measurement System and the coastal hazards performance measure.

Evaluation Metrics: 2012-2017

Metric 1

Goal: Lessen vulnerability along the Texas Coast and reduce exposure to hazards and public expenditures due to storm surge and erosion.

Objective: By 2017, ten percent of Beachfront Construction Certificates and Dune Protection Permits issued for dune restoration or compensatory mitigation projects in priority areas which are identified in individual local government Erosion Response Plans.

Strategy: This goal was developed to capture the percent of permit applications local jurisdictions receive that demonstrate procedures for preserving, restoring, and enhancing critical sand dunes for storm protection and conservation purposes through implementation of Erosion Response Plans as a result of local jurisdictions complying with beach/dune rule revisions under the Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act (CEPRA). The General Land Office (GLO) ensures that dune restoration on the Texas coast by property owners and developers that affects the beach and dunes is performed according to state law. Both the Open Beaches Act and the Dune Protection Act are designed to help local property owners and communities protect and preserve beaches so that all Texans have unrestricted access to the beach, while also maintaining an environmentally healthy beach/dune system. In addition, CEPRA requires that coastal communities adopt an Erosion Response Plan (ERP) to reduce public expenditures due to impacts from storms and erosion. Local communities must adopt plans in order to remain eligible for Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Account funding. Permit applications will be counted at the time the GLO issues comments on individual permit applications submitted to local jurisdictions as part of the Beachfront Construction Certificate and Dune Protection Permit process.

Performance Measure: Percentage of permits issued for dune restoration or compensatory mitigation projects are in priority areas that are specifically identified in the ERPs and restored to standards specified in the ERPs.

Target: Between 2012 and 2017, ten percent of permits issued for dune restoration or compensatory mitigation projects are in priority areas that are specifically identified in the ERPs and restored to standards specified in the ERPs.

Results:

Year 1 – 100%	(11 of 11 projects)
Year 2 – 100%	(2 of 2 projects)
Year 3 – 0%	(0 projects initiated)

Year 4 – 75% (3 of 4 projects)
Year 5 – 0% (0 of 1 projects)

Total: 89% (16 of 18 restoration or mitigation projects)

Discussion: The Coastal Protection Division has been very successful in targeting restoration and mitigation projects to areas identified as priority areas in local government erosion response plans.

Metric 2

Goal: Protect coastal habitat by restoring and/or acquiring critical areas in the 18 coastal counties included in the Coastal Zone Management boundary.

Objective: By 2017, 5,000 acres restored and/or acquired with funding allocated directly to the state under the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP).

Strategy: This goal was developed to capture the amount of acreage restored and/or acquired with funding allocated directly to the state under the CIAP. Through the implementation of the Coastal Management Program (CMP), the GLO ensures the long-term environmental and economic health of the Texas coast through management of the state’s coastal natural resource areas. Because Texas has a federally approved CMP, it was eligible to receive CIAP funding. The CIAP is used to fund a wide range of coastal projects; however, there is currently not a mechanism for tracking acreage restored or acquired for CIAP projects. Using the CMP performance measurement structure, the GLO would set up a similar mechanism for tracking restored and/or acquired areas with funding directly allocated to the state under the CIAP.

Performance Measure: Number of acres restored and/or acquired with funding allocated directly to the state under the CIAP.

Target: Between 2012 and 2017, 5,000 acres restored and/or acquired with funding allocated directly to the state under the CIAP.

Results:

- Year 1 – 7,676.88 acres
- Year 2 – 2,027.88 acres
- Year 3 – 1,096.60 acres
- Year 4 – 6,217.92 acres
- Year 5 – 3,871.17 acres

Total: 20,890.45 acres restored or acquired (417% of the goal)

Discussion: The Coastal Protection Division has been very successful in restoring and acquiring land in critical habitat areas.

Metric 3

Goal: Provide Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible measures to the public utilizing construction standards from the Texas Beach Accessibility Guide.

Objective: By 2017, five new ADA access measures provided to the public for accessing the beach along the Texas coast utilizing the construction standards from the Texas Beach Accessibility Guide.

Strategy: This goal was developed to capture the number of new ADA access measures utilizing construction standards from the Texas Beach Accessibility Guide for public access to the beach along the Texas coast. The GLO prepared a guidance document, Texas Beach Accessibility Guide, for local governments adopting and implementing beach accessibility measures for persons with disabilities. This guidance document was developed in consultation with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation. The public has historically used the beaches along the Texas coast for numerous recreational activities ranging from swimming to beachcombing. In recent years, increasing coastal construction and decreasing beach widths have prompted local governments to restrict vehicles from public beaches, particularly in areas with concentrated urban development. Although intended to prevent health and safety hazards, these restrictions often hinder beach access for persons with disabilities. This is a guidance document; however, the GLO would track the number of measures utilizing construction standards from the Texas Beach Accessibility Guide. Permit applications will be counted at the time the GLO issues comments on individual permit applications submitted to local jurisdictions as part of the Beachfront Construction Certificate and Dune Protection Permit process.

Performance Measure: Number of new ADA access measures provided to the public for accessing the beach along the Texas coast utilizing the construction standards from the Texas Beach Accessibility Guide.

Target: Between 2012 and 2017, five new ADA access measures provided to the public for accessing the beach along the Texas coast utilizing the construction standards from the Texas Beach Accessibility Guide.

Results:

- Year 1 – 3
- Year 2 – 2
- Year 3 – 3
- Year 4 – 2
- Year 5 – 8

Total: 18 additional facilities meeting ADA accessibility standards

Discussion: The Coastal Protection Division has been very successful in applying ADA compliance standards to beach access facilities along the Texas coast.

Evaluation Metrics: 2018-2023

Metric 1: Coastal Habitat Protection

Goal: Implement projects in the Texas Coastal Resiliency Master Plan to make Texas more resilient through coastal habitat restoration, protection, and acquisition.

Objective: By 2023, implement projects listed in the Texas Coastal Resiliency Master Plan (TCRMP) that result in habitat restoration to protect communities and habitats from damage related to coastal hazards.

Strategy: This goal was developed to capture the acreage protected, restored and/or acquired through the completion of state and local-level projects from the TCRMP. Through the implementation of the Coastal Management Program (CMP), the GLO ensures the long-term environmental and economic health of the Texas coast through management of the state’s coastal natural resource areas. The TCRMP is an important step in providing Texas with a framework for community, socio-economic, environmental, and infrastructure protection from coastal hazards. The TCRMP provides a list of preferred state and local-level projects that will work to safeguard the coast. Under a 309 Strategy, the GLO is working to examine and streamline funding sources across the Coastal Resources (CR) Program, considering project solicitation, outreach, project management databases, and reporting mechanisms to focus on implementation of projects within the TCRMP. Currently, each CR program functions independently under its own set of policies, procedures, and timelines, typically focused on enhancing specific features within the coastal zone, i.e. erosion and shoreline stabilization, public access, wetland restoration, etc. Work under this strategy will assess all CR funding programs (CMP, Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act, and Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act) to develop a more integrative and streamlined approach for soliciting and funding projects to implement the goals and priorities of the TCRMP. Using the CMP performance measurement structure, the GLO will be able to track protected, restored, and/or acquired areas acreage as a tracking mechanism for implementation of the TCRMP.

Performance Measure: From 2018 to 2023, the number of acres of coastal habitat under restoration with assistance from CZM funding or staff.

Target: From 2018 to 2023, 5,000 acres of coastal habitat under restoration with assistance from CZM funding or staff.

Results:

- Year 1 – 1,707 acres
- Year 2 – 170.1 acres
- Year 3 – 46.3 acres
- Total – 1,923.40 acres**

Discussion: The Coastal Protection Division continues to protect and restore habitat in critical coastal areas. The numbers of acres have varied recently due to changes in grants processes and funding sources, but the five-year goal s still attainable.

Metric 2: Coastal Hazards

Goal: Lessen vulnerability along the Texas coast and reduce exposure to hazards through increased community planning and resiliency.

Objective: By 2023, provide technical assistance to minimize damage to communities and coastal habitats, increasing preparedness, and responding to coastal hazards.

Strategy: Societal and administrative resiliency are categories identified in the 2019 Texas Coastal Resiliency Master Plan (TCRMP) as being critical to making the Texas coast less vulnerable to the next coastal hazard event. Societal resiliency strategies outline possible improvements to the human or built environments, such as community infrastructure upgrades or development planning. Administrative resiliency strategies describe opportunities to enhance program-level aspects of coastal resiliency, like policy making or regional planning. The TCRMP acknowledges that risk avoidance is the safest and most cost-effective way to keep communities protected and that policies and plans should protect natural habitats that buffer communities and provide important ecosystem benefits. Recognizing storm preparedness and response requires a proactive administrative planning approach to anticipate and respond to coastal disasters; the GLO has made technical and planning assistance to communities a top priority for §306, §306A, and §309 grant funds to implement or update local plans, policies, and ordinances to reduce future damage from coastal hazards and undertake projects to achieve more resilient coastal communities. To support implementation of the TCRMP, the GLO is streamlining and focusing outreach efforts, from those reported in the past, to efforts that are more technical in nature with planning and policy implications and less of a broad-brush approach to education and outreach on coastal hazards. The GLO anticipates completing (a) 1 state-level policy and plan; (b) 1 local level policy and plan; (c) 1 state project; and (d) 17 local projects.

Performance Measure: From 2018 to 2023, the number of (a) state-level policies and plans completed; (b) local-level policies and plans completed; (c) projects completed at the state level; and (d) projects completed at the local level to reduce future damage from coastal hazards with assistance from CZM funding or staff.

Target: From 2018 to 2023, complete 20 (a) state-level policies and plans completed; (b) local-level policies and plans completed; (c) projects completed at the state-level; and (d) projects completed at the local-level to reduce future damage from coastal hazards with assistance from CZM funding or staff.

Results: Year 1 – 2
 Year 2 – 1
 Year 3 – 3

Total: 6 state or local level policies, plans, or projects

Discussion: The Coastal Protection Division has worked to develop projects to reduce the impacts of coastal hazards. The goal for the five-year period may have been too optimistic, but the division continues to place a priority on hazard reduction efforts.

Metric 3: Coastal Dependent Uses and Community Development

Goal: Implement programs and conduct outreach to manage and reduce non-point source (NPS) pollution through the Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program (Coastal NPS Program).

Objective: By 2023, (1) Assist coastal communities to implement a project or update a local plan to enhance coastal management and reduce coastal NPS; (2) Conduct outreach to communities on utilizing the Texas Coastal Stormwater Management Manual to enhance local planning or implement NPS reduction projects.

Strategy: The GLO CMP, with 309 and additional funding, is working toward compliance with the U.S. Protecting Coastal Waters Act (Section 6217 of the Coastal Zone Reauthorization Amendment (CZARA)) that requires Texas to develop and implement a Coastal NPS Program. The deadline for implementation is June 19, 2019. If Texas fails to develop a plan that is consistent with CZARA Section 6217 by this date, Texas' portion of CMP and Clean Water Act 319 funds may be reduced by 30% annually. To achieve compliance, Texas is pursuing a non-regulatory implementation approach that includes the development of a Coastal Stormwater Management Manual, public education and outreach through the Coastal NPS Program and other state programs, implementation of Watershed Protection Plans and Total Maximum Daily Load Plans within the coastal zone, and implementation of sustainable projects and land acquisition projects like those identified in the TCRMP. Coastal NPS staff will conduct outreach and technical assistance with coastal communities in coordination with other networked agencies and programs like the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality NPS Program and the Texas Department of Transportation's Local Government Training Program.

A community may be counted twice in one year if they complete (a) an ordinance, policy, or plan; or (b) a project related to polluted runoff management plans. Any project providing planning or technical assistance to amend an ordinance, policy, or plan will be counted under subpart (a) of this measure and any on the ground project completed to implement pollution runoff control measures will be counted under subpart (b).

Performance Measure: From 2018 to 2023, the number of coastal communities that developed or updated polluted runoff management ordinances, policies, and plans; or completed projects to implement polluted runoff management plans with assistance from CZM funding or staff.

Target: From 2018 to 2023, 15 coastal communities will develop or update polluted runoff management ordinances, policies, and plans; or complete projects to implement polluted runoff management plans with assistance from CZM funding or staff.

Results:
Year 1 – 0
Year 2 – 0
Year 3 – 1

Discussion: The Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program was approved by NOAA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in May 2022. A critical element of the program is Clean Coast Texas, a partnership with the goal of working with local governments to adopt plans, policies, and ordinances to reduce the impacts of polluted runoff. It may take some time to see the full impact of this program.

Conclusion

This evaluation concludes that the Texas General Land Office is successfully implementing and enforcing its federally approved coastal management program, adhering to the terms of the federal financial assistance awards, and addressing coastal management needs identified in section 303(2)(A) through (K) of the Coastal Zone Management Act.

These evaluation findings contain five recommendations that must be considered before the next regularly scheduled program evaluation but that are not mandatory at this time. Recommendations that must be repeated in subsequent evaluations may be elevated to necessary actions. These findings contain no necessary actions.

This is a programmatic evaluation of the Texas Coastal Management Program, which may have implications regarding the state's financial assistance awards. However, it does not make any judgment about or replace any financial audits.

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Director, NOAA Office for Coastal Management

Date

Appendix A: Response to Written Comments

No written comments on the performance of the Texas Coastal Management Program were received.