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NATIONAL SPORTSMAN'S GROUP URGES GULF RESTORATION COUNCIL TO PRIORITIZE ECOSYSTEM PROJECTS

Group sends letter saying protecting wildlife and habitat will yield economic recovery for the Gulf

NEW ORLEANS, LA - Today, more than 350 hunting and fishing businesses and organizations [sent a letter](#) to the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, asking that the Council prioritize restoration of the Gulf ecosystem in order to also achieve economic restoration in the region.

The Restoration Council is a multi-state, multi-agency group that has been tasked with developing a comprehensive ecosystem restoration plan for the Gulf. The Council is currently developing the plan, with a draft due for public comment this spring.

Vanishing Paradise drafted the letter, which illustrated that hunting and fishing are major economic drivers in the Gulf and are supported by habitat restoration and wildlife conservation. In 2011, in the five Gulf states alone, nearly 8.5 million hunters and anglers spent \$15.7 billion on their outdoor pursuits. This spending supports more than 255,000 jobs and generates \$3.3 billion in federal, state and local taxes.

The letter to the Restoration Council united thousands of sportsmen and women in their commitment to protect wildlife and habitat.

“If the wild spaces of the Gulf region aren’t protected and restored, sportsmen and women will lose the return on their long-standing investment, and the region will lose its rich hunting and angling heritage,” the letter stated. “A restored and productive Gulf ecosystem is essential for both regional and national economic recovery and growth. Every dollar spent on ecosystem restoration helps the recovery of the Gulf’s natural resource-based economy.”

“The Gulf Coast is a national treasure that is near and dear to the hearts of sportsmen and women across the country,” Ben Weber, national sportsman’s coordinator for National Wildlife Federation said.

“Millions of Americans enjoy the productive Gulf landscape for its fisheries and waterfowl hunting every year, but without substantial investments in projects that create, enhance or protect essential wildlife habitat, the world-class hunting and fishing opportunities that make the Gulf such a special place for the nation’s hunters and anglers will suffer, leading to the loss of billions of dollars in generated revenue for the Gulf states.”

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