

## Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program Equity Strategy

On January 27, 2021, President Biden announced an executive action to tackle the climate crisis at home and abroad through *Executive Order 14008*<sup>1</sup>. The presidential action includes, but is not limited to: (i) *making environmental justice a part of the mission of every agency by directing federal agencies to develop programs, policies, and activities to address the disproportionate health, environmental, economic, and climate impacts on disadvantaged communities*; (ii) *creating a government-wide Justice40<sup>2</sup> Initiative with the goal of delivering 40 percent of the overall benefits of relevant federal investments to disadvantaged communities*; and (iii) *initiating the development of a Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool, building off EPA’s EJSCREEN, to identify disadvantaged communities, support the Justice40 Initiative, and inform equitable decision making across the federal government*.

To support the Administration’s comprehensive approach to advancing equity, a presidential *Executive Order, E.O. 13985*, was finalized to direct federal agencies to develop equity action plans. The EPA’s *Equity Action Plan* aligns with its *FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan* and supports accountable and transparent implementation of the Agency’s equity goals.

The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program (PRP) Equity Strategy outlines how the *2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)* funds appropriated to the PRP will be used to sustain and increase investments in disadvantaged communities, and the benefits that flow to them (e.g., financial investments, ecological restoration, climate resiliency). This Strategy is intended to meet the goals of *Executive Orders 14008 and 13985 – Justice40 Initiative* and the *EPA Equity Action Plan*<sup>3</sup> respectively.

### 1. GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW

The PRP was established under the *Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Act of 2000* and is governed by *33 U.S.C. Section 1273, section 121 of the Clean Water Act (CWA)*. The program is designed to fund restoration projects, studies, and public education projects to restore the ecological health of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin. A Management Conference was convened in accordance with *CWA Section 320* as required by PRP regulations.

#### The Management Conference

The Management Conference (MC) consists of a group of diverse stakeholders that use a collaborative, consensus-building approach to implement the *Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP)*.

The PRP Management Conference was established in 2002 when the Stakeholder Conference was first convened. The stakeholders were instrumental in developing an organizational outline for the PRP, creating a master plan to target Basin clean-ups, and assembling a variety of

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<sup>1</sup> [Executive Order 14008 – Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Biden-Harris Administration’s Justice40 Initiative](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Executive Order 13985](#).

subcommittees to support program implementation. In the past 20 years, however, participation in the Management Conference dwindled from over 50 members and multiple subcommittees to only a 7-member Executive Committee.

EPA has worked with the Executive Committee and Basin stakeholders to expand the Management Conference, which is now 47 organizations. Active stakeholder involvement and participation are critical in the successful development and implementation of the CCMP.

The members of PRP Management Conference<sup>4</sup> should include, at a minimum, representatives of the EPA; State, Tribal, regional agencies or entities having jurisdiction over all or a significant part of the Basin; each interested Federal agency; local governments having jurisdiction over any land or water within the Basin; affected industries, public and private educational institutions; nonprofit organizations; and the general public.

## **1.1 PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program is one of the EPA's twelve National Geographic Programs<sup>5</sup> and is the responsibility of Region 6. These long-standing, geographic specific programs help protect local ecosystems and communities from climate change, habitat loss and pollution. Program activities vary, but typically include ecosystem and habitat restoration, water quality improvements, nutrient reduction, climate resilience, environmental education and outreach, and local capacity building.

Planning for restoration of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin began in the early 1990s and included numerous public meetings and extensive input from individual citizens, user groups, local governments, state and federal agencies, and universities. User groups consisted of representatives of commercial and recreational fishing organizations, the farming community and dairy operators, the business and industrial community, sportsmen's groups, and others. Ultimately, 92 entities agreed to the problems identified and restoration plans outlined in the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) for the Pontchartrain Basin. The CMP was completed in 1995 and became the roadmap for Pontchartrain's restoration. The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program was authorized in 2000. With that authorization, projects were funded according to the recommendations outlined in the 1995 CMP. The CMP was supplemented by the Comprehensive Habitat Management Plan (CHMP) in 2006. The CHMP focused on identifying coastal habitats in distress and developed plans to reestablish self-sustaining conditions. Over the last two decades, many problems initially identified such as shell dredging, abandoned oil and gas structures, various agricultural uses, unsewered communities, saltwater intrusion from the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, and others have been addressed.

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<sup>4</sup> 33 U.S.C. § 1330 (c)

<sup>5</sup> [EPA National Geographic Programs](#)

The CCMP requires revisions to reflect current and long-term Basin and stakeholder priorities. The program will be working with Basin stakeholders to revise the CCMP. Moving forward, the CCMP must be reviewed and revised once every five years.

The current CCMP identifies the following three major environmental challenges in the Basin:

***Sewage and Agricultural Runoff:*** *Sewage and agricultural runoff are major sources of pollution in the Basin. Elevated fecal coliform bacteria levels have led to restrictions on basin waterbodies. Potential sources of high bacteria count in these waterbodies include: community sewage treatment plants stormwater runoff from urbanized areas, sewage by-passes, broken sewer lines, dairies and cattle farms, and wildlife.*

***Stormwater Runoff:*** *Stormwater runoff, a form of nonpoint source (NPS) pollution, is the largest single source of pollution in Late Pontchartrain. Stormwater runoff occurs when rainfall – which can scour litter, animal droppings, particulates, and other contaminants that have settled on the ground, roofs or paved areas and carry them into the drainage system – is pumped into Lake Pontchartrain. Major pollutants in stormwater include sediments, nutrients, bacteria (pathogens), organics, metals, and pesticides.*

***Saltwater Intrusion and Wetland Loss:*** *Saltwater intrusion and wetland loss are major problems in the Basin. Saltwater intrusion and wetland loss are usually the result of a combination of natural and human-induced causes. Some of the natural causes are: subsidence, or "settling," of wetlands; sea level rise; and natural abandonment of former deltas of the Mississippi. Human-induced causes include the Mississippi River levee network; canal construction; alterations to the natural surface hydrology; shoreline erosion; and dredging.*

Since 1995, extensive research had been published on the Pontchartrain Basin and new issues were identified. In 2006, the Comprehensive Habitat Management Plan (CHMP) component of the 1995 CCMP was updated to include a revised "Saltwater Intrusion and Wetland Loss" section and further expanded to include all the habitats of the Pontchartrain Basin. The CHMP recommends practices that will make progress towards restoring the historic form and function of the Pontchartrain Basin's habitats. The CHMP also summarizes the proposed restoration and recommendations for each of the four Sub-basins: *Upland Sub-basin Forest (North of Interstate 12), Upland Sub-basin riverine recommendations (North of Interstate 12), Upper Sub-basin (Lake Maurepas and adjacent wetlands), and the Middle Sub-basin (Lake Pontchartrain and adjacent wetlands).*

The CHMP focuses on identifying coastal habitats in distress and develops plans to reestablish self-sustaining conditions. Over the last two decades, many problems initially identified in the CHMP, such as shell dredging, abandoned oil and gas structures, various agricultural uses, unsewered communities, saltwater intrusion from the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, and others have been addressed.

The standing CCMP recommends priority actions to (i) address pollution; (ii) restore and maintain water quality; (iii) maintain populations of fish and wildlife; (iv) address effects of

extreme weather events; (v) protect the designated uses of the Basin, and others. Future revisions to the CCMP will assess current conditions of the Basin and propose activities to address the Basin’s current challenges.

For more information about the program and its history, please reference the “[Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program Management Conference Operational Procedures/Organizational Parameters FY 23](#)” document found on the program website.

## **1.2 PROGRAM FUNDING**

Currently, the EPA awards annual PRP grant funds to a pass-through grantee, the University of New Orleans Research and Technology Foundation (UNORTF), which distributes grant funds from the EPA, develops and publishes PRP Requests for Proposals, and administers and monitors the subaward grants. Current base appropriation funding levels for the PRP:

- FY 2022: \$1,899,000
- FY 2023: \$2,199,000

Under the IJJA, the PRP will receive approximately \$10,000,000 per year for FY 2022-2026. The PRP goal for IJJA funding is to significantly improve Lake Pontchartrain Basin’s environmental health and climate resilience in an equitable manner in communities across the Basin’s watershed. Projects will continue to follow the CCMP’s recommendations to improve the ecological health of the basin through stormwater runoff, agricultural runoff, coastal restoration, habitat protection, inflow/infiltration, sewerage, public education, research, and monitoring.



**Figure 1.** Map of Lake Pontchartrain Basin watershed. The boundary of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin was delineated using current high-resolution USGS 12-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC 12) data. The four Mississippi counties, specified in CWA Section 121, were determined based on the greatest contribution to the watershed.

## 2. DEFINITION OF DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

The PRP equity strategy defines disadvantaged communities using different geographic tools including the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST), [EJScreen: Environmental Justice Screening & Mapping Tool](#), and the Inflation Reduction Action (IRA) indexes that’s

available on the EJScreen tool. To learn more about IRA indexes please visit EPAs [EJScreen map descriptions website](#).

The PRP will ask subrecipients to identify disadvantaged communities using the IRA criteria. The IRA definition includes both CEJEST and EJScreen indexes and includes state and national indexes, as well as additional supplemental indexes.

These changes make the IRA definition more inclusive than using only EJScreen and CEJEST. The IRA indexes can be selected and observed on [EPA EJScreen: Environmental Justice Screening & Mapping Tool](#).

Under the IRA definition, disadvantaged communities are defined as any community that meets at least one of the following characteristics:

- Identified as disadvantaged by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST);
- Any census block group that is at or above the 90th percentile for any of EJScreen’s Supplemental Indexes when compared to the nation or state; and / or
- Any geographic area within Tribal lands as included in EJScreen.

The CEJST tool was created by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and uses datasets to represent eight categories as indicators of burdens. Communities are considered disadvantaged if they are at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for one of the eight categories, *and* the 65<sup>th</sup> percentile for low-income. The low-income factor is not considered for the “workforce development” category, which instead considers that at least 10% of people ages 25 and older have a high school education.

#### CEJST’s Eight Categories Indicating Burden<sup>6</sup>:

1. *Climate change*
  - *Expected agricultural loss rate*
  - *Expected building loss rate*
  - *Expected population loss rate*
  - *Projected flood risk*
  - *Projected wildfire risk*
2. *Energy*
  - *Energy cost*
  - *Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM2.5) in the air*
3. *Health*
  - *Asthma*
  - *Diabetes*
  - *Heart disease*

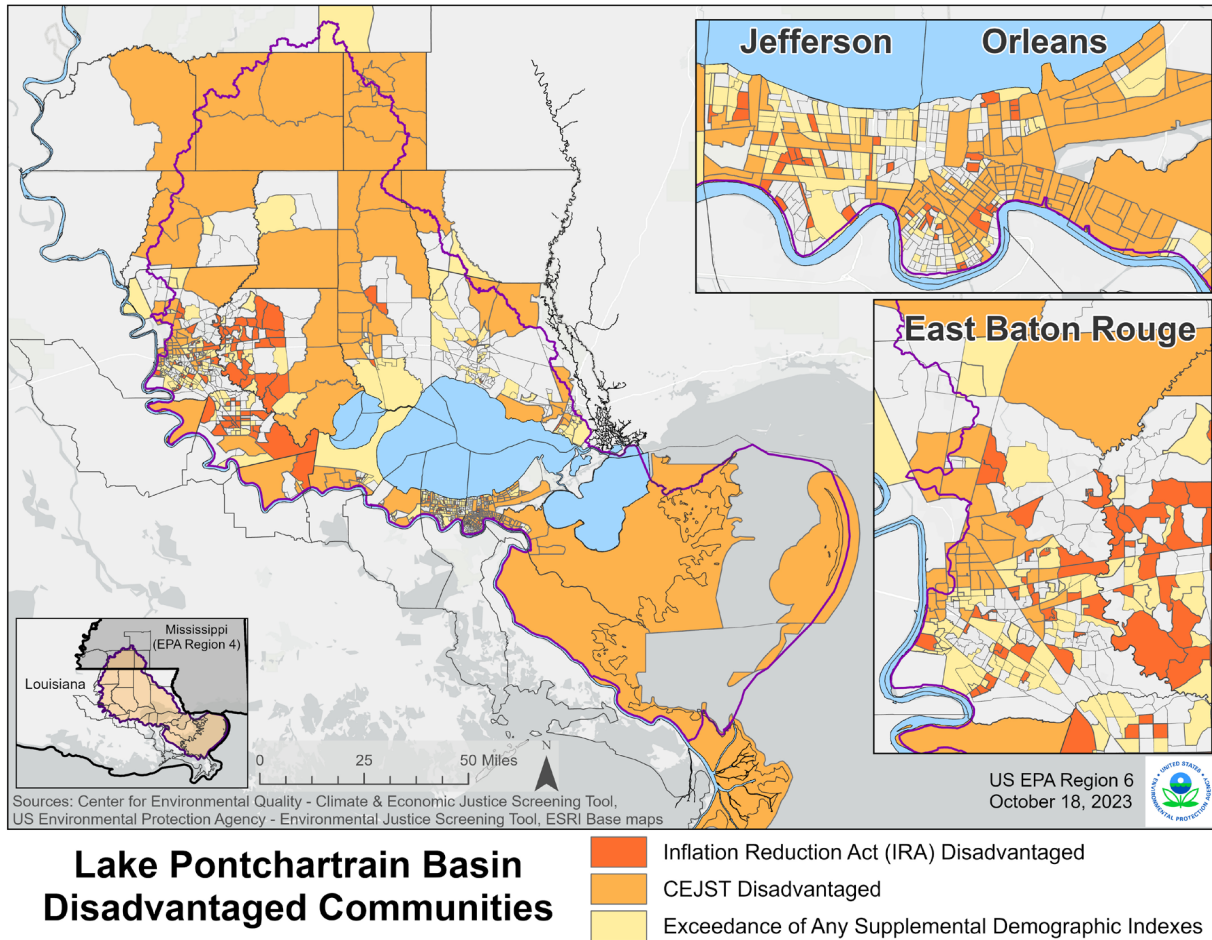
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<sup>6</sup> Greater detail may be found at [CEJST’s Methodology](#) webpage

- *Low life expectancy*
- 4. *Housing*
  - *Historic underinvestment*
  - *Housing cost*
  - *Lack of green space*
  - *Lack of indoor plumbing*
  - *Lead paint*
- 5. *Legacy pollution*
  - *Abandoned mine land (one or greater)*
  - *Formerly used defense sites (one or greater)*
  - *Proximity to hazardous waste facilities*
  - *Proximity to EPA Superfund sites*
  - *Proximity to EPA Risk Management Plan (RMP) facilities*
- 6. *Transportation*
  - *Diesel particulate matter exposure*
  - *Transportation barriers*
  - *Traffic proximity and volume*
- 7. *Water and wastewater*
  - *Underground storage tanks and releases*
  - *Wastewater discharge*
- 8. *Workforce development*
  - *Linguistic isolation*
  - *Low median income*
  - *Poverty*
  - *Unemployment*

CEJST also considers communities as disadvantaged if they are:

- Federally Recognized Tribes;
- Completely surrounded by disadvantaged communities *and* are at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for low income.



**Figure 2.** Map of Disadvantaged Communities in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin. In this map, the 16 parishes and 4 counties of the Basin were assessed using the definition described in this Equity Strategy. The additional census blocks that IRA brings are colored in dark orange.

The Region additionally uses the [EJScreen](#)<sup>7</sup> tool in its Disadvantaged Communities definition for the PRP. The EPA EJ Screen Supplemental Demographic Index criteria are used to identify disadvantaged communities which are not considered disadvantaged using CEJST alone. Communities at or above the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile of any one of the following five supplemental demographic indices will also be considered a disadvantaged community:

- *Percent low-income*
- *Percent limited English speaking*
- *Percent less than high school education*
- *Percent unemployed*
- *Low life expectancy*

<sup>7</sup> Greater detail about [EJScreen](#)

The Region evaluated the percentage of disadvantaged communities within the boundaries of the Basin using IRA indexes. Using this methodology, 57.9% of the Basin falls under the disadvantaged community definition described above. Figure 2 below is a map of the Basin depicting the disadvantaged communities.

IRA has 118 more block groups, 892 compared to the 774 with CEJST & EJScreen. When using CEJST and EJScreen the percentage of disadvantaged communities within the basin equals 50.3%, compared to 57.9% using IRA.

### **3. BASELINE ANALYSIS OF DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES**

The PRP baseline analyzed the percentage of PRP grant funds invested in disadvantaged communities for Fiscal Years 2016-2020 only using CEJST and EJScreen indexes. At the time of the baseline analysis, the IRA definition had not been developed. Since Mississippi counties had not received any grant funds, the baseline only included Louisiana Parishes. The baseline analysis assumed that every dollar spent resulted in a dollar of benefit. Percentages of funds invested were calculated using the disadvantaged area proportion of the total benefit area. Total benefit areas were calculated based on the project type.

For all nonpoint source and ecological restoration projects, the total benefit area was measured using 12-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC 12) perimeters. All measurements using HUC perimeters did not exceed a 3 linear mile downstream measurement from the project location, using the EJScreen measure tool. The HUC measurement assumed that benefits to the watershed also benefited the communities residing in that area of the watershed.

For planning and design of sewerage infrastructure projects, areas were assessed by both the service area and the downstream HUC 12 area. If the service area was not provided, an approximated center point was determined for the project location, and a 1 square-mile (sq. mi) circle buffer was applied to provide an estimated service area. Though two area measurements were used (Service area/1 sq. mi buffer, and HUC 12), the lesser of the two values was used in the final calculation of the baseline for these project types. This approach assumes that the benefit to the watershed would be an outcome of the implementation of the planning and design. The PRP will track future implementation of these plans to ensure that the full environmental and social benefits are achieved.

Recreation projects were calculated under the assumption that all residents of the Basin can access and benefit from improved recreational opportunities. As such, the baseline proportion of recreation project investments was calculated using the percentage of disadvantaged communities within the Louisiana area of the Basin (50%). For projects involving outreach and education, the targeted audience or specific activity location defined the calculation area.

**Table 1. Breakdown of funds which flowed to disadvantaged communities in the previous five fiscal years and the total baseline percentage.**

PRP Fiscal Year	Total Grant Funds	Grant Funds Spent in Disadvantaged Communities	Percent of Grant Funds Spent in Disadvantaged Communities
16	\$947,000	\$350,695	37%
17	\$947,000	\$300,720	32%
18	\$947,000	\$352,754	37%
19	\$947,000	\$370,528	39%
20	\$1,441,000	\$467,915	32%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,229,000</b>	<b>\$1,842,612</b>	<b>36%</b>

#### 4. NUMERIC TARGET

The *Justice40 Initiative* is a transformational opportunity to ensure that benefits of federal investments are equitably distributed for all EPA funding including communities within the Lake Pontchartrain Basin. The PRP program is prioritizing funding projects that benefit disadvantaged communities. The PRP will ensure that at least 40% of IJA funds are invested in disadvantaged communities.

The PRP anticipates the need for technical assistance to disadvantaged communities in the grant application process as well as capacity building for those applicants. There are many EPA resources that address these challenges, and applicants are encouraged to reach out to the PRP grantee for support and information.

One example of this type of resource is the recent development of Regional Environmental Justice Thriving Community Technical Assistance Centers (TCTACs). These TCTACs are intended to provide training and other assistance to help build capacity for navigating federal grant application systems, writing strong grant proposals, and help effectively manage the grant funding process. In addition, these centers will provide guidance on community engagement, meeting facilitation, and translation and interpretation services for limited English-speaking participants, thus removing barriers, and improving accessibility for communities with environmental justice concerns. The Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, a non-profit organization, is a TCTAC center located in New Orleans, Louisiana, and will offer assistance to organizations.

Using the definition described in this Equity Strategy, approximately 50% of the communities within the PRP Basin boundaries are disadvantaged. With a PRP baseline investment in disadvantaged communities of 36% in previous years, the program plans to meet the 40% target. To help meet this target, the program has selected *Benefiting Disadvantaged Communities & Climate Resilience* as one of its 4 priority investment. The grantee will include

scoring criteria for project activities that benefit disadvantaged communities and/or address climate resilience and examples of project activities that help accomplish this are suggested in the program's request for proposals (RFP).

## **5. KEY ACTIVITIES**

The current CCMP outlines three main challenges which should be addressed by eligible PRP funding activities:

- Sewage and agricultural runoff
- Stormwater runoff
- Saltwater intrusion and wetland loss (see CHMP for updated information)

Examples of how IJJA funds could be used to implement activities which contribute to the mitigation of these four challenges are provided below.

### **5.1 SEWAGE AND AGRICULTURAL RUNOFF**

Water quality is important to habitat restoration, fisheries, recreation, and the economic vitality of the Basin. Disadvantaged communities may experience disproportionate pollution burdens, particularly in areas without regionalized municipal wastewater systems. The PRP will support project activities and planning efforts that respond to water quality problems that may pose a risk to people or the environment. Example projects include septic system repairs, strategies to address un- or poorly-sewered communities, implementing agricultural best management practices, sampling and analysis of algal blooms, and regionalization of municipal wastewater systems.

### **5.2 STORMWATER RUNOFF**

Projects addressing nonpoint source pollution are integral to the restoration of the Basin estuary. Several disadvantaged communities of the Basin live in flood-prone areas, such as in cities like Baton Rouge and New Orleans. These impermeable environments contribute a diverse array of pollutants during flood events, and this urban runoff deteriorates water quality both locally and in all receiving water bodies of the Basin. The PRP will support programs that respond to nonpoint source pollution in the Basin. Example projects include, but are not limited to, stormwater treatment through wetlands, adopting green and nature-based infrastructure approaches (e.g., pervious pavement, riparian corridor restoration, wetland restoration, rain gardens), government planning to reduce nonpoint source loadings, education programs to increase awareness of residential pollution sources, and restoring abandoned sand or gravel mines.

### **5.3 SALTWATER INTRUSION AND WETLAND LOSS**

The health of the Basin's habitats, coasts, and wetlands affect the Basin's disadvantaged communities, markedly in St. Bernard and Plaquemines parishes. This is because these parishes are not only classified as disadvantaged, but they are on the coast and are subject to coastal processes and habitat loss that effect the whole basin. However, disadvantaged communities

are not always well-represented in decisions that affect fisheries, wetlands, and other natural resources – the degradation of which can impact these Basin communities disproportionately. The PRP will support projects that include but are not limited to wetland protection planning, barrier island restoration, shoreline protection, management of invasive species, protection of long leaf pine and cypress habitat, plans addressing surface water impairments that do not support intended use for fish and wildlife, restoration of Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) habitat, and water quality enhancement in wetlands.

## 6. TRACKING BENEFITS

Project proposals will include:

- *Project location data*

All project applicants should include project coordinates (latitude/longitude). Coordinates are the most consistent location data with which to determine whether a proposed project will occur within or benefit a disadvantaged community. If an area, such as a service area or school district, best defines the project location, the area tool in EJScreen may be used to draw the area with corresponding coordinates along perimeter corners, with an annotated screenshot within the workplan. Geographic Information Service (GIS) information and files of the area may also be provided.

- *Define whether there is a benefit to disadvantaged communities*

If the project clearly provides reference to how the proposed project addresses the primary needs of the Basin defined in the CCMP and the CHMP, and has provided project location coordinates which define the project location, the next step is to assess whether there is a social or environmental benefit, and record which communities receive this benefit (ID#/census block number). The grantee provides this data to the EPA within the table for tracking Justice40 investments, defined below.

- *Record and report tracking data*

The method for tracking project investments and benefiting communities will be in a table format, and a template will be provided to the grantee. An example of data included in this table include: fiscal year of funds received; funds awarded, recipient name; parish name; award amount; project name; CCMP/CHMP-linked project objective (see Section 5 and indicate which category it falls within); project type (Implementation, planning & design, education & outreach, research & monitoring); location (lat/long coordinates - latitude as one data entry, and longitude as another); number of disadvantaged communities benefited; listed communities by block group ID number who are benefiting; how a community is benefited (environmental or social); intended

project outcomes; whether the intended outcome was achieved (fillable at a later date - as yes or no); and any additional notes regarding the projects or communities.

The PRP plans to assess the total benefit area for all IJIA workplan activities to determine whether disadvantaged communities are included and receiving benefits from the activity. The grantee will provide the requested data for all IJIA-funded projects. Assessments will assume that one-dollar invested is equal to one-dollar of financial benefit. All area measurements will be assessed in sq. mi units to determine the proportion of the total benefit area which includes disadvantaged communities.

In addition to the data listed above, further tracking of non-monetary benefits to disadvantaged communities will be categorized as social and/or environmental. Data collected will include the benefits to disadvantaged communities.

Examples of activities with an environmental benefit and non-monetary tracking activities include:

- Water quality improvement: number of projects that are within a HUC 12 watershed that have impairments and are on the 303(d) list.
- Habitat restoration: area or length of habitat restored/improved; number of projects with habitat restoration as the outcome.
- Sewerage/Agricultural or Stormwater runoff: number of projects to reduce pollutants; number of green infrastructure projects.

Examples of projects with a social benefit and non-monetary tracking metrics include:

- Planning activities: number of plans developed and the intended outcome (e.g., stormwater design planning).
- Recreation and access improvement: number of new or improved access opportunities implemented.
- Stakeholder education & outreach: number of stakeholder outreach events conducted; number of disadvantaged communities participating in outreach events.

## **7. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

Reinvigoration in stakeholder engagement and program participation is critical to the success of the program and in meeting the Justice40 goals. The PRP, in alignment with the *Justice40 Initiative* and this Strategy, will maximize efforts to engage a diverse group of stakeholders with activities such as: informational sessions on RFPs, as well as tracking and publishing metrics toward meeting the Justice40 goals.

Since 2010, stakeholder participation in the PRP has decreased significantly, which could pose a challenge to achieving this numeric target. The EPA has initiated efforts to increase stakeholder outreach in the program and will continue these efforts through the EPA program website,

webinars, and informational meetings. A stakeholder meeting hosted by the EPA in May 2023 to provide information on PRP IJA grants and obtain input on Basin needs and priorities drew over 60 participants. Another EPA hosted meeting on September 5, 2023, was held to share information about the PRP management conference and request attendees to join if interested.

A significant increase in stakeholder engagement is expected compared to the limited engagement in the previous two decades. Maintaining broader engagement will require frequent communication and transparency with stakeholders throughout the Basin. The PRP intends to maintain engagement with stakeholders through actions such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Regular Management Conference meetings
- Regular management conference subcommittee meetings
- Providing information about Management Conference meetings to the public on the EPA PRP website

## **7.1 KEY ISSUES**

The PRP anticipates engaging with a variety of both internal and external stakeholders through hosting meetings around the following issues:

### **7.1.1 SEWAGE AND AGRICULTURAL RUNOFF**

The PRP will support projects that involve regionalization, outreach, and infrastructure improvements to un- and poorly-sewered communities along both the north and south shores of Lake Pontchartrain. Support will also be provided to projects which provide technical assistance to rural agricultural communities as a foundation for practices that support a sustainable environment and thriving natural resources.

### **7.1.2 STORMWATER RUNOFF**

Deteriorating coastal conditions and storm surges pose major threats to the Basin, and communities are significantly affected by this changing environment. Flood events and the harms associated with these impacts affect all communities of the Basin, but disproportionately affect the communities who are under-resourced to prepare for and recover from such events. The PRP will support opportunities to implement projects which improve the resiliency of communities to effects of climate change including stormwater management planning, plans and assessments for coastal resilience, and other mitigation strategies that support functional stormwater solutions.

### **7.1.3 SALTWATER INTRUSION AND WETLAND LOSS**

Healthy estuary habitats help sustain healthy communities and support a thriving economy. Disadvantaged communities may not have the resources to protect fisheries and habitat, efforts which may be supported by PRP. The PRP stakeholders will be involved in prioritizing projects that ensure the long-term sustainability of native resources. These projects preserve

and restore habitats, restore and enhance coastal environments, and conserve and manage wetlands for the ecological and economic integrity of the Basin and its residents.

## 7.2 STAKEHOLDERS

**Table 2. Unique Partners/Stakeholders and Timing**

<b>Group / Partner / Community Name</b>	<b>Geographic Locale</b>	<b>Type of Engagement Anticipated</b>	<b>Rationale for Engagement</b>	<b>Timing/ Regularity of engagement</b>
PRP Executive Committee	Local	Information distribution, public meetings, decision-making, collaboration with EPA	Reviews and recommends PRP proposals for funding	Quarterly, and as needed
University of New Orleans Research and Technology Foundation	Local	Grantee, manages RFPs for base and IIJA funds, submits documents to EPA for review and approval	Administers all PRP funding to subaward grantees	Quarterly, and as needed
Federal Agencies	Regional	Management Conference and eligible subaward grantee	Member of a collaborative group to implement the CCMP and potential recipient of funds	At least once annually, and as needed
State Agencies	Regional	Management Conference and eligible subaward grantee	Member of a collaborative group to implement the CCMP and potential recipient of funds	At least once annually, and as needed
Tribes	Local	Management Conference	Member of a collaborative group to implement the CCMP and potential recipient of funds	There are no federally registered tribes within the Basin. However, the Management Conference will reach out annually to tribal communities within the study area

Parishes, Counties and Municipalities	Local	Management Conference	Members of a collaborative group to implement the CCMP and potential recipient of funds	At least once annually, and as needed
Nonprofit Organizations and Universities	Regional	Management Conference	Members of a collaborative group to and implement the CCMP and potential recipient of funds	At least once annually, and as needed