

**Gulf South Rising
Community Controlled Fund
July 2016 Report Out**



The Seas Are Rising and So Are We

Background: Gulf South Rising

The extreme extraction of limited energy resources, the subsequent pollution, and the lack of corporate and government accountability has damaged the land, people and systems of democracy of the Gulf South. Gulf South Rising acknowledges that the global climate crisis is rooted in economic practices that promote mass consumption of limited resources, laws that maintain inequity and social hierarchies and governance processes that limit civic participation. Frontline communities are residents living in coastal areas; neighborhoods near fossil fuel refining and toxic pollution; and, generationally marginalized communities living throughout the region.

The vision of the 2015 Gulf South Rising Initiative was to seed a unified regional movement toward equity through coordinated actions and collaborative events led by frontline communities in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. 12-month regional movement of coordinated actions and events to highlight the impact of the global climate crisis on the Gulf South region. Through collaborative events and actions around strategic dates in 2015 GSR demanded a just transition away from extractive industries, discriminatory policies and unjust practices that hinder equitable recovery from disaster and impedes the development of sustainable communities. This year-long initiative 1) built regional movement infrastructure; 2) connected and convened frontline communities around collective healing and ecological equity; 3) advanced regional efforts of indigenous tribal and land sovereignty; and, 4) shifted the regional narrative from resilience to resistance.

Gulf South Rising Community Controlled Fund

One main goal of Gulf South Rising was to build regional movement infrastructure, which included building knowledge, skills and financial resources. The development of financial resources included developing community-controlled funds that invest in alternative economic infrastructure rooted in renewable energy through art/culture.

Funds raised in 2015 either went to designated events or have been placed in escrow as the community develops its process for distribution and management. Resources received specifically for 2015 operations, trainings and actions went directly to specific anchor/host organizations or groups. Non-financial donations are housed with GSR allied organizations or leaders. Such donations are the collective property of GSR frontline communities and are for use, free of charge, by the community in perpetuity. Dollars that were to support the general vision of Gulf South Rising, but not marked for a specific event/organization, are being held in trust with not more than 8% being used for administrative fees.

GSR/ Community Controlled Fund Meetings 2016

A Gulf South Rising community commission has been in the process of developing guidelines and management strategies since January 2016. The goal is for the first funds to be redistributed to frontline communities before December 1, 2016.

Community members have been meeting regularly to develop the community controlled fund according to the following 2016 decision-making timeline:

Phase 1: Governance

- ✓ Community agreements (March)
- ✓ Decisions making processes (March)
- ✓ Movement lexicon (April)

Phase 2: Vision and Goals

- ✓ Mission statement (May)
- ✓ Goals (June)

Phase 3: Infrastructure (July)

- Guiding discussion:
 - What structure do we need to accomplish our goals?
 - Do we want to establish a formal organization? IRS tax exempt?

Phase 4: Selection Process (August)

- Guiding discussion: Who is eligible to receive funds? Who is applying to receive funds? Where does the money go?

Phase 5 Disbursement Process (September)

- Guiding discussion: How do we distribute funds/ resources?

Phase 6: Reporting Process (October)

- Guiding discussion: How do we ensure transparency and accountability?

GSR-Community Control Fund- Total (last updated 6/30/16)

CrowdRise via WePay (on-line) 2015	\$3,474.00
Sierra Club- 2015	\$262.00
Greenpeace- 2016	\$3,000.00
Movement Generation- WC collection- 2016	\$700.00
Other	4,723.00
Total	\$12,159.00

(Governance Process) *(consensus vote on March 15, 2016)*

I. GSR/CCF Decision making process

1. A proposal is made by an individual or individuals at the meeting.
2. Group has open discussion with equitable facilitation
 - a. Equitable facilitation means everyone has the opportunity to speak once before anyone can speak twice.
3. Decision makers vote (verbally or in writing)
 - a. Decision Makers: While everyone can contribute to the discussion, voting decision makers meet these 3 criteria:
 1. CULTURAL IDENTITY: Current Gulf South resident who was raised in the Gulf South.
 2. AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE: A decision maker agrees to CCF structures, including (must accept both):
 - a. Agreement to:
 - i. Jemez Principles,
 - ii. Community Agreements,
 - iii. Mission Statement, and
 - iv. Goals of GSR CCF
 - b. Acceptance of responsibility and role of being decision maker.
 3. COMMITMENT: Has attended a minimum of 3 community controlled fund meetings.
 - b. Quorum: CCF decisions can only be made when there is a quorum present. CCF Quorum means that at least 5 decision makers are present AND at least 2/3rds of the decision-makers present are Black or Indigenous.
4. **CONSENSUS**: Consensus means everyone agrees to move forward. If there is consensus among decision makers, the proposal passes.
5. **NO CONSENSUS**. If consensus is not reached:
 - a. There is a facilitated conversation around concerns with the items proposed.
 - b. The general Gulf South Rising community is notified via email that a decision will be made at next meeting.
 - c. At the next meeting, a proposal requires two thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the total number of votes to pass.

Statement of Purpose (MISSION): *(consensus vote on May 24, 2016)*

The Gulf South Rising Community Controlled Fund (GSR CCF) sets precedents for new funding mechanisms promoting just transitions away from extractive practices while dismantling oppressive structures which harm our communities and, ultimately, our ecology. The GSR CCF exists to restore communities and to honor the legacy of strength and resistance in the Gulf South.

We believe people on and of the land should control what happens to the land; the people of the South must control what happens in the South. This regenerating, community-controlled fund provides resources to foster power and promote togetherness in the region (TX, LA, MS, AL, FL). The fund exists to return power to historically marginalized communities through collective control of dollars, assets, skills and information. We work against racism, homophobia, transphobia, sexism, ableism, classism, ageism and other forms of discrimination which have been used to divide our communities internally and exclude valuable members of our communities from the larger world. We prioritize Black and Indigenous communities of the Gulf South, and we aim to impact and connect the often over-looked, common interests of Gulf South and Global South communities.

We invest in furthering ecological equity. We fund innovative approaches to ensure that the basic needs (air, water, food, housing, healthcare) of Gulf South residents on the frontlines of climate change are met in balance with our ecology. Our dollars are our love in action and we use them to create and grow regenerative spaces of power and collective healing.

Community agreements (GUIDELINES) *(consensus vote on March 15, 2016)*

- Operate from a place of cooperative and ecological economics.
 - Anti-capitalist.
 - Prioritize people, relationships, and community over profit.
 - Rooted in ecology and non-extraction - emphasis on balance and regenerative systems.
 - Commitment to shared resources - community giving and sharing
- Commitment to anti-racism and anti white supremacy
- Longevity, sustainability and regeneration (i.e. operating with a long-term strategy)
 - Established more formally as an organization or an independent fund.
 - The fund cannot be regenerated through extractive practices; committed to restorative justice and transformative justice.
- Collective work and responsibility

- Investment of financial assets is complemented by non-monetary investment to ensure mutual success (e.g. sharing wisdom, knowledge that is valuable but doesn't get monetarily valued).
- Commitment to restorative justice and transformative justice
 - Distribution of money rooted in restoring Gulf South frontline communities.
 - Money used to repair and restore the health and well-being of people, places and relationships.
 - Prioritization of community and ecological relationships.
 - Fund connects, at a minimum, two or three communities.
- Focus on the community and group's abilities, and do not get caught up on limitations.
 - Recognize and elevate existing community non-monetary assets
- Money disbursed must be beneficial to the community (e.g. beyond just the people in the room) and the community decides what is beneficial.

NOTE: The following proposals must be ratified.

30% to a project, 70% to grow money (invest more than we spend)

"X" amount of money leading to sustainable job creation as part of a just transition.

Seasonal disbursement (shrimp season, crab season, etc.)

GSR/ Community Controlled Fund Goals *(Consensus vote on 6/21/16)*

The Gulf South Rising Community Controlled Fund supports ideas and projects that promote 1) Collective Community Healing and 2) Just Transition.

Collective Healing. Support collective community healing for the bodies and minds of Gulf South frontline communities. Prioritize funding for culturally-rooted practices that support healthy bodies and minds".

Just Transition. Advise and invest in cooperative economies and ecological remediation for Gulf South communities. Existence is resistance. Empowering people is an act of creating resistance strong enough to beat the extractive systems that are alongside it.

- **Invest in things that regenerate themselves.** Invest in 1) small Black and Native businesses working towards renewable energy/ecological technologies. (e.g. project for underserved youth with big ideas and potential through mentorship and other opportunities, etc.); 2) property that allows development of ecologically friendly community; and, 3) small, sustainable farms to give people access to fresh food and water.

- **Building new processes for new possibilities.** Support projects that 1) use collective control of dollars, assets, skills and information that foster community power 2) increase access to (shared or new) materials and experiences (e.g. food and travel) that contribute to self-growth (self-determination); and, 3) build financial empowerment for women, queer, trans and gender nonconforming entrepreneurs.