



# GOMESA PHASE II PROJECT FUNDING

## Request for Funding FY2026

Submission ID: #202509301369

ENHANCE \* PROTECT \* CONSERVE

### PROJECT SUMMARY

#### 1. Title of Project

OS Arborist - Beautification and Protection

#### 2. Location of Project

City-wide with a focus on historic trees, ongoing projects, and private property applications

#### 3. Requesting Organization:

City of Ocean Springs

#### 4. Requesting Agency Representative

a. Name:

Bobby Cox, Mayor

b. Phone:

228-875-6722

d. Email:

bcox@oceansprings-ms.gov

c. Address:

1018 Porter Avenue

Ocean Springs Mississippi

#### 5. Funding Requested:

\$365000

#### 6. Have any other State or Federal funding sources been identified for the project?

No

#### 7. If yes, enter amount and source of additional funds:

\$

#### Source of Additional Funds:

#### 8. Total Project Funds

\$365000



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### 9. Provide Brief Project Description/Overview:

One of the iconic and identifying characteristics of the City of Ocean Springs will always be our historic streets lined with majestic Live Oaks, complementing the variety of flora and fauna throughout the city. Many of the live oaks in the historic areas of the city are over a hundred years old and are certified as such on the State Registry. As development progresses and the historic trees continue to mature and age, it has become increasingly important to monitor the health and protection of trees within the public spaces of the city. Equally, it is important to educate and encourage private property owners on the best management practices to maintain and, when required or requested, evaluate the liability and safety aspects of keeping, pruning, or removing a tree.

With a mission to preserve, protect, and grow the iconic and vital tree canopy of Ocean Springs, the city desires to implement a proactive approach to its care and maintenance by entering into a contract with a certified arborist or arborist firm for a two-year period. Contracting with an arborist for at least two consecutive years will allow the city to develop a system of urban tree canopy care designed to enhance environmental health, to improve air quality, to improve stormwater management, reduce heat island effect, and to increase biodiversity. This contracted position would work with city staff to evaluate and develop maintenance strategies for trees and other landscaping within public property and rights-of-way. Additionally, this consultant would support staff with application review for private property that includes the removal or modification of protected trees. The arborist will be effective in addressing tree canopy inventory and planning for the 5.9 acres which the city recently annexed from Jackson County. This annexation nearly doubles the physical size of the City. Recognition and assessment of the function of the tree canopy in this annexed area as infrastructure is crucial prior to increased development. This project would also provide tools and materials to evaluate the health of existing trees, document and monitor any changes or impacts, and implement both beautification and protection measures for our urban greenery and tree canopy.

### 10. LIST Project Goals/Objectives:

1. This project will be an integral part of the overall plan for improvements for coastal protection, water quality improvements, and public safety by ensuring the health and longevity of the public tree canopy, as well as proper oversight of private development.
2. Creation of a proactive, long-term tree plan will be a strong benefit for the city moving forward on both public and private projects. Community education and engagement are important elements in this process.
3. By maintaining a healthy tree canopy and public vegetation cover, the city's character is maintained. But greater still, the trees and ground vegetation serve to filter runoff and protect the environment.
4. The Arborist will be able to coordinate with local environmental groups to ensure that all are working together toward the common goal to protect both environmental and manmade infrastructure while enhancing and protecting the character and quality of life within the City of Ocean Springs.

### 11. Which of the following authorized uses set forth in the GOMESA Act does this project fall under? Explain SPECIFICALLY and in detail how the project meets the required criteria. Check all that apply - At least one must be checked.

(A) Projects and activities for the purposes of coastal protection, including conservation, coastal restoration, hurricane protection, and infrastructure directly affected by coastal wetland losses

Engaging a professional arborist will provide vital support to city staff by providing expert input on the impact of public and private development. This input will help with maintaining the tree canopy and surrounding open space, nature's ability to filter stormwater runoff, mitigate surface temperatures, and ensure that the trees are as resilient as possible during severe



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weather.

**(B) Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife, or natural resources.**

Maintaining and improving the tree canopy and health of the public greenspace will help to support the flora and fauna that depend on our natural environment. Healthy trees serve to naturally filter road runoff and storm wastewater, helping to create a rich abundance of nutrients and organic matter in our coastal wetlands, which support the food web, providing a crucial, productive habitat where juvenile fish and shellfish can thrive.

**(C) Implementation of a federally-approved marine, coastal, or conservation management plan**

**(D) Mitigation of the impact of Outer Continental Shelf activities through funding of onshore infrastructure projects.**



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### 12. Project Timetable/Milestones:

- \* Authorize advertisement for contractual services.
- \* Advertise for consultant services - approximately 45 days.
- \* Confirm consultant selection by the Board of Aldermen and establish rates.
- \* Finalize the budget and work with the Arborist to develop the list of tools and materials.
- \* The contract with the Arborist would be for a 12-month period, renewable for an additional 12 months.
- \* Once in place, the Arborist would begin immediately working with the Building Office on an evaluation strategy for all public trees. Likewise, the selected consultant would begin immediately to work with the Planning Department to review development plans where appropriate.

### 13. Project Timing

Short-term (3 year or less)



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### APPLICATION SUMMARY QUESTIONNAIRE

#### 14. Current status of architectural/engineering plans & specifications for this project (if applicable):

##### Group 1:

no plans or specifications required

##### Group 2:

Funds not budgeted

#### 15. In what way does this project meet the goals and objectives of the Department of Marine Resources, which includes enhancing, protecting and conserving the marine interest of Mississippi for present and future generations.?

The City of Ocean Springs is a functional peninsula with bayous, marshlands, and sand beach on the majority of the city limit borders. These coastal marshes and bayous are vital nurseries for young marine animals. Bayous and marshes serve as critical feeding grounds for juvenile fish and shellfish. A healthy well-maintained tree canopy can reduce stormwater runoff by absorbing rainwater, mitigating flooding, and lessening the burden on the city's drainage system. Proactive, planned efforts to maintain an appropriate amount of open space goes a long way to filter impurities from stormwater, road runoff, before it reaches any one of the surrounding ecosystems.

Not only do the trees define the character of the city and attract many people to view the natural charm, by ensuring the health of the outdoor open space and tree canopy, the overall environment is supported and maintained.

This project would allow the city to develop and implement a proactive plan that can be kept in place moving forward and integrated into standard operating procedures as they relate to infrastructure maintenance and plan review for both public and private projects. The framework of this ongoing conservation project will be easily replicable in other communities facing similar challenges.

#### 16. Estimated number of years to completion:

2

#### 17. Estimated Completion Date:

12/31/28

#### 18. Prioritize if your agency has submitted multiple projects:

1



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### BUDGET

Category	Total
Salaries	
Travel	
Architecture & Engineering	
Legal	
Consulting	312000
Construction	
Site Work	
Equipment	
Indirects	
Other	53000
<b>Total</b>	<b>365000</b>

#### Attachments

1. gomesa-form-fy2026-fillable\_os-arborist-beautification\_signed\_combined\_red.pdf
2. letter-for-carolyn-martin.pdf

I hereby certify under penalty of perjury that all information contained in this application packet is true and correct. I have not knowingly or intentionally provided any false information. I understand that a false statement on this application may be grounds for rejection of my application or termination of the award. In addition, a false statement may be punishable under applicable state or federal laws, which may also result in a fine and/or imprisonment.

I certify that the above referenced agency / entity has given me the authority to submit this application.

**Name**

**Phone**

**Date**

Carolyn Martin

228-230-1969

09/30/2025

## TREES ON WASHINGTON AVENUE – Ocean Springs, MS





## HENRY "HANK" B. ZUBER, III

503 Minor Lane  
Ocean Springs, MS 39564  
Office: 228.875.1097  
hank@zuberlaw.net

September 30, 2025

MS Department of Marine Resources  
*Via Electronic Application Submittal*

**Re: City of Ocean Springs – Arborist - Beautification and Protection**

To Whom it May Concern:

We are pleased to support the application being prepared for submission by the City of Ocean Springs to contract with a certified Arborist for a two-year period. This consultant would both evaluate and develop a strategy to maintain trees and ground cover in the open, public spaces, as well as review applications for private development to ensure protection of the city's tree canopy.

This project should be strongly considered for funding as an opportunity to protect the environment and at the same time support the physical, economic, and financial health of the community. We look forward to these improvements for the betterment of Ocean Springs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Hank Zuber". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Hank Zuber  
Mississippi State Representative, District 113