



NFWF

Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

RECIPIENTS

The Nature Conservancy

AWARD AMOUNT

\$1,957,600

LOCATION

East Bay and Blackwater Bays, Florida

AWARD DATE

November 2015

PROGRESS UPDATE

The data collection phase of the project is complete and there has been a slight delay in surveying due to weather. (August 2017)

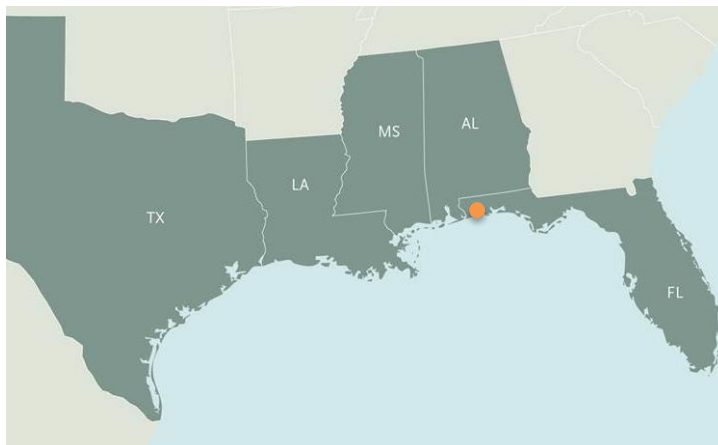
FLORIDA

Eastern Pensacola Bay Oyster Habitat Restoration- Phase I

This proposal is the first step in a comprehensive effort to design and construct oyster habitat along approximately 8 miles of shoreline in East and Blackwater Bays to enhance nursery habitat for commercially and recreationally important finfish and shellfish. Additional anticipated benefits include: decreased wave energy to minimize shoreline erosion; stabilization of sediments and decreased turbidity; and improvement of habitat for a suite of avian and fish species. Phase I includes pre-restoration monitoring, design and engineering, and permitting for the entire project area.

This project will significantly increase protected oyster resources in Eastern Pensacola Bay and protect vulnerable shoreline and other important coastal and marine habitat. The project is located partially within the boundaries of the state's Yellow River Marsh Aquatic Preserve and leverages acquisition and management investments from the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, the MOEX settlement, and NRDA in the Escrimano Point Wildlife Management Area.

Oysters are considered a keystone species because they play a critical role in maintaining water quality and biodiversity by cycling water and nutrients within the ecosystem and providing habitat and food for many estuarine species. At this scale, reef restoration is expected to also provide significant nursery habitat for numerous finfish and shellfish stocks, as well as foraging habitat for numerous avian species.



This project will facilitate the design, engineering and permitting needed to construct a significant oyster restoration project in Eastern Pensacola Bay.

The Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), supports projects to remedy harm and eliminate or reduce the risk of harm to Gulf Coast natural resources affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. To learn more about NFWF, go to www.nfwf.org.