



NFWF

Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

RECIPIENT

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Atlanta Botanical Gardens

AMOUNT

*\$5,916,000

PARTNERS

USFWS

USDA

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

LOCATION

Walton County, Florida

AWARD DATE

November 2014

AMENDED DATE

November 2017

PROGRESS UPDATE

An additional 20.43 acres were cleared, completing 30% of the project's restoration goals. A total of 1,159 cubic yards of woody biomass was cleared, completing 80% of the goal. Predator management ongoing, and the application of prescribed fire expected to increase in early 2018. (February 2018)

**Project was amended in November 2017 to add \$2,870,600 to complete treatment of invasive plant material on additional acreage and to increase freshwater flow and improve water quality.*

FLORIDA

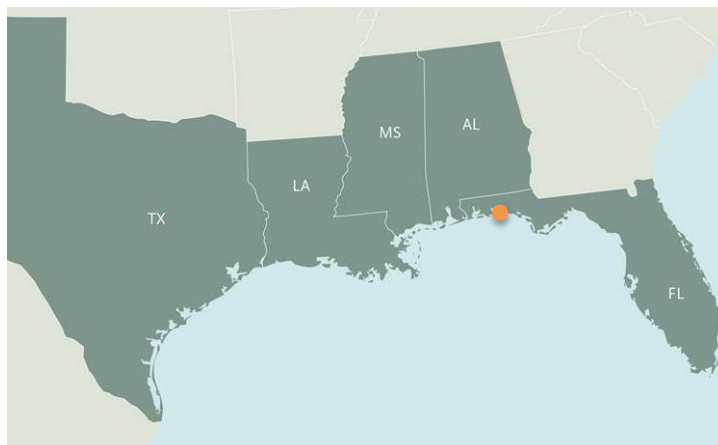
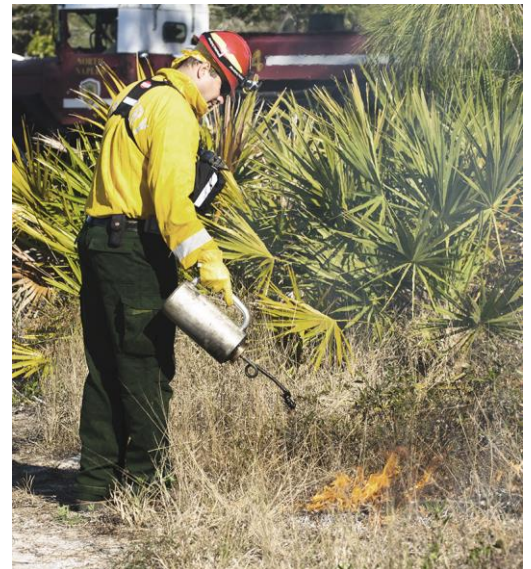
Restoration of Florida's Coastal Dune Lakes

This project will remove invasive species and use fire management to restore wetland habitat and increase freshwater flows into priority coastal dune lakes in the Florida Panhandle. Florida's coastal dune lakes systems provide unique habitat for a wide variety of fish and wildlife, in particular beach nesting shorebirds and estuarine fish species, and exist as a natural estuarine transition between the Gulf of Mexico and upland areas. Restoration of these lakes will improve wetland habitat, enhance freshwater flows and have significant benefit to adjacent benthic environments in Gulf waters.

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory has classified coastal dune lakes as imperiled globally and vulnerable to extinction. Florida's coastal dune lake habitats are incredibly unique, and their conservation and restoration is a high priority for the state. Addressing water quality improvements in watersheds that feed these lakes through improved fire management and invasive species control will provide significant improvements to the quality of the water within these systems and to the Gulf of Mexico.



Credit: Florida State Parks



Coastal Dune lakes are unique estuarine transitional habitats that occur in only a few places in the world and provide important habitat for a variety of fish and coastal birds.