



# NFWF

# Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

### RECIPIENT

Audubon Florida

### AWARD AMOUNT

\$5,592,000

### PARTNERS

Florida Department of Environmental Protection – Aquatic Preserve Program and Florida Division of State Lands

The Mosaic Company

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Pinellas County

### LOCATION

Tampa Bay

### AWARD DATE

November 2018

### STATUS

Active

### PROGRESS UPDATE

Project recently awarded. (February 2019)

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](http://www.nfwf.org).

## FLORIDA

# Southwest Florida Wading Bird Nesting Island Enhancement

This project will engineer, design, and install near-shore breakwaters at five sites to protect nesting and foraging habitat for colonial waterbirds. This region of Florida hosts one of the largest populations of colonial waterbirds in the state and selected project sites support important habitat for multiple bird species that were impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Habitat enhancement will be focused on five of the most important waterbird nesting islands in the region, prioritized by historical importance, lack of mammalian predation, and severity of impacts from ongoing erosion. Breakwaters constructed as part of this project will slow impacts from erosion, protecting and enhancing nesting and foraging habitat for colonial waterbirds.

The Tampa Bay region hosts the largest population of colonial waterbirds in Florida outside of the Everglades. Alafia Banks Critical Wildlife Area, in particular, is home to the largest wading bird colony on the west coast of Florida with between 5,000 and 10,000 nesting pairs annually and the largest roseate spoonbill colony in the state. Other species that nest on these islands include brown pelicans, reddish egrets, wood storks and several heron species. Proposed project activities address one of the top funding priorities in the Florida GEBF Restoration Strategy to replenish and protect living resources, including colonial waterbirds. Moreover, project activities address priorities included in other colonial waterbird strategies including the Natural Resource Damage Strategic Framework for Bird Restoration Activities, FWC’s Species Action Plan for Six Imperiled Wading Birds and the North American Colonial Waterbird Conservation Plan.



Credit | Jon Porthouse



Great egrets, great blue herons, cormorants, spoonbills, and wood storks nesting on an eroded rookery island proposed for restoration. Installation of near-shore breakwaters will intercept wave energy and create a calm lagoon between the breakwater and the shoreline, providing foraging habitat for birds.