



NFWF

Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

RECIPIENTS

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC)

AWARD AMOUNT

*\$3,072,100

LOCATION

Florida Panhandle Beaches

AWARD DATE

November 2015

AMENDED DATE

November 2017

STATUS

Active

PROGRESS UPDATE

Lighting evaluations on beachfront properties continued. STC evaluated feasibility and cost of lighting retrofits for several properties. (February 2019)

**Project was amended in November 2017 to add \$957,000 to address remaining priority light pollution retrofits to Panhandle properties and continue ongoing improvements to data collection and monitoring.*

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.

FLORIDA

Eliminating Light Pollution on Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches – Phase II

This project will improve nesting beach habitat quality for sea turtles on Florida Panhandle beaches by reducing visible light on an estimated 85 properties. Funds will be used to implement complete retrofits of beachfront lights (identified during Phase I) that impact nesting beaches. Additionally, this project will engage all FWC Marine Turtle Permit Holders along the Florida Gulf Coast in timely and accurate reporting of all disorientation events on their surveyed beaches. To improve the efficiency and utility of FWC’s existing disorientation reporting program, this project will create an online database that will provide a tool for local government, property owners, and others to address documented impacts to sea turtle nests on their beaches. Permit Holders will be trained to correctly document disorientation events and to provide accurate and timely information to FWC, local government officials, and beachfront communities.

Successful nesting and hatchling survival is essential for the protection and recovery of the sea turtle populations that live in the Gulf of Mexico and specifically for loggerheads nesting along the northern Gulf coast. Proposed efforts are complimentary to the prior activities undertaken to darken public beaches under NRD and earlier Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund projects for similar activities on private properties in other targeted Panhandle counties. Additionally, the data collection effort will provide a uniform and consistent platform for reporting disorientation events to improve local, state, and federal management of nesting beaches and to monitor the impact of mitigation efforts.



Credit: STC



This project will continue lighting retrofit work along the panhandle beaches of Florida to reduce the amount of sea turtle disorientations. The project will also facilitate improvements in disorientation event reporting and data management.