



NFWF

Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

FLORIDA

Eliminating Light Pollution on Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches - Phase I

This project significantly increased sea turtle hatchling survival on Florida Panhandle nesting beaches by correcting problematic lights on private properties with a history of sea turtle disorientations. The project targeted problem lights adjacent to existing dark areas in order to expand contiguous stretches of beach rather than small pockets of habitat. Willing property owners were identified and complete retrofits of beachfront lights were installed to benefit turtle nesting.

Florida hosts over 90% of all sea turtle nesting in the continental United States, including the largest population of loggerheads in the Western Hemisphere and regionally significant nesting populations of the Kemp's ridley sea turtles. As coastal development continues around the state, the problem of beachfront lighting continues to hamper sea turtle recovery efforts. Each year tens of thousands of nesting females and hatchlings are negatively impacted by artificial lights, with thousands of hatchlings never making it to the sea. Sea turtles are threatened globally, and Gulf coast populations were particularly hard hit by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. While significant funds have been allocated to reduce light pollution on public property, little funding has been available to upgrade lighting on private property. The targeted beaches along the Panhandle of Florida part of the Northern Gulf Coast Recovery Unit, and were disproportionately affected by the oil spill and response.



Before



After

Credit | STC

STC retrofitted 17 large multi-family condominium complexes and 45 single-family homes, totaling 4,491 unshielded fixtures or full-spectrum white light bulbs were replaced with sea turtle-friendly bulbs. A minimum of 29,900 linear feet of beach was restored, equivalent to 5.7 miles.

AT A GLANCE

RECIPIENT:
Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC)

AWARD AMOUNT:
\$1,500,000

PARTNERS:
Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission

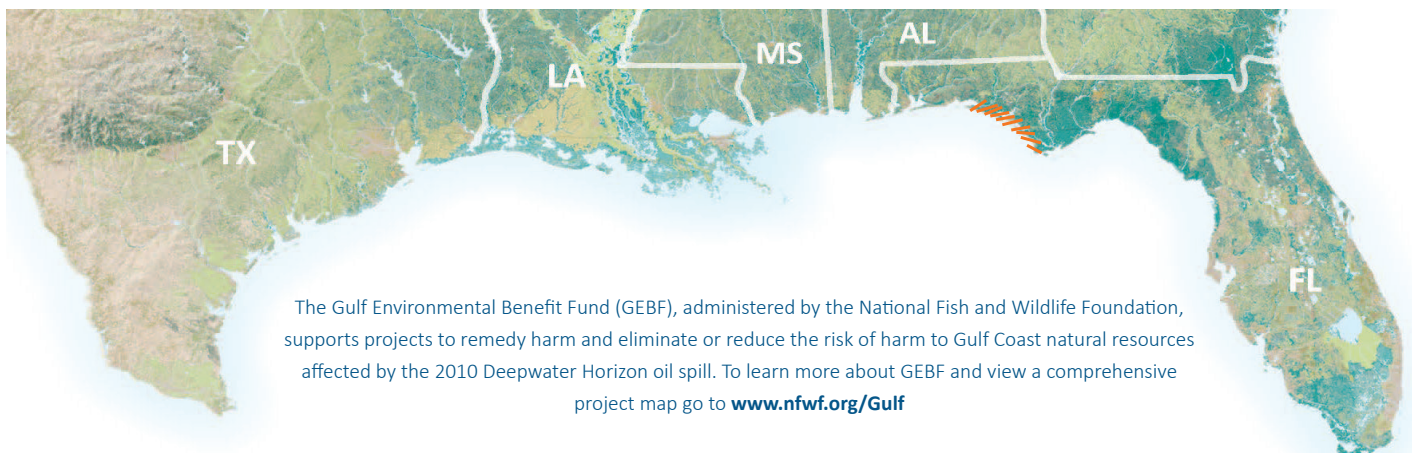
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

LOCATION:
Walton, Gulf and Franklin Counties, Florida

AWARD DATE:
November 2013

STATUS:
Closed

PROGRESS UPDATE:
Monitoring efforts showed a decrease from 48% to 20% in sea turtle hatchling disorientation. The project is now closed. (January 2017)



The Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF), administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 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 GEBF and view a comprehensive project map go to www.nfwf.org/Gulf