MISSISSIPPI

Acquisition of Priority Tracts for Coastal Habitat Connectivity– Phase I

This project seeks to enhance coastal habitat connectivity and increase core conservation areas within the Mississippi Coastal Preserves system, the Gulf Islands National Seashore, and the Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The conservation of coastal habitats is one of the fundamental steps in building and maintaining a sustainable, resilient coastal environment. This project addresses this conservation need by acquiring key land parcels that provide multiple long-term benefits for the Mississippi Gulf Coast ecosystem. Priority parcels have been identified, utilizing the Mississippi Comprehensive Ecosystem Restoration Tool (MCERT), based on several key factors including adjacency to land parcels that are currently managed by the State or Federal Government, the existence of a target species or habitat, and/or the susceptibility to changing conditions, such as marsh migration, changes in water salinity or quality, altered fire regime, etc. This approach represents a significant opportunity to expand and complement existing conservation land through targeted, science-based acquisition. This project will leverage approximately $13,500,000 in RESTORE funding, as well as additional funding through the Natural Resource Damage program.

This project will bring additional priority coastal lands, similar to the marsh and fringe longleaf habitat pictured above, into conservation and support Mississippi's developing vision for coastal land protection.

AT A GLANCE

RECIPIENT:
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality

AWARD AMOUNT:
$17,433,000

PARTNERS:
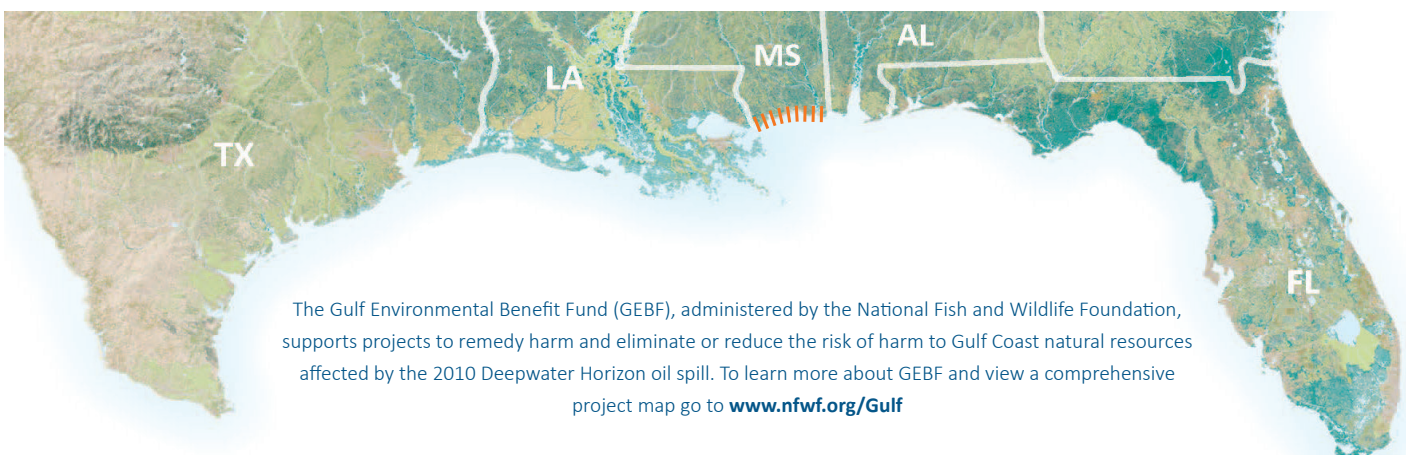Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Mississippi Secretary of State

LEVERAGE AMOUNT:
$13,500,000

LOCATION:
Coastal Mississippi

AWARD DATE:
March 2016

STATUS:
Active

PROGRESS UPDATE:
Historical surveys and surface ownership data were reviewed. Target acquisition parcels have been identified and due diligence is being conducted.

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**