



NFWF

Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

FLORIDA

Marine Mammal Pathobiology Laboratory

This project will construct a marine mammal pathobiology facility on the campus of Eckerd College in Pinellas County. The facility will serve as a hub for high quality marine mammal necropsy activities that will increase the understanding of the causes of illness and death, and inform early detection and intervention of anthropogenic and natural threats in marine mammals that strand off Florida’s Gulf Coast. Necropsy and sample collection results will be provided to federal and state managers to support science-based conservation decisions and management plans. The new facility will be designed to include increased cold storage capacity and other amenities that will help the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) overcome challenges that occur when responding to mass strandings and large cetacean species (e.g., sub-adult whales) for which little data currently exists.

The Gulf of Mexico is habitat for 21 species of cetacean (dolphins and whales) and one sirenian (manatees), all of which are listed under the Marine Mammal Protection Act as well as several listed under the Endangered Species Act. Timely and accurate information from stranding events and necropsies, particularly when human-related, is critical for managers to make effective decisions that conserve and protect marine mammals.

The project will benefit from FWC’s Marine Mammal Program infrastructure and will build upon previous GEBF projects by providing the Marine Mammal Stranding Network with a state of the art necropsy facility for enhanced cause of stranding and/or death determination and standardize data collection, sample collection, data dissemination, and training.



This facility will enhance efforts to protect marine mammals, like the pilot whales pictured above, by improving the collection and analysis of data obtained from stranding events.

AT A GLANCE

RECIPIENT: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

AWARD AMOUNT: \$6,766,000

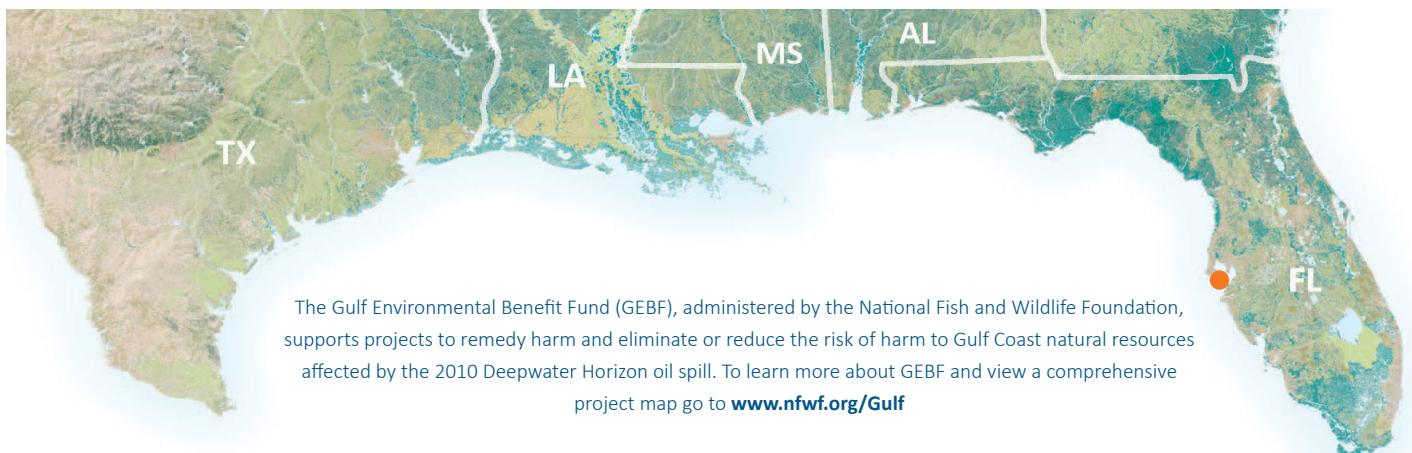
PARTNERS: Eckerd College

LOCATION: St. Petersburg, Florida

AWARD DATE: November 2020

STATUS: Awarded

*Project was amended November 2023 to fund construction of a marine mammal pathobiology facility on the campus of Eckerd College.



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