NFWF | Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

FLORIDA

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge Saltmarsh Restoration – Phase I

This project will complete engineering and design plans to restore up to 28 acres of saltmarsh habitat along the St. Marks River within the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Wilderness Area. The project will restore saltmarsh habitat by removing remnant dredge spoil islands that consist of large crushed limestone piles. Permitting, design, and planning will evaluate beneficial use alternatives for crushed limestone, including the construction of bird nesting, artificial reefs, and oyster reef restoration in the St. Marks River and Apalachee Bay. Restoring saltmarsh habitat and historic hydrological conditions to the project area will help re-establish riparian ecosystem services. Saltmarsh ecosystems provide habitat for a variety of ecologically and economically important fishes and birds and are critical to the long-term viability of regional fisheries in Florida. Restoration will include removal of up to 24 dredge spoil islands along the St. Marks River within the St. Marks NWR and Wilderness Area. Phase II of the project will implement preferred design alternatives identified and permitted in this phase.

Restoration of coastal marsh and estuarine habitats remain a high priority focal area for the state of Florida under the Florida GEBF Restoration Strategy, is identified in the St. Marks NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan, the St. Marks River and Apalachee Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan, and the State Wildlife Action Plan.

This project will restore saltmarsh habitat, as pictured above, along the St. Marks River.

AT A GLANCE

RECIPIENT:
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

AWARD AMOUNT:
*$2,106,000

PARTNERS:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge

Northwest Florida Water Management District

Florida Sea Grant

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

City of St. Marks

LOCATION:
Wakulla County, Florida

AWARD DATE:
November 2019

STATUS:
Active
**Project was amended in November 2022 to add $1,300,000 to complete engineering, design and permitting*

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**