NFWF | Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

RECIPIENT
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

AMOUNT
$1,973,500

PARTNERS
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

University of Florida

USFWS

Saint Andrew Bay Resource Management Association

LOCATION
Bay County, Florida

AWARD DATE
November 2014

STATUS
Active

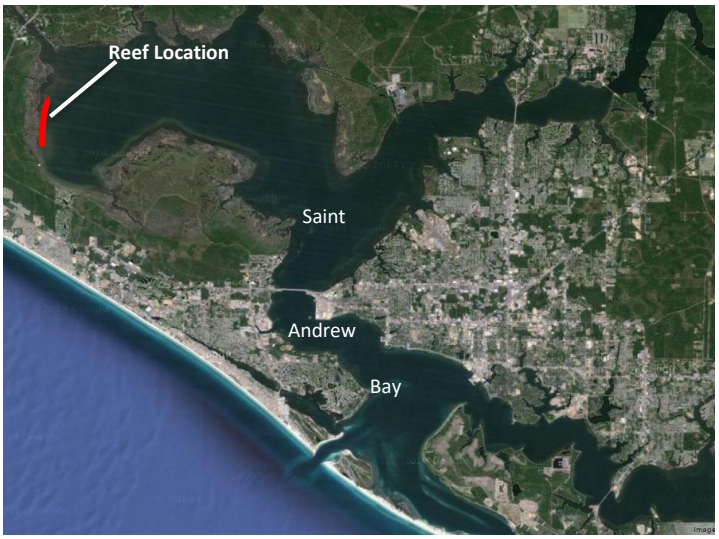
PROGRESS UPDATE
Outreach and educational events continued. Hurricane Michael post-storm impact assessments have been initiated. (February 2019)

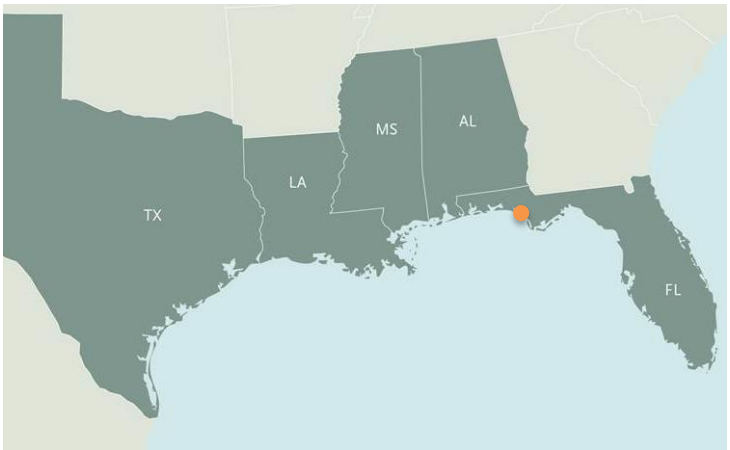
FLORIDA

Oyster Reef Habitat Restoration in Saint Andrew Bay

This project will restore one and a quarter miles of oyster reef habitat in West Bay, improve water quality, enhance fisheries, and increase coastal resiliency. By improving water quality and reducing wave action and turbidity, this project is expected to promote the expansion of over 200 acres of seagrass beds that were lost or degraded as a result of a former shrimp farm operation and wastewater discharge that have since ceased operation. This project is the second phase of a larger restoration project, and will complement a pilot restoration effort to be constructed in early 2015.

The St. Andrew Bay estuary is unique both for its significant biological diversity and clear, high-salinity waters in which submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) flourishes. West Bay, the northwest arm of the estuary, has experienced a variety of detrimental impacts over many decades resulting in significant loss of seagrass throughout this part of the system. Improving water quality and clarity will allow for restoration and expansion of SAV, which provide important nursery habitat benefits to a variety of commercially and recreationally important fish and shellfish species; including, grey snapper, spotted sea trout, mullet, grouper, red drum, flounder, shrimp, blue crab and scallops.





Oyster reef restoration in West Bay of the St. Andrew Bay system will provide significant benefits to fisheries, improve coastal resiliency, and promote the restoration of SAV habitat.