



NFWF

# Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

## RECIPIENTS

Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

## AWARD AMOUNT

\$2,663,000

## PARTNERS

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality

Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks

## LOCATION

Mississippi Gulf Coast

## AWARD DATE

March 2019

## STATUS

Active

## MISSISSIPPI

# Mississippi Offshore Artificial Reef and Habitat Enhancement

This project will create 7-12 artificial reefs in Mississippi waters to provide ecological benefits to marine fishes in offshore areas. Reef fish and other marine wildlife within Mississippi's coastal and nearshore Gulf of Mexico waters were impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill through direct contact with oil and dispersants. Creation of artificial reefs will provide habitat to marine fishes to help bolster their populations. Artificial reefs will be constructed utilizing decommissioned materials from the Ingalls dry dock facility in Pascagoula and deployed to optimize ecological benefit to fishes and other reef organisms. Reef sites will be managed and maintained by the Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks in coordination with Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' (MDMR) Artificial Reef Program. MDMR will also collect high resolution benthic mapping of the project area and document colonization of reefs by juvenile fishes. Data collection from deployed reefs will inform future reef deployments.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast Restoration Plan, created through GEBF funding identifies artificial reef habitat as a priority in Mississippi. Additionally, this project aligns with the goals of the MDMR Artificial Reef Program and the Mississippi Artificial Reef Plan. Under the Artificial Reef Program, the State of Mississippi currently manages more than 16,000 acres of permitted offshore artificial reef sites that serve as habitat for reef fishes in adjacent Gulf of Mexico waters.



Above, concrete panel structures that will be used to construct artificial reefs.

The Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), 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 NFWF, go to [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org).