



NFWF

# Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

### RECIPIENTS

The Nature Conservancy

### AWARD AMOUNT

\$1,957,600

### LOCATION

East Bay and Blackwater Bays, Florida

### AWARD DATE

November 2015

### PROGRESS UPDATE

Most of the first quarter project work involved acquainting TNC with the project Scope of Work and formalizing responsibilities and deliverables. (August 2016)

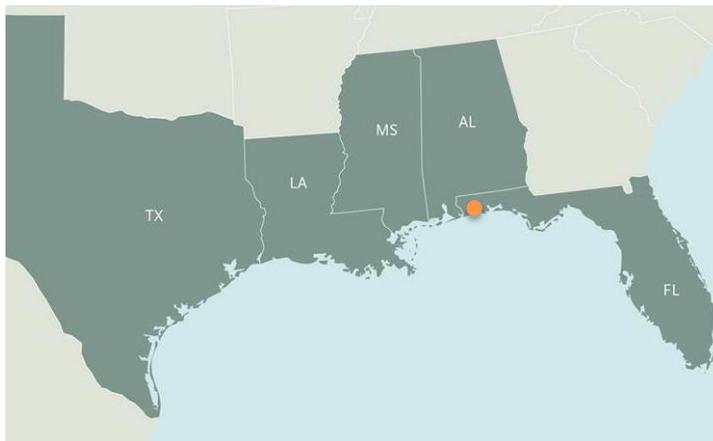
## FLORIDA

# Eastern Pensacola Bay Oyster Habitat Restoration- Phase I

This proposal is the first step in a comprehensive effort to design and construct oyster habitat along approximately 8 miles of shoreline in East and Blackwater Bays to enhance nursery habitat for commercially and recreationally important finfish and shellfish. Additional anticipated benefits include: decreased wave energy to minimize shoreline erosion; stabilization of sediments and decreased turbidity; and improvement of habitat for a suite of avian and fish species. Phase I includes pre-restoration monitoring, design and engineering, and permitting for the entire project area.

This project will significantly increase protected oyster resources in Eastern Pensacola Bay and protect vulnerable shoreline and other important coastal and marine habitat. The project is located partially within the boundaries of the state's Yellow River Marsh Aquatic Preserve and leverages acquisition and management investments from the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, the MOEX settlement, and NRDA in the Escribano Point Wildlife Management Area.

Oysters are considered a keystone species because they play a critical role in maintaining water quality and biodiversity by cycling water and nutrients within the ecosystem and providing habitat and food for many estuarine species. At this scale, reef restoration is expected to also provide significant nursery habitat for numerous finfish and shellfish stocks, as well as foraging habitat for numerous avian species.



This project will facilitate the design, engineering and permitting needed to construct a significant oyster restoration project in Eastern Pensacola Bay.

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).