



NFWF

Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

RECIPIENT

Sea Turtle Conservancy

AMOUNT

\$1,500,000

PARTNERS

Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

LOCATION

Walton, Gulf and Franklin Counties, FL

ANNOUNCEMENT DATE

November 2013

PROGRESS UPDATE

Recipient has evaluated 148 properties for lighting retrofits. Lighting retrofits have been completed on 44 of 63 approved properties. Recorded lighting data is being stored in an online ArcGIS geodatabase and a public project map will soon be available to the public. Sea Turtle Conservancy has given two lighting retrofit presentations, expanding exposure and establishing Sea Turtle Conservancy as experts in the field. (August 2016)

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.

FLORIDA

Eliminating Light Pollution on Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches

This project will greatly increase sea turtle hatchling survivorship on Florida Panhandle nesting beaches by correcting problematic lights on private properties with a history of sea turtle disorientations. The project targets problem lights adjacent to existing dark areas in order to improve contiguous stretches of beach rather than small pockets of habitat. Willing property owners will be identified and complete retrofits of beachfront lights that impact the nesting beach.

Florida hosts over 90% of all sea turtle nesting in the continental United States, including the largest population of loggerheads in the Western Hemisphere and regionally significant nesting populations of the Kemp's ridley sea turtles. As coastal development continues around the state, the problem of beachfront lighting continues to hamper sea turtle recovery efforts. Each year tens of thousands of nesting females and hatchlings are negatively impacted by artificial lights, with thousands never making it back to the sea to replenish this dwindling population – a population particularly affected by the Gulf oil spill in 2010. While significant funds have been allocated to reduce light pollution on public property, little funding has been available to bring privately-owned lights into compliance. The counties of the Panhandle of Florida that are targeted in this proposal are part of the Northern Gulf Coast Recovery Unit, which is the nesting assemblage most at risk for this population and whose beaches had the most direct impacts from the spill.



Before



After



This project complements efforts under NRDA and is expected to significantly reduce sea turtle disorientation due to lighting on Panhandle beaches, resulting in an increase of sea turtle hatchlings annually.