



NFWF

Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

RECIPIENT

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality

AWARD AMOUNT

\$11,780,000

LEVERAGE AMOUNT

\$7,300,000

PARTNERS

Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

LOCATION

Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi

AWARD DATE

November 2015

PROGRESS UPDATE

The Experimental Cultch mapping area was revised, finalized, and moved to the Team Map Viewer. Discussions concerning sonde deployment, permit application, monitoring, data analysis, and benthic habitat mapping are ongoing. Finally, a scope of work was drafted for Lower Pearl Monitoring. (August 2016)

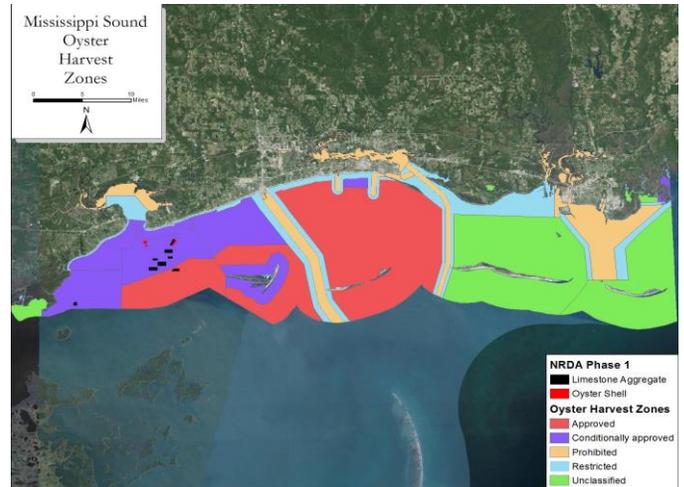
The Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), supports projects to remedy harm and eliminate or reduce the risk of harm to Gulf Coast natural resources affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. To learn more about NFWF, go to www.nfwf.org.

MISSISSIPPI

Oyster Restoration and Management – Phase I

This project seeks to improve oyster populations and sustainability in coastal Mississippi by conducting several studies to better understand why oyster populations are not more resilient and how productivity can be improved. This project will provide managers with information needed to undertake future large-scale oyster restoration projects and improve the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of such efforts. The studies include an assessment of cultch-type, research into the effects of contaminated oyster shell on recruitment, and baseline water quality and benthic habitat assessments in the Mississippi Sound to identify preferred locations for future restoration. The project also includes a pilot nearshore ‘oyster gardening’ program to produce oysters for conservation purposes.

To address a significant decline in oyster production over the past 10 years, Mississippi intends to make oyster restoration a significant priority moving forward. These studies will contribute to the technical due diligence that will inform oyster restoration in Mississippi and help to ensure the sustainability and success of future investments. The proposal intends to build on existing scientific data to provide the technical understanding of variables critical to the success of future investments around oysters in several key areas.



Annual oyster yield in Mississippi has dropped 90% over the past decade. This project will provide baseline information for future large-scale oyster restoration.