



Florida Restoration Area

June 2023



RECENT ACTIVITIES

We have been busy overseeing the planning, construction, and/or monitoring of projects. To date, of the 29 active early restoration projects, 10 have been completed (most recently, Navarre Beach Park Coastal Access and Dune Restoration and Navarre Beach Park Gulfside Walkover Complex) and 11 are in the monitoring phase. Of the 43 post-settlement and restoration planning projects, 2 have been completed (Lower Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Hydrologic Restoration Initiative at Yucca Pens and Lower Suwanee National Wildlife Refuge Hydrologic Restoration – Planning and Design) and 1 is in the monitoring phase (Alligator Lake Coastal Dune Lake Hydrologic Restoration). We also recently kicked off a Monitoring and Adaptive Management Project, *Coastal Environmental Sensitivity Index (ESI) Mapping of the Florida Gulf Coast*. Lastly, we have been screening project ideas for further evaluation in our third restoration plan, which is focused on water quality.

WHAT WE DO

Our work focuses on restoring water quality and wetlands, coastal, and nearshore habitats and replenishing and protecting sea turtles, marine mammals, birds, and oysters. We also provide and enhance recreational opportunities and restore habitats on federal lands.

The Trustee representatives for the Florida Restoration Area are:

- Sarah Ketron, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Gareth Leonard, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Erin Chandler, U.S. Department of the Interior
- Stella Wilson, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Craig Johnson, U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Tripp Boone, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

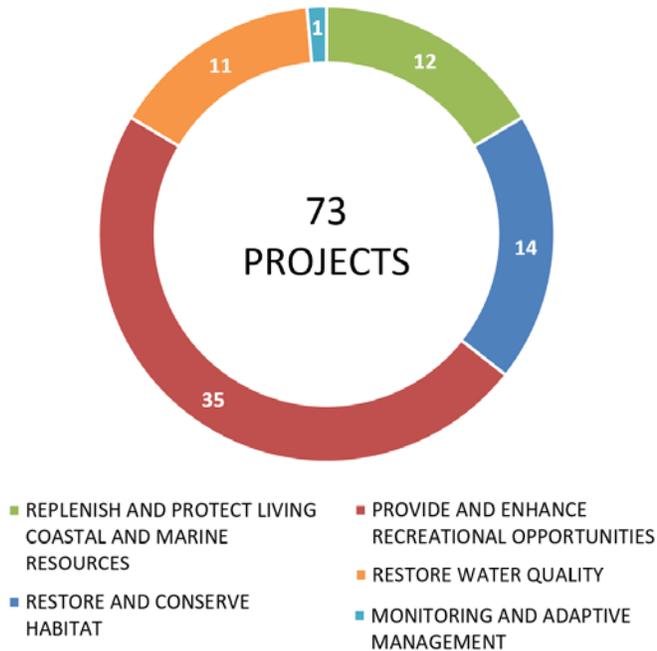




Restoration Overview

\$267 million committed to approved projects

PROJECTS BY RESTORATION GOAL



Sea Turtle and Wildlife-Friendly Lighting Retrofit in Florida is underway

This project is enhancing sea turtle nesting beach habitat in Escambia County and on Gulf Islands National Seashore managed lands by replacing and upgrading streetlights along Fort Pickens Road. Light pollution has a negative impact on nesting sea turtles and can also disorient sea turtle hatchlings as they emerge from their nests. The newly installed amber LED fixtures will benefit sea turtles and other wildlife by reducing light pollution along the beach road. The Department of the Interior is implementing this project.



New light pole and LED fixture installation began in late March 2023, with new fixtures planned for operation in April 2023. This project will be completed in Fall 2023.

PROJECT UPDATE // FLORIDA PANHANDLE SCALLOP ENHANCEMENT



The Scallop Enhancement for Increased Recreational Fishing Opportunity in the Florida Panhandle project involves enhancing local scallop populations through a variety of methods including harvesting and redistributing wild scallops; releasing hatchery-produced scallop spat and larvae; including the public in scallop harvests and cage maintenance through scallop rodeos and scallop sitter programs, respectively; and conducting sampling to evaluate recreational scallop harvest effort in Gulf County.

The goal of this project is to enhance and/or increase recreational fishing opportunities by increasing scallop populations. Adult scallop surveys in St. Joseph Bay reveal an increase in scallop densities from the time the project began in 2016 (0.005 scallops/m²) to 2022 (0.038 scallops/m²). Over the five days that vessels were counted during the 2022 recreational scallop season in Gulf County, a total of 1,389 vessels were observed scalloping in St. Joseph Bay, an increase of 413 vessels from the same five-day period in 2021.





Funding Overview

Restoration Type	Settlement Allocation	Funds Committed Through May 2023	Percent Funds	
			Committed	Remaining
Wetlands, Coastal, and Nearshore Habitats	\$20,629,367	\$15,626,264	76%	24%
Habitat Projects on Federally Managed Lands	\$17,500,000	\$16,619,481	95%	5%
Nutrient Reduction	\$35,000,000	\$5,284,826	15%	85%
Water Quality	\$300,000,000	\$17,501,899	6%	94%
Oysters	\$25,370,596	\$8,173,408	32%	68%
Sea Turtles	\$20,000,000	\$6,559,587	33%	67%
Marine Mammals	\$5,000,000	\$5,020,129	100%	0%
Birds	\$42,835,000	\$19,251,603	45%	55%
Provide and Enhance Recreational Opportunities	\$183,817,680	\$168,878,389	92%	8%
Monitoring and Adaptive Management	\$10,000,000	\$1,473,993	15%	85%
Administrative Oversight and Comprehensive Planning	\$20,000,000	\$2,805,000	14%	86%
Total	\$680,152,643	\$267,194,579	39%	61%

The Florida TIG will begin drafting a third post-settlement restoration plan in mid-2023 and hold a public webinar in late 2023 or early 2024.

MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ONLINE www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/florida

