

Seagrass Recovery Project at Gulf Islands National Seashore – Florida District

Phase IV Early Restoration Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

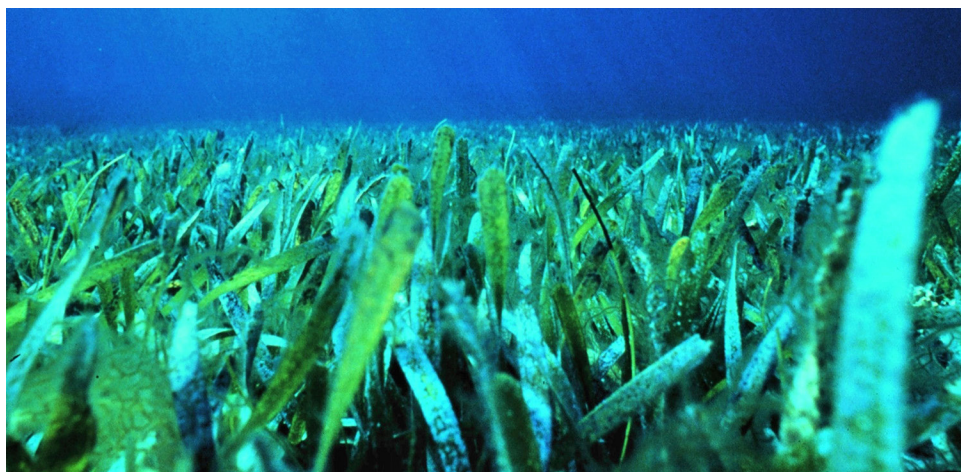
The Seagrass Recovery Project at Gulf Islands National Seashore (GUIS) will restore injury to shallow seagrass beds caused by *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill response activities.

After the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill, significant amounts of oil reached the beaches along the Florida Panhandle. During the response, boat engine propellers caused damage to seagrass beds at GUIS.

Seagrass communities are essential breeding, rearing, and feeding grounds for many important recreational and commercial fish, as well as other wildlife, including the endangered West Indian manatee and various species of sea turtles. Unfortunately, seagrasses are slow to recover from physical damage. This is especially true of turtle grass (*Thalassium testudium*), the most common species of seagrass at GUIS.

The project will promote full recovery of approximately 0.02 acres of seagrass beds that were injured by response activities in the Naval Live Oaks area of GUIS in Santa Rosa Sound, Santa Rosa County, Florida. An initial survey will be conducted in the Naval Live Oaks area to identify restoration sites. The restoration project includes

- 1) harvesting seagrass from nearby donor sites and transplanting them into injured areas,
- 2) installing bird stakes to condition the sediments and promote survival and growth of the transplanted seagrass,

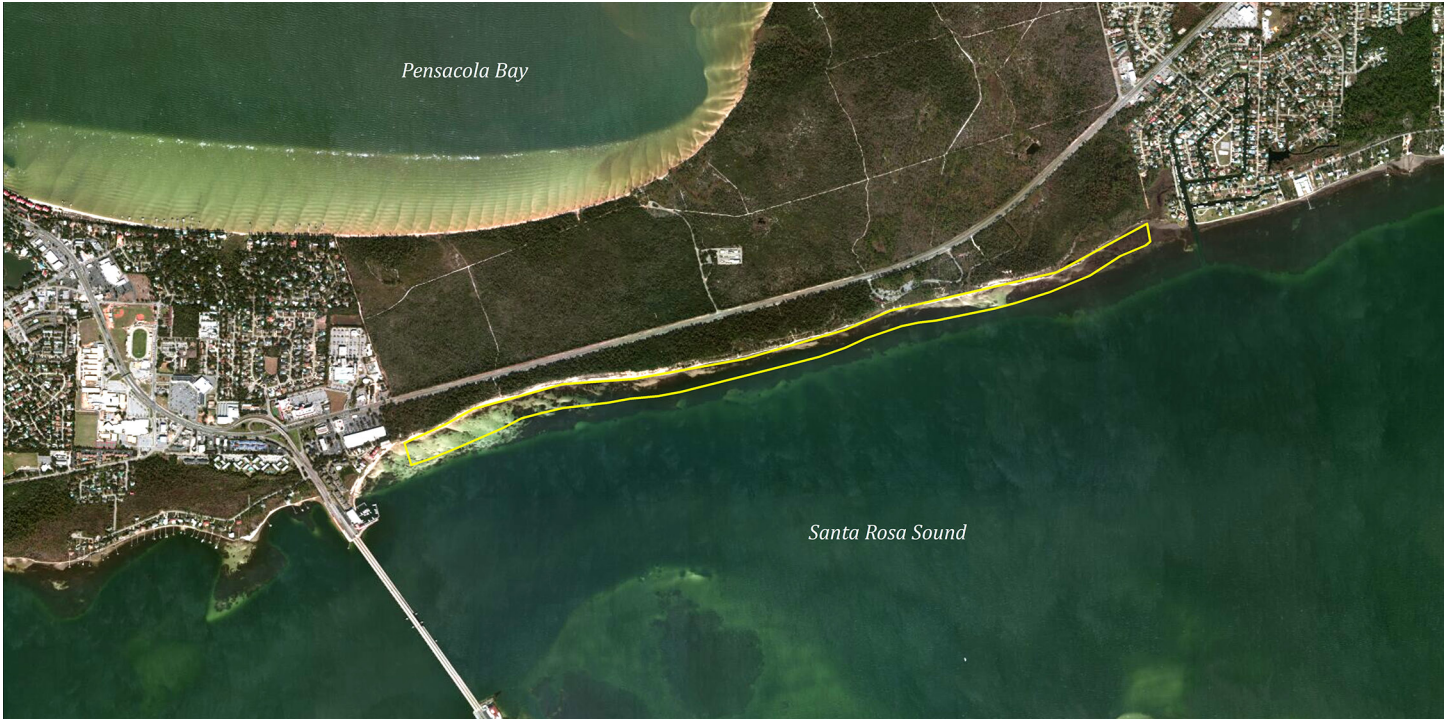


A seagrass bed. Credit: Florida Department of Environmental Protection


- 3) monitoring sites to measure and report on the success of the restoration work, and
- 4) educating visitors on protecting seagrass via brochures, temporary signage in the restoration area, and possibly permanent signage on the shore.

ESTIMATED COST: \$136,700.

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Seagrass Recovery Project at Gulf Islands National Seashore, Florida District

 Naval Live Oaks Seagrass Beds

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



Location of Seagrass Recovery Project at Gulf Islands National Seashore



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www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov