



Florida: Regional Projects

Phase III Proposed Early Restoration Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The *Deepwater Horizon* Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustees are proposing four regional projects to implement across Florida's Panhandle. The first is an oyster restoration project; the next one is a submerged aquatic vegetation restoration project; the last two are recreational use projects. As a result of the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill, oyster secondary productivity and submerged aquatic vegetation along Florida's Panhandle suffered adverse impacts, and the public's access to and enjoyment of their natural resources along Florida's Panhandle was denied or severely restricted. The proposed oyster restoration project seeks to foster reef development by constructing breakwaters, and the proposed submerged aquatic vegetation restoration project seeks to restore submerged aquatic vegetation through appropriate restoration techniques. The two proposed recreational use projects seek to enhance and/or increase the public's use and/or enjoyment of those natural resources.

The first proposed project is the Florida Oyster Cultch Placement project, which would take place in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Bay, and Franklin counties. These projects propose to place cultch material for the settling of oyster larvae and oyster colonization in three Florida Bays:

- Pensacola Bay & St. Andrews Bay would include placing 12,000 cubic yards of cultch material over 60 acres in each bay system.
- Apalachicola Bay would include placing 18,000 cubic yards of cultch material over a 90 acre area.

The proposed Florida Seagrass Recovery Project will primarily be located in St. Joseph Bay Aquatic Preserve in Gulf County, with potential additional sites in Alligator Harbor Aquatic Preserve in Franklin County and St. Andrews Aquatic Preserve in Bay County. The first step of the project would be surveying and mapping the seagrass scarring in three Aquatic Preserves (St. Joseph Bay, Alligator Harbor, and St. Andrews). The next step would involve placement of sediment tubes across two acres of seagrass propeller scars. The final step would involve the placement of bird stakes in the project area to facilitate restoration. Additionally, a boater outreach and education component of the project will install Shallow Seagrass Area signage, update existing signage and buoys where applicable, and install educational signage and provide educational brochures about best practices for protecting seagrass habitats at popular boat ramps in St. Joseph Bay, Alligator Harbor, and St. Andrews Bay.

The proposed Florida Artificial Reef Creation and Restoration project, would take place in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, and Bay counties. The proposal includes reef designs to be constructed at various depths. The deep water "nearshore reefs" would have a single, prefabricated modular design and would be located within nine nautical miles of shore. Shallower "snorkeling reefs" have a piling-mounted design using disc-shaped concrete and limestone layers with spacers between the layers, in less than 20 feet deep water and within 950 feet of shore.

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The proposed Scallop Enhancement for Increased Recreational Fishing Opportunity in the Florida Panhandle project would be implemented in Bay County (St. Andrew Bay system) and in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties (Pensacola Bay / Santa Rosa Sound) and possibly Okaloosa and Walton counties. Ideally by implementing this project, scallop populations in the targeted locations could be eventually increased to self-sustaining levels to support recreational harvests. Scallop populations in Gulf and Franklin counties may be enhanced if deemed appropriate to reduce the risk of collapse in currently harvested areas.

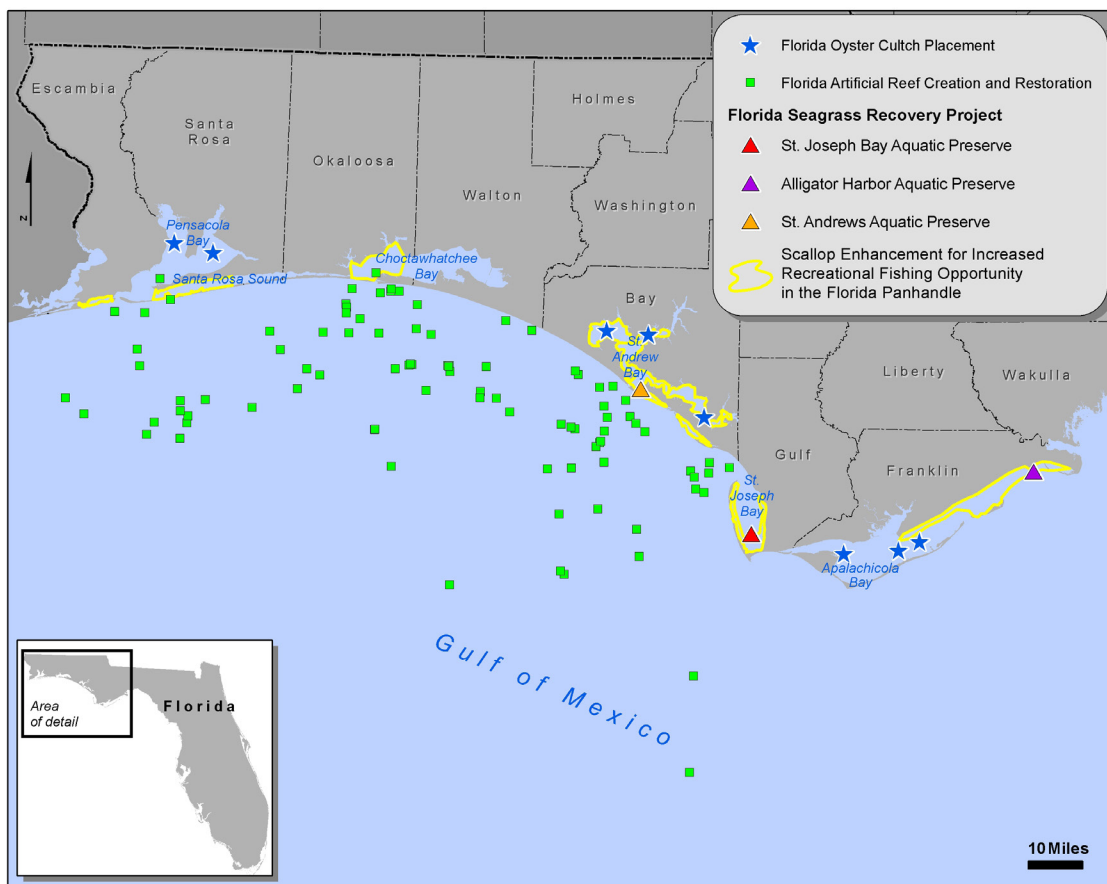
ESTIMATED COST

The Florida Oyster Cultch Placement project is \$5,370,596.

The Florida Seagrass Recovery project is \$2,691,867.

The Florida Artificial Reef Creation and Restoration project is \$11,463,587.

The Scallop Enhancement for Increased Recreational Fishing Opportunity in the Florida Panhandle project is \$2,890,250.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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