State of Alabama

Alabama Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Restoration and Monitoring Project

The Alabama Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Restoration and Monitoring Project seeks to utilize RESTORE Act funds to further the State's comprehensive efforts to sustain and restore Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV or seagrass) in coastal Alabama. These efforts advance the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP 2014) and supports ongoing efforts of the NOAA funded Alabama Coastal Zone Management Program. Alabama proposes the development of a model SAV restoration and monitoring program that is foundational in nature and can be applied Gulfwide. Specific project components include:

- Lower Perdido Bay Sea Grass Protection and Restoration: RESTORE funds will be used to add additional bird stakes to the area; additional navigational signage advising the public of the boundaries of no-motor zones and the presence of sea grasses; and educational signage describing the importance of SAVs.
- Upper Mobile Bay and the lower Mobile/Tensaw River Delta SAV Restoration Project: SAV seeds (particularly Vallisneria sp.) will be collected in order to be sown in areas known to historically have Vallisneria present.
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Monitoring Program: In 2014, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation announced that Gulf Environmental Benefit Funds will be awarded to update SAV maps in Alabama. Alabama seeks to leverage this effort to collect 2 additional SAV measurements over the next 5-7 years, each 2-3 years apart. In each case, aerial imagery will be analyzed to determine SAV coverage and create a GIS shapefile of SAV coverage, with species composition noted for each polygon. Imagery acquisition, imagery analysis and field work to ground-truth SAV species and coverage will be conducted in accordance with NOAA protocols in order to maintain data consistency between collections. A report on SAV coverage, species composition and status & trends will be developed from each monitoring event.

Requested funding amount: $875,000.