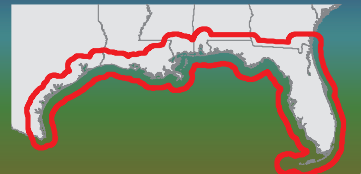




Gulf Coast
Ecosystem
Restoration
Council

Gulf-wide Foundational Investment

Gulf of Mexico Estuary Program
(EPA_RESTORE_003_008_Cat1)



Project Name: Gulf of Mexico Estuary Program – Planning

Cost: Category 1: \$2,200,000

Responsible Council Member: Environmental Protection Agency

Partnering Council Member: State of Florida

Project Details: This project will develop and stand-up a place-based estuary program encompassing one or more of the following bays in Florida's northwest panhandle region: Perdido Bay, Pensacola Bay, Escambia Bay, Choctawhatchee Bay, St. Andrews Bay and Apalachicola Bay.

Activities: EPA, in collaboration with Florida, will engage key stakeholders in the northwest Florida panhandle region and request proposals to establish the northwest Florida panhandle estuary program. The key components of the project include establishing the host organizations and hiring of key staff, developing Management and Technical committees, determining stressors and then developing and approving a Comprehensive Plan. Although this Estuary Program will be modeled after the structure and operation of National Estuary Programs (NEP) it will not be a designated NEP. This project will serve as a pilot project for the Council to consider expanding Gulf-wide when future funds become available.

Environmental Benefits: If the estuary program being planned by this activity were implemented in the future, projects undertaken would directly support goals and outcomes focusing on restoring water quality, while also addressing restoration and conservation of habitat, replenishing and protecting living coastal and marine resources, enhancing community resilience and revitalizing the coastal economy. Specific actions would likely include, but not be limited to: implementing best management practices for nonpoint source water quality improvement; protecting shoreline and upland habitat through easement or purchase; implementing green infrastructure measures; designing and constructing storm water parks; completing and implementing watershed management plans; protecting, restoring and managing critical aquatic, shoreline and upland habitat through a variety of hydrologic, landscape, vegetation and wildlife management actions; establishing living shoreline habitat; and implementing other water quality and habitat restoration techniques.

Duration: This project is expected to take five years to complete.

More information on this activity can be found in Appendix K. Gulf-wide; Unique Identifier: EPA_RESTORE_003_008_Cat1.