

US Department of Agriculture

Mobile Bay and Beyond – Watershed Implementation to enhance Marsh, Marine, and Estuarine Ecosystems

This project will restore water quality in select watersheds through installation of conservation practices, primarily on private land. The work in these watersheds will build upon on-going and planned downstream projects, such as NRDA and NFWF Projects. This USDA project will treat the upstream landscapes and improve waters draining to coastal and marine restoration areas.

The implemented conservation practices will reduce sediment, pesticides, nutrients, and fecal coliform entering priority watersheds near the Gulf, improving water quality of fresh, estuarine and marine waters. This project will include installing structures for sediment and erosion control; livestock stream exclusion; stream restoration — such as replanting hardwoods and expanding buffers, sod-based rotation on cropland, precision placement of pesticides, nutrient management, cover crops, hydrologic restoration, and innovative urban/rural interface projects. Even though the primary objective is water quality, a secondary result will be restoration and conservation of habitat, through improved aquatic resources. Implementation can commence immediately upon funding. The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Clean Water Partnership, Auburn University and other partners have the capacity to start work immediately. Each 12 digit HUC watershed will take between 3-5 years for full implementation and treatment. USDA will measure acres treated and will keep a geospatial database of installed practices, including calculations of sediment reduction rates. Requested funding amount: \$6,750,000.