

FUNDED PRIORITIES LIST 3B

Enhancing Hydrologic Connectivity in Justin's Bay (Mobile Bay)

Funded Priorities List (FPL) 3b is part of a two-phase approach used by the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council) to respond to ecosystem needs and take advantage of important partnership opportunities to advance large-scale ecosystem restoration.

The Council has approved \$1M in planning funds as FPL Category 1 for the *Enhancing Hydrologic Connectivity in Justin's Bay (Mobile Bay)* project. This project will utilize the Planning Framework techniques and approaches outlined in the figure below to address environmental stressors in the Mobile Bay and Mobile-Tensaw Delta. Alabama, through the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, is the sponsor of this project.

This planning project builds on a previous study, conducted in 2015, that examines how the hydrology of upper Mobile Bay is affected by the Mobile Bay Causeway. The construction of the Mobile Bay Causeway in 1927 resulted in a significant amount of dredge material placement over large portions of the Upper Mobile Bay marsh complex. At the time, filling of marsh was a preferred alternative to elevating the causeway and as a result, restrictions of hydrological interaction and connections between Mobile Bay and its Delta, including faunal migrations and natural food web interactions have occurred.

Project activities aim to enhance hydrologic connectivity in Justin's Bay through a planning effort that will: (1) address any data gaps remaining from the 2015 study, (2) evaluate the suggested restoration alternatives with a cost-logistics/feasibility frame of reference, and (3) move identified and prioritized restoration alternatives forward to a preliminary engineering design.

Project at a Glance

The *Enhancing Hydrologic Connectivity in Justin's Bay (Mobile Bay)* project applies Planning Framework approaches and techniques to support Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives. In support of the primary objective to *Restore, enhance, and protect habitats*, stressors such as disrupted hydrologic flows will be addressed using the *Restore hydrologic connectivity* technique. Success using this technique to *Restore, enhance, and protect habitats* may be tracked using number of studies produced to inform management as a metric.

Comprehensive Plan Goal: Restore and conserve habitat



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