Project Name: Upper Mobile Bay Beneficial Use Wetland Creation Site- Planning
Cost: Category 1: $2,500,000
Responsible Council Member: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Partnering Council Members: State of Alabama and Interagency Working Group members from Department of the Interior and Department of Commerce

Project Details: This project will develop the final design and permitting of a 1,200-acre wetland creation site in the Upper Mobile Bay south of the US Highway 90/98 causeway. The site was developed in coordination with an Interagency Working Group (IWG) established to evaluate sediment management practices in Mobile Bay. The project will be conducted in partnership with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources in coordination with the Mobile Bay IWG, consisting of representatives from federal, state, and local agencies including academia and other stakeholders.

Activities: Geotechnical investigations will be initiated to characterize the sediments of the area, provide the load bearing capacities of the existing bay bottom, and to identify the potential for on-site borrow sources for the containment berms. Once the geotechnical results are obtained and processed, the design team and IWG will determine the final shape of the site as well as what portions will need armament and which areas will remain open for tidal influence.

Following planning and engineering, final plans and specifications will be delivered along with the environmental compliance coordination and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation. A Department of the Army permit will be submitted in the name of the Alabama State Port Authority (ASPA), the local sponsor for the navigation project.

The intent of the final design is to enable the entire site to have full tidal influence and allow marine life conveyance within the site until it is ultimately filled with dredged material and the wetlands are established.

Environmental Benefits: A project based on these studies, if implemented in the future, would contribute to much-needed conservation of various ecological resources that exist in the Mobile Bay system and for estuarine habitat restoration through the beneficial use of dredged sediments. Additionally, if implemented in the future the project would directly benefit threatened and endangered species such as the Gulf sturgeon, Alabama red-belly turtle, and West Indian manatee.

Duration: Geotechnical investigations will begin immediately following receipt of funds and the entire study will be completed within 18 to 24 months.

More information on this activity can be found in Appendix F. Mobile Bay; Unique Identifier: USACE_RESTORE_005_000_Cat1.