

State of Alabama

Coastal Alabama Comprehensive Watershed Restoration Planning Project

With the publication of its updated Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) in 2013, the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) adopted a protocol of watershed management planning at the 12-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) scale to guide science-based project implementation in Alabama's coastal watersheds. Utilizing significant community and stakeholder input, the MBNEP's 20-member Science Advisory Committee and 30-member Project Implementation Committee systematically targeted and prioritized the order in which 31 coastal and intertidal watersheds were identified for the development of standardized comprehensive watershed management plans. To date, funding has been secured and watershed management plan development is underway or has been completed in 5 priority watersheds in the MBNEP Program Area. Seven additional priority watersheds, as well as implementation of specific habitat and water quality projects is also underway with funding from NFWF's Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund. The watershed management planning process, tied with the stakeholder-driven NEP framework, is proving to be a strong foundation to support targeted, efficient ecosystem restoration. It is expected that certain efficiencies can be achieved by completing all of the remaining watershed plans in a similar timeframe. MBNEP staff and committee structures are in place to monitor plan development and ensure quality and consistency of each effort. The Council-Selected Restoration Component of funding through the RESTORE Act provides a unique opportunity to complete the watershed planning component of the remaining 19 priority watersheds in Coastal Alabama. Requested funding amount: \$4,342,500.