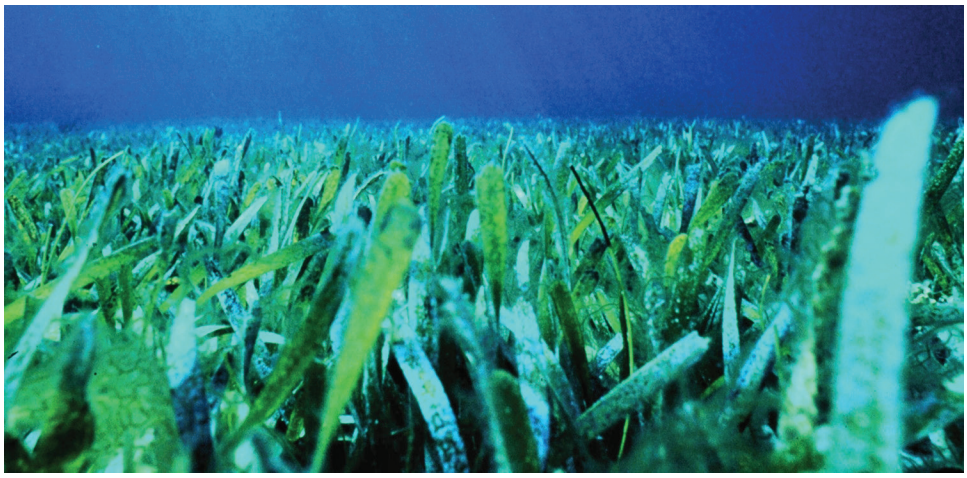
Seagrass Recovery Project at Gulf Islands National Seashore – Florida District

Phase IV Proposed Early Restoration Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Seagrass Recovery Project at Gulf Islands National Seashore (GUIS) would restore injury to shallow seagrass beds caused by *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill response activities.

After the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill, significant amounts of oil reached the beaches along the Florida Panhandle. During the response, boat engine propellers caused damage to seagrass beds at GUIS.



A seagrass bed. Credit: Floria Department of Environmental Protection

Seagrass communities are essential breeding, rearing, and feeding grounds for many important recreational and commercial fish, as well as other wildlife, including the endangered West Indian manatee and various species of sea turtles. Unfortunately, seagrasses are slow to recover from physical damage. This is especially true of turtle grass (*Thallasium testudium*), the most common species of seagrass at GUIS.

The proposed project would promote full recovery of approximately 0.02 acres of seagrass beds that were injured by response activities in the Naval Live Oaks area of GUIS in Santa Rosa Sound, Santa Rosa County, Florida. An initial survey would be conducted in the Naval Live Oaks area to identify restoration sites. The proposed restoration project includes

1) harvesting seagrass from nearby donor sites and transplanting them into injured areas,

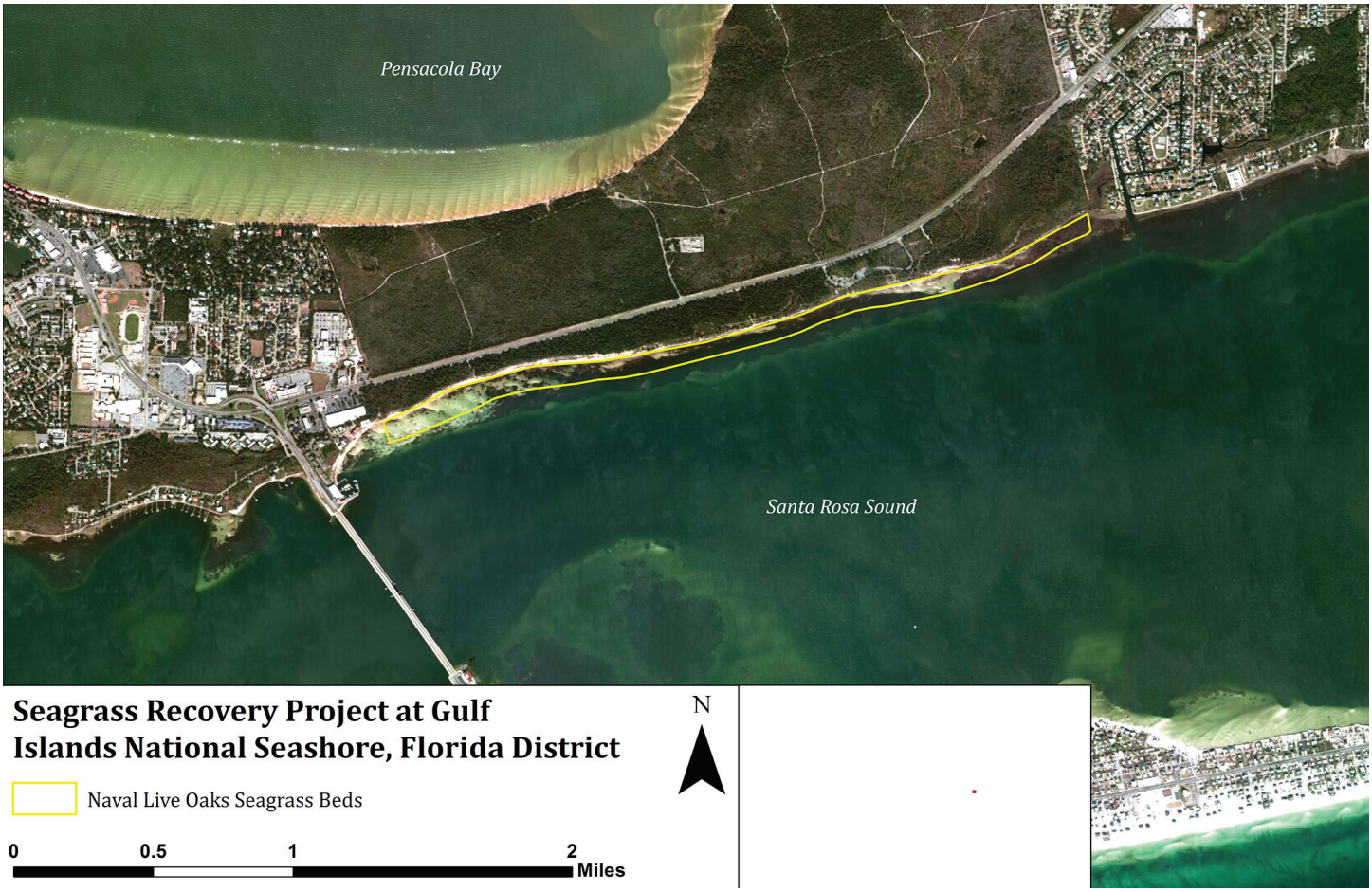
2) installing bird stakes to condition the sediments and promote survival and growth of the transplanted seagrass,

3) monitoring sites to measure and report on the success of the restoration work, and

4) educating visitors on protecting seagrass via brochures, temporary signage in the restoration area, and possibly permanent signage on the shore.

ESTIMATED COST: $136,700.

Amy L. Mathis, Ph.D.
Natural Reources Specialist
National Park Service
341 Greeno Road North, Suite A
Fairhope, AL 36532
Office Phone: 251-517-8014
amy_mathis@nps.gov



Location of proposed Seagrass Recovery Project at Gulf Islands National Seashore