

# Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration Phase II Update



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**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**

## Program Overview

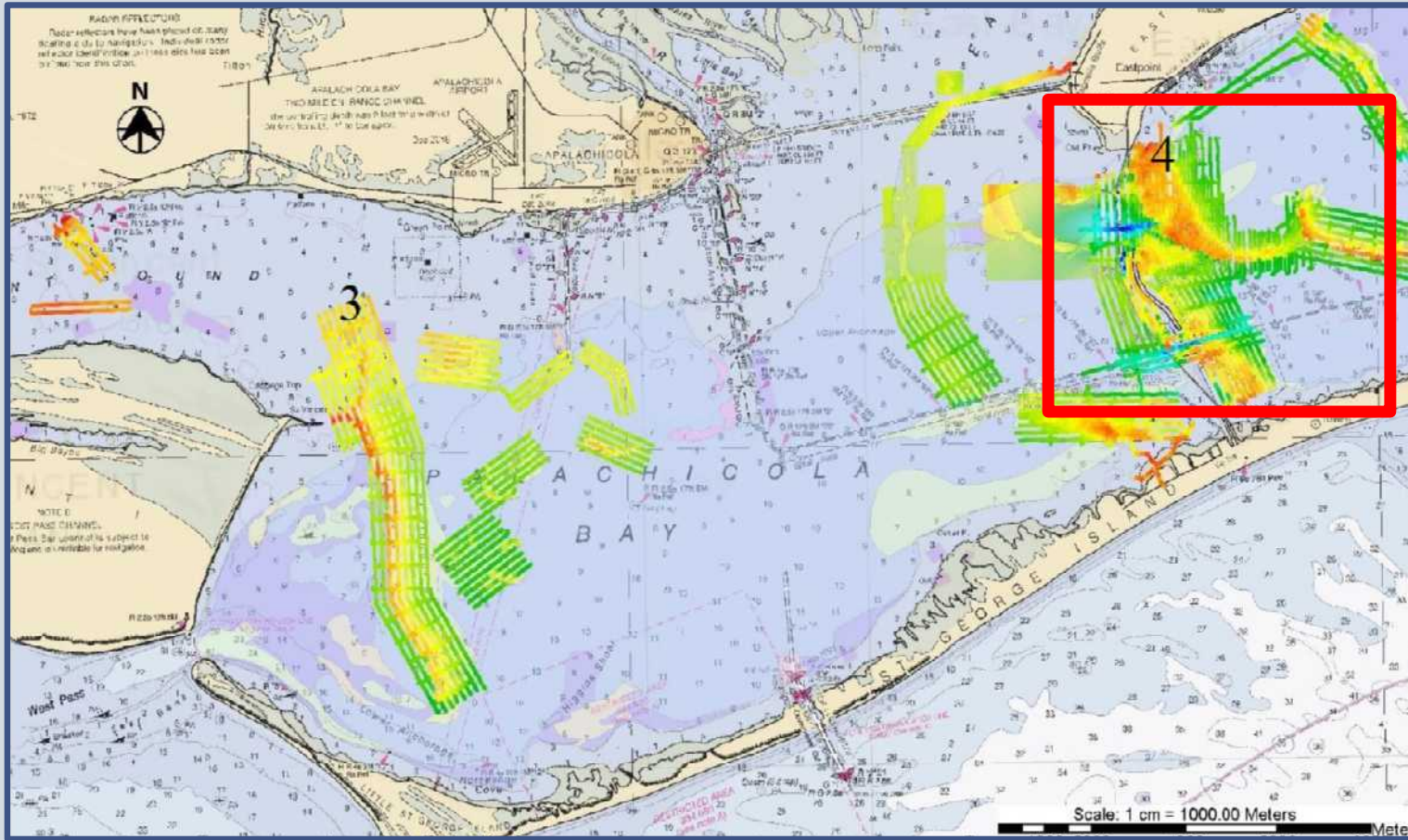
- \$20M agreement with National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)
- Increased surveying/monitoring efforts for Apalachicola Bay & Suwannee Sound
- Restoration activities in Apalachicola Bay
- Revised oyster management strategies for Apalachicola Bay & Suwannee Sound
- FWC will perform a restoration pilot study
- Utilizing pilot study, FWC will have more data to construct and perform larger restoration activity soon following pilot study



## Restoration Pilot Study

- Originally budgeted at \$7 million utilizing NFWF funding
- Budget has increased with additional funding allocated from Governor DeSantis' Framework for Freedom
- Additional \$10 million for Apalachicola Bay oyster reef restoration
- Allows FWC to perform a more robust pilot study, ensuring scientific merit and meaningful restoration
- Dependent on the quality of received bids for the pilot study, additional funds could be utilized towards expansion of the pilot if deemed appropriate





## Reef Characteristics

1. Hardbottom
2. Good waterflow
3. Nearby oysters
4. Not a navigational hazard
5. Navigable for contractor



## Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration – Pilot Study

- Competitive solicitation was formally advertised on June 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - Invitation to Bid
- FWC received less than two responsive bids
- Transitioned into negotiations
- Negotiations demonstrated that large rock material was cost prohibitive
- Prospective contractors suggested different material types than the FL dolostone
  - Potentially more readily available, cheaper, similar performance once deployed
  - Requested bidders to provide information on rock types (quarry contact, material spec sheet) to conduct review of material



## Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration – Pilot Study

- Internal FWC discussion on potential edits to the study's scope of work
  - Important to balance fiscal responsibility, scientific learning, funding entity
- Inclusion of large rock was not fiscally possible
  - Scope of work to request material sized 4 – 8"
- Use of other material types
  - Alabama Gray
  - Kentucky Blue
  - *Florida Dolostone originally requested*



## Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration – Pilot Study

- Pilot study will test multiple reef heights: 1 ft (low) and 2 ft (high)
- Material will be sized 4-8”
- FWC will exhaust the \$10 million state allocation
  - Removal of material size treatment reduces the necessary number of reefs needed for statistical power. Even if sufficient power is achieved with less than \$10 million, all funds will be spent.
- NFWF has approved of these revisions to the pilot study
- FSU ABSI’s complimentary study
  - Increases scientific scope of work done in Apalachicola Bay
  - Provides more data to assist in future, larger restoration activities





## Next Steps

- Continue negotiations with potential contractors
- Goal is to have material in water early Spring 2024
  - Contractor to source and stage material in 2023, deploy material February/March 2024
  - Scientific importance to deploy all material during same season
- Hire part-time site monitor for restoration activities
- Work with FWC researchers, university researchers to prepare monitoring and surveying methods
- Continued monitoring efforts throughout the Bay



# Questions?

