

Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration Phase II Update



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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



Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration – Pilot Study

- \$10 million budget from Governor DeSantis' Framework for Freedom
- Allows FWC to perform a more robust pilot study, ensuring scientific merit and meaningful restoration
- Increased *general restoration* given funding allocation



Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration – Pilot Study

- Pilot study will test multiple reef heights: 1 ft (low) and 2 ft (high)
- Material will be *Kentucky Blue* limestone
 - Sized 4 – 8” (+/- 1”)
 - Not using large rock, unable to be tonged



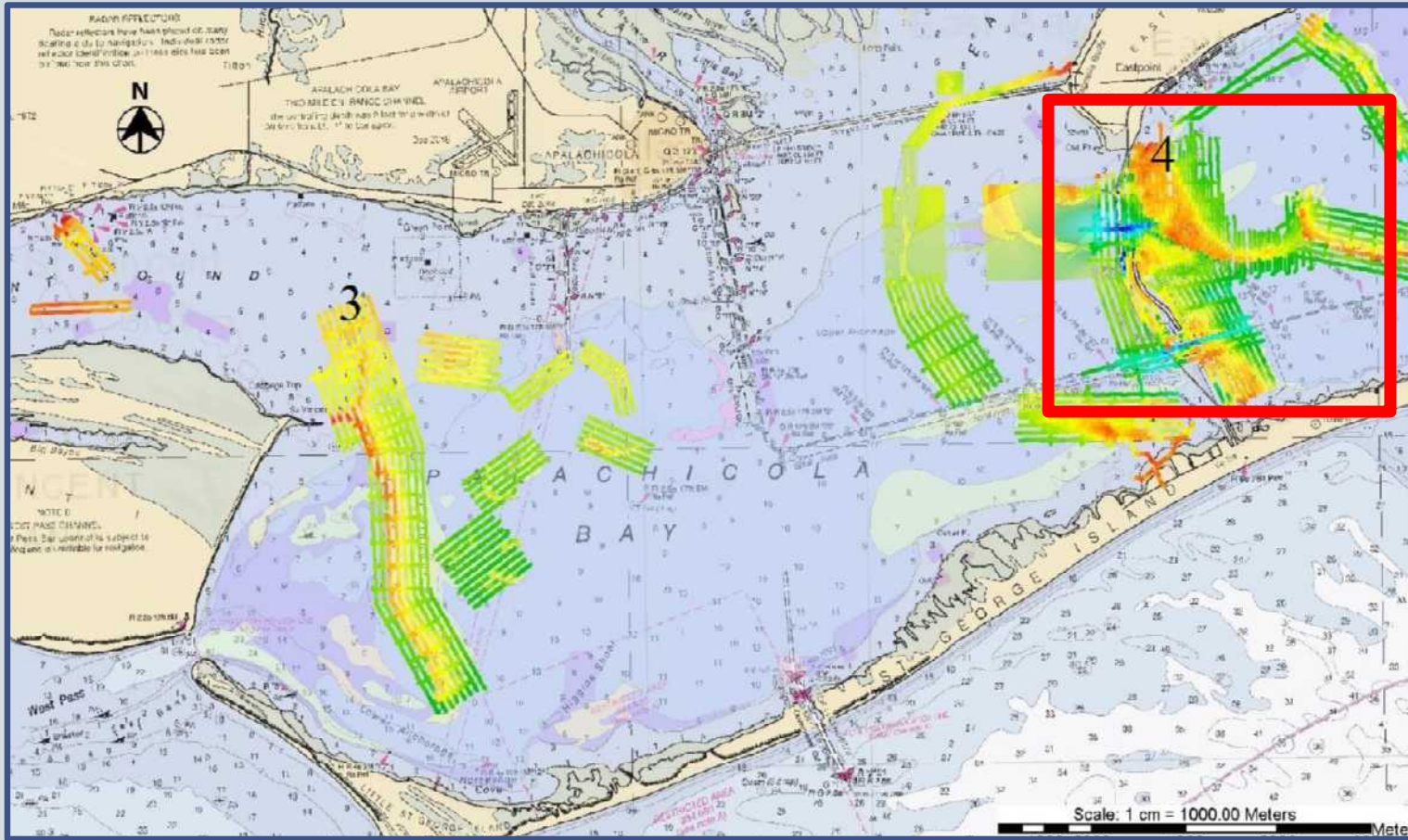




Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration – Pilot Study

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- Material will be *Kentucky Blue* limestone
 - Sized 4 – 8” (+/- 1”)
 - Not using large rock, unable to be tonged
- Each restored reef will be 1 acre in size
- Site observer will be hired to oversee restoration efforts, potentially map reefs
- FWC will exhaust the \$10 million state allocation
- FSU ABSI’s complimentary study
 - Increases scientific scope of work done in Apalachicola Bay
 - Provides more data to assist in future, larger restoration activities

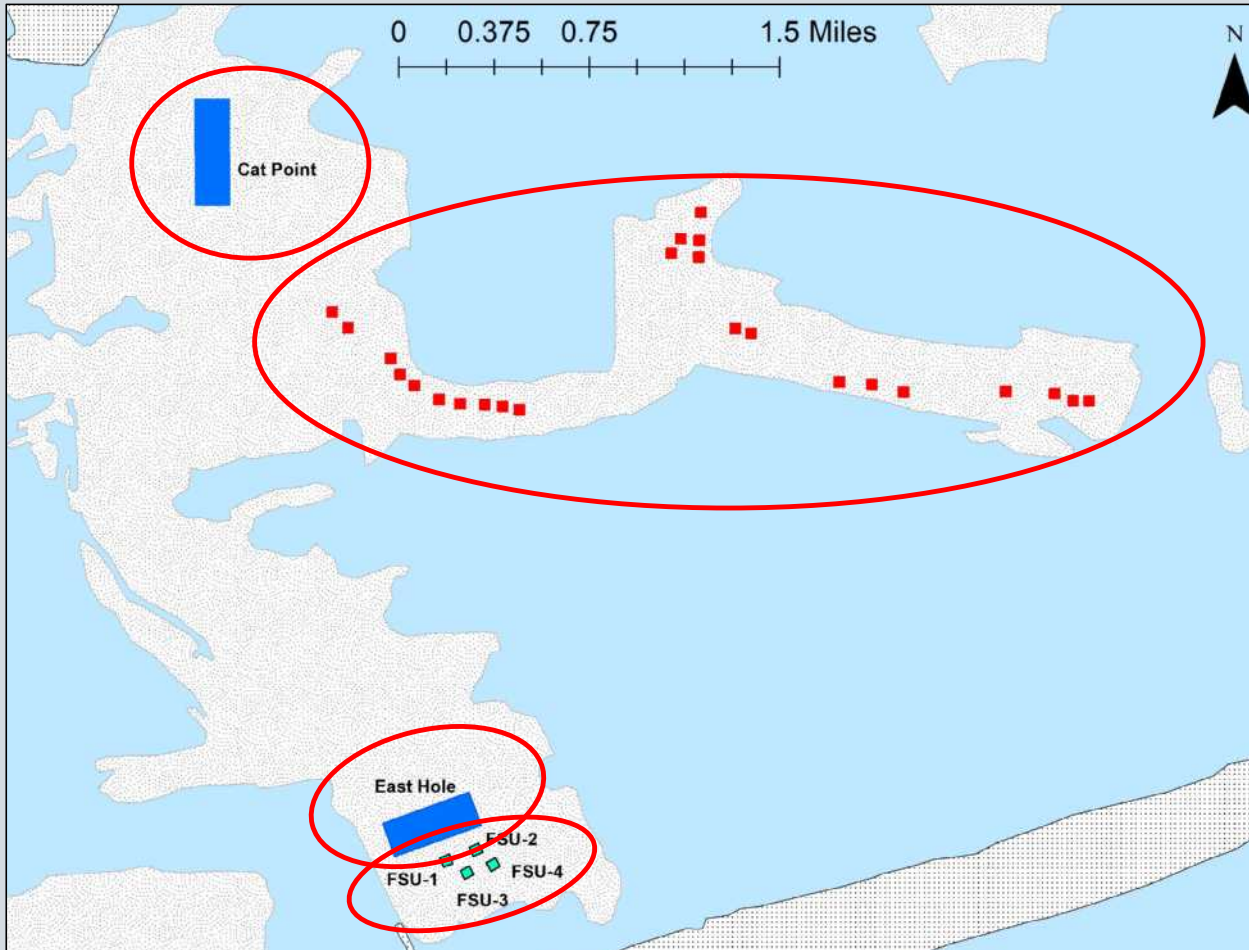




Reef Characteristics

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





Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration – Pilot Study Next Steps

- Material in water early Spring 2024
 - Contractor to source and stage material in 2023, deploy material early Spring 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
- Continued collaboration with FSU, other partners



Apalachicola Bay Oyster Fishery Management

- FWC continues to gather public feedback to inform oyster fishery management
- Continue to monitor and analyze biological data
 - Most recent monitoring efforts have shown improvements where restoration has occurred
- Decisions on future restoration and reopening of the Bay will be data informed as well as include public input
- FWC will increase stakeholder engagement efforts in the coming months
 - Also leverage the process of the FSU ABSI Successor Group's future efforts
- Actively researching additional funding opportunities



Questions?

