



SUNS
SCALING UP NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS



The Florida Panhandle boasts an incredible array of natural coastal features, from barrier islands to tidal marshes and coastal forests. After suffering the impacts of Hurricane Michael in 2018, communities across the Panhandle are now actively working to recover.

To help integrate and boost these efforts, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is working alongside regional, local, and university partners to conduct a two year project in Bay, Gulf, and Franklin Counties with funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The first portion of this project is dedicated to information gathering and research. During this phase, TNC, Northeastern University, and the United States Naval Academy will study the suitability, advantages, and challenges of leveraging nature-based solutions to reduce risk in the Panhandle.

Using results of this study, TNC will work with the Northwest Florida Water Management District, as well as local governments, regional planning councils, and state agencies, to create a portfolio of nature-based solution (NBS) projects for coastal resilience in Franklin, Gulf, and Bay counties. The resulting regional resilience planning framework will guide investments in restoring and strengthening natural features to advance hazard mitigation, climate adaptation, post-hazard redevelopment, and conservation of the exceptional natural resources of the project area.

Project Objectives

1. Provide local government staff, planners, and communities with decision-making knowledge and tools to inform the use of NBS
2. Develop and facilitate a regional, stakeholder-based planning process to create a prioritized portfolio of NBS investments that takes into account both risk reduction and habitat benefits
3. Encourage adoption and implementation of the portfolio by state, local, and regional governments by providing technical support and capacity-building trainings

TIMELINE

Year	Months	Activity	Outcome
2021	March- July	Information gathering, Needs Assessment, data compilation	Established stakeholder working group and identification of capacity gaps
2021- 2022	July- March	Convene Working Group to review and select nature-based solution options in Bay, Gulf, and Franklin Counties	Draft portfolio of nature-based solution projects, maps
2022	April- August	Finalize, prioritize, and share portfolio of nature-based solutions	Prioritized portfolio of nature-based solutions
2022- 2023	August- March	Working group sessions and workshops to build capacity to implement the portfolio	Improved capacity to implement projects in the portfolio

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