

PROJECT OVERVIEW



UPPER MOBILE BAY WETLAND CREATION

ISSUE #1 • SPRING 2021

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the Upper Mobile Bay Beneficial Use Wetland Creation Site (Planning) Project is to plan for creation of 1,200 acres of wetlands in the Upper Mobile Bay through the beneficial use of dredged material. This project will ensure that some of the sediments dredged from the Upper Mobile Bay area are used beneficially to help restore our coastal wetland habitats.

Utilizing dredged sediment to create wetlands rather than upland management or open-water placement is a wise use of this valuable Alabama natural resource. Benefits resulting from this wetland creation project will include improved water quality, more habitat for living coastal and marine organisms, and implementation of improved dredging practices that support navigation-related commerce and thus the region's economy.

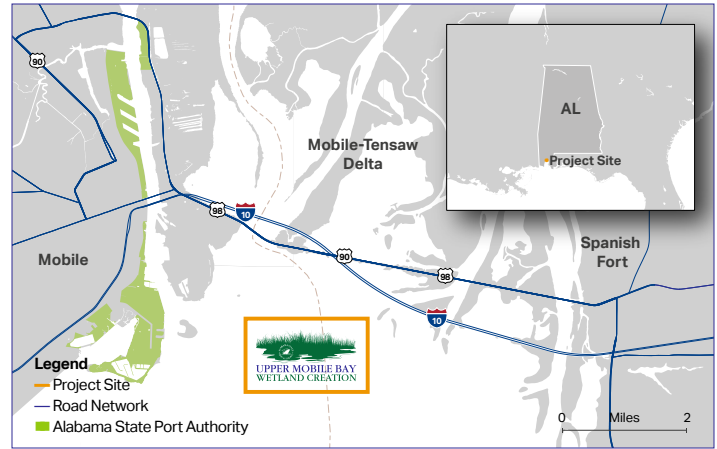
FUNDING

This planning Project is funded by the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf States Act (RESTORE Act) – Bucket 2. It is a Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council-approved project that is sponsored and managed by the Alabama State Port Authority (ASPA). The ASPA received the \$2.5 million grant to implement the planning needed for the project.

TIMELINE

The Project will be completed in multiple phases. The current Phase I – Planning effort supports the necessary investigations, studies, and engineering design work to meet all federal and state compliance requirements. Phase I of the Project delineates the exact location of the wetland creation site, identifies sources of material for wetland construction, and makes provision for an US Army Corps of Engineers construction permit for 1,200 acres of wetlands creation. It also prepares the engineering plans and specifications necessary for procurement of construction services for the initial construction phase for 100 acres of wetland. Phase I – Planning commenced in 2021. The initial construction phase is expected to begin in 2022 under a separate project.

PHASES



BACKGROUND

Each year the US Army Corps of Engineers and the ASPA remove approximately six million cubic yards of sediment from Alabama's Mobile Harbor federal navigation channel and adjacent public berths. Current practices place dredged materials in permitted open-water or upland management areas. These valuable sediments can be used to create wetlands and habitat.

Current Mobile Bay National Estuary Program wetland mapping indicates there are 6,200 acres of wetlands (emergent marsh) in the Upper Mobile Bay/Lower Mobile-Tensaw Delta area. By constructing this project, sediments could remain in the Upper Mobile Bay system, increasing these important wetland habitats by 15 percent.

KEY BENEFITS

- Increased nursery habitat where shrimp, crabs, mullet, trout, and other finfish species will breed and grow
- Increases in future natural resources including sport fishing and other opportunities for people to recreate
- Increases in submerged aquatic vegetation habitat
- Wise environmental stewardship practices that put to good use the beneficial, nutrient-rich dredge material that would otherwise be lost
- A reduction in sedimentation and an increase in dissolved oxygen
- Reduced damage resulting from storm surge
- Reduced wave action and erosion within the area
- Lessened state and federal taxpayer cost burden.

STAY IN TOUCH

For further information about the project, visit our website at uppermobaywetlands.com or email uppermobaywetlands@asdd.com

LATEST NEWS

Currently, field investigations, studies, and conceptual design tasks are being completed along with public education and outreach. During 2021, the Project team will work to develop a design that meets grant requirements.