

**NAME:** St. Lucie River Oyster Reef Habitat Restoration Project

**LOCATION:** St. Lucie Estuary, Martin County, Florida

**ACRES:** 2 acres oyster reef

**NON-FEDERAL SPONSOR:** Martin County Board of County Commissioners

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The proposed project will continue ongoing efforts to restore and monitor approximately 2 acres of historical oyster reef in the St. Lucie Estuary (SLE). No oyster harvest is allowed in the SLE. These restoration efforts include direct placement of cultch material in the SLE and the restoration/stabilization of adjacent shoreline using ecologically sound restoration techniques. The Monitoring Phase includes surveys of both structure (growth, health, reproduction) and function of the restored habitat to document short- and long-term project success.

**EXPECTED BENEFITS:**

The proposed restoration of 2 acres of oyster reef in the St. Lucie Estuary will provide habitat for approximately 3 million oysters, which positively affects the ecological health of the water body and provides shoreline protection. Coupled with shoreline restoration, this project will improve the ecosystem's resiliency in the face of sea level rise and climate change by stabilizing shoreline sediments, increasing the spatial habitat and ultimately the species richness. The St. Lucie Estuary and adjacent terrestrial ecosystems provide habitat for over 4,300 species of plants and animals, including more than 30 threatened and endangered species (manatee, wood stork, sandhill crane, and peregrine falcon).

**STATUS:** Planning and Design