

# *2025*

## ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



**ST. ANDREW &  
ST. JOSEPH BAYS**  
ESTUARY PROGRAM  
*at FSU PANAMA CITY*



# St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program

The St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program is a **collaborative, community-driven initiative** dedicated to protecting and restoring the vital estuarine and coastal resources in the St. Andrew Bay watershed.

Centered around the unique and ecologically rich waters of **St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays**, the program brings together local stakeholders, scientists, government agencies, and residents to develop and implement a **science-based, consensus-driven Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP)**.

The SASJBEP strives to ensure our iconic bays remain healthy productive and resilient for generations to come set forth by these **desired outcomes**:



## Desired Outcomes



*Clean, swimmable, fishable water*  
that supports the local community and wildlife.



*Functioning ecosystems*  
that support resilient communities and wildlife.



*Stronger, more resilient communities*  
and ecosystems through comprehensive long-term and integrated nature-based solutions (NBS).



*A responsible community*  
working together to protect and restore our bays.

# PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## *Restoration*

Restoration activities are geared toward addressing the sources of issues across the watershed with an overall goal of restoring ecosystem function that has been lost. The resultant restoration projects go through a multi-phased process including project identification, feasibility, design, engineering, permitting and finally implementation.

**10** Projects *Identified*

**1** Projects *Designed*

**3** Projects Brought to Feasibility



# PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Planning

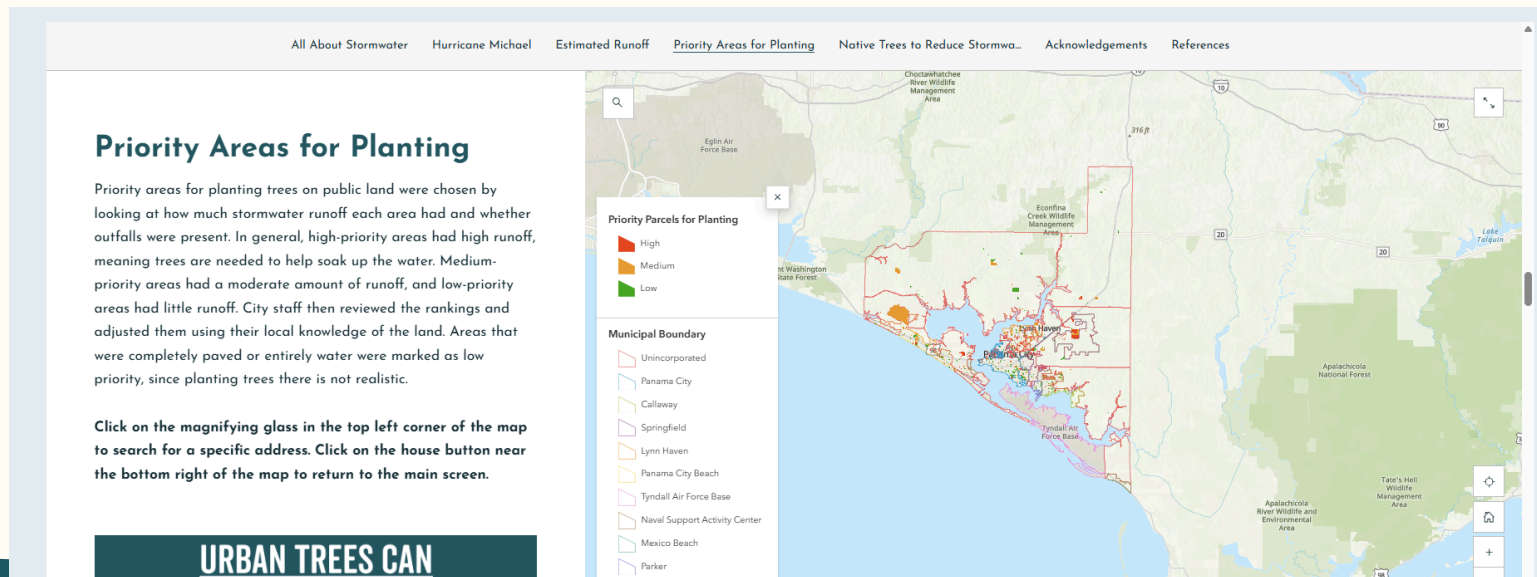
All great projects and initiatives take robust planning to ensure success. The SASJBEP through community involvement created the first ever Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) to guide direction for the next 10 years. Additional planning efforts are working to establish baseline conditions of our natural resources across the watershed.

**15** Data Sets *Compiled/Updated*

**5** Projects *Identified*

**1** Publications/Reports

**6** Interactive Tools Created





# PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## *Research and Monitoring*

An essential part of determining actionable and adaptive resource management, relies in a comprehensive understanding of our systems and the interactions with external variables. The SASJBEP has identified a number of gaps in our understanding and is working with partners to fill these gaps and ensure financial resources are strategically invested.



800 FISH CAUGHT



1082 SEDIMENT SAMPLES TAKEN



34 TECHNICAL SUMMARIES CREATED

# PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## *Stewardship*

Engaging citizens both locals and visitors in conservation actions is one of the priority issues identified by the community. SASJBEP engages partner organizations and the public to increase awareness and understanding of the priority issues and how all citizens can play a role in preserving our natural resources.



54

Vertical Oyster  
Gardens Deployed

8

Tides and Talks  
Events

23

Outreach and  
Education Events

270

Race for the Bays  
Registrations



# PROGRESS TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (CCMP)

## *Overview*

In April 2024, the St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program published the first ever Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. The Estuary Program together with partners have been working to secure funding for projects that align with the CCMP. The CCMP was broken into Focus Areas that had desired outcomes and more specific goals.

## *Progress*

The Action Plans outlined in the CCMP were broken into four Focus Areas where a total of 14 goals were split between the four. Each goal identified 1-5 actions that were developed into Action Plans with additional details including individual activities. Progress is reported at the Action level and overall goal level. It is calculated by determining the level of progress across four categories divided by the total number of actions \* 4 progress categories.

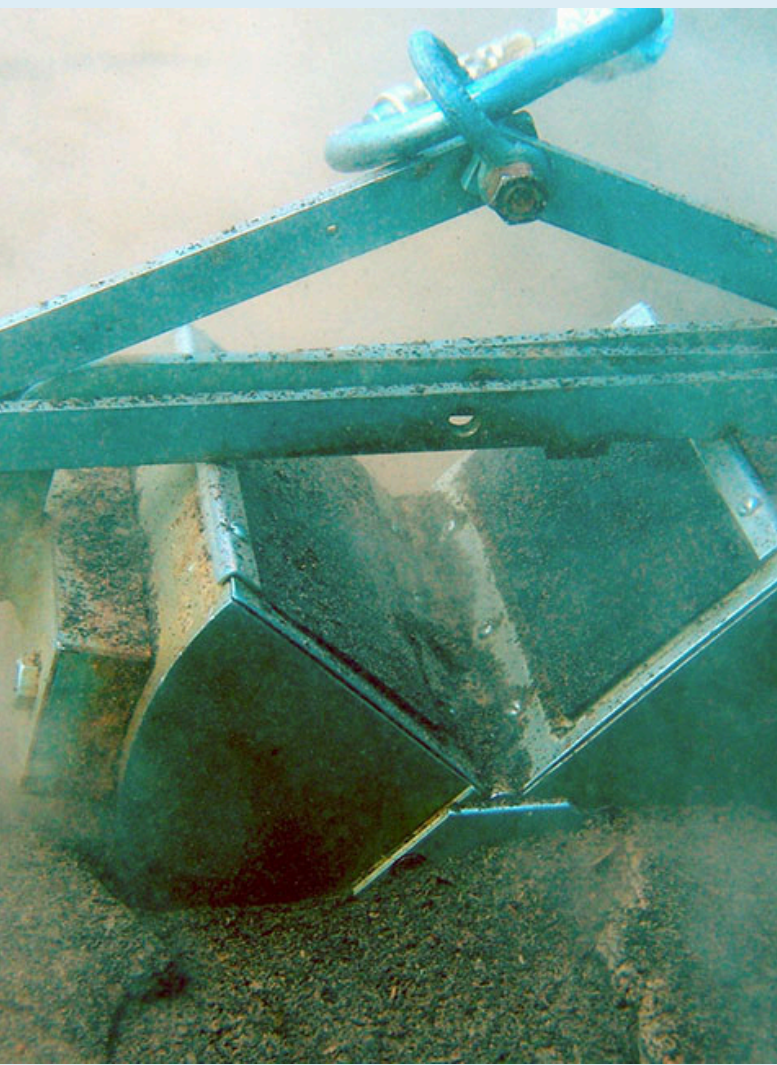


Lake Powell, Darryl Boudreau



# WATER AND SEDIMENT QUALITY AND QUANTITY

*Clean, swimmable, fishable  
water that supports the local  
community and wildlife.*



**Goal 1:** Reduce nutrients and pathogens to meet water quality targets needed to maintain healthy populations of wildlife and protect recreational uses.



## ACTIONS

## OVERALL STATUS

1.1 Identify, monitor, and assess water quality to support directed implementation actions



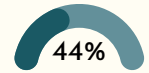
1.2 Identify and implement actions to reduce nutrients, pathogens, toxins



1.3 Reduce impact of septic systems to bays



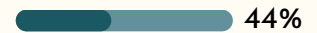
**Goal 2:** Increase public awareness of the importance of high quality water and sediment



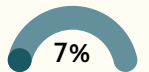
## ACTIONS

## OVERALL STATUS

2.1 Develop outreach strategies about water and sediment quality



**Goal 3:** Reduce erosion and turbidity throughout the watershed for improved water quality and resilient ecosystems



## ACTIONS

## OVERALL STATUS

3.1 Improve our understanding and address sediment and erosion dynamics throughout the watershed



3.2 Develop outreach materials on impacts of erosion and turbidity on the watersheds waterbodies



**Goal 4:** Reduce adverse impacts of stormwater throughout the watershed



## ACTIONS

## OVERALL STATUS

4.1 Reduce quantity of stormwater



4.2 Understand sources of pollution found in stormwater



**Goal 5:** Establish an understanding of fresh and saltwater balance to maintain a resilient estuarine ecosystem



## ACTIONS

## OVERALL STATUS

5.1 Understand the currents and flows of both fresh and salt water necessary to maintain a resilient estuarine ecosystem



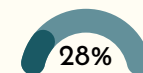


# NATURAL RESOURCE AND SPECIES CONSERVATION

*Functioning ecosystems that  
support resilient communities and  
wildlife*



**Goal 1:** Conserve, restore, and maintain seagrass cover to support diverse species and ecosystem services



## ACTIONS

## OVERALL STATUS

1.1 Restore and conserve seagrass in the Bays



1.2 Develop outreach and education strategies to increase seagrass



**Goal 2:** Conserve, restore and enhance self-sustaining native shellfish populations that support the provision of ecosystem services and sustainable harvest



## ACTIONS

## OVERALL STATUS

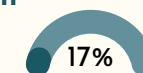
2.1 Restore scallop populations



2.2 Restore oyster populations



**Goal 3:** Support strategic landscape conservation and land acquisition to restore and protect a healthy and resilient St. Andrew and St. Joseph bay Watershed



## ACTIONS

## OVERALL STATUS

3.1 Support development of landscape conservation and land acquisition plan with partners



**Goal 4:** Restore and sustain habitats to support ecosystem function, diverse species, and ecosystem services



## ACTIONS

## OVERALL STATUS

4.1 Identify and assess the status of habitats throughout the watershed



4.2 identify, implement, and evaluate management actions for habitats throughout the watershed



4.3 Improve knowledge on the diversity of species in the watershed



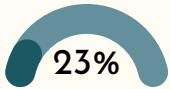


# RESILIENCY

*Stronger, more resilient communities and ecosystems through comprehensive long-term and integrated nature-based solutions (NBS)*



*Goal 1:* Improve resiliency of local communities and ecosystems through comprehensive and proactive planning that integrates community and natural resource needs



## ACTIONS

## OVERALL STATUS

- |   |  |     |
|---|--|-----|
| 1.1 Identify, implement, and monitor areas that are prone to flooding currently and at risk in the future from different sources of water |  | 40% |
| 1.2 Integrate resiliency throughout existing and new local government and management plans  |  | 7%  |

*Goal 2:* Increase implementation of nature-based solutions (NBS) to support resilient ecosystems throughout suitable areas of the watershed



## ACTIONS

## OVERALL STATUS

- |  |  |     |
|--|--|-----|
| 2.1 Identify, implement, and evaluate nature-based solutions (NBS) |  | 40% |
| 2.2 Increase public awareness and buy-in of NBS                    |  | 33% |





# STEWARDSHIP

*A responsible community working together to protect and restore our bays*






*Goal 1:* Increase public awareness, understanding, and connection



OVERALL STATUS

## ACTIONS



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1.1 Support watershed initiatives through exhibit creation and installation of signage and exhibits  |  22% |
| 1.2 Develop outreach and education strategies to increase seagrass   |  56% |
| 1.3 Provide and support community workshops, professional development and trainings to improve the understanding of the water/bays and increase environmental literacy |  33% |

*Goal 2:* Promote public engagement and stewardship



OVERALL STATUS

## ACTIONS



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 2.1 Promote stewardship of the natural resources through community engagement projects and events         |  50% |
| 2.2 Establish partnerships to strengthen collaboration and support that will protect and restore the bays |  58% |

*Goal 3:* Increase recreational opportunities and public access



OVERALL STATUS

## ACTIONS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 3.1 Facilitate increased access to natural resources and promote initiatives that foster responsible recreational use that promotes stewardship |  42% |
| 3.2 Support efforts to engage the community through outdoor recreational activities   |  33% |

# FINANCIALS

Revenue	FY24-25	Projected FY25-26
Government grants	\$1,348,408.87	\$1,800,432.36
Member contributions	\$ -	\$102,500.00
Foundation grants	\$ -	\$25,778.68
Donations/fundraising	\$10,256.08	\$10,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,358,664.95</b>	<b>\$1,939,711.04</b>

Expenditures	FY24-25	Projected FY25-26
Payroll	\$592,683.13	\$762,459.87
Travel	\$7,308.57	\$15,537.00
Equipment	\$ -	\$ -
Contractual Services	\$37,000.00	\$78,404.00
Subawards	\$362,360.29	\$403,880.00
Supplies	\$40,694.07	\$210,340.00
Other	\$6,941.43	\$17,355.00
Hosting Closts	\$126,068.08	\$338,327.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,173,055.57</b>	<b>\$1,826,303.67</b>

6

PROPOSALS  
SUBMITTED IN 2025

*\$5,042.738*

TOTAL REQUEST





# Race for the Bays

## FINANCIALS

The annual Race for the Bays is an amazing opportunity to get outside and celebrate the last day of National Estuaries Week while supporting the St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program. Proceeds raised from the event allow the program to support events including Tides and Talks, Vertical Oyster Gardens, Oyster shell recycling, and many more efforts into the future!

Second  
Wind  
RACE TIMING



**270** Registrants

**54** Returning runners

**23** Volunteers

**\$9,247** in Registration

**\$6,500** in Sponsorships



# *2026 Vision*

In the year ahead, the St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program will shift from pursuing national designation to building a strong, sustainable foundation for the future. We will focus on securing annual donations, state appropriations, and strategic partnerships to ensure long-term resilience while building a greater community awareness and education to our mission and vision

We will work to amplify awareness and impact messaging so that every resident understands the value of the bays, the driving issues, and actions that will protect them. Building on the framework of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan we will continue to work with partners in identifying projects that address the priority issues impacting our Bays. Over the next year, we will have three projects that will be closed out, a number that will continue through, and three projects that will begin in 2026.





## 2026 VISION

### *Closing Out*



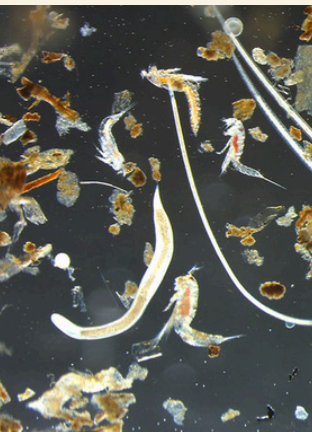
#### **Springfield Restoration**

Completion of 60% design for floodplain and stream restoration in the upper tributaries of Martin Lake.



#### **National Coastal Condition Assessment Intensification**

Ten additional site sampled to provide more information on the condition of St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays at the national scale and trends overtime.



#### **Assessing Benthic Indicators in St. Joe Bay**

An assessment of bottom habitat condition in St. Joe Bay using information from tiny bottom-dwelling animals.

### *Just Getting Started*

#### **Microbial and Nutrient Resource Tracking**

Identifying water body impairments to determine effective actions to increase water quality of St. Andrews Bay.



#### **BAY GUARDIANS: Citizen Science for Clean Waters**

Citizen-led water quality monitoring and public dashboard to guide better watershed management.



#### **SPARK: Supportive Partnerships Advancing Resilience and Knowledge**

Supporting the implementation of projects by moving them through the phases of development from project identification to implementation.

