

Estuary Exchange

March 2026



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

Together for the Bays



The scary “-uaries” are behind us, and brighter days are ahead! March is Seagrass Awareness Month, and we’re celebrating with a special Tides and Talks guest speaker focused on seagrass restoration. In addition, be sure to visit the Science Corner for the latest update on seagrass coverage in St. Andrew Bay.

Board Member Spotlight

Our watershed thrives because of passionate individuals committed to its protection and restoration. To honor these efforts, we’re sharing our appreciation by highlighting the members of our Policy Board. Each month, we’ll introduce you to those working behind the scenes to help strengthen our community and support the long-term well-being of our watershed.



Policy Board Member Spotlight: Councilmember Mary Coburn

Councilmember Mary Coburn, representing the City of Panama City Beach, brings a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and balanced growth to the SASJBEP Policy Board. Encouraged by former Chair Phil Chester due to her long-standing interest in environmental issues, she welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the Estuary Program's regional work.

Councilmember Coburn recognizes how essential healthy and clean waterways are to both residents and the tourism-driven local economy. She is focused on supporting long-term sustainable projects that keep conservation and development in balance. Childhood memories of fishing with her father and crabbing from the old Hathaway Bridge also remind her of the value of protecting these resources for future generations.

On the Board, she provides a pragmatic, steady perspective, drawing on her nonprofit leadership and grant management experience. She has taken a particular interest in the LittaTrap program that aligns with her priorities of clean waterways and effective stormwater management. She remains committed to initiatives that strengthen water quality and community resilience.

Looking ahead, Councilmember Coburn hopes the bay system will recover enough to support safe oyster and scallop harvesting once again. Her favorite days are spent on or near the water with loved ones, where she can soak up sunshine, relax, and appreciate the natural beauty that makes our watershed special.

Tides and Talks: Seagrass Solutions



Tides & Talks

WHERE CONVERSATION STARTS



March Topic: Seagrass Solutions

When: Thursday, March 12th, 3:00PM CDT

Where: Destination Panama City, 101 West Beach Dr.

For more info go to:
sasjbep.org/events/tidesandtalks

AND STEWARDSHIP FLOWS

This month, we welcomed our first virtual guest speaker, Jon Brucker of AquaTech Eco Consultants. He shared how large-scale seagrass restoration is helping to strengthen Florida's waterways. This effort has restored 100 acres of submerged aquatic vegetation across the state, with even more underway. Learn how innovative planting methods, teamwork, and careful planning are bringing back underwater habitats that improve water clarity, support fish and wildlife, and enhance our bays for everyone to enjoy. Watch now on YouTube at the link below.

[View on Youtube](#)

Vertical Oyster Garden Program

BECOME AN Oyster Gardener!

Do you live on St. Andrew Bay? You can become an oyster gardener with the St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program!

IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

One oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water a day! By participating in this program, you are helping to improve water quality in St. Andrew Bay.

RESTORE OYSTER POPULATIONS

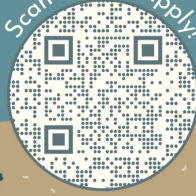
One vertical oyster garden can host dozens of oysters! Become a gardener and play a part in increasing oyster populations.

PARTICIPATE IN CITIZEN SCIENCE

Oyster gardeners will have the opportunity to participate in monthly monitoring of their vertical oyster gardens and watch them grow!



Scan here to apply!



Go to [SASJBEP.ORG/VOGS](https://sasjbep.org/voogs) for more information.

**Not for human consumption*



It's what season? That's right—SPAT season! Time for baby oysters to drift through the water in search of a place to settle and grow. This makes now the perfect time to get involved in our Vertical Oyster Garden (VOG) program. Apply at the link below and help support oyster restoration in our bays.

Apply Now

Science Corner



Deer Lake State Park wet prairie restoration site.

St. Andrew Bay Seagrass Coverage

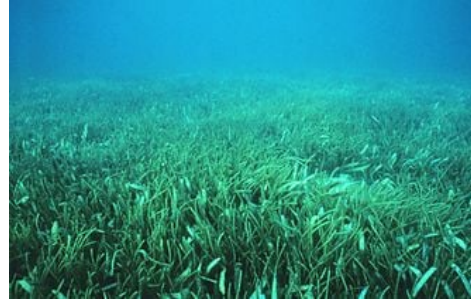
March is seagrass awareness month, and we wanted to provide an update on seagrass cover in St. Andrews and St. Joseph Bays where new data is available! The FDEP Central Panhandle Aquatic Preserve was able to complete mapping in both St. Andrews Aquatic Preserve and St. Joseph Bay Aquatic Preserve in 2024 and has shared this new data! In 2024, St. Joseph Bay Aquatic Preserve had ~5,142 acres, and the St. Andrews Aquatic Preserve had ~1,026 acres of seagrass. To view additional available seagrass data for St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays, check out the [statewide seagrass layer](#).

Recent Relevant Research

Click the images to view articles.



Implications of depensation on oyster recruitment, population collapse, restoration, and sustainable fisheries management.



The Relationship Between Abiotic Conditions, Seagrass Genetic Variation, and Production Reveals Population Differentiation is Predicted by Temperature Range.

Find the Estuary Program



April 11th & 12th, 2026

Gulf Coast Salute Air Show

When: April 11th & 12th, 9:00am - 3:00pm CT

Where: Aaron Bessant Park, Panama City Beach



April 26th, 2026

North Florida Wildflower Festival

When: April 25th, 9:00am - 2:00pm CT

Where: Magnolia Square, Blountstown, FL

Community Events

Click the images to explore upcoming events throughout the St. Andrew Bay Watershed!



Events in Panama City



Events in Panama City Beach



Events in South Walton County



Events in Gulf County

Upcoming Meetings

Policy Board Meeting



April 22nd, 2026

1:00pm-3:00pm CDT; Room A301 Deans Conference Room; FSU PC Holley Building
Meeting ID: [928 1613 1724](#)

Join Zoom

Management Council Meeting



April 10th, 2026

10am-12pm CDT; Room A301, Deans Conference Room; FSU PC Holley Building Join Via
Zoom: <https://fsu.zoom.us/j/98797010571> Meeting ID: [987 9701 0571](#)

Join Zoom

Science and Technical Committee Meeting



April 16th, 2026

1:00 - 2:00 PM CDT; Admin Services Conference Room 108

Join Zoom

Stormwater Working Group



May 6th, 2026

10am-11am CDT; Virtual only.

[Join on Teams](#)

Community Action Committee Meeting +

Date TBD

Next meeting date to be determined.

Teen Outreach Committee Meeting +

March 14th, 2026

10 am - 11:00 am CT Marsh plant installation at FSU Panama City

[Join the TOC](#)

To access all past meeting materials, notes, and presentations, visit our [Library of Resources](#) page on our website. Link directly by clicking below!

[Library of Resources](#)

[Florida State University Panama City Campus Map](#)

Volunteer Opportunities

SASJ BAYS
VOLUNTEER NETWORK

JOIN THE VOLUNTEER NETWORK!

Interested in getting involved in protection and restoration efforts within the St. Andrew Bay Watershed?

Join Our Email List!

SASJ Bays Volunteer Network connects organizations across the watershed with citizens looking for an opportunity to get involved.

- **Organizations:** Connect with volunteers for your events
- **Volunteers:** Learn about volunteer opportunities from our partners all across the watershed

[JOIN NOW](https://lists.fsu.edu/mailman/listinfo/volunteer-sasjbep)  [HTTPS://LISTS.FSU.EDU/MAILMAN/LISTINFO/VOLUNTEER-SASJBEP](https://lists.fsu.edu/mailman/listinfo/volunteer-sasjbep)

St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program



The SASJ Bays Volunteer Network connects organizations with passionate members of the community that are interested getting involved. Join the email list to receive updates on upcoming volunteer opportunities from across the partners across the watershed and share organized events with others!

[Join the Email List](#)

Job Opportunities

University of Northwest Florida

- [Assistant Professor of Biology, Coastal Ecologist](#)

Contact us at estuaryprogram@pc.fsu.edu



St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary
Program

4750 Collegiate Drive
Panama City, FL 32405



estuaryprogram@pc.fsu.edu

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