

Estuary Exchange

August 2025



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

Together for the Bays

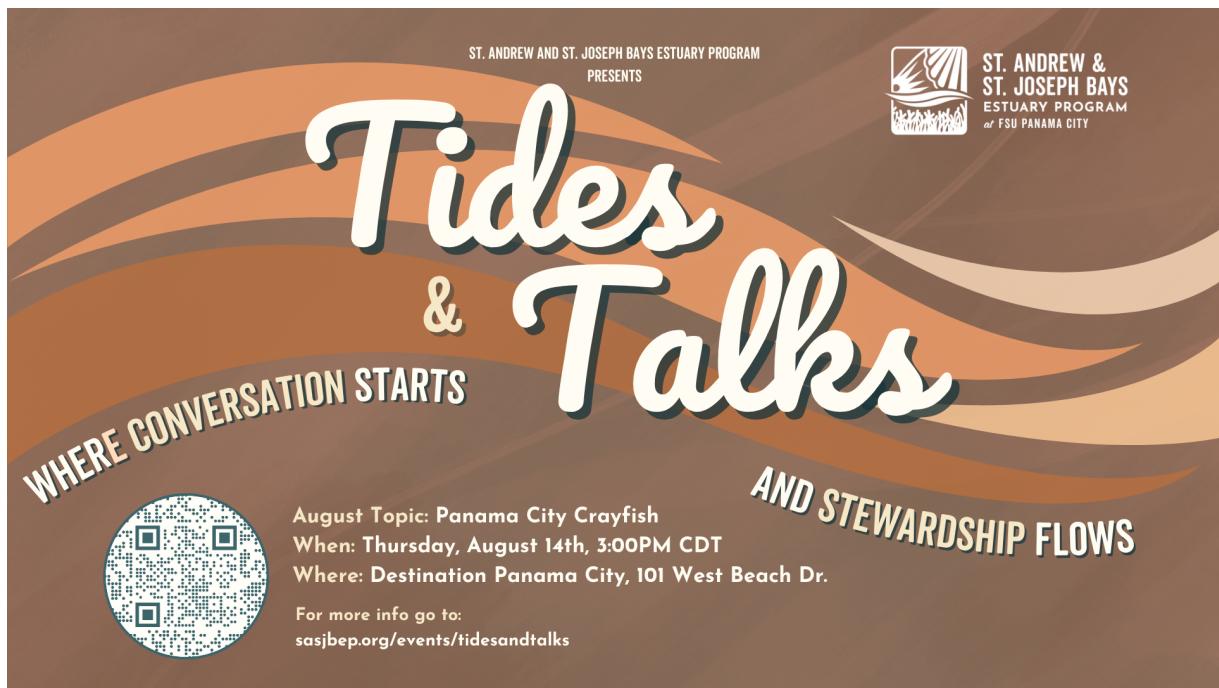
AUGUST 2025



Gulf County FL Tourism

There's no denying that we've reached the dog days of summer. Cool off by splashing into our August Estuary Exchange, where you'll learn about water and marine life safety, upcoming Estuary Program events, restoration efforts, and more!

Tides & Talks



Tides and Talks is back! Take a look at our Autumn series lineup [here](#) and join us on August 14th as we hear from Patty Kelly with US Fish and Wildlife Service about the Panama City Crayfish!

Save the date on facebook or pre-register at the links below.

[Facebook Event](#)

[Zoom](#)

[Youtube](#)

Teen Outreach Committee



Our Teen Outreach Committee (TOC) is getting ready for an exciting new school year—and we're looking for more students interested in taking action in their local community to join the team!

Open to high school students, the TOC meets once a month and takes on projects that support local conservation efforts. Past activities include launching an Environmental Ad Campaign, building Vertical Oyster Gardens, attending field trips to local parks, organizing fundraisers, and constructing monofilament recycling tubes to reduce marine debris.

Want to get involved and make an impact? Click [here](#) to join the club!

[Join The TOC!](#)



It's seagrass seed season!

Keep your eyes peeled for seagrass seeds! They can look like spiky balls to green corn kernels depending on their stage of development. Look along the shore and email estuaryprogram@pc.fsu.edu if you see any!

Race for the Bays: Registration is now open!



Join the Estuary Program in celebrating National Estuaries Week! Sign up to walk or run through Panama City Beach Conservation Park on September 27th, 2025 and support the Estuary Program in our efforts to continue to improve our natural resources.

[Register to Run](#)[Sponsor the Event](#)

Science Corner

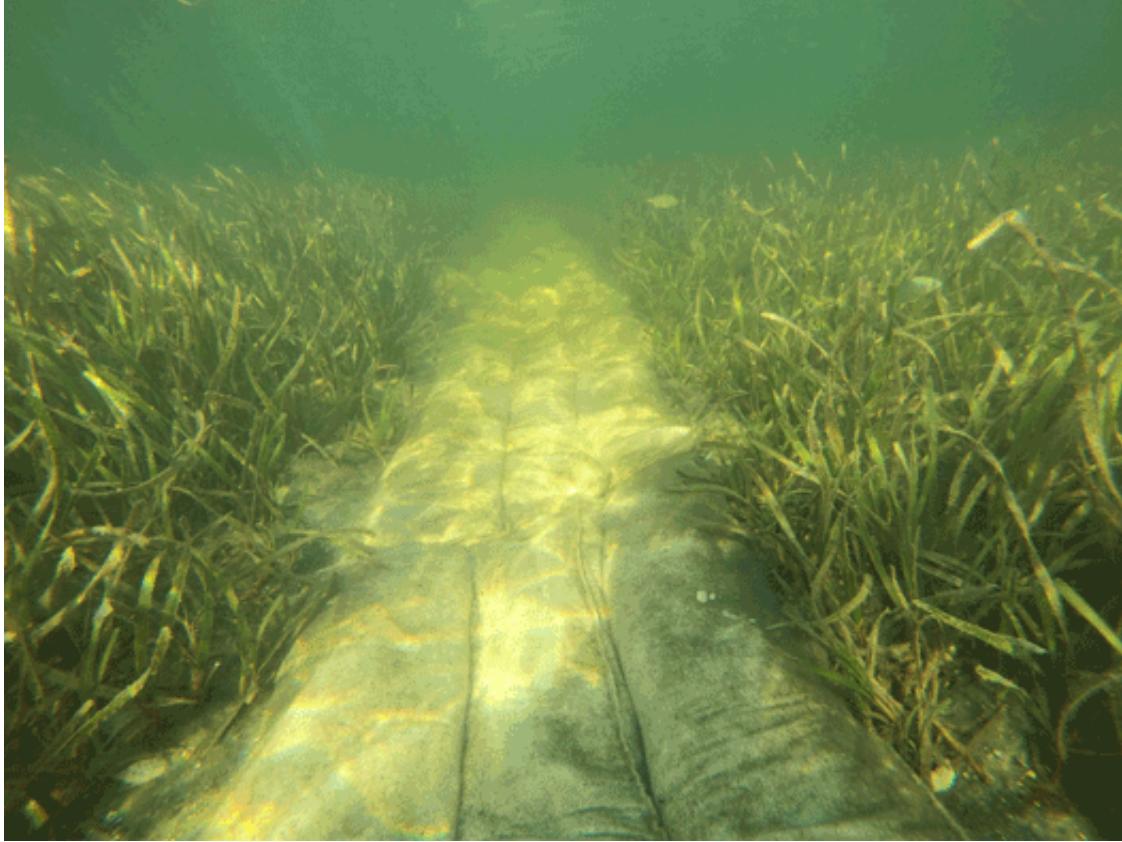
Seagrass Restoration One Project at a Time

Seagrass restoration can be done many different ways, and we have a few examples in our Bays!

One method focuses on restoring seagrass in prop scars (areas where a boat propeller drags on the seafloor damaging seagrass beds). Restoration involves placing sediment tubes (see image – large socks filled with sediment) into scars to help raise the level to the same as adjacent seagrass which helps to encourage seagrass growth. Our partners at the Central Panhandle Aquatic Preserve (CPAP) led sediment tube restoration in St. Joseph Bay, where approximately 44,000 tubes were installed in 379 scars and are overseeing the installation of sediment tubes in the St. Andrews Aquatic Preserve this summer-fall!

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has also restored seagrass using a transplant method. Here, healthy donor sites are used to transplant shoal grass units. This method has been used in St. Andrew Bay where the El Dorado ran aground, and over in West Bay.

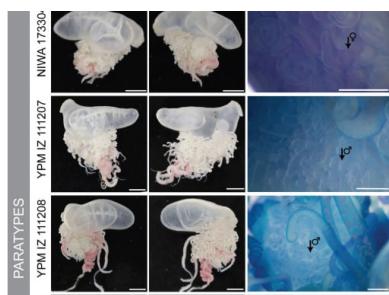
Another method involves planting nursery grown seedlings into restoration sites, and this has been done in St. Joseph Bay by AquaTech Eco Consultants and they are working on doing this in areas of St. Andrew Bay (West Bay, Shell Island Sound) as well with funding provided to Ecosphere Restoration Institute by the Florida Legislature.



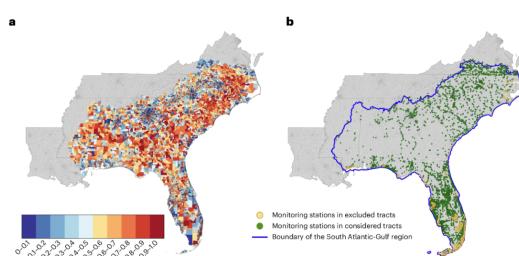
Sediment tube in St. Joseph Bay, Central Panhandle Aquatic Preserves

Recent Relevant Research

Click the images to view articles.



Population genomics of a sailing siphonophore reveals genetic structure in the open ocean.



Surface waters in socially vulnerable areas are disproportionately under-monitored for nutrients in the US South Atlantic-Gulf region.



Ask A Scientist!

Have a question about our bays, local wildlife, or want to know more about the estuary program? We've got answers! Submit your questions, and our scientists will answer them in

Ask a Scientist

Question: “Ouch! What is stinging me at the beach?”

Answer:

Being stung while enjoying your time in the water is never fun! There are a few species of stinging creatures along the beaches of the Florida panhandle to be aware of including Moon jellies, Atlantic Sea Nettles, Sea lice, and Portuguese man o' war.

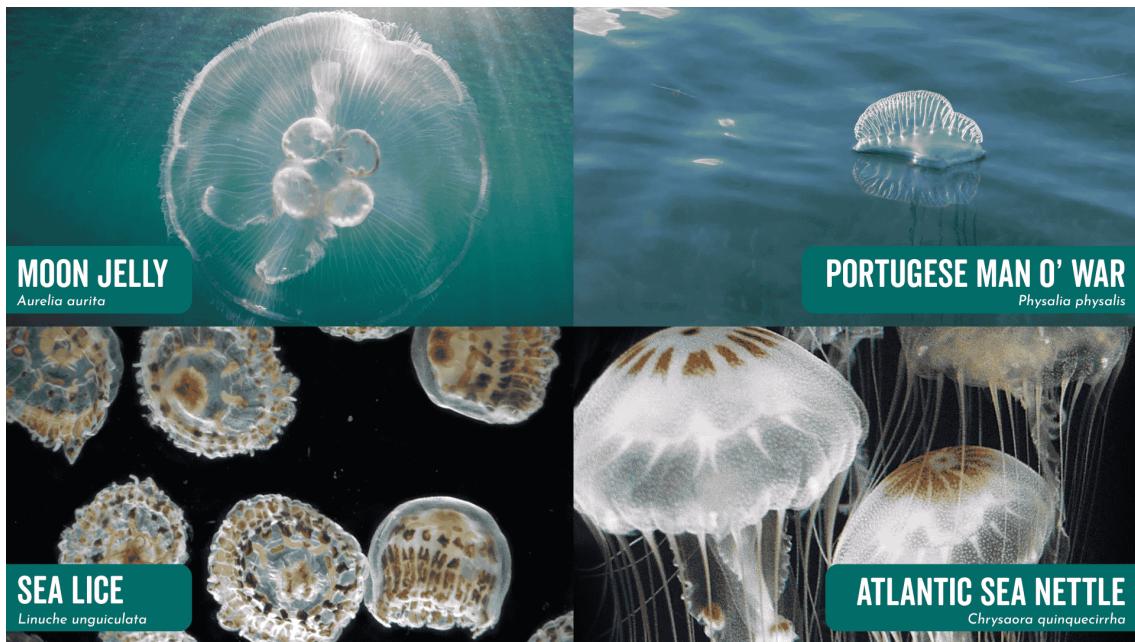
- Moon Jellies are a common species of jellyfish with a translucent body and 4 petals on top of their large bell. Thankfully, their sting only feels like a small pinch, and if you avoid their tentacles you should be safe around these graceful creatures.
- Atlantic Sea Nettles have longer tentacles, which can be harder to avoid. They typically have reddish stripes on the top of their bells, and their sting feels more like a wasp sting.
- Sea Lice is a common name for tiny larvae of thimble jellyfish that drift in the water. When these larvae are squished, such as in between bathing suit and skin, they release toxins that cause an itchy rash. If you experience this, rinse off with fresh water and change out of swimwear as soon as possible!
- Portuguese man o' war is a species of siphonophore and not a true jellyfish (but closely related). It has a balloon-like float that is typically blue, violet or pink with long strands of tentacles that can grow to an average of ~ 30ft! The sting can be painful and cause welts on exposed skin.

So, what causes each of these critters to sting? They contain stinging cells in their tentacles called nematocysts, which contain venom. Nematocysts are triggered by physical or chemical disturbances and are used against potential predators and to subdue prey. Since jellyfish don't have eyes, they can't tell what they are bumping into! Keep a lookout for these stinging friends and try to prevent getting in their way.

If you do happen to get stung, exit the water and rinse the affected area with salt water. Fresh water can activate more stingers! After any remaining stingers and tentacles have been removed, soak the area in hot water for 20-45 minutes.

Often times, you'll find that purple flags are flying when these marine invertebrates are present, so be sure to always check the flags!

- Liz Farmer, Research Scientist



Water Safety

Summer is here! Please remember to exercise water safety when visiting the beach. Click the images below to view resources that keep you safe and updated.



Florida Healthy Beaches
Program



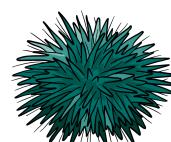
Red Tide Sampling



Beach Flags



Rip Current Safety



Sea Urchin Survey

Help us monitor the sea urchin population and support the recovery of seagrass in both St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays by reporting sea urchin sightings.

[Click here to report your sightings.](#)

Thank you for your participation!

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](#)



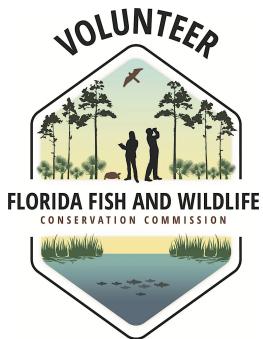
[Events in Gulf County](#)



[Events in Mexico Beach](#)



[Gulf County Chamber of Commerce - Events](#)



August 23rd, 2025

New Angler Day

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Volunteer Program, in partnership with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), invites you to a Fishing Education Day at St. Andrews State Park!

This free, family-friendly event is open to all ages and will feature hands-on opportunities to learn basic fishing techniques and discover the importance of marine conservation.

Fishing rods and bait will be provided at no cost!

When: August 23rd, 2025 9am-1pm CDT

Where: St. Andrews State Park

[Learn More](#)

Upcoming Meetings

Policy Board Meeting +

August 27th, 2025

1:00pm-3:00pm CST; Room A301 Deans Conference Room; FSU PC Holley Building
<https://fsu.zoom.us/j/99362305989> o Meeting ID: **994 7324 3671** o Passcode: 342269

[Join Zoom](#)

Management Council Meeting +

August 8th, 2025

10am-12pm CST; Room A301, Deans Conference Room; FSU PC Holley Building Join Via Zoom: <https://fsu.zoom.us/j/99362305989> Meeting ID: **993 6230 5989**

[Join Zoom](#)

Science and Technical Committee Meeting +

August 21st, 2025

1:00 - 2:30 PM CDT; FSU PC Administrative Building Conference Room 108; Zoom Meeting ID: **935 2145 7426**

[Join Zoom](#)

Stormwater Working Group

+

August 13th, 2025

10am-11am CDT; Virtual only. Join on Teams: o Meeting ID: [268 804 956 253](#) o
Passcode: g4zt9qd7

Teen Outreach Committee Meeting

+

Kickoff Meeting

Our first meeting date for the 2025-2026 school year is to be determined. Join the TOC to stay up to date!

[Join the TOC](#)

Tides and Talks

+

August 14th, 2025

Patty Kelly with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service will be joining us on August 14th to discuss the Panama City Crayfish.

[Learn More](#)

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)

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

FSU Coastal Marine Lab

- [Restoration Coordinator](#)

Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance

- [Ecology Technician](#)

Contact us at estuaryprogram@pc.fsu.edu

St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary

estuaryprogram@pc.fsu.edu

Program

4750 Collegiate Drive

Panama City, FL 32405

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