

# APALACHICOLA BAY OYSTER PROJECTS FUNDED WITH \$6.3 MILLION FEDERAL FUNDS

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Tallahassee, Fla. (WTLX) - Florida Governor Rick Scott announced the projects in the Apalachicola Bay area that he is recommending for disaster relief funding.

Last month, Governor Scott announced Florida was awarded \$6.3 million in disaster assistance funding for the communities that were devastated by the collapse of the oyster harvesting industry in Apalachicola Bay.

The Governor's team says that the funds are to help the affected communities recover from the devastation and move forward to have sustainable fisheries and fishing communities.

“I am excited today to recommend these projects that will share \$6.3 million to help restore economic vitality and provide relief to the oystermen and their families who have endured such hardship in the Apalachicola Bay area. In addition to bolstering their industry, this funding will be used to provide vocational and educational training for oystermen and their families so they are able to support their families for generations to come.”

The projects are focused on four areas and are subject to final approval from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The recommended projects are:

**\$4,569,767 for Apalachicola Bay Habitat Improvement.** Apalachicola Bay will be reshelled, which is the process of adding oyster shells to existing oyster reefs and is a typical habitat improvement technique. Young oyster larvae need a hard surface onto which to settle after they are spawned. Hiring fishermen to conduct

shelling operations also produces economic activity across a larger portion of the community than barge shelling.

**\$415,473 for Monitoring of the Wild Apalachicola Bay Oyster Population.** The oyster population will be monitored to help evaluate the success of shelling programs, and so that the fishery can be adaptively managed as the oyster population recovers.

**\$563,233 for Vocational and Educational Training for Apalachicola Bay Oyster Industry Workers.** Vocational and educational training will be conducted so that those in the oyster industry can have a greater diversity of job opportunities.

**\$768,060 for Apalachicola Bay Processor Facilities Upgrades.** In order for the oyster industry to remain viable, upgrades in processing facilities are needed. Cost reimbursement agreements (in whole or in part) will be made with wholesale dealers to make these improvements, based on losses incurred during the disaster.