



# Apalachicola River and Bay Sub-Basin Work Plan

## Northwest Florida Watersheds Partnership Program

The **Northwest Florida Watersheds Partnership Program (Program)** is a collaborative, multi-party initiative to proactively address critical water resource issues within priority sub-basins of the Northwest Florida Water Management District (District). The program is being implemented in coordination with local and county governments, regional entities, and other interested parties to maximize effectiveness.

## Apalachicola River and Bay

The Apalachicola River and Bay sub-basin is the priority sub-basin within the Apalachicola River and Bay Watershed. The work plan describes the sub-basin, the critical water resource issues, and strategies and proposed projects that can be implemented to address these issues. The sub-basin encompasses approximately 246,790 acres of the southernmost portion of the greater Apalachicola River and Bay watershed. The area is characterized by extensive lands and waters remaining in natural conditions which are protected and managed by federal and state agencies. As a result, the area contains extensive aquatic-based resources making recreation such as fishing (commercial and recreational), boating, and tourism important to the local culture and economy. The sub-basin includes the City of Apalachicola, Eastpoint, St. George Island, Apalachicola Bay, and the lower Apalachicola River. The goal of the work plan is to provide an integrated framework for a multi-year collaborative effort to improve the environmental resources, ecological functions, and public benefits of the Apalachicola River and Bay sub-basin. Approximately 3 percent of the sub-basin is developed and in 2020 the population was 6,887. The population is estimated to grow by 12 percent by 2045 with the projected population estimated at 7,726.



### Current Issues and Challenges

The Apalachicola River and Bay sub-basin is experiencing numerous issues and challenges. Alterations to natural habitats including the loss of oyster habitat, floodplains, and seagrasses are of concern. Storm-water drainage is a concern for portions of Eastpoint. Septic tanks are present throughout the sub-basin which may be contributing to water quality issues. Sedimentation is a primary issue affecting the hydrology and ecosystems of Apalachicola River floodplains. Water supply is also an issue in the sub-basin with supply wells being susceptible to storm surge, sea level rise, hydrogen sulfide, and saltwater intrusion. In addition, aging and/or outdated infrastructure may be an issue for some utilities.

Water quality impairments are present throughout the sub-basin with portions of the sub-basin being impaired for total nitrogen, metals, dissolved oxygen, bacteria, and biological impairments.

## Strategies and Solutions

Successful restoration and protection of the Apalachicola River and Bay sub-basin will involve restoring oyster and other natural habitats, addressing sources of water quality impairments, improving and protecting water supply resources, and septic tank abatement. These efforts are likely to be bolstered by improving coordination and cooperation between restoration partners and increasing monitoring activities to track and evaluate progress.



Erosion Along Highway 98 in Franklin County

## Proposed Projects and Funding Needs

Proposed projects to address water resource issues in the Apalachicola River and Bay sub-basin are detailed in the work plan. Addressing critical water resource issues will require a multi-year effort. Future projects, in addition to those identified within this work plan, will likely be needed to fully address water resource issues and challenges within the Apalachicola River and Bay sub-basin. Currently proposed projects are detailed in the plan and some provide multiple water resource benefits. As of January 2026, **seven** projects have been proposed by partners within the sub-basin. Two of these projects have estimated costs which total **\$2.9 million**. Cost estimates for the remaining five projects are to be determined.

Project types include:

- Habitat Restoration
- Septic to Sewer Conversion
- Water Supply Infrastructure Enhancement



Shoreline Along the City of Apalachicola

For more information please visit: <https://nwfwater.com/water-resources/surface-water-improvement-and-management/>