



NFWF

# Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

**RECIPIENTS**

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality

**AWARD AMOUNT**

\$7,536,400

**PARTNERS**

Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain

North Gulfport Community Land Trust

Turkey Creek Community Initiative

Turkey Creek Watershed Team

USDA-NRCS

**LOCATION**

Gulfport, Mississippi

**AWARD DATE**

November 2015

**STATUS**

Active

**PROGRESS REPORT**

A permit application was submitted to allow the hydrographic survey to be performed on Turkey Creek. (February 2018)

The Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), supports projects to remedy harm and eliminate or reduce the risk of harm to Gulf Coast natural resources affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. To learn more about NFWF, go to [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org).

## MISSISSIPPI

# Habitat Restoration and Conservation in Turkey Creek – Phase I

This project seeks to conserve important habitat and enhance water quality in the 30,000-acre Turkey Creek watershed through habitat and stream conservation and restoration. The Turkey Creek watershed encompasses a mix of rural and urban land use areas in greater Gulfport and has significant ecological and recreational value. However, the watershed faces development pressures that threaten its ecological benefits. The project will use fee simple land and easement acquisition, focused in the lower reaches of the Turkey Creek watershed, to protect key wetland and riparian habitats. Restoration on these and other previously protected lands will include hydrologic restoration of wetlands, riparian buffers, invasive species management, debris removal and stream bank stabilization. The restoration efforts will maintain and improve water quality, and floodwater storage capacity, and will enhance the hydrologic connectivity of Turkey Creek to Bernard Bayou and the Back Bay of Biloxi.

This project represents the first phase of a comprehensive watershed conservation initiative that seeks to maintain and enhance the ecological function of Turkey Creek, one of the primary tributaries to the Back Bay of Biloxi. A watershed action plan has been previously developed for Turkey Creek, and restoration activities enjoy strong community support.



Reddish Egret | Credit: Audubon Florida



Chinese Tallow Tree



This project will improve hydrologic connectivity between the Turkey Creek watershed and the Back Bay of Biloxi. Priority actions include the removal of invasive species like the Chinese Tallow trees pictured above.