



Five Star Restoration Program



The **Five Star Restoration Program** provides modest financial and technical assistance to support community-based wetland, riparian, and coastal habitat restoration nationwide. The program is a partnership among the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the National Association of Counties, the Wildlife Habitat Council and corporate sponsors. Southern Company – including its four operating companies (Alabama Power, Georgia Power, Gulf Power, and Mississippi Power) – serves as the Southern region lead corporate sponsor.

Five Star projects use modest seed money to leverage additional resources and engage citizens in on-the-ground restoration. Projects have diverse goals – from improving local water quality and fish habitat with stream buffers or reefs, to providing outdoor classrooms and ecotourism by building or enhancing parks, riverfronts, wetlands and coastal areas.

Five Star’s hallmark is that it helps build local community capacity for natural resource stewardship through education, outreach and hands-on community involvement and education. The projects are represented by diverse public-private partnerships that include at least five participants (i.e., “Five Stars”) from various governments, businesses, schools and youth groups, environmental and citizen organizations.

As the southeastern corporate sponsor of the Five Star Restoration program, Southern Company has since 2006 provided \$1.92 million to fund projects through 2013. Through Five Star, the company also provides conservation training and networking opportunities.

Accomplishments

- 57 grants to 40 organizations involving 286 partner entities
- Grants totaling more than \$1.2 million, along with matching funds, will have a total on-the-ground conservation impact of \$4.8 million
- More than 546 acres of wetlands and nearly 49,500 linear feet of riparian buffer restored or streambank stabilized*

**Figures are approximate. Includes completed and anticipated results for funded projects through 2011.*

2011 Southern Company Project Highlights

Restoring Stream Functions in Holland Creek (AL) (2-yrs) – Auburn University and partners will stabilize stream banks along 500 feet of Holland Creek, an impaired stream with extreme erosion near the mouth of the Chattahoochee River in Phenix City, Ala. In-stream structures will help redistribute flow, dissipate energy, reduce velocities that scour stream banks and create scour pools to increase habitat diversity. Invasive species will be removed and sanitary sewer manholes relocated to minimize overflow events. Citizen stewardship will be fostered through tours, workshops and training events.

Key Project Elements

On-the-Ground Restoration

Ecological habitat restoration

Environmental Education

Meaningful community participation and/or school curriculum integration

Partnerships

Engagement of diverse community partners

Measurable Results

Ecological outcomes and social benefits





Prichard Reading Park Stream Bank Restoration (AL) – The **Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium** and partners will restore 350 feet of urban stream to its natural function planting aquatic and terrestrial habitat to reduce sediment loading, turbidity and nutrient enrichment in Eight Mile and Chickasaw Creeks in Prichard, Ala. This will showcase environmentally-appropriate buffer management technologies in an urban setting and provide community education, involvement and development opportunities to a grassroots citizens group.

Bayview Park Oyster Restoration (FL) – **Pensacola Escambia Clean Community Commission, Inc.** and partners are collecting approximately 80 tons of oyster shell from local partner restaurants to use as substrate in restoring 22 oyster reefs (0.02 acres) at Bayou Texar in the Pensacola, Fla. Bay System. This effort will increase oyster populations; provide nursery and foraging grounds for finfish, shellfish and wading birds; help filter storm water runoff into the bayou; and provide public education and involvement opportunities.



Invasive Removal and Education at Blue Heron Nature Preserve (GA) – **Blue Heron Nature Preserve, Inc.** and partners are treating 7 acres of invasive species on the Blue Heron Nature Preserve in Fulton Co., Ga. This project will eradicate invasives such as privet, English ivy, wisteria and commercial lawn grasses, reducing them to a manageable level for a well-developed volunteer program to mechanically combat re-emergence. Educational signage will explain the role of native plants in the ecosystem and their relationship to other flora and fauna.



Urban Habitat Restoration (GA) (2-yrs) – **Atlanta Botanical Garden, Inc.** and partners will restore a total of 10 acres across multiple sites in the metropolitan Atlanta area, including the Atlanta Botanical Garden, some DeKalb Co. parks and schools and the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. Citizens will learn about the adverse impacts of invasive species, help remove invasive species from wetland and riparian forests and replant non-invasive native species.

Crosby Arboretum Swamp Forest Educational Exhibit (MS) (2-yrs) – **Crosby Arboretum Foundation** and partners will restore 4.1 acres of a Small Stream Swamp Forest wetland in Picayune, Miss., as an outdoor classroom to educate students and the public on the conservation needs and ecological values of this regional habitat type. This site will serve as a primary filter to improve water quality and storage of off-site storm water and provide interpretive trails, educational signage and guided tours for the public.



Old Fort Bayou Connection (MS) – **Land Trust for the Coastal Mississippi Plain** and partners are restoring 11.17 acres of coastal wetland and upland forest (known as the Hussey property) on Old Fort Bayou in Ocean Springs, Miss. Activities include clearing trash and debris; removing invasives and replanting native species; and building a ½-mile foot path along an existing road bed.

NFWF

A nonprofit established by Congress in 1984, The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation sustains, restores and enhances the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Through leadership conservation investments with public and private partners, NFWF is dedicated to achieving maximum conservation impact. Since its establishment, the Foundation has awarded more than 11,000 grants to more than 3,800 organizations in the United States and abroad and leveraged more than \$529 million in federal funds into over \$1.8 billion for conservation.

For additional information on the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and/or the [Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program](http://www.nfwf.org/fivestar), please contact Heather Fox at (202) 857-0166 or visit our website, www.nfwf.org/fivestar.