Urban Stormwater Retrofits – Pensacola Bay System, Choctawhatchee Bay, and St. Andrew Bay (Escambia through Bay Counties)

Urban stormwater runoff and nonpoint source pollution present the most significant continuing source of water and sediment quality degradation in most of northwest Florida's coastal waters. Retrofit of stormwater systems to protect water quality and manage flows is especially needed in the Pensacola Bay System, Choctawhatchee Bay, and St. Andrew Bay, where much of the existing development was constructed prior to the enactment of modern stormwater regulations. Effects have been especially pronounced in urban bayous, where concentrated pollutant loading has resulted in degraded sediments, poor water quality, and severely altered and diminished aquatic habitat.

Priorities in the Pensacola Bay System include the drainage basins of bayous Chico, Texar, and Grande; much of downtown Pensacola; and the city of Gulf Breeze and other communities. In Choctawhatchee Bay, the urbanized bayous in the western portion of the bay have experienced substantial ecological degradation from untreated stormwater runoff. St. Andrew Bay has experienced similar conditions, including in Watson Bayou, Grand Lagoon, Massalina Bayou, and urban drainages within the city of Panama City.

Stormwater retrofit facilities would be developed cooperatively with local governments, which would maintain long-term ownership and maintenance responsibilities. In addition to improving water and aquatic habitat quality, projects will be designed to provide flood protection, to restore littoral and intertidal habitats, and to provide aesthetic and recreational amenities for local communities.

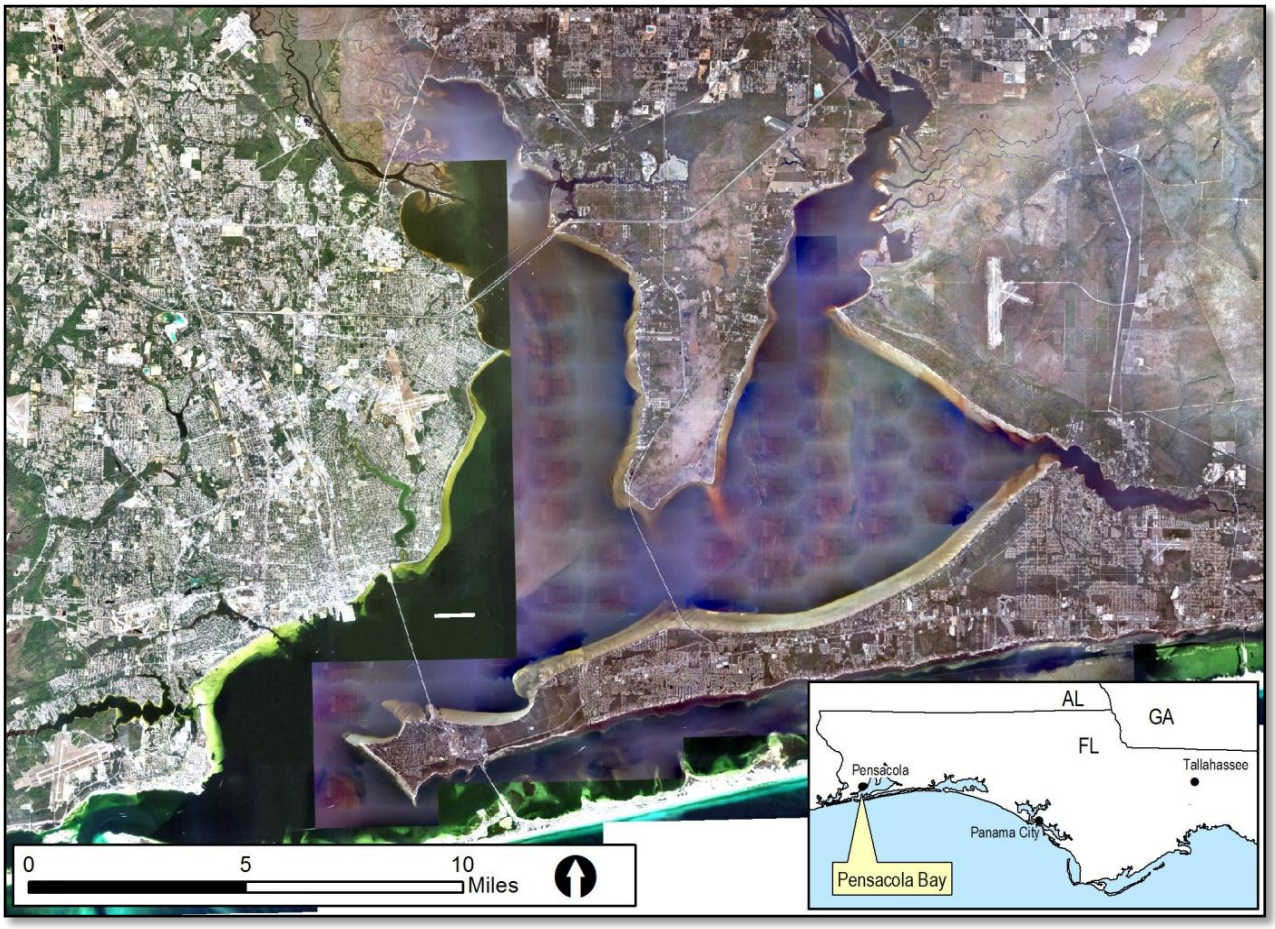

Figure 7. Pensacola Bay System Urban Retrofit Area, Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties

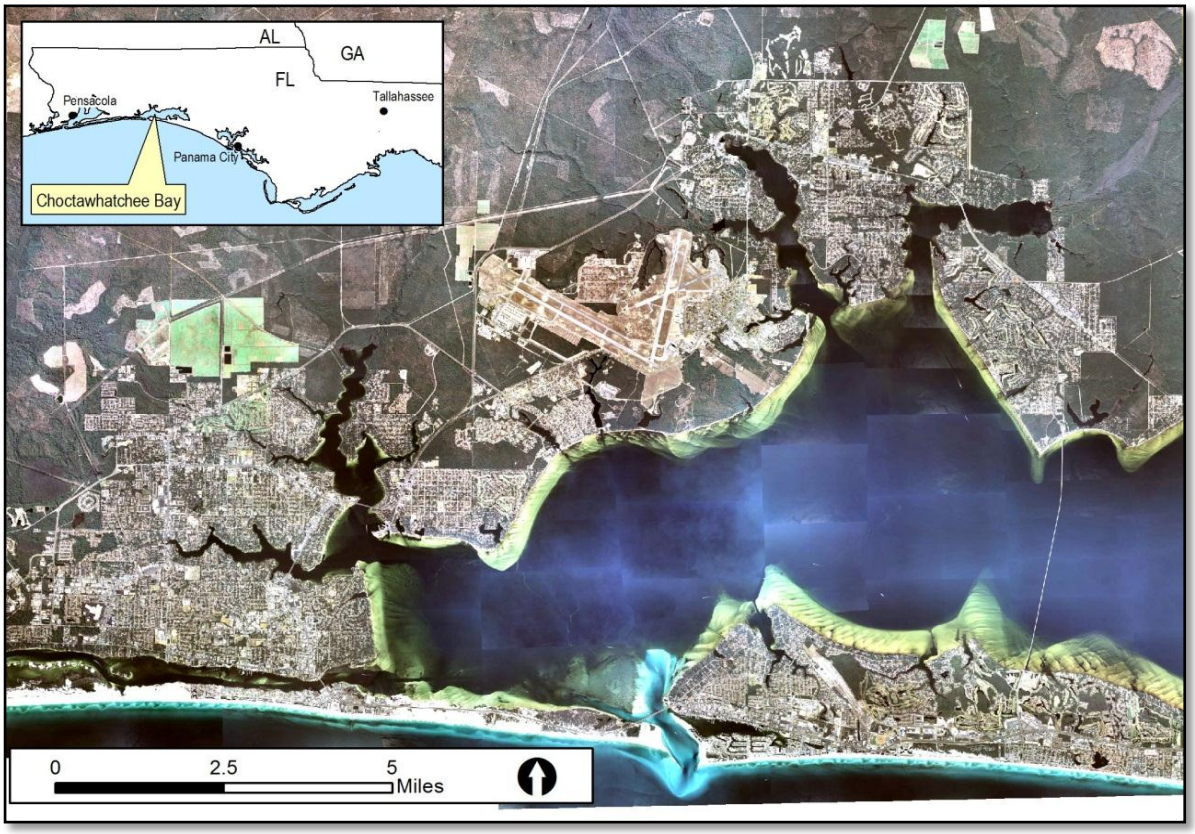

Figure 8. Choctawhatchee Bay Urban Retrofit Area, Okaloosa and Walton Counties

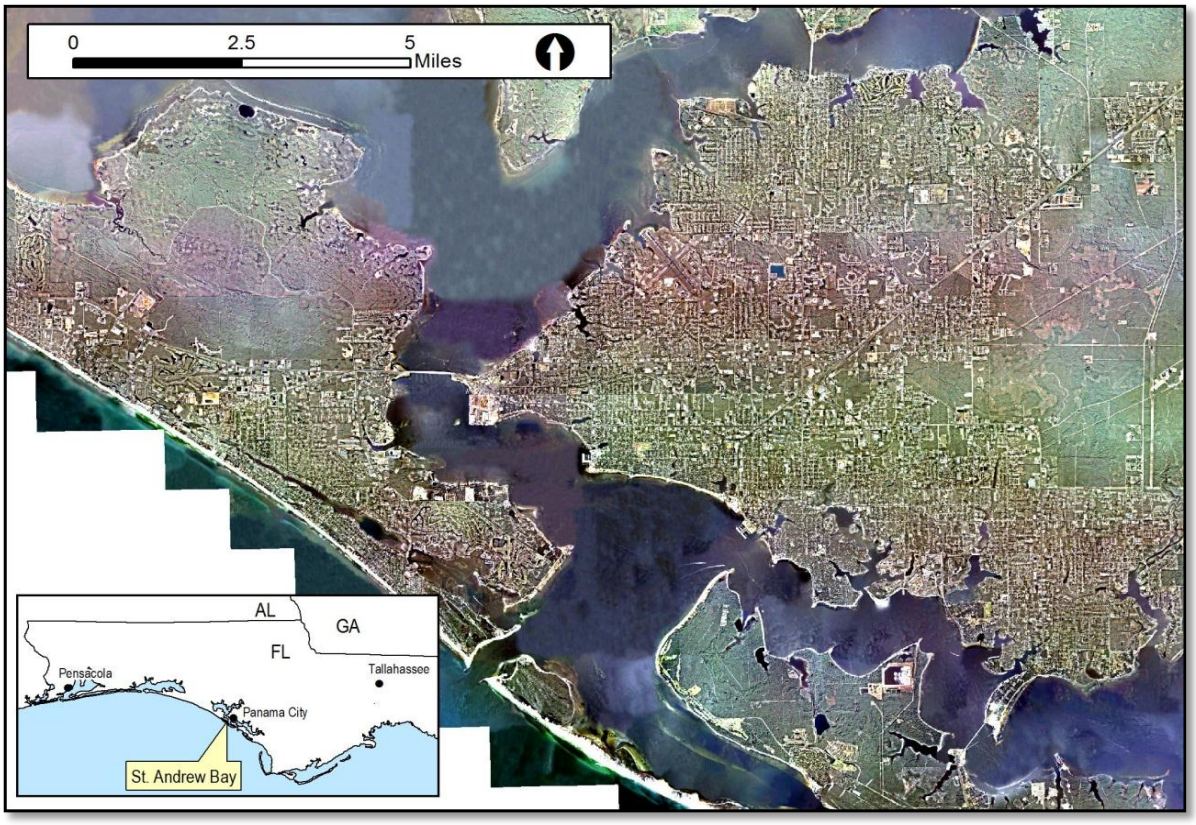

Figure 9. St. Andrew Bay Urban Retrofit Area, Bay County