
The Nature Conservancy, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, State Public Trust Lands

Sandusky Bay Restoration Initiative Nutrient Reduction Wetlands

Sandusky, Ohio



Integrated, landscape-scale interventions will transform Western Sandusky Bay water quality while improving fish and wildlife habitat.

SERVICES

Conservation Planning
Ecological Restoration

The 64-square-mile Sandusky Bay is a unique Great Lakes Bay ecosystem, with one of the larger coastal wetlands in the Ohio Lake Erie basin. Over the years, high lake levels, nutrient loadings, and upstream land use changes have impacted these wetlands. In 2019, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources launched the Sandusky Bay Restoration Initiative, a multi-project effort to improve the bay's ecological function and water quality. Biohabitats helped the City of Sandusky create a Strategic Restoration Plan, which identified and prioritized 39 sites where ecological restoration and nature-based solutions could reduce sediment suspension and nutrients and regenerate shoreline resilience and habitat.

The Nature Conservancy, with H2Ohio program funding, turned to the Baird-Biohabitats-TetraTech team to initiate the Strategic Plan's highest-ranking restoration projects in Western Sandusky Bay. These included creating three 300+-acre barrier wetlands to reduce wave energy in Muddy Creek; riparian and wetland restoration along Pickerel Creek; restoration of a formerly diked wetland at Willow Point; and nature-based shoreline solutions along five diked bayfront sites.

Biohabitats led design and permitting for the Pickerel Creek Riparian restoration and all of the nature-based shorelines projects. For all project sites, Biohabitats performed ecological assessments, set restoration goals, determined design elevations for wetland formation and adaptation, and developed protocols for managing, monitoring, and maintaining the restored sites into the future.