



Figure 2.2: Water Use Classification in the Pensacola Bay Basin

Bay estuary. Seagrasses provide important habitat for young and juvenile fish and scallops. The current coverage of seagrasses is much less than historically was present. Pensacola Bay lost a 14-mile stretch of seagrasses on the east side of the bay. Most seagrasses have been lost from Escambia Bay. Seagrasses were common in this bay as late as the early 1950s. The earliest documented loss of seagrasses was recorded in 1955, with the commencement of a discharge from the Monsanto Plant. Additional discharges from chemical plants exacerbated the loss of more seagrasses. Some tape grass and widgeon grass continue to survive in Escambia Bay, while parts of Santa Rosa Sound continue to support turtle grass, shoal grass, manatee grass, and widgeon grass. Blackwater Bay has a lower salinity than other parts of the Pensacola Bay estuary and supports tape grass and widgeon grass. These 2 species of submerged aquatic vegetation are apparently doing well in this part of the bay.

Different efforts have been undertaken to restore seagrasses in the Pensacola Bay estuary. The Escambia Bay Recovery Study Team planted shoal grass at 4 sites on the east and west side of Escambia Bay in 1974. More recently, the Department’s Northwest District Ecosystem Restoration