Coffee Island is located in Portersville Bay, southeast of Bayou la Batre in Mississippi Sound. The shoreline has been experiencing significant erosion since the 1950’s. Reef segments were placed about 100 ft waterward from the shoreline and protected 1.02 miles of natural shoreline. The project restored more than 1.5 acres of reef breakwater and living shoreline habitat.

Coffee Island restoration was funded through a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant. The main objective was the creation of fishery-related jobs for south Mobile County, the restoration of oysters and the protection of eroding shorelines. This project helped create local jobs for oystermen, shrimpers, and workers, as well as promote healthy fisheries that can sustain traditional livelihoods of fishers and
those involved in the seafood processing industry. This project, in combination with the Alabama Port project, employed 33 full-time workers and contributed to paychecks for 152 positions in the coastal Alabama community.

This project created oyster reefs that protected approximately 10 acres of seagrass and marsh habitat, while limiting erosion along approximately 1.02 miles of shoreline. The methods used in the project offered a natural approach to shoreline protection that enhances critical habitats for many species of fish and invertebrates.

The Future of Coffee Island
Implementing alternative techniques in front of bagged shell reefs will be explored, as well as refilling the ReefBLKs™ to restore wave attenuation and substrate.