Vegetation Monitoring at Four Northwest Florida Water Management District Mitigation Sites Fall 2016

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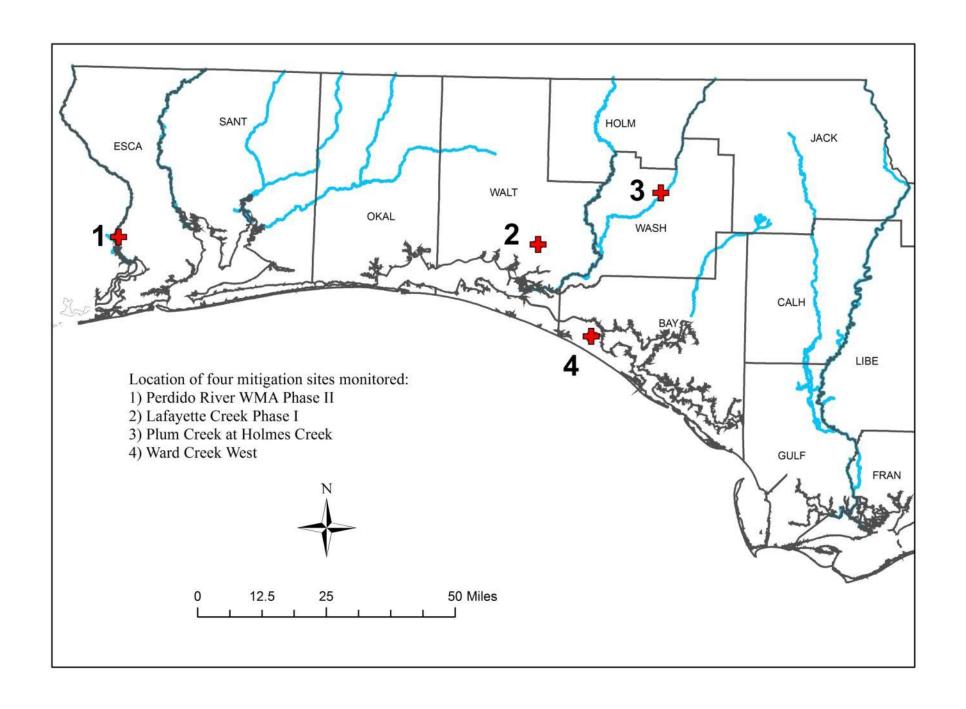
Florida Natural Area Inventory 1018 Thomasville Road, Suite 200-C Tallahassee, FL 32303 Dan Hipes, Director

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This document contains separate qualitative and quantitative vegetation monitoring reports for four mitigation sites managed by the Northwest Florida Water Management District:

- 1) Perdido River Water Management Area Phase II in Escambia County
- 2) Lafayette Creek Phase I in Walton County
- 3) Plum Creek at Holmes Creek in Washington County
- 4) Ward Creek West in Bay County.

Except for the genus *Dichanthelium*, taxonomy follows Wunderlin, R. P., B.F. Hanen, A.R. Franck, and F.B. Essig. 2016. Atlas of Florida Plants (htpp://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/), Institute for Systematic Botany, University of South Florida, Tampa. *Dichanthelium* follows the 2012 treatment by Freckman and Lelong in the Flora of North America (http://herbarium.usu.edu/treatments/Dichanthelium.htm#Dichanthelium).



Plum Creek at Holmes Creek Mitigation Site Qualitative and Quantitative Monitoring December 2016

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INTRODUCTION

The Plum Creek at Holmes Creek Mitigation Site compensates for the loss of wetland function due to the impact of the SR 79 Open Creek Bridge in Washington County, Florida. The 130-acre tract lies just north of Holmes Creek and is contiguous with other Northwest Florida Water Management District holdings along the creek. Access is by going south on SR 79 for 6.3 miles from I-10 to Johnson Road. Head east on Johnson Road to the gate on the south side of the winding road. The Plum Creek Mitigation project aims to restore sandhill (SA) from pine plantation and mixed forested wetlands (MFW) from a wetland impacted by a beaver pond (Figure PC-1). Quantitative and qualitative monitoring documented the current plant species composition and vegetation structure of the communities targeted for restoration as well as an intact mixed forested wetland community. The site vegetation was previously monitored by FNAI biologists during the fall from 2012 through 2015.

METHODS

The quantitative monitoring utilized 300-foot- long permanent transect lines previously marked during the 2012 survey. Two transects were located in the sandhill, one in the restoration mixed forested wetland, and one in preserved mixed forested wetland (Figure PC-1). In 2013, metal T-posts were installed at the ends of each transect to provide more permanent reference points. Data recorded consisted of the visually estimated percent cover of each plant species in fifteen 1-meter square quadrats. Tree trunks in quadrats were noted in comments but not recorded as cover; canopy over 2 m in height was also not recorded as cover in quadrats. Quadrats were located to the left of the transect line and placed 20 feet apart, starting at 0 feet and ending at 280 feet. The qualitative monitoring consisted of recording the species and vegetation structure observed along meandering pedestrian transects through each of these communities. The field surveys were performed by FNAI botanists Gary Schultz and Ann Johnson on October 19, 20, and 24, 2016.

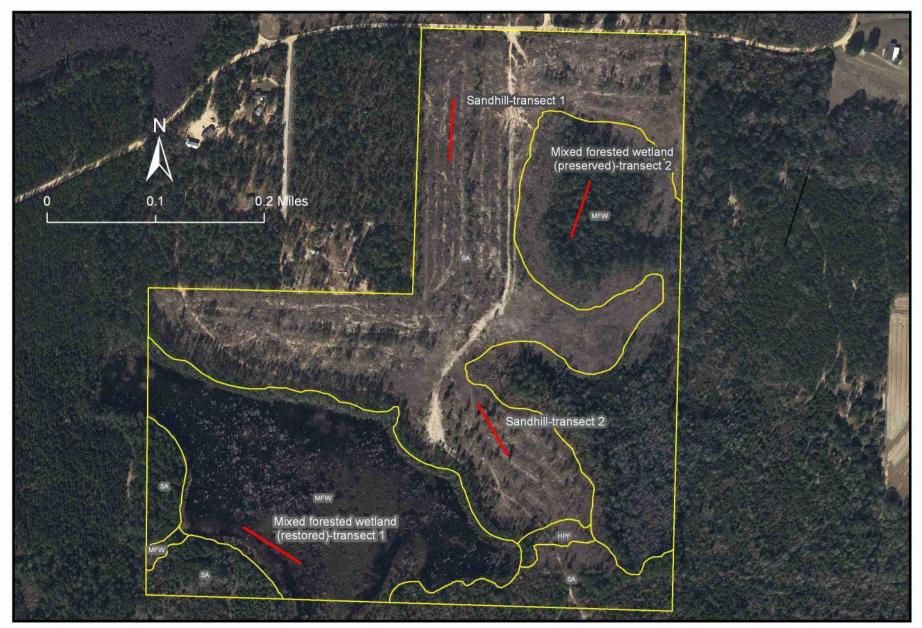


Figure PC-1. Location of permanent transects at Plum Creek at Holmes Creek Mitigation Site in Sandhill and Mixed Forested Wetland,

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 127 plant species were observed during the 2016 monitoring period in the target communities at Plum Creek at Holmes Creek Mitigation Site (Table PC-1).

Table PC-1. Plant species observed in target communities at Plum Creek at Holmes Creek

Mitigation Site on October 19, 20 and 24, 2016.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Sandhill	Mixed Forested Wetland- Restoration	Mixed Forested Wetland- Preserved	Grand Total
Acer rubrum	red maple		Х	Х	2
Agalinis fasciculata	beach false foxglove	Х			1
Andropogon ternarius	splitbeard bluestem	Х			1
Andropogon virginicus	broomsedge bluestem	Х			1
Apteria aphylla	nodding nixie			Х	1
Aristida purpurascens	arrowfeather threeawn	Х			1
Aristida stricta var. beyrichiana	wiregrass	Х			1
Asimina angustifolia	slimleaf pawpaw	Х			1
Baccharis halimifolia	groundsel tree	Х			1
Baptisia lanceolata	gopherweed	Х			1
Berlandiera pumila	soft greeneyes	Х			1
Bidens mitis	smallfruit beggarticks		Х		1
Bulbostylis ciliatifolia	capillary hairsedge	Х			1
Callicarpa americana	American beautyberry	Х			1
Carex striata	Walter's sedge			Х	1
Chrysoma pauciflosculosa	woody goldenrod	Х			1
Chrysopsis lanuginosa	Lynn Haven goldenaster	Х			1
Clethra alnifolia	sweet pepperbush			Х	1
Cliftonia monophylla	black titi			Х	1
Cnidoscolus stimulosus	tread softly	Х			1
Conyza canadensis	Canadian horseweed	Х			1
Croptilon divaricatum	slender scratchdaisy	Х			1
Cyperus retrorsus	pinebarren flatsedge	Х			1
Dalea pinnata	summer farewell	Х			1
Decodon verticillatus	willow herb		Х		1
Dichanthelium aciculare	needleleaf witchgrass	Х			1
Dichanthelium acuminatum	tapered witchgrass	х			1
Dichanthelium commutatum	variable witchgrass	Х			1
Dichanthelium ovale	eggleaf witchgrass	Х			1
Dichanthelium sp.	witchgrass	Х			1
Dulichium arundinaceum	threeway sedge		Х		1

Scientific Name	Common Name	Sandhill	Mixed Forested Wetland- Restoration	Mixed Forested Wetland- Preserved	Grand Total
Eleocharis equisetoides	jointed spikerush		Х		1
Elephantopus elatus	tall elephantsfoot	Х			1
Eragrostis spectabilis	purple lovegrass	Х			1
Eriogonum tomentosum	dogtongue wild buckwheat	Х			1
Eupatorium compositifolium	yankeeweed	Х			1
Eupatorium mohrii	Mohr's thoroughwort	Х			1
Euphorbia floridana	greater Florida spurge	Х			1
Euthamia caroliniana	slender flattop goldenrod	Х			1
Galactia minor	leafy milkpea	Х			1
Galium hispidulum	coastal bedstraw	Х			1
Gelsemium sempervirens	yellow jessamine	Х			1
Hibiscus aculeatus	comfortroot	Х			1
Houstonia procumbens	roundleaf bluet	Х			1
Hypericum brachyphyllum	coastalplain St. John's wort		Х		1
Hypericum gentianoides	orangegrass	Х			1
Hypericum hypericoides	St. Andrew's cross	Х			1
Hypericum tetrapetalum	fourpetal St. John's wort	Х			1
Ilex coriacea	large gallberry			Х	1
llex opaca	American holly	Х			1
llex vomitoria	yaupon	Х			1
Juncus canadensis	Canadian rush		Х		1
Lachnanthes caroliana	Carolina redroot		Х		1
Leucothoe racemosa	swamp doghobble			Х	1
Liatris elegans	pinkscale gayfeather	Х			1
Liatris gracilis	slender gayfeather	Х			1
Liatris pauciflora var. secunda	Piedmont gayfeather	Х			1
Liatris spicata	dense gayfeather	Х			1
Licania michauxii	gopher apple	Х			1
Liquidambar styraciflua	sweetgum			Х	1
Ludwigia suffruticosa	shrubby primrosewillow		Х		1
Ludwigia virgata	savannah primrosewillow	Х			1
Lycopus rubellus	taperleaf waterhorehound		Х		1
Lyonia lucida	fetterbush			Х	1
Magnolia virginiana	sweetbay		Х	Х	2
Myrica cerifera	wax myrtle			Х	1
Nymphaea odorata	white waterlily		Х		1
Nymphoides cordata	little floatingheart		Х		1
Nyssa sylvatica var. biflora	swamp tupelo		Х	Х	2
Osmanthus americanus	wild olive	Х		Х	2

Scientific Name	Common Name	Sandhill	Mixed Forested Wetland- Restoration	Mixed Forested Wetland- Preserved	Grand Total
Osmunda cinnamomea	cinnamon fern			Х	1
Panicum hemitomon	maidencane		Х		1
Paronychia patula	pineland nailwort	Х			1
Persea palustris	swamp bay			Х	1
Pinus clausa	sand pine	Х			1
Pinus elliottii	slash pine	Х	Х	Х	3
Pinus palustris	longleaf pine	Х			1
Pityopsis aspera	pineland silkgrass	Х			1
Pityopsis graminifolia	narrowleaf silkgrass	Х			1
Polygala nana	candyroot	Х			1
Polygonella gracilis	tall jointweed	Х			1
Polypremum procumbens	rustweed	Х			1
Pseudognaphalium obtusifolium	sweet everlasting	Х			1
Pteridium aquilinum	bracken fern	Х			1
Quercus falcata	southern red oak	Х			1
Quercus hemisphaerica	laurel oak	Х			1
Quercus laevis	turkey oak	Х			1
Quercus margarettae	sand post oak	Х			1
Quercus myrtifolia	myrtle oak	Х			1
Rhexia mariana	pale meadowbeauty	Х			1
Rhododendron canescens	mountain azalea			Х	1
Rhynchosia cytisoides	royal snoutbean	Х			1
Rhynchosia reniformis	dollarleaf	Х			1
Rhynchospora chalarocephala	loosehead beaksedge		Х	Х	2
Rhynchospora nitens	shortbeak beaksedge		Х		1
Rhynchospora sp.	beaksedge		Х		1
Rubus cuneifolius	sand blackberry	Х			1
Saccharum giganteum	sugarcane plumegrass		Х		1
Schizachyrium scoparium	little bluestem	Х			1
Scleria ciliata	fringed nutrush	Х			1
Serenoa repens	saw palmetto	Х			1
Sericocarpus tortifolius	whitetop aster	Х			1
Smilax auriculata	earleaf greenbrier	Х			1
Smilax bona-nox	saw greenbrier	Х			1
Smilax glauca	cat greenbrier	Х			1
Smilax laurifolia	laurel greenbrier		1	Х	1
Smilax pumila	sarsaparilla vine	Х	1	1	1
Solidago fistulosa	pinebarren goldenrod	Х			1
Solidago odora	sweet goldenrod	Х			1

Scientific Name	Common Name	Sandhill	Mixed Forested Wetland- Restoration	Mixed Forested Wetland- Preserved	Grand Total
Solidago sp.	goldenrod	Х			1
Sphagnum sp.	sphagnum moss			Х	1
Stylisma patens	coastalplain dawnflower	Х			1
Symphyotrichum dumosum	rice button aster	Х			1
Taxodium distichum	bald cypress		Х		1
Triadenum virginicum	Virginia marsh St. John's		Х		1
Trichostema dichotomum	forked bluecurls	Х			1
unknown graminoid	unknown graminoid		Х		1
Utricularia foliosa	leafy bladderwort		Х		1
Vaccinium arboreum	sparkleberry	Х			1
Vaccinium corymbosum	highbush blueberry			Х	1
Vaccinium sp.	blueberry			Х	1
Vaccinium stamineum	deerberry	Х			1
Viburnum nudum	possumhaw			Х	1
Vitis rotundifolia	muscadine	Х		Х	2
Woodwardia areolata	netted chain fern			Х	1
Woodwardia virginica	Virginia chain fern		Х		1
Xyris fimbriata	fringed yellow-eyed grass		Х		1
Total number of species: 127		84	26	25	135

Sandhill

Qualitative sampling. The sandhill natural community has been degraded by past silviculture activities but retains many characteristic species. Young planted longleaf pines were spaced over the hillside. The diverse but somewhat sparse groundcover included wiregrass, broomsedge bluestem, little bluestem, and needleleaf witchgrass. The occasional shrubs were mainly yaupon, turkey oak, sparkleberry, and sand blackberry. The earleaf greenbriar vine was common. A total of 84 plant species were identified in this community (Table PC-1).

Quantitative sampling. The northern Transect 1 (Table PC-2, Figure PC-2) was located midslope on an east-facing hill. It had a total of 45 species with 28% bare ground. Broomsedge bluestem had the highest percent cover was by followed by orangegrass, Lynn Haven goldenaster, and wiregrass. The shrub yaupon and the herbs yankeeweed and tapered witchgrass had the next highest covers. The southern Transect 2 (Table PC-3, Figure PC-3) was situated near the top of a low ridge. It had a total of 36 species with 39% bare ground. The herb rustweed had the highest cover followed by the shrubby saw palmetto and saplings of longleaf pine. The herbaceous orangegrass, needle witchgrass, and Lynn Haven goldenaster had the next highest percentages.

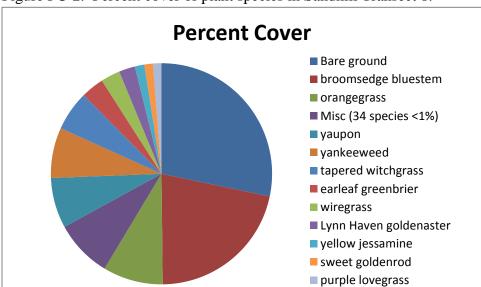


Figure PC-2. Percent cover of plant species in Sandhill Transect 1.

Table PC-2. Percent cover of plant species in Sandhill Transect 1 when sampled on October 24, 2016.

6 1 1/6		verage percent cover per
Scientific name	Common name	quadrat
Andropogon virginicus	broomsedge bluestem	21.63
Hypericum gentianoides	orangegrass	8.83
Ilex vomitoria	yaupon	7.40
Eupatorium compositifolium	yankeeweed	7.40
Dichanthelium acuminatum	tapered witchgrass	5.87
Smilax auriculata	earleaf greenbrier	3.37
Aristida stricta var. beyrichiana	wiregrass	2.83
Chrysopsis lanuginosa	Lynn Haven goldenaster	2.37
Gelsemium sempervirens	yellow jessamine	1.40
Solidago odora	sweet goldenrod	1.27
Eragrostis spectabilis	purple lovegrass	1.23
Vaccinium stamineum	deerberry	0.77
Galactia minor	leafy milkpea	0.73
Dalea pinnata	summer farewell	0.60
Pteridium aquilinum	bracken fern	0.57
Dichanthelium commutatum	variable witchgrass	0.57
Pinus palustris	longleaf pine	0.50
Dichanthelium ovale	eggleaf witchgrass	0.50
Smilax glauca	cat greenbrier	0.43
Polypremum procumbens	rustweed	0.33
Hypericum hypericoides	St. Andrew's cross	0.30

		Average percent cover per
Scientific name	Common name	quadrat
Pseudognaphalium obtusifolium	sweet everlasting	0.30
Bulbostylis ciliatifolia	capillary hairsedge	0.27
Scleria ciliata	fringed nutrush	0.27
Smilax pumila	sarsaparilla vine	0.23
Conyza canadensis	Canadian horseweed	0.23
Baptisia lanceolata	gopherweed	0.23
Pityopsis aspera	pineland silkgrass	0.23
Galium hispidulum	coastal bedstraw	0.10
Solidago sp.	goldenrod	0.10
Quercus margarettae	sand post oak	0.10
Dichanthelium aciculare	needleleaf witchgrass	0.10
Croptilon divaricatum	slender scratchdaisy	0.07
Liatris spicata	dense gayfeather	0.07
Berlandiera pumila	soft greeneyes	0.03
Aristida purpurascens	arrowfeather threeawn	0.03
Baccharis halimifolia	groundsel tree	0.03
Euphorbia floridana	greater Florida spurge	0.03
Viola sp.	violet	0.03
Rhynchosia reniformis	dollarleaf	0.03
Vaccinium arboreum	sparkleberry	0.03
Cnidoscolus stimulosus	tread softly	0.03
Trichostema dichotomum	forked bluecurls	0.03
Liatris pauciflora var. secunda	Piedmont gayfeather	0.03
Rhynchospora sp.	beaksedge	0.03
	Bare ground	28.43

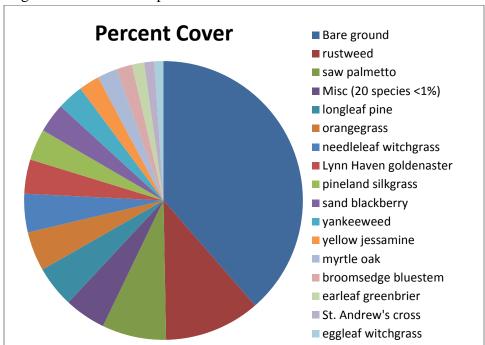


Figure PC-3. Percent species cover in Sandhill Transect 2.

Table PC-3. Percent cover of plant species in Sandhill Transect 2 when sampled on October 20, 2016.

		Average percent cover per
Scientific name	Common name	quadrat
Polypremum procumbens	rustweed	11.20
Serenoa repens	saw palmetto	7.50
Pinus palustris	longleaf pine	4.83
Hypericum gentianoides	orangegrass	4.60
Dichanthelium aciculare	needleleaf witchgrass	4.50
Chrysopsis lanuginosa	Lynn Haven goldenaster	4.00
Pityopsis aspera	pineland silkgrass	3.67
Rubus cuneifolius	sand blackberry	3.43
Eupatorium compositifolium	yankeeweed	3.07
Gelsemium sempervirens	yellow jessamine	2.40
Quercus myrtifolia	myrtle oak	2.33
Andropogon virginicus	broomsedge bluestem	1.83
Smilax auriculata	earleaf greenbrier	1.43
Hypericum hypericoides	St. Andrew's cross	1.17
Dichanthelium ovale	eggleaf witchgrass	1.07
Pteridium aquilinum	bracken fern	0.70
Agalinis fasciculata	beach false foxglove	0.57
Aristida purpurascens	arrowfeather threeawn	0.53

	_	Average percent cover per
Scientific name	Common name	quadrat
Solidago odora	sweet goldenrod	0.47
Pseudognaphalium obtusifolium	sweet everlasting	0.30
Hibiscus aculeatus	comfortroot	0.23
Dichanthelium acuminatum	tapered witchgrass	0.23
Smilax bona-nox	saw greenbrier	0.23
Euthamia caroliniana	slender flattop goldenrod	0.20
Cyperus retrorsus	pinebarren flatsedge	0.17
Solidago fistulosa	pinebarren goldenrod	0.10
Conyza canadensis	Canadian horseweed	0.07
Symphyotrichum dumosum	rice button aster	0.07
Smilax glauca	cat greenbrier	0.03
Tragia smallii	Small's noseburn	0.03
Baccharis halimifolia	groundsel tree	0.03
Croptilon divaricatum	slender scratchdaisy	0.03
Trichostema dichotomum	forked bluecurls	0.03
Pityopsis graminifolia	narrowleaf silkgrass	0.03
Vitis rotundifolia	muscadine	0.03
	Bare ground	38.87

Mixed Forested Wetland (Restoration)

Qualitative sampling. The mixed forested wetland restoration area (Figure PC-1) resembled a marsh due to its sparse tree cover. The muck soil of the former beaver pond was inundated at the time of the survey. The vegetative cover consisted primarily of willow herb, a low shrub with woody base and herbaceous stems that arch over to form an impenetrable interlacing thicket. Interspersed with the willow herb were patches of young cypress with occasional swamp tupelo, sweetbay, and red maple. Shallower areas near the shore were lined with a diverse set of wetland herbs, including taperleaf waterhorehound, and maidencane. The total number of species observed in this community was 26 (Table PC-1).

Quantitative sampling. Transect 1 (Table PC-4, Figure PC-4) had a total of 13 species with 29% bare ground. The highest percent cover was by willow herb followed by shrubby primrose willow and sweetbay. Willow herb was still in leaf at the time of the sampling.

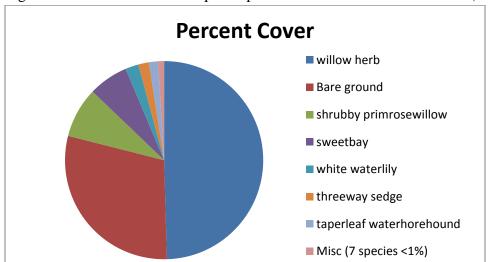


Figure PC-4. Percent cover of plant species in Mixed Forested Wetland (Restored) Transect 1.

Table PC-4. Percent cover of plant species in Mixed Forested Wetland (Restored) Transect 1 when sampled on October 19, 2016.

		Average percent cover per
Scientific name	Common name	quadrat
Decodon verticillatus	willow herb	49.67
Ludwigia suffruticosa	shrubby primrosewillow	8.23
Magnolia virginiana	sweetbay	6.50
Nymphaea odorata	white waterlily	2.17
Dulichium arundinaceum	threeway sedge	1.73
Lycopus rubellus	taperleaf waterhorehound	1.47
Juncus canadensis	Canadian rush	0.37
Taxodium distichum	bald cypress	0.10
Eleocharis equisetoides	jointed spikerush	0.10
Nymphoides cordata	little floatingheart	0.10
Panicum hemitomon	maidencane	0.03
unknown graminoid	unknown graminoid	0.03
Nyssa sylvatica var. biflora	swamp tupelo	0.03
	Bare ground	29.47

Mixed Forested Wetland (Preserved)

Qualitative sampling. The preserved mixed forested wetland (Figure PC-1) was a relatively undisturbed mature baygall forest. The tall canopy of large trees formed dense shade with occasional openings in places. Dominant species were sweetbay, swamp tupelo, and Virginia live oak. The dense subcanopy was formed primarily by tree-size black titi, and swamp bay. The moderately dense shrub layer consisted mainly of large gallberry, fetterbush, and sweet

pepperbush. The sparse herb layer was primarily sphagnum moss. The muck soil was saturated, but no standing water was present at the time of sampling. The total number of species observed in this community was 25 (Table PC-1).

Quantitative sampling. Transect 2 (Table PC-5, Figure PC-5) had a total of 17 species with 62% bare ground. The dominant shrubs were fetterbush and sweet pepperbush, with lesser amounts of large gallberry and highbush blueberry. Sphagnum moss formed most of the sparse herbaceous cover.

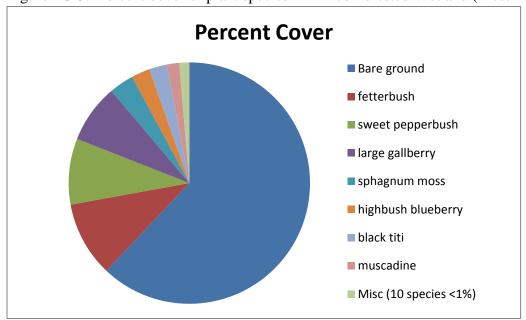


Figure PC-5. Percent cover of plant species in Mixed Forested Wetland (Preserved) Transect 2.

Table PC-5. Percent cover of plant species in Mixed Forested Wetland (Preserved) Transect 2 when sampled on October 20, 2016.

		Average percent cover per
Scientific name	Common name	quadrat
Lyonia lucida	fetterbush	10.07
Clethra alnifolia	sweet pepperbush	8.83
Ilex coriacea	large gallberry	7.87
Sphagnum sp.	sphagnum moss	3.30
Vaccinium corymbosum	highbush blueberry	2.50
Cliftonia monophylla	black titi	2.37
Vitis rotundifolia	muscadine	1.67
Carex striata	Walter's sedge	0.50
Nyssa sylvatica var. biflora	swamp tupelo	0.23
Rhododendron chapmanii	Chapman's rhododendron	0.23
Smilax laurifolia	laurel greenbrier	0.10
Apteria aphylla	nodding nixie	0.10
Vaccinium sp.	blueberry	0.03

		Average percent cover per
Scientific name	Common name	quadrat
Rhynchospora chalarocephala	loosehead beaksedge	0.03
Osmanthus americanus	wild olive	0.03
Woodwardia areolata	netted chain fern	0.03
Persea palustris	swamp bay	0.03
	Bare ground	62.07