

## MYSTIC SPRINGS MITIGATION SITE

### “Time-Zero” Monitoring Report (2017)

1 June 2017

USACE Permit No.: SAJ-2015-03537 (SP-MAO), issued 6/30/2016

Permittee: Florida Department of Transportation, District 3  
C/o Colby Cleveland  
1074 Highway 90  
Chipley, FL 32428

Responsible Party for Monitoring: Northwest Florida Water Management District  
81 Water Management Drive  
Havana, FL 32333

Date of Inspection: 5/19/2017

#### **Summary:**

The purpose of this project (Mystic Springs Mitigation Site) is to provide offsetting mitigation for 1.88 acres of impact (1.21 acres direct/permanent; 0.67 acres secondary) to freshwater palustrine wetlands (0.82 UMAM functional loss) associated with FDOT replacement and realignment of the CR 99 Pine Barren Creek Bridge in Escambia County, Florida. As required by Special Condition No. 8 of the USACE permit, mitigation has been implemented at the Mystic Springs site on NFWFMD lands along the Escambia River floodplain via planting forested wetland species on approximately 5.52 acres.

Mystic Springs Mitigation Site (30.8563° North, 87.3129° West), a sand pit excavated in the 1940s or early 1950s, is located adjacent to the public boat ramp (Mystic Springs Road) on the Escambia River approximately one mile east of US 29 and 1.5 miles southeast of McDavid, Florida. Foot access is possible at any time without prior notice.

In accordance with the restoration plan, 2,396 trees (447 red maple, 447 river birch, 224 Carolina ash, 1,278 bald cypress; each tree 4-5' tall) were planted at the mitigation area from April 25 – 28, 2017. Trees were installed in plantable areas on 8' centers at a rate of 681 trees per acre.

During the May 19, 2017 “Time-Zero” site inspection, it was discovered that 173 planted trees had been stolen or uprooted. Uprooted trees were replanted by NFWFMD staff. Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) law enforcement was informed of the incident and asked to provide additional patrols of the area. This incident resulted in an estimated loss of 126 trees. Despite this loss, tree density continues to exceed the required performance standard of 400 trees per acre.

**Performance Standards:**

- 400 hydrophytic trees per acre in a healthy and thriving condition.
- Nuisance vegetation  $\leq 5\%$  cover per acre.
- Exotic vegetation  $\leq 1\%$  cover per acre.

**Monitoring Requirements:**

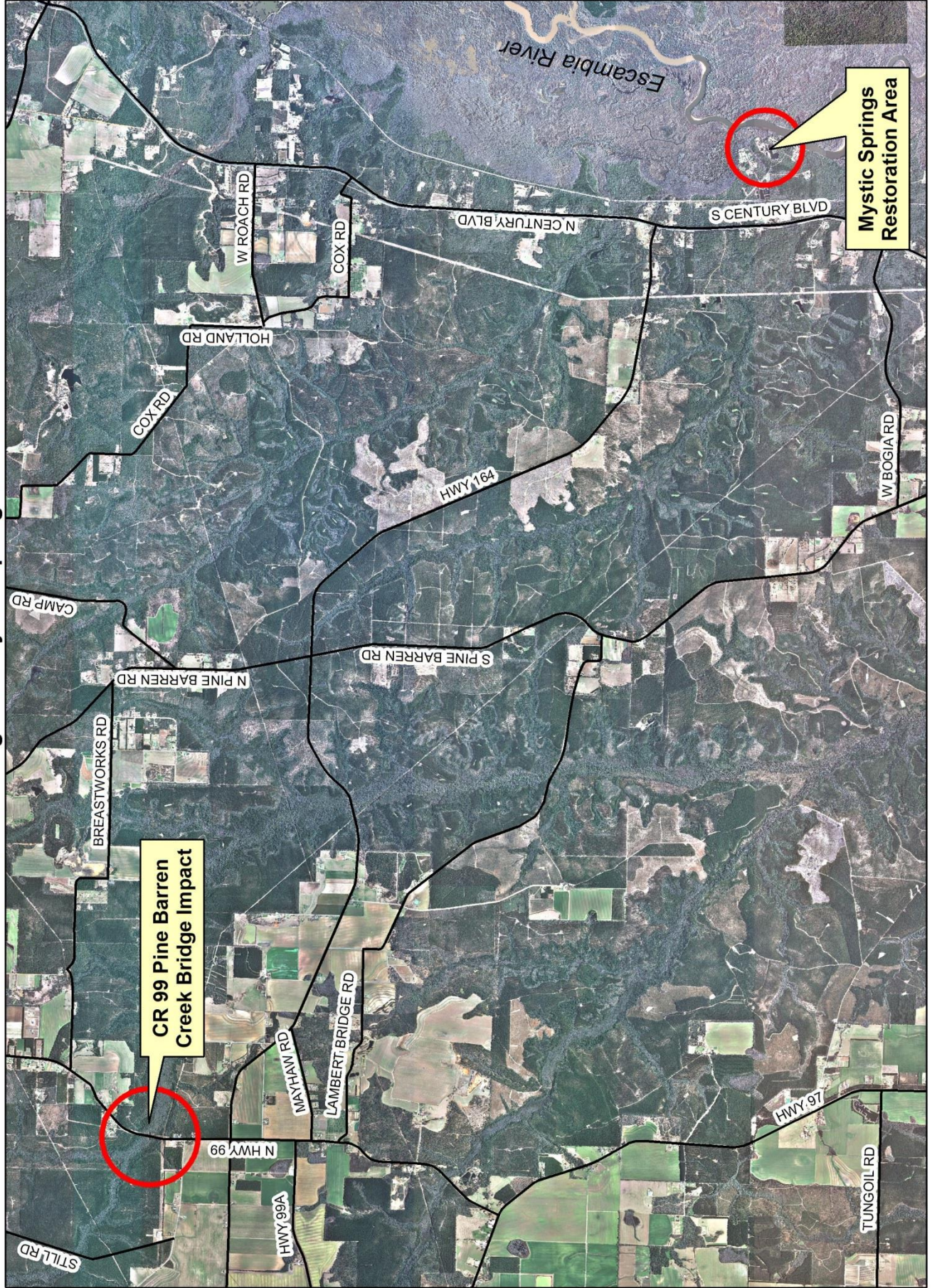
- Inspection and photo-documentation of site.
- Frequency
  - “Time-Zero” monitoring (Spring, 2017).
  - Semi-annual monitoring (Fall, 2017; Spring and Fall, 2018).
  - Annual monitoring (Fall, 2019 – 2021).
- “Time-Zero” monitoring report to be submitted within 60 days of implementation of mitigation.
- Annual reports submitted to the USACE for duration of monitoring (2017 – 2021; semi-annual reports are to be combined into one annual report for submission).

**Conclusions:**

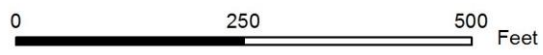
The “Time-Zero” site inspection of 5/19/2017 found that all performance standards are being met. The number of trees successfully established per acre exceeds permit requirements. Planted trees are healthy and frequent rains have helped with establishment. No exotic or invasive vegetation is present. Increased surveillance by NFWFMD staff and FWC patrols are expected to deter further vandalism/theft of plants.

All monitoring reports will be submitted to the USACE Enforcement Section, Pensacola, Florida, and posted at [www.NFWFMDwetlands.com](http://www.NFWFMDwetlands.com).

CR 99 Pine Barren Creek Bridge and Mystic Springs Restoration Area - 2013 DOQ



### Mystic Springs Restoration Area - 2013 DOQ





Mystic Springs Pre-mitigation (10/28/2016)



Mystic Springs Post-planting (5/19/2017)



Mystic Springs Post-planting (5/19/2017)



Mystic Springs Plant Vandalism/Theft Area (5/19/2017) [All Live Plants Were Replanted]