

SOUTHGATE MITIGATION SITE

2019 Annual Monitoring Report

USACE Permit No.: SAJ-2015-02153 (NW-RLT), issued 1/13/2016

Permittee: Florida Department of Transportation, District Three
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: 9/24/2019

Summary:

This project (Southgate Mitigation Site) provides offsetting mitigation for 0.26 acres of impact to tidal marsh (0.16 UMAM functional loss) associated with FDOT construction of a multiuse path adjacent to SR 300 (from St. George Island Bridge to US 98). As authorized by USACE Permit SAJ-2015-02153 (NW-RLT), the mitigation wetlands are palustrine emergent (sawgrass tidal marsh). Mitigation was implemented at St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve (Buffer Preserve, FDEP, Florida Coastal Office) via installation of one low-water-crossing at Southgate, which enhanced the hydrologic regime of an estimated 6.49 acres of sawgrass tidal marsh by removing an impediment to natural surface flows.

Southgate (29.6865° North, 85.3017° West), a raised dirt road used by the Buffer Preserve for management access, forms a “T” intersection with SR 30A approximately 0.5 mile east of the SR 30E / SR 30A intersection. Parking is available adjacent to the mitigation site on SR 30A; pedestrian access to the site is allowed at any time during daylight hours without prior notification. Dylan Shoemaker, Preserve Manager (850-229-1787) should be contacted if any access issues arise.

Raised above natural grade, Southgate bisected a palustrine emergent wetland marsh and disrupted natural hydrologic flows and moisture regimes. The low-water-crossing designed to enhance the hydrology of adjacent wetlands was installed mid-October 2016.

Although the low-water-crossing was damaged by storm surge associated with Hurricane Michael¹, inspection by NFWMD staff on 9/24/2019 reconfirmed that there is no blockage of hydrologic flows. Invasive or exotic species listed on the “Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council 2015 List of Invasive Plant Species” within the 6.49-acre enhancement polygon were not observed, and

¹ Hurricane Michael made landfall on October 10, 2018 approximately 15-20 miles NNW of the Southgate Mitigation Site.

the emergent marsh and adjacent pine flatwoods appear healthy. Repair of the low-water-crossing is planned, and the site will continue to be managed for ecological integrity in perpetuity under an ARC-approved (Acquisitions and Restoration Council) St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve management plan (available at www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/sites/stjoseph_buffer/). The Buffer Preserve emphasizes prescribed fire and management of exotic vegetation.

Performance Standards:

- Low-water-crossing installed at appropriate elevation to allow unimpeded flows.
- Not greater than 10 percent cover by invasive or exotic species listed on the “Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council 2015 List of Invasive Plant Species” within the 6.49-acre enhancement polygon.

Monitoring Requirements:

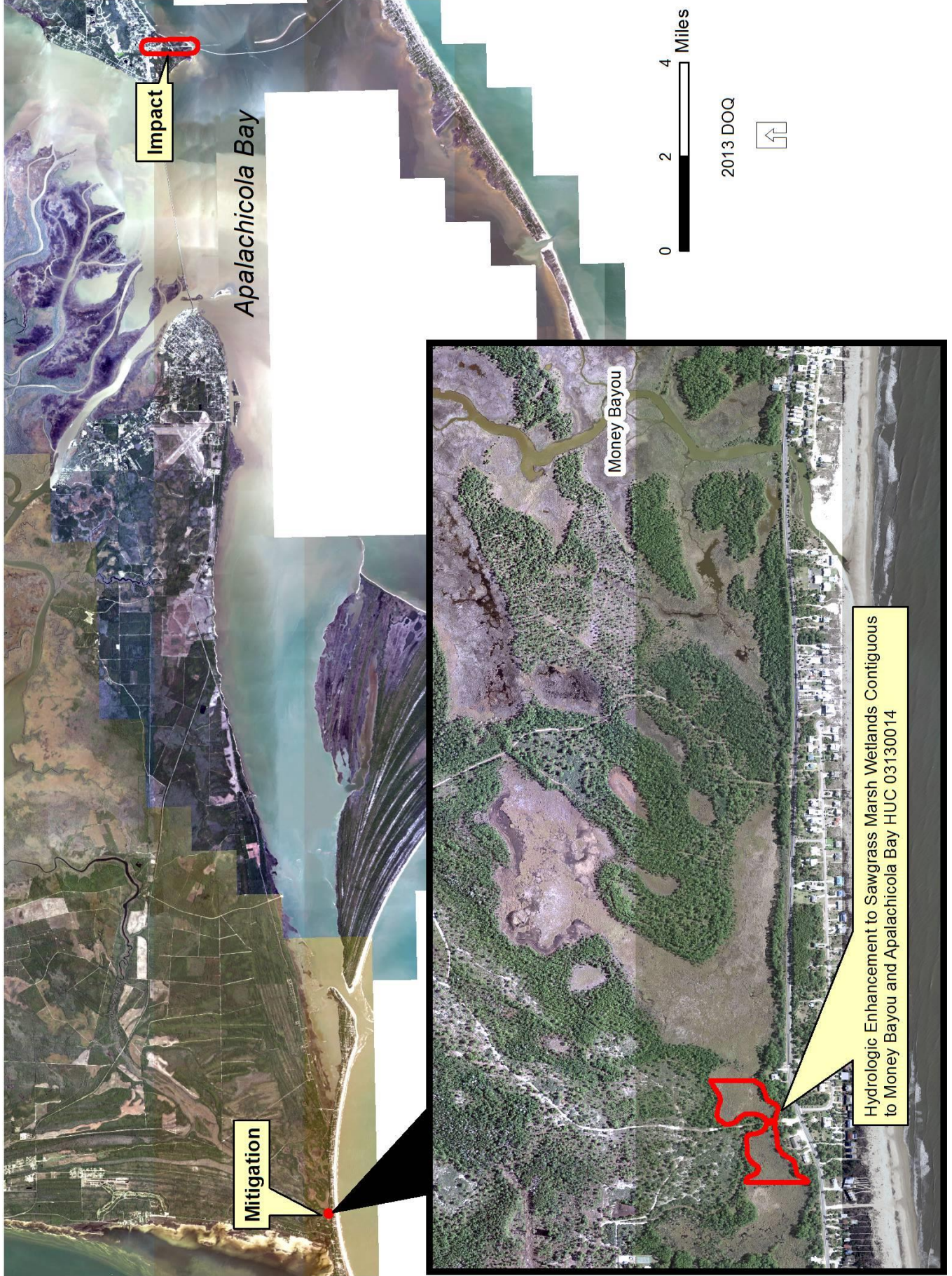
- Inspection and photo-documentation of low-water-crossing site.
- Frequency
 - “Time Zero” monitoring in Fall, 2016.
 - Semi-annual monitoring for 2017 (Spring and Fall, 2017).
 - Annual monitoring (Fall, 2018 – 2019).
- Annual reports submitted to the USACE for duration of monitoring (semi-annual reports are to be combined into one annual report for submission).

During the most recent site inspection of 9/24/2019, performance standards associated with invasive or exotic vegetation were found to be met and hydrologic flows within the marsh continue to be unimpeded by the Southgate access road. Repair of the eroded portion of the low-water-crossing (Hurricane Michael damage) is planned.

Conclusions:

The 2016 installation of one low-water-crossing at Southgate enhanced the hydrology of the adjacent palustrine emergent wetlands (sawgrass tidal marsh) by removing an impediment to natural hydrologic flows. Although damaged by Hurricane Michael, no blockages have reformed to impede hydrologic flows. Adjacent palustrine emergent wetlands are being managed for ecological integrity per the St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve management plan. No invasive or exotic plant species listed on the “Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council 2015 List of Invasive Plant Species” appear present within the enhancement polygons. Per USACE permit conditions, unless directed otherwise by the USACE, active monitoring of the mitigation site concludes with this 2019 inspection report.

Southgate Mitigation in Relation to SR 300 Multiuse Path Impact



Southgate / Sandridge Road - Wetland Hydrologic Enhancement Polygons



2013 DOQ

0 250 500 Feet

500 Feet





Southgate LWC (9/24/2019)



Southgate LWC (9/24/2019)



Enhancement Polygon, East Side (9/24/2019)



Enhancement Polygon, West Side (9/24/2019)