



Douglas E. Barr  
Executive Director

# Northwest Florida Water Management District

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(U.S. Highway 90, 10 miles west of Tallahassee)

(850) 539-5999 • (Fax) 539-2777

January 15, 2010

Ms. Victoria Tauxe  
DEP-OSLER-MS 2500  
2600 Blair Stone Rd  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2400

RECEIVED

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OFFICE OF SUBMERGED LANDS  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Re: Progress Report ~~10~~<sup>11</sup>

Dear Ms. Tauxe,

Please accept this submittal as the ~~10~~<sup>11</sup>**th semi-annual progress report** for the SHLMB.

**Please provide a brief description of permit requirements met and extent of work completed the previous report or since the permit was issued:**

1. Fishing continued at the SHLMB throughout the winter without incident.
2. In accordance with Specific Condition 8, security and law enforcement continued at the bank throughout the winter. No violations have been observed.
3. In March of 2007, inappropriate mulch used by the contractor and Bahia grass was introduced into erosion stabilization areas #1, #2, #3 and #10. These areas have been treated with herbicide in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The Bahia grass was eradicated. However any additional plants that emerge will be treated by Back Forty Solutions in 2010 as needed (Figure 4).
4. In 2006, several small patches of torpedo grass (*Panicum repens*) were observed at old boat launches associated with Dry Pond, Garret Pond and two Green Ponds. These areas were treated 3x with herbicides provided by the DEP. Since 2008, no live coverage of torpedo grass has been observed.
5. Surveys for feral hogs continued during the fall 2009 sampling at the SHLMB. Very minor feral hog evidence was observed adjacent to Deep Edge Pond. Trapper was called in but no hogs captured.
6. A total of 165 acres of wet pine flatwoods have been restored from titi shrub wetlands (Figure 10). As part of the mitigation bank instrument a total of 147 acres were selected for restoration. District staff identified an additional 18 acres of titi shrub wetlands that were historic wet flatwoods. This acreage was included in the wet flatwoods restoration efforts.

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A Gyro-trac was used to reduce shrub cover to ground level in 2007 followed by winter burns in December 2007. The following spring, the shrubs re-sprouted and dense shrubs approximately 1/2 meter in height were observed in the spring of 2008. In 2008 two test plots of 16.2 total acres were treated with selective herbicides that eradicate target shrubs without impacting desirable vegetation. The shrub cover was reduced from over 85% to less than 15 percent in those areas without impacting the planted wire grass. With the success of the test plots, the herbicide treatment was expanded to 84 acres in 2009. These areas have responded well to the herbicide treatments and shrub cover has been greatly reduced. Selective herbicide treatments will be expanded in 2010 to the remaining 65 acres (Figure 10).

7. The area adjacent to Management Unit 5, Dykes Mill Pond was planted with 90 black gums on May 7, 2009 in accordance with Attachment D of the permit.
8. The Boggy Branch erosion stabilization area was planted with 20 pond cypress and 40, 3 gallon wax myrtles on May 7, 2009 in accordance with Attachment D of the permit.
9. The road-fill removals between Deep Edge and Little Deep Edge; and Little Deep Edge and Green Head Branch were planted with shrubs on May 7, 2009. Each site was planted with 15 fetter bush (*Lyonia lucida*), 15 dog hobble (*Leucothoe racemosa*) and 40 high bush blue berries (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) in accordance with Attachment D of the permit.
10. Improvement to the upland buffer through the re-introduction of fire and thinning of oaks have been a significant component of buffer improvement at the SHLMB. As a result the wire grass cover has increased and 67 species have been identified in the sandhill. However, many of the stumps of the felled oaks re-sprouted and oaks again became numerous. In an effort to reduce oak densities to less than 150 stems per acre as required by the permit (Specific Condition 10 b) ULW (Velpar) was applied aerially in open areas and by hand in more sensitive areas. A total of 546 acres were treated in June of 2009 (Figure 11).
11. The annual monitoring was conducted between 10/30 and 11/6 2009.
12. Oblique aerials were flown October 19, 2009 and have been posted at [NFWMD.wetlands.com](http://NFWMD.wetlands.com)
13. A total of 30 acres of wet wire grass (145,200 tublings) were planted in January 2010 (Figure 12).
14. In some restored wet pine flatwoods areas, the seed bank did not responded as anticipated following the Gyro-Trac and site preparation burns. In 2010 the seed bank will be tested in these areas. In order to increase species diversity in areas where the seedbank is slow to respond, a test plot of 8 acres (38,720 tublings) of diverse wet flatwood species (10 species) were planted adjacent to dry pond in January 2010 (Figure 12).
15. A total of 610 acres of winter burns were conducted at the SHLMB between November 2009 and January 2010. (Figures 13).

**Restoration activities anticipated within the next 6 months:**

1. Surveys for nuisance species will continue in summer and fall of 2010.


2. Erosion areas identified with Bahia grass cover (Figure 4) will continue to be spot treated as needed.
3. Nuisance shrubs within the one hundred sixty five acres of restored wet flatwoods will be continued to be treated in 2010.
4. Water Level gauges will continue to be measured in 2010 (Figure 9).
5. Management Unit 3 (11.5 acres) of planted slash pine was thinned in 2007 and fire re-introduced. Since then two burns have followed. However shrub cover continues to increase. In 2010 shrub cover will be reduced through selective herbicides.
6. The seed bank within the restored wet pine flatwoods will be tested for viability using new rapid assessment protocols developed by District staff.
7. Three native perennial grasses will be tested in both wetland and upland sites for future use in erosion control.

**Please provide a brief description of problems encountered and solutions undertaken:**

In some wet flatwood restoration areas the seed bank has not responded as anticipated. The seed bank in these areas will be tested and the information used to better enhance the wet flatwood restoration. In areas with little seed bank viability, diverse wet flatwood understory species will be added in 30 acre increments.

Thank you for your consideration of this submittal. If you have any question or comments please feel free to contact me at 850-539-5999.

Sincerely,

  
David Clayton  
QMS

Enclosures:

- Figure 4 Erosion Stabilization Sites (1-6 with Bahia Grass Cover)
- Figure 9 Water Level and Staff Gauge Locations
- Figure 10 Wet Pine Flatwood Restoration Areas
- Figure 11 Oak Eradication Areas
- Figure 12 2009-2010 Wetland and Upland Wiregrass and Wet Flatwood Species Planting
- Figure 13 Wetland and Upland 2009-2010 Winter Burns

Figure 4 - Erosion Stabilization Sites

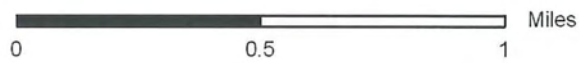
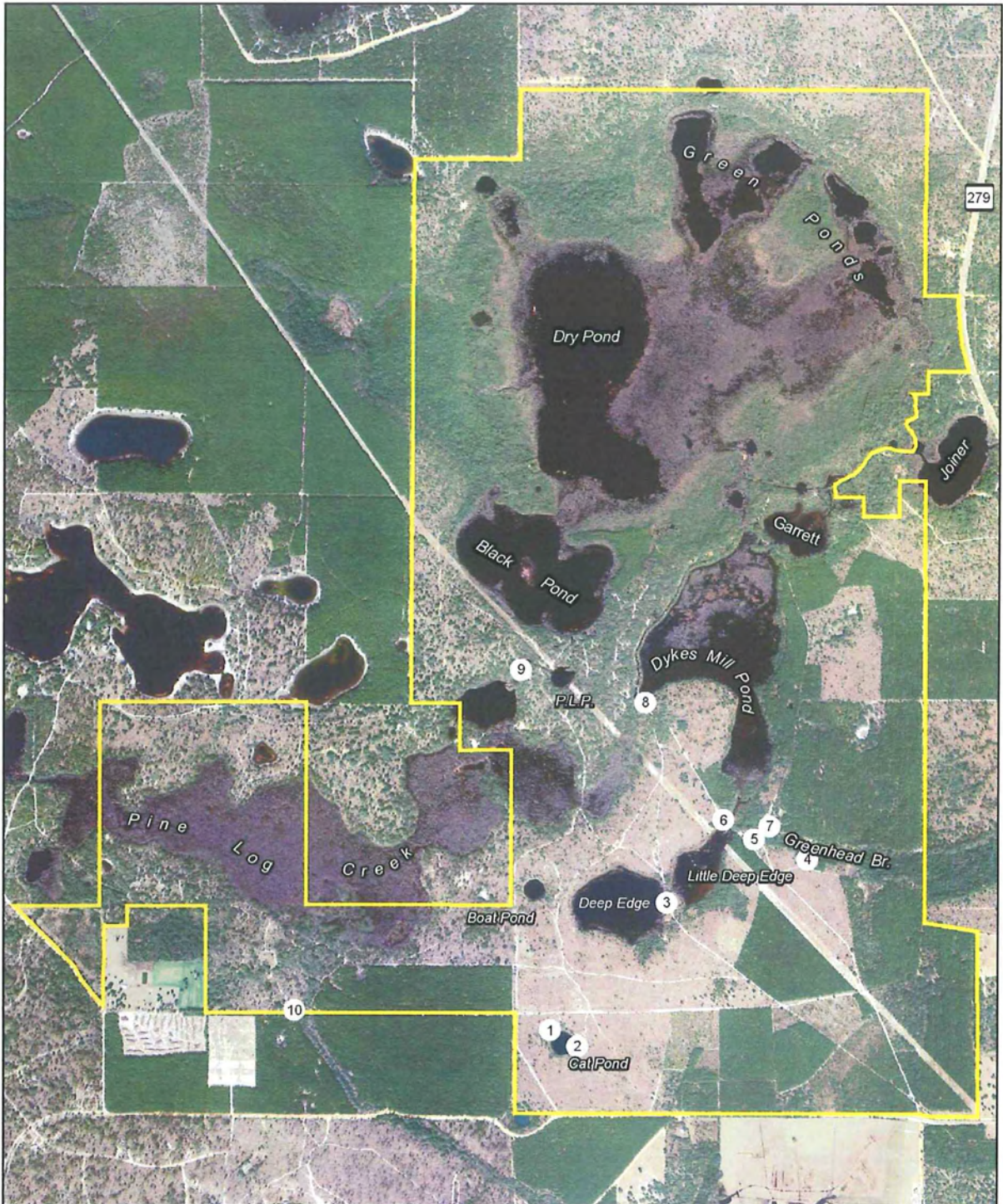
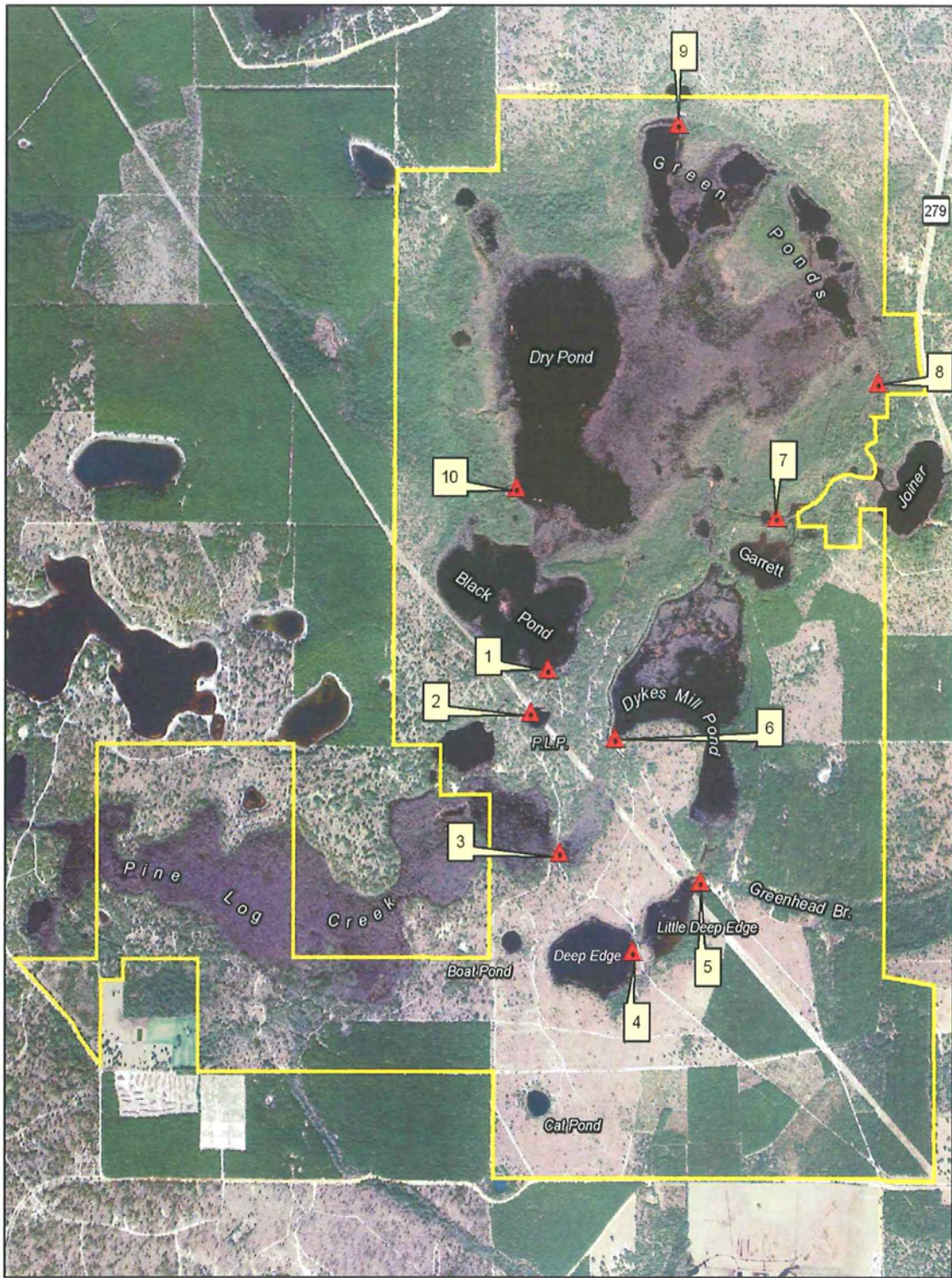


Figure 9 - Water Level Staff Gage Locations

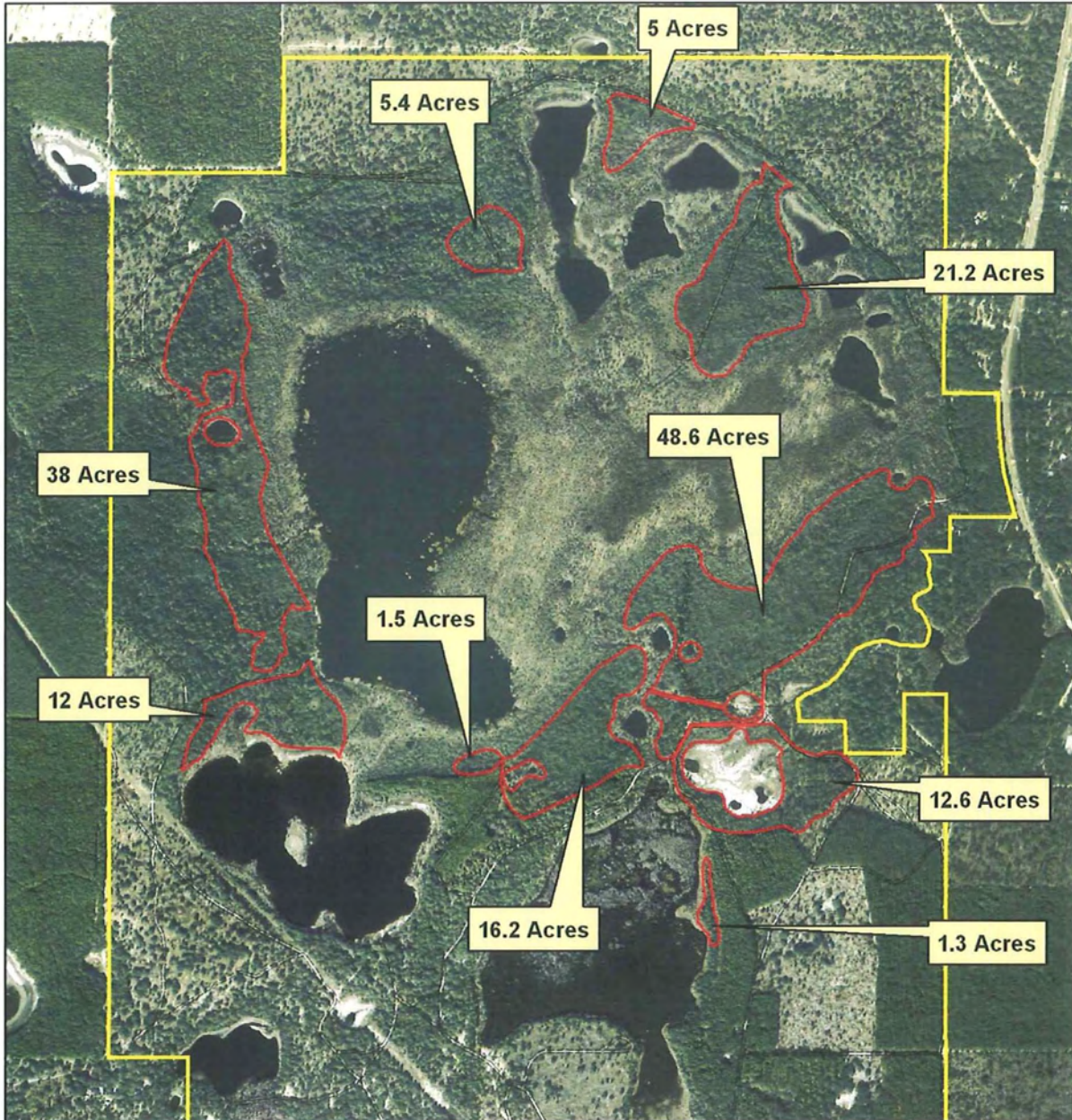


▲ = Staff Gage (Installed 2005)



Figure 10 – Wet Pine Flatwood Restoration Areas

### Brush Reduction



Northwest Florida Water Management District  
Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank (SHLMB)  
Brush Reduction (Gyro-Track Mulching) - ~165 Acres  
Section 6, Township 1 North, Range 14 West  
Washington Co., Florida

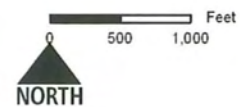


Figure 11. Winter 2009/2010 Upland and Wetland Wiregrass and Wet Pine Flatwood Species Planting

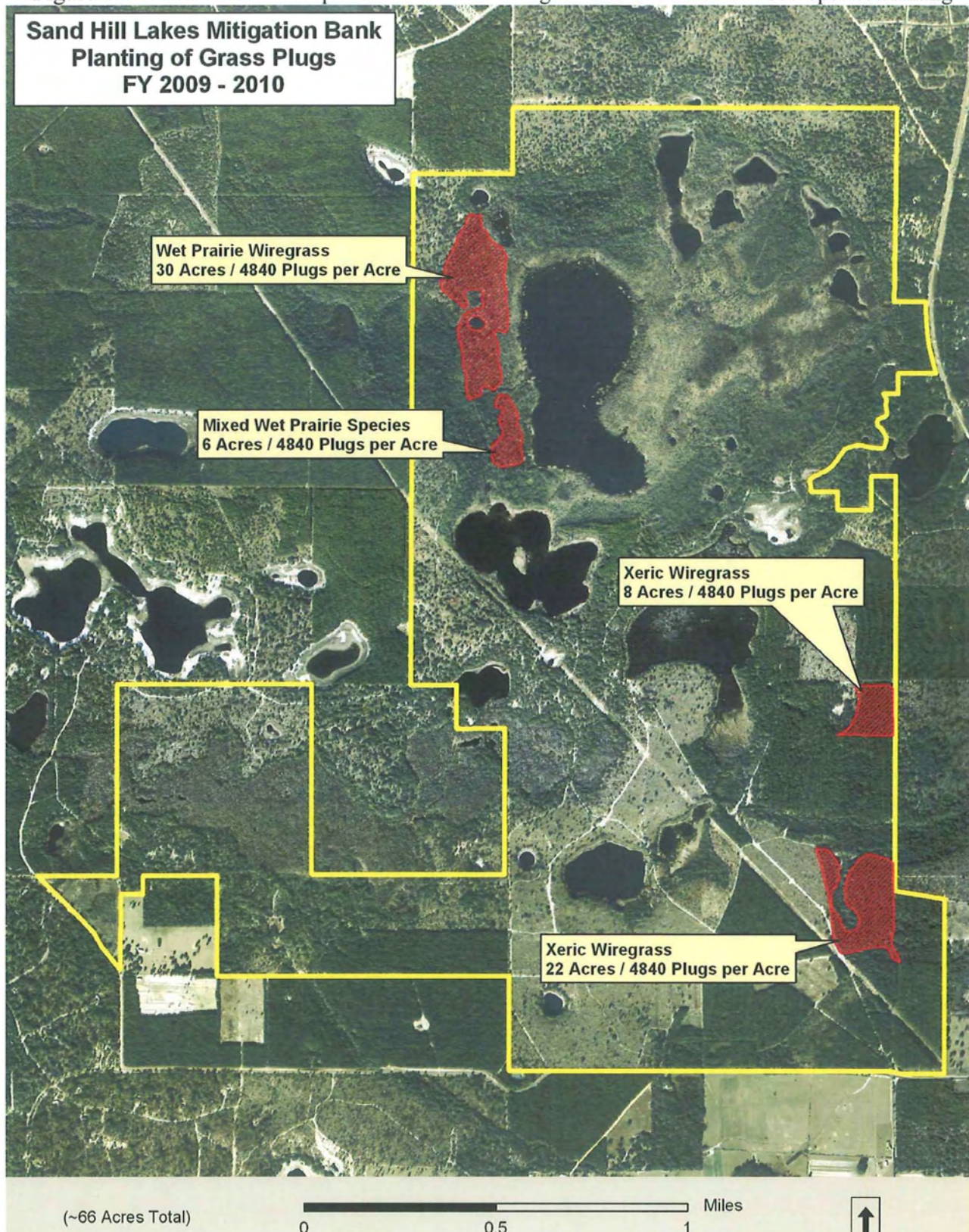


Figure 12. Winter 2009/2010 Wetland and Upland Burns

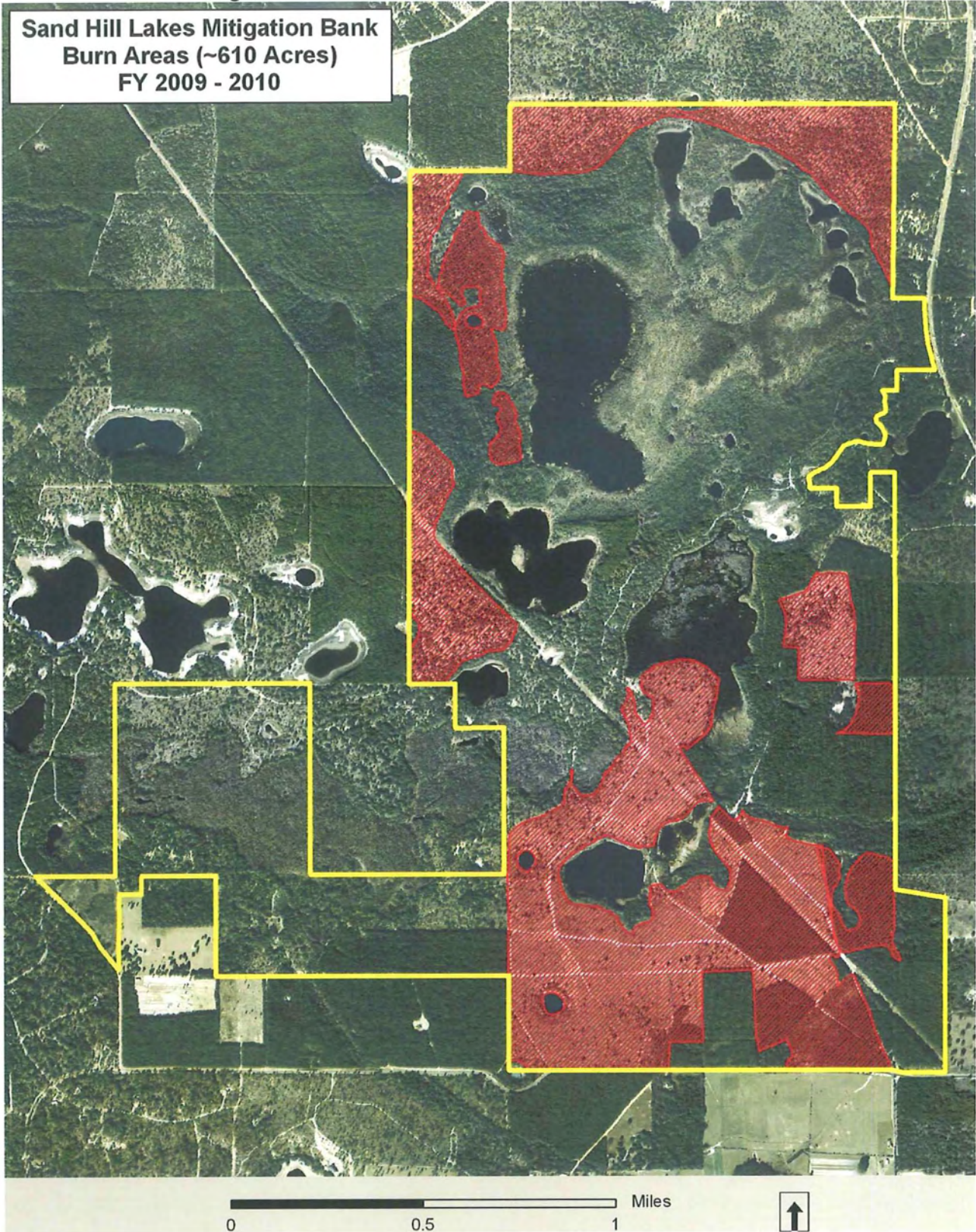




Figure 13 Oak Eradication Areas

