

NFWMD Semi-annual Compliance Inspection Field Form

Date of Site Inspection: 7/10/12

Site: Yellow River Ranch Restoration

Watershed: Pensacola Bay and River

Site Inspection Conducted by: David Clayton, Steve Brown, Tyler Macmillan and Danny Dean

Background: In December, 2005, the NFWMD acquired the 275-acre Yellow River Ranch parcel as mitigation for current and future FDOT wetland impacts. A total of 121.5 acres consist of former forested wetlands that have been converted to pasture (i.e., the complete eradication of canopy trees, understory and natural groundcover vegetation, severe hydrologic alteration from ditching and the creation of an earthen dike, the establishment of exotic pasture grasses, and ongoing cattle grazing operations). Functional wetland lift will be derived from 1) acquisition and perpetual preservation of the mitigation property, 2) cessation of cattle grazing, 3) filling in or blocking of drainage ditches, 4) breaching of the dike that impairs hydrologic connection with the Yellow River floodplain, 5) eradication of non-native pasture grasses, 6) replanting with bottomland hardwood forest and hydric pine flatwood species, 7) establishment, where appropriate, of growing-season fire regime, and 8) long-term management including control of nuisance and exotic species.

Expected date of next burn for hydric pine flatwoods:

December - February 2013

Hydrologic Improvements: completion dates

Completed 8/2009

| Performance Standards: | Cypress Strand (28 acres) | Hydric Pine Flatwoods (60 acres) | Bottomland Hardwood Forest (27 acres) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Water depth: | 0-6" | Below ground | Below ground |
| Expected dates of herbicide treatments for Gyro-Trac areas and fire lines (Month) | September 2012 | September 2012 | September 2012 |
| No more than 1% coverage of invasive exotic and 5% nuisance native and non-invasive exotic species | Popcorn tree saplings 2-4' No nuisance native veg. | Scattered popcorn tree seedlings No nuisance native veg. | Scattered popcorn tree seedlings No nuisance native veg. |
| 80% cover desirable species | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Kind and total coverage of species appropriate for management goals and target natural community | Yes Developing | Yes Developing | Yes Developing |
| Kind and total coverage of tree species appropriate for management goals and target natural community | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Increase in appropriate herbaceous, shrub and / or tree species | Yes | Yes | Yes |

Comments:

With continued rains, ponds that had formed following ditch block have returned. These are in similar locations to what was observed in historic photographs. Survival of bottomland hardwoods is good and samplings are growing well. Cypress saplings planted within the drains are thriving and appear healthy. Many wet flatwood species appropriate for the target community were observed within the flatwoods area. Popcorn tree seedlings were scattered throughout the site with some larger 2'-4' seedlings were observed near the cypress drains. Seedlings popcorn trees continue to germinate from the seed bank or deposited during spring flooding of the site. Popcorn trees will be treated. The flatwoods area is getting thick with brush and should be burned in the winter/early spring of 2013.

I certify that this report represents true accurate and representative description of the activities and site conditions at the time of this report.

David Clayton

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