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Executive Director

Northwest Florida Water Management District

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MAR 06 2009

OFFICE OF SUBMERGED LANDS
AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Signature (Senior Clerk)

March 6, 2009

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

Re: Progress Report 9

Dear Ms. Tauxe,

Please accept this submittal as the **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. Due to inappropriate mulch used by the contractor, Bahia grass was introduced into the erosion stabilization areas #1, #2, #3 and #10 in 2007. These areas were treated with herbicide by BRA twice in 2008. These areas were inspected in October of 2008 and a few small patches still remained. Back Forty Solutions has been contracted to treat the Bahia grass in 2009 as needed (Figure 4).
4. Small patches of torpedo grass (*Panicum repens*) were observed at old boat launches associated with Dry Pond, Garret Pond and two Green Ponds in 2006-2007. These areas were treated 3x with herbicides provided by the DEP. During 2008, no live coverage of torpedo grass was observed.
5. Surveys for feral hogs continued during the fall 2008 sampling at the SHLMB. Very minor feral hog evidence was observed adjacent to Pine Log Creek. Traps were set for the hogs but no hogs have been trapped and no additional hog damage observed.
6. Twenty eight acres of historic wet flatwoods that had dense titi cover reduced with a Gyro-Trac had re-sprouted with dense shrubs. As a test to determine if shrubs could be further reduced without impacting the understory, selective herbicides were employed. The areas targeted were a 12 acre polygon known as the Whale with dense re-sprouts approximately 1-

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2' in height, and a 16.2 acre polygon adjacent to Dykes Mill Pond and Dry Pond with re-sprouts 3 - 4' in height. Two treatments, using wetland approved herbicides were conducted 65 days apart by Biological Research Associates. Total shrub cover was reduced from greater than 85% to approximately 15% without impacting the understory vegetation. Following the herbicide treatments, the 16.2 acre polygon was burned and planted with wire grass. Both sites will be further evaluated this summer and fall (Figure 10).

7. A total of 138 acres of warm season burns were conducted at the SHLMB. A 113 acre burn was conducted adjacent to Pine Log Creek and a growing season burn was conducted for the 25 acres surrounding Garret Pond (Figure 11 and 12).
8. A total of 32 acres of wet wire grass (154,880 tublings) were planted in December 2008 (Figure 13).
9. A total of 53 acres of upland wiregrass (256,520 tublings) were planted in December 2008 (Figure 14).
10. A total of 319 acres of long leaf pine (139,084 seedlings) were planted in December 2008. This completes the re-forestation efforts at the SHLMB (Figure 15).
11. A total of 246 acres of winter burns were conducted at the SHLMB between November 2008 and January 2009. The majority of the burns were site prep burns following timber harvest (208 acres of uplands) as well as 38 acres of wet flatwood restoration (Figures 16-21).

Restoration activities anticipated within the next 6 months:

1. Surveys for nuisance species will continue in summer and fall of 2009.
2. Approximately 368 acres of warm season burns will be conducted in the sandhills surrounding Cat Pond, Boat Pond, Dykes Mill Pond, Deep Edge, Little Deep Edge and Green Head branch.
3. Erosion areas identified with Bahia grass cover (Figure 4) will continue to be spot treated as needed.
4. One hundred forty acres of historic wet flatwoods that had dense titi cover reduced with a Gyro-Trac have re-sprouted with dense shrubs. These areas will be treated in early spring and summer with wetland approved herbicide targeting the shrubs cover without impacting the understory. These areas will be burned in the fall/winter 2009-2010.
5. Water Level gauges will continue to be measured in 2009.
6. Thirteen acres of former planted pine adjacent to the field office will have the oak densities thinned to less than 150 trees per acre. (Management Unit 11). This will help to restore the sandhill to the correct densities of oaks and reduce shading of the wire grass.
7. The area adjacent to Management Unit 5, Dykes Mill Pond will be re-planted with Black Gum and Cypress seedlings in March of 2009.

8. The road fill removal areas between Deep Edge and Little Deep Edge, Little Deep Edge and Green Head Branch and the area surrounding Boggy Branch will be planted in March 2009 with shrubs according to Attachment D of the permit.

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

The greatest challenge at the bank has been restoring historic wet flatwoods. These systems have become dominated by 20' black titi and other shrubs due to fire exclusion. As a first step, the Gyro-Trac was an excellent tool for the initial shrub reduction. However, shrub densities returned following the shrub reduction and burning. Within one year following the Gyro-Trac and burn treatments shrub densities increased to greater than 110 stems per meter squared. Without further treatment, these areas would return to wetland shrub forests within 3 – 5 years. In an effort to further control the shrubs, two test plots (28 acres) were established. Shrubs were treated with wetland approved herbicides that target the shrubs without impacting the understory. Results using this technique have shown excellent results. Shrub cover was reduced from 85% to less than 15% and understory vegetation cover appears healthy and expanding.

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 – Pine Flatwood Restoration – Brush Reduction
- Figure 11 - Warm Season Burn – 113 Acres South Pine Log
- Figure 12 - Warm Season Burn – 25 Acres Garret Pond
- Figure 13 - 2008 Wetland Wiregrass Planting
- Figure 14 -- 2008 Upland Wiregrass Planting
- Figure 15 – 2008 Long Leaf Pine Planting
- Figure 16 – 2008 Winter Burn (Uplands) Pine Log
- Figure 17 – 2008 Winter Burns (Uplands) Southeast Greenhead
- Figure 18 – 2008 Winter Burns (Uplands) Office Stand
- Figure 19 – 2008 Winter Burns (Uplands) Greenhead Branch
- Figure 20 – 2008 Winter Burns (Upland) Southwest Greenhead
- Figure 21 – 2008 Winter Burns (Wetlands) Wet Flatwoods Dry Pond

Figure 4 - Erosion Stabilization Sites

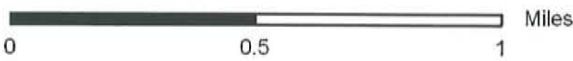
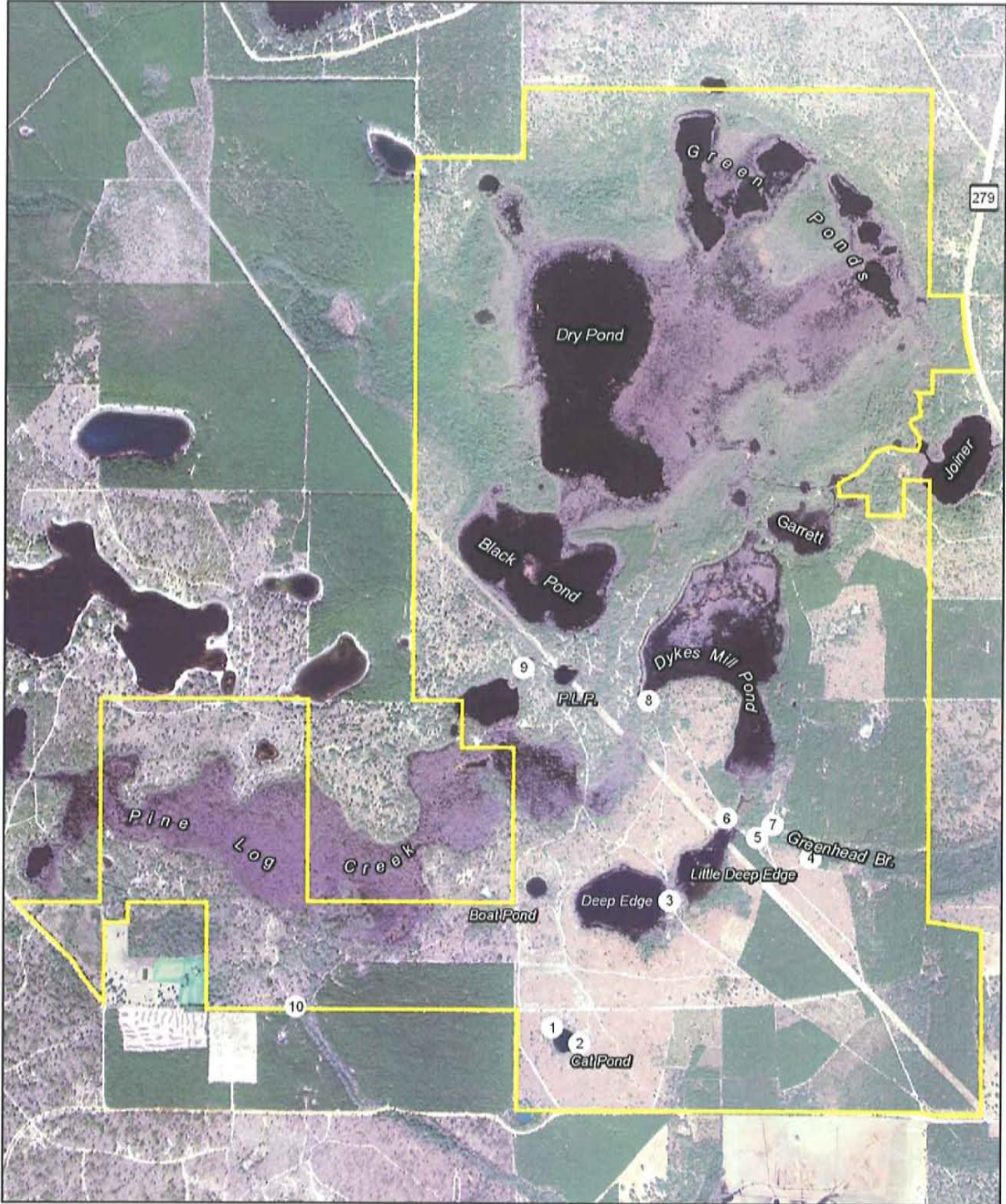
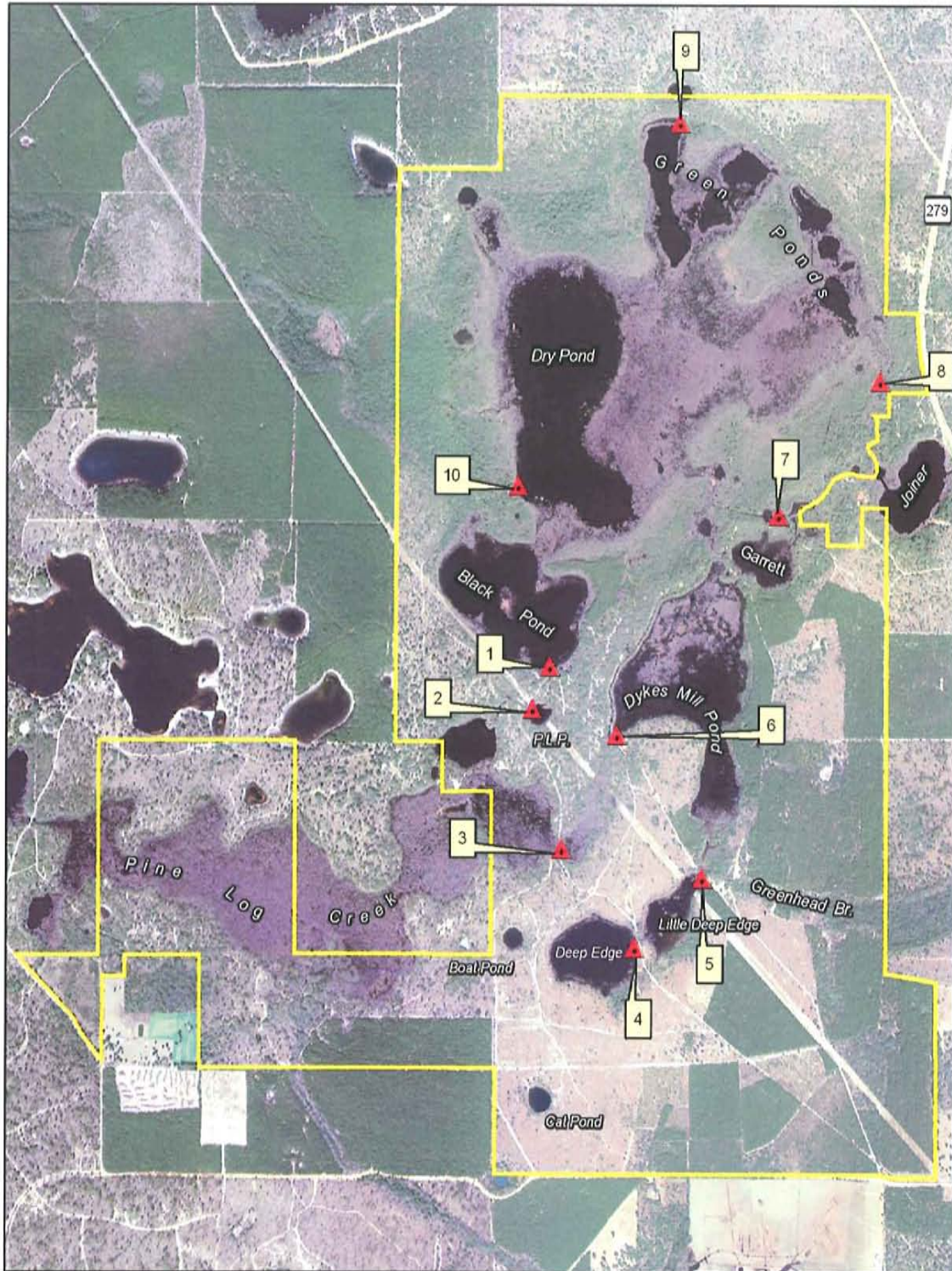


Figure 9 - Water Level Staff Gage Locations

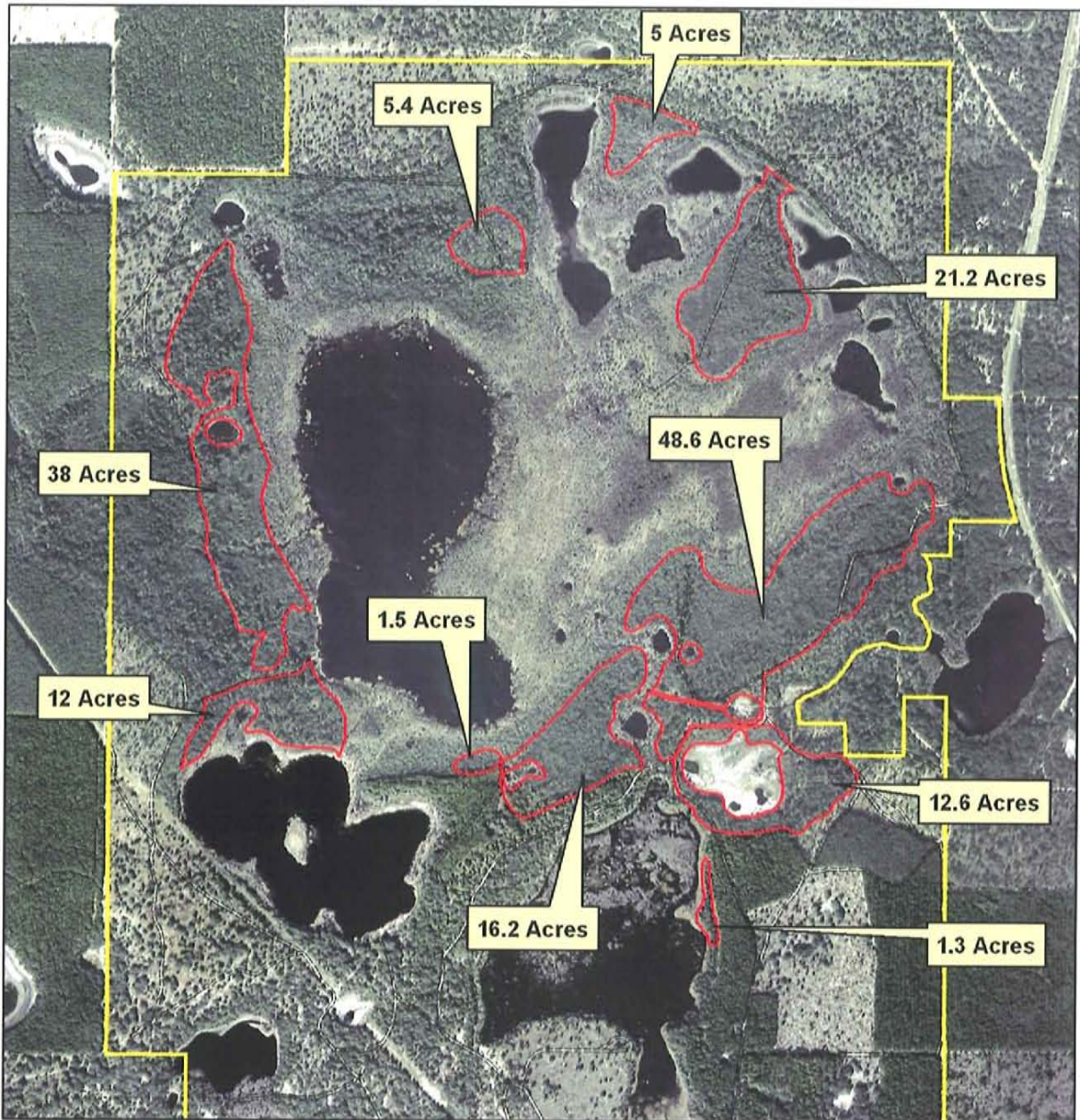


▲ = Staff Gage (Installed 2005)



Figure 10 – Pine Flatwood Restoration – Brush Reduction

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

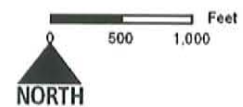


Figure 11. Warm Season Burn – 113 Acres South Pine Log

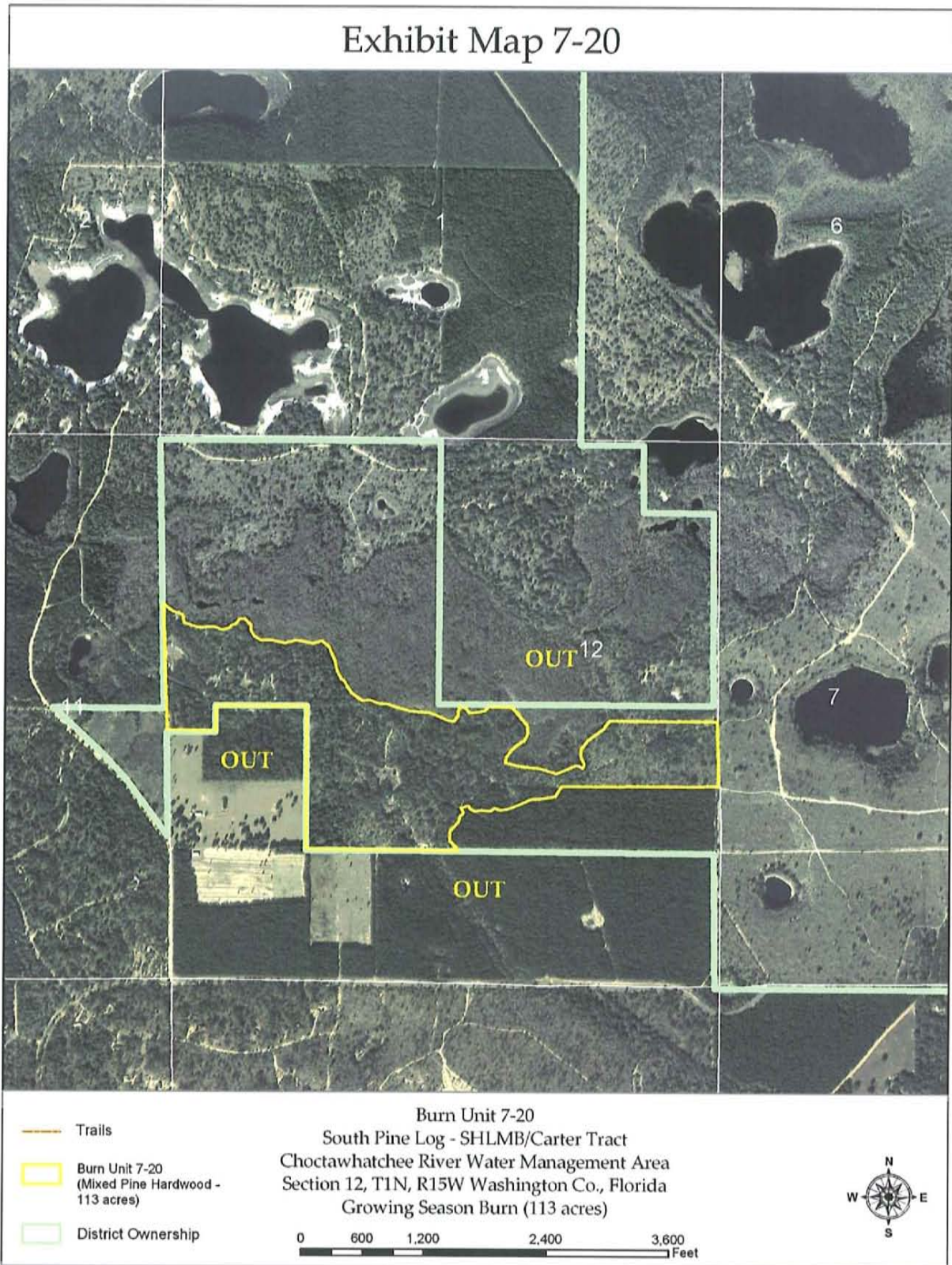


Figure 12. Warm Season Burn – 25 Acres Garret Pond Area

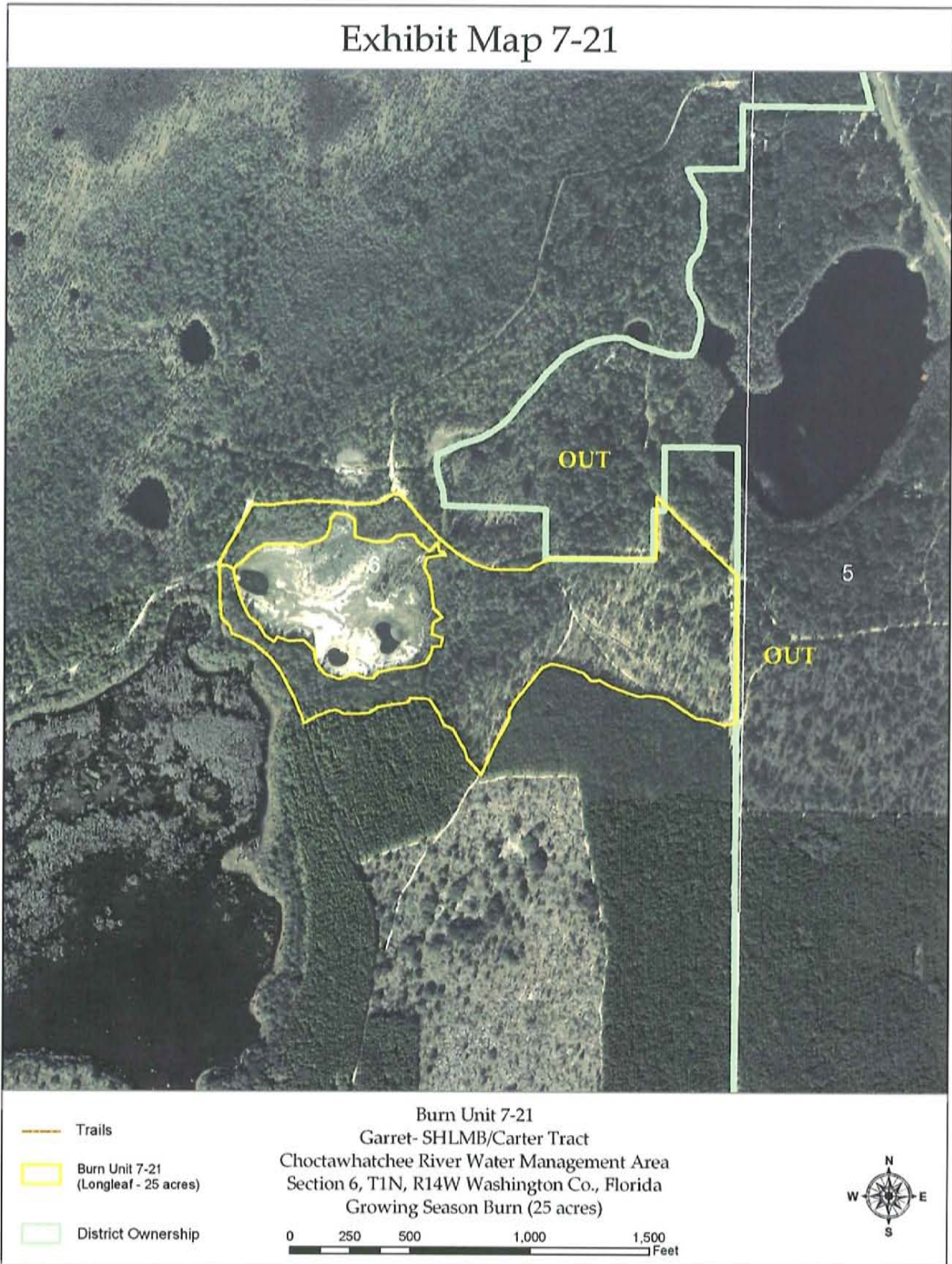


Figure 13. 2008 Wetland Wire Grass Planting

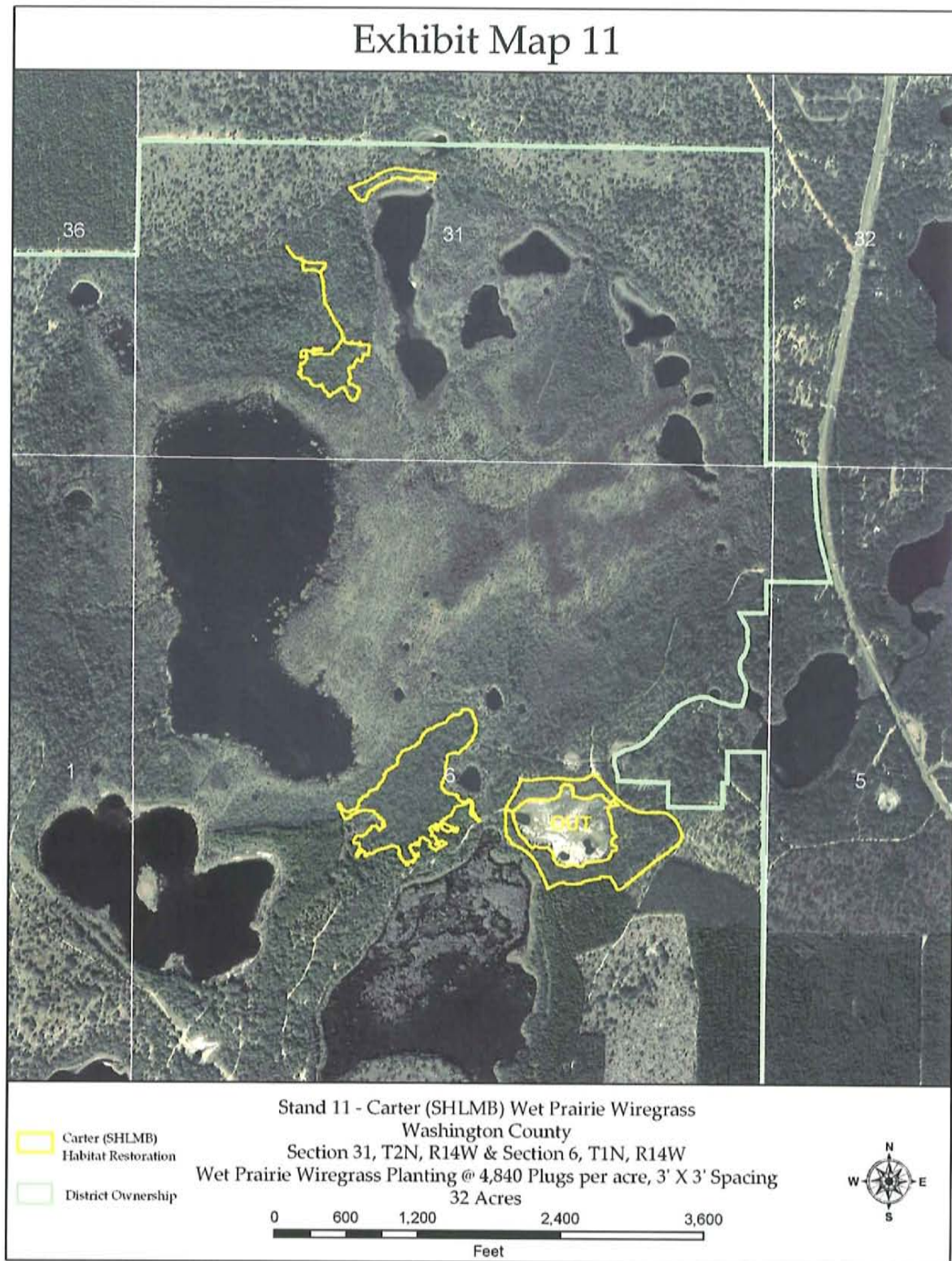


Figure 14. 2008 Upland Wiregrass Planting

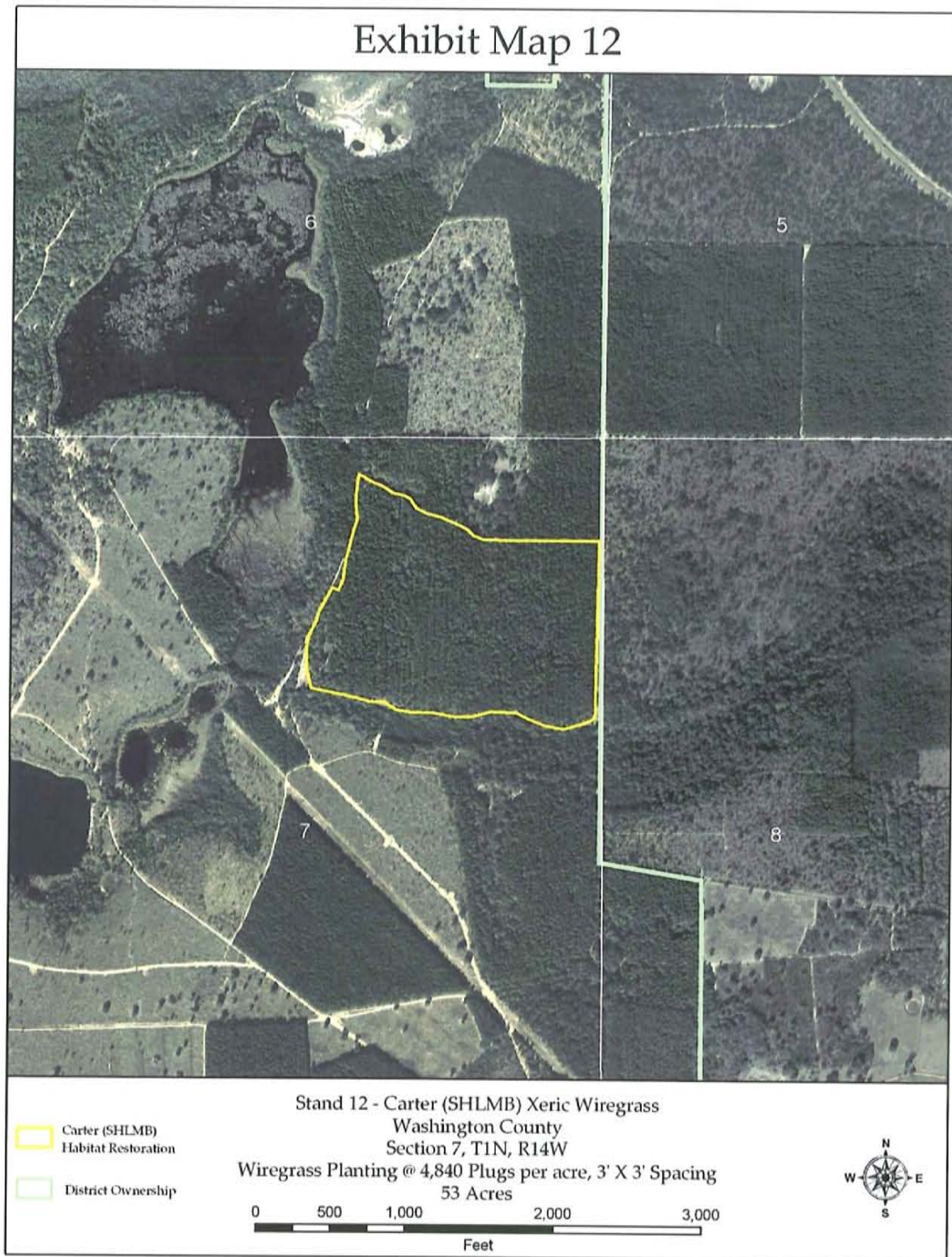


Figure 15. 2008 Long Leaf Pine Planting

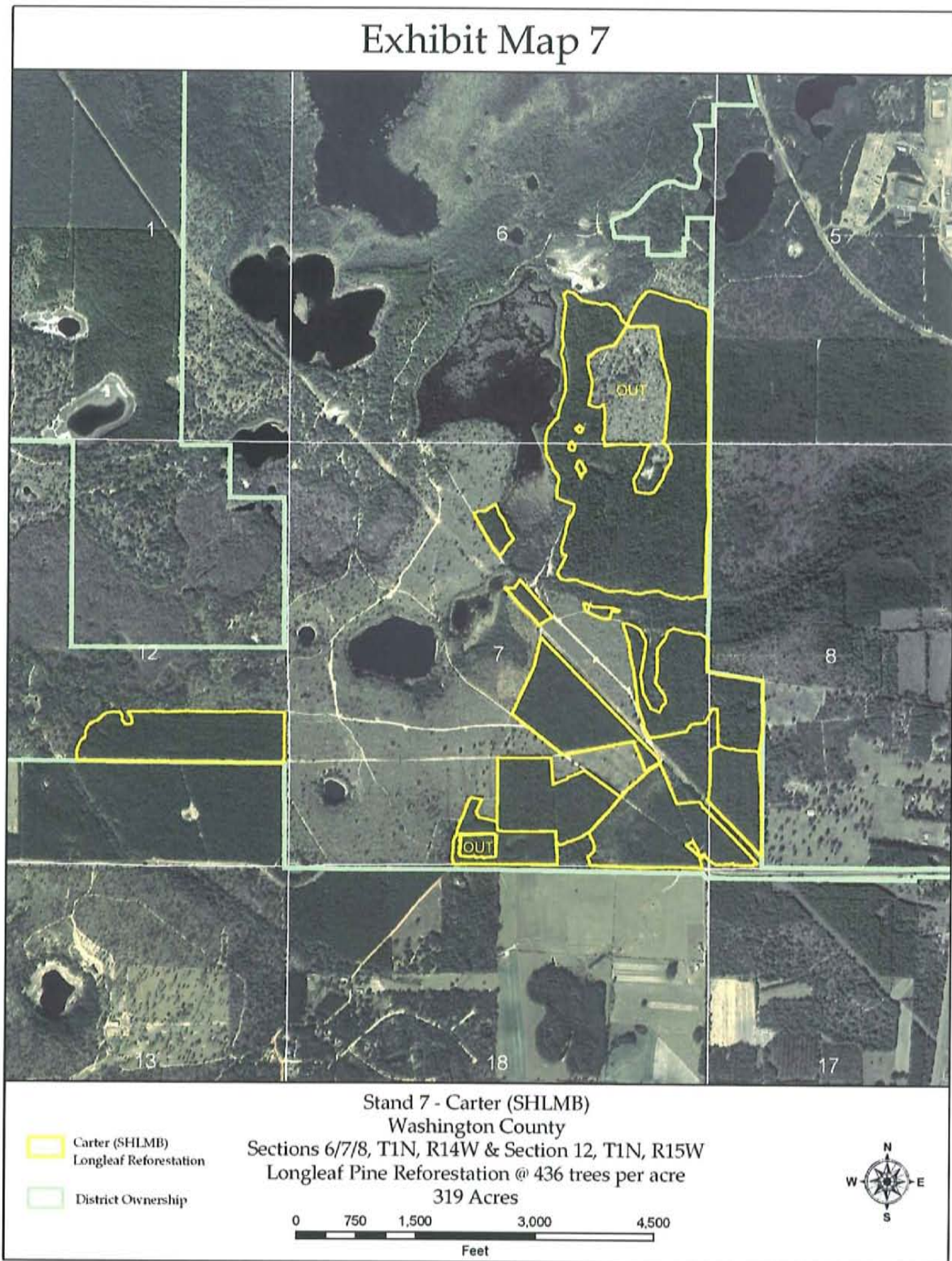


Figure 16. Winter Burns (Uplands) Pine Log

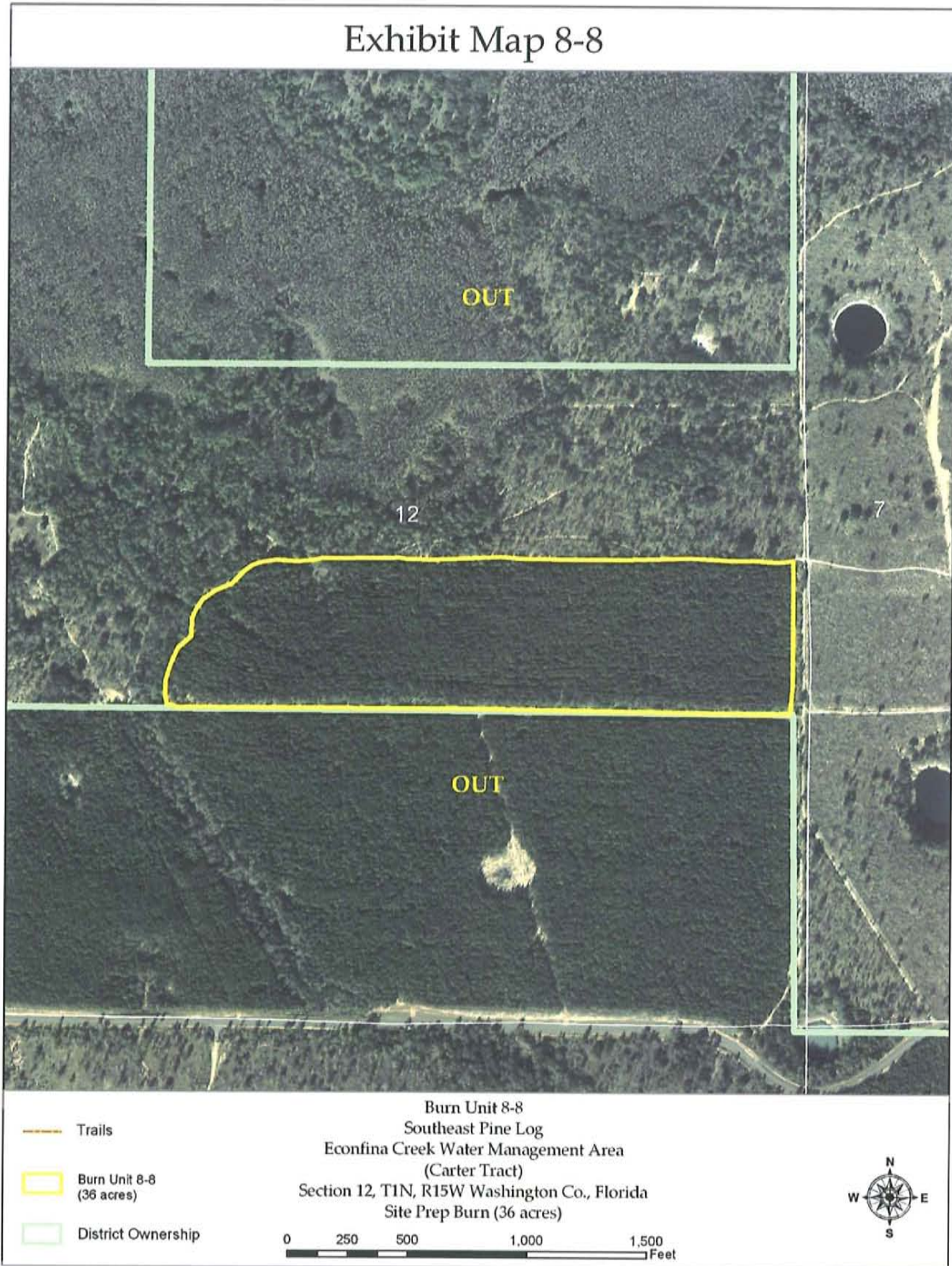


Figure 17. Winter Burns (Uplands) Southeast Greenhead

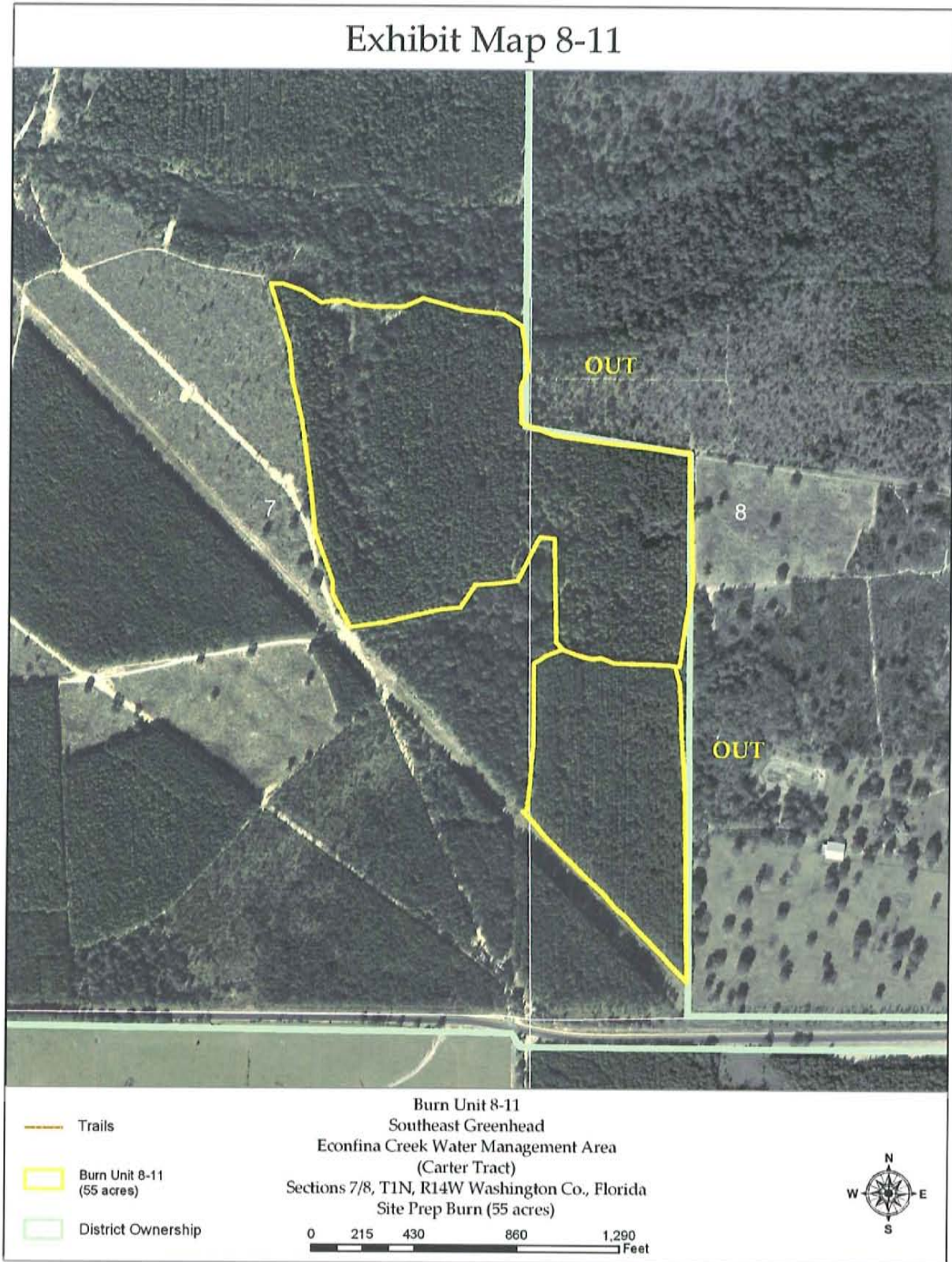


Figure 18. Winter Burns (Uplands) Office Stand

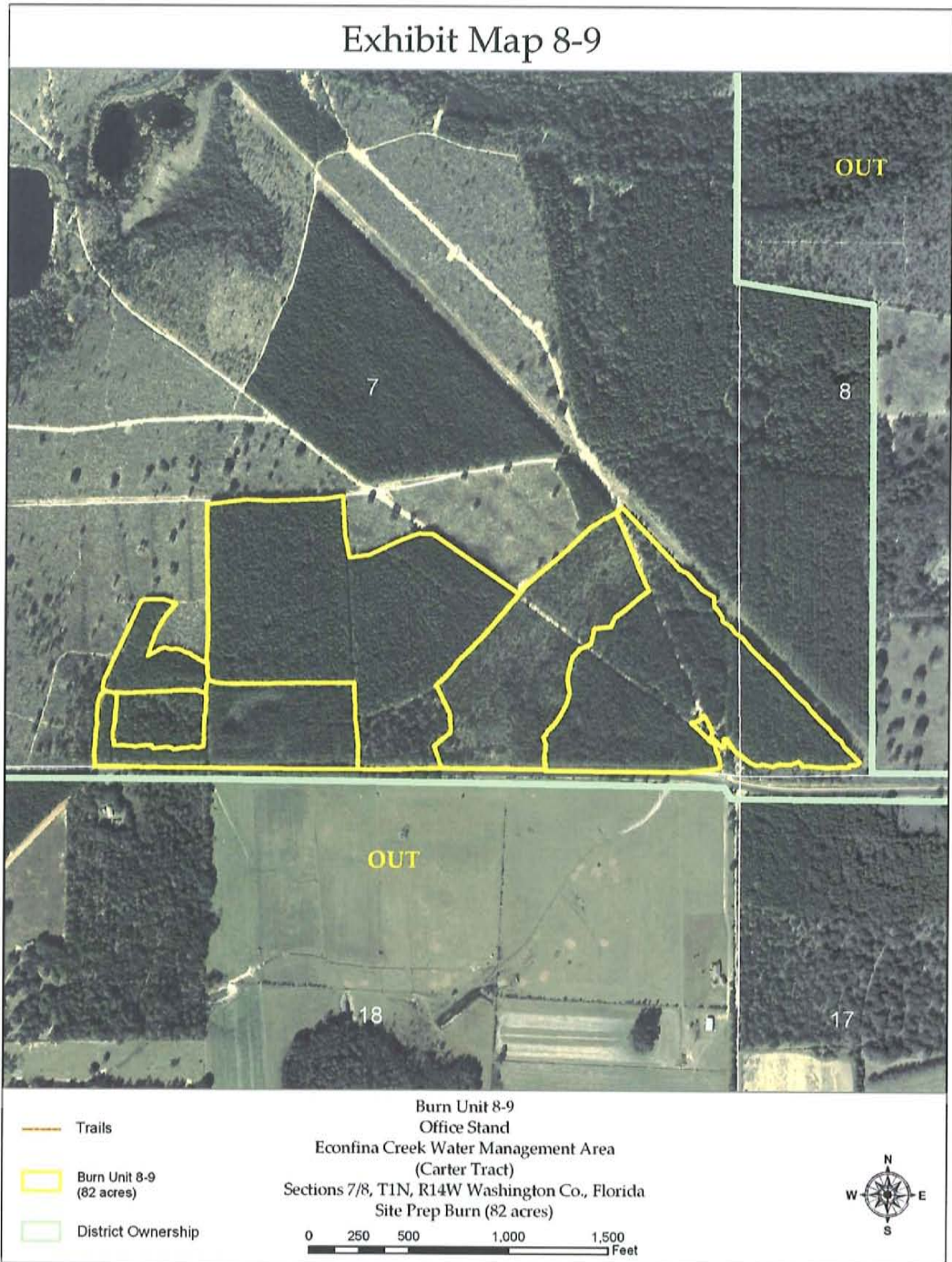


Figure 19. Winter Burns (Uplands) Greenhead Branch

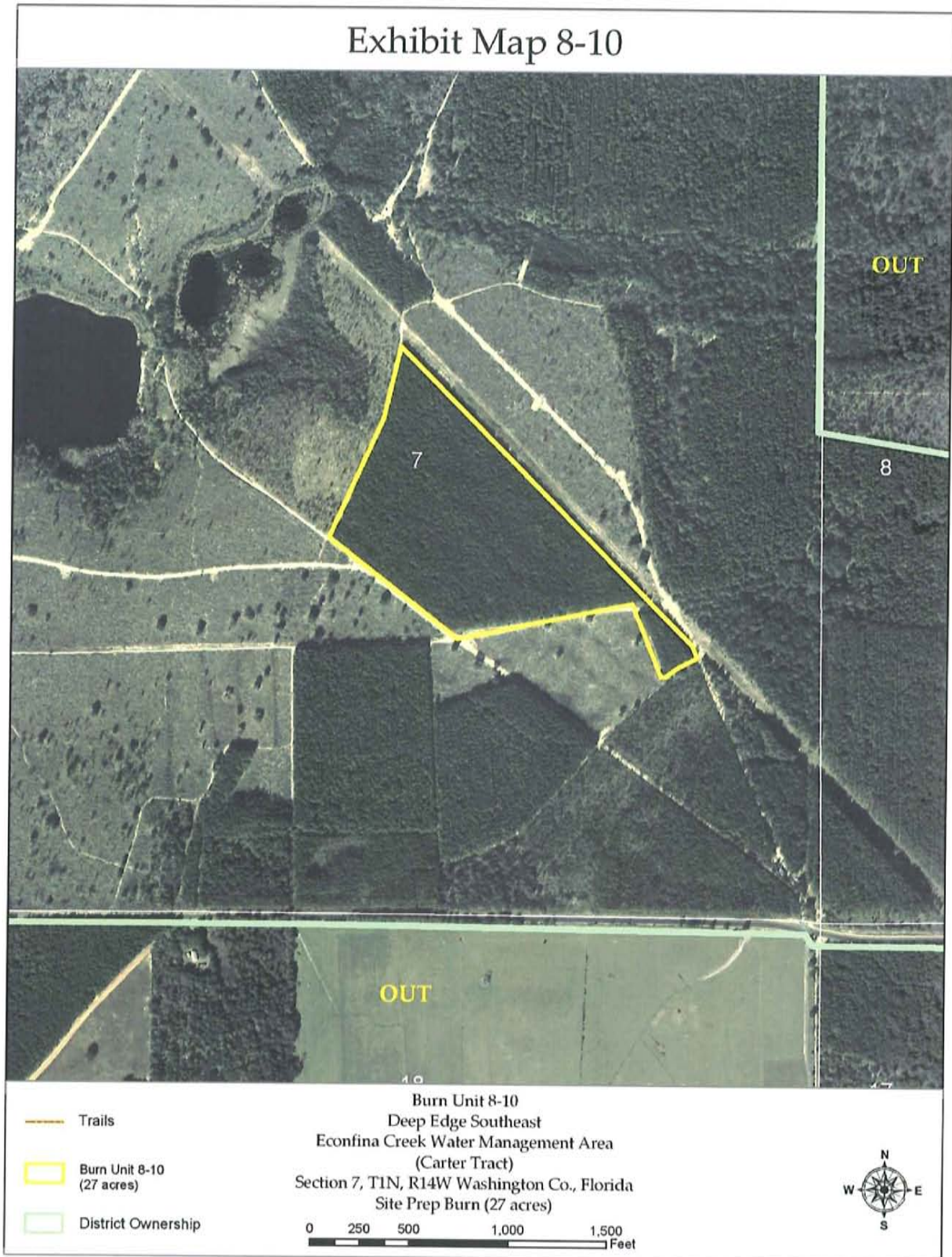


Figure 20. Winter Burn (Upland) Southwest Greenhead



Figure 21. 2008 Winter Burn (Wetlands) Wet Flatwoods Dry Pond

