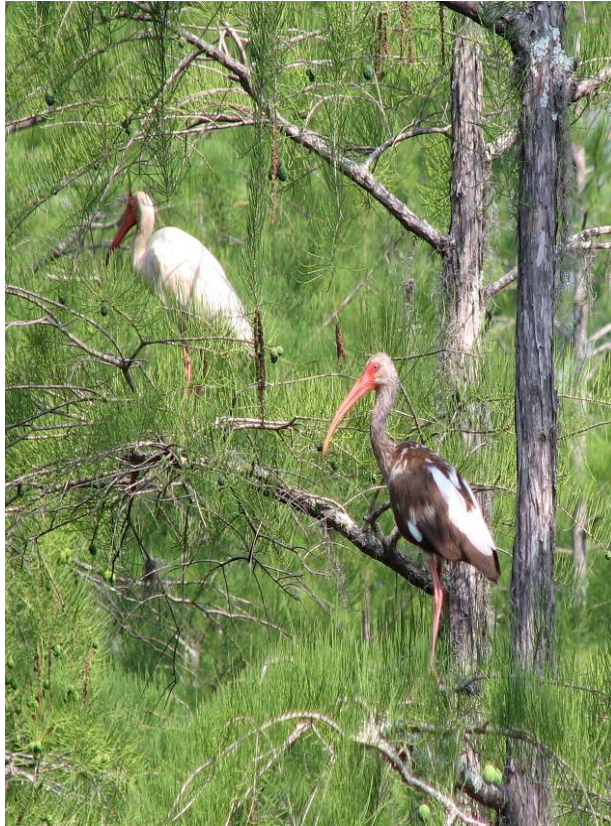
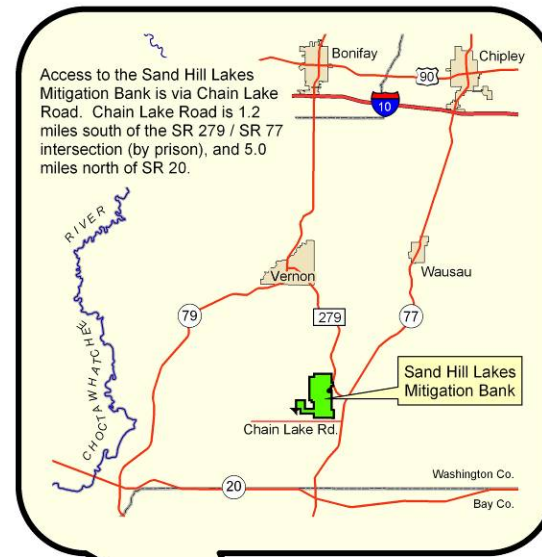


# SAND HILL LAKES MITIGATION BANK



The **SAND HILL LAKES MITIGATION BANK (SHLMB)** is publicly owned and operated by the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD). Situated in the Sand Hill Lakes region of the Dougherty Karst Plain, it is preserving, enhancing and restoring 2,155.3 acres of wetlands, natural lakes and upland buffers. Established primarily to provide compensation for wetland impacts caused by Florida Dept. of Transportation (FDOT) road projects, wetland “credits” may also be made available for purchase by other public and/or private entities.

## LOCATION



Straddling the basin divide between the Choctawhatchee River and St. Andrew Bay watersheds, the Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank is located in Washington Co. approximately 20 miles north of Panama City.

## MITIGATION SERVICE AREA (MSA)



Wetland impacts occurring within portions of the Choctawhatchee River and St. Andrew Bay watersheds may be mitigated at the Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank. The mitigation service area excludes the 100-year floodplain of the Choctawhatchee River, the Black Creek drainage to Choctawhatchee Bay, and all portions of the “Deer Point Reservoir Protection Zone” defined by the 1999 Bay Co. Comp Plan. Use of the Bank, as determined by permitting authorities, may be inappropriate when it will result in

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unacceptable cumulative impacts to a water body, or when an impact is to a locally unique species, feature or community.

## MITIGATION CREDITS

Mitigation credits were established using the Florida Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM) for state permitting, and the Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedure (WRAP) for federal permitting. Credits will be released by state and federal permittees in phases over five to six years as various success criteria are met. Attainment of all success criteria will yield 298.40 UMAM credits and 284.03 WRAP credits. Credits will be released as “Hydric Flatwood Wetlands” (up to 123.11 UMAM Credits / 117.18 WRAP Credits), “Mixed Hardwood Wetlands” (up to 146.09 UMAM Credits / 139.05 WRAP Credits), and “Herbaceous Wetlands” (up to 29.20 UMAM Credits / 27.80 WRAP Credits).

## HISTORY

Prior to acquisition by the NFWFMD in 2002, the site was owned and managed as a fish camp for over a half century by Fitzhugh Carter. Most longleaf pine was harvested. Uplands were replanted with sand pine, or allowed to convert to oak dominated communities. Substantial ditching in the 1950s redirected surface flows and connected formerly isolated ponds.

## RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The Bank will preserve, enhance and restore 2,155.3 acres of wetlands, natural lakes and associated upland buffers. Natural

communities consist of approximately 850 acres of wetlands, 150 acres of lakes and ponds, and 1,150 acres of uplands.

- **Wetlands preservation and management**—high-quality cypress, bayhead and emergent wetlands (~600 acres).
- **Wetlands restoration and enhancement**—degraded hydric pine flatwoods, seepage slope and cypress wetlands (~250 acres).
- **Aquatic habitat preservation**—karst ponds and undeveloped sand hill lakes (~150 acres).
- **Hydrologic Enhancements**—removal of road-fill, removal of a small dam, replacement of a collapsed water control structure and dilapidated culverts.
- **Erosion stabilization.**
- **Upland buffers enhancement and restoration**—longleaf pine / wiregrass and oak / pine forest communities (~1,150 acres).
- **Natural corridor protection**—component of protected lands and natural corridors between the Econfina Creek Water Management Area and the Choctawhatchee Water Management Area.

## PUBLIC USE

The Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank exists for the express purpose of restoration and protection of natural habitats. Public access is allowed only to the extent that it does not interfere with the goals and ecological protection of the Bank. Passive

pedestrian use is allowed during daylight hours. A limited hunting and fishing program is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).



Wetland and Aquatic Habitats at Bank



Longleaf Pine / Wiregrass Restoration



1999 Aerial of Bank

## WEB LINKS

[www.myfwc.com/hunting/](http://www.myfwc.com/hunting/) (follow links to SHLMB hunting regulations under Econfina Creek Wildlife Management Area)  
[www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wetlands/mitigation](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wetlands/mitigation) (state mitigation banking information)  
[www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/fact16.html](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/fact16.html) (EPA mitigation banking factsheet)