

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
PANAMA CITY REGULATORY OFFICE
475 HARRISON AVENUE, SUITE 202
PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA 32401-2731

Regulatory Division
North Permits Branch
Panama City Regulatory Office
200002933(IP-DH)
Modification #1

January 23, 2002

Florida Department of Transportation
c/o Frank Roberts
Post Office Box 607
Chipley, Florida 32428

Dear Mr. Roberts:

Reference is made to your letter dated November 5, 2001, in which you requested to modify Department of the Army (DA) permit number 200002933(IP-DH). The permit authorizes the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to fill 42.9 acres of wetlands for the widening of US Highway 98 from the intersection of US98 and US 331, eastward to the intersection of US98 to the intersection at Peach Creek in Wallon County, Florida. The project includes the upgrading of service of several intersections and intersecting roads along the project corridor.

You requested that the authorized project be modified to allow the temporary impact of 1.2 acres of wetlands along the length of the project within a 5 foot wide strip along the project boundaries as shown on the permit drawings. The strip would allow the temporary placement of a silt fence and use of equipment within the five-foot wide strip. The disturbed area would be restored after project completion.

The impacts of the proposed permit modification on the environment and navigation have been evaluated and found to be insignificant, and are not expected to have significant negative effects on the public interest factors. The impacts of the proposed modification will not jeopardize the continued existence or critical habitat of the threatened flatwoods salamander, *Ambystoma cingulatum*. The area of wetlands permitted to be impacted by DA permit #200002933(IP-DS) would increase from 42.9 acres to 44.1 acres. The permit is hereby modified in accordance with your request, and the required additional permit special condition, as follows:

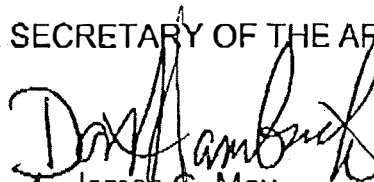
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5. An additional five (5) foot wide strip along the other edge of the fill areas already authorized along the highway right-of-way for this permit may be temporarily impacted by the installation of silt fencing and other erosion control materials and use of equipment to install the erosion control materials. The impacted areas must be restored within six months of project completion or expiration of this Department of the Army permit, whichever occurs first.

You should attach this letter to the permit. All other conditions, limitations, and stipulations of permit number 200002933(IP-DH) not specifically changed by this modification remain in effect.

Thank you for your cooperation with our permit program.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:


James G. May
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Engineer

Copy Furnished:

DEP, Pensacola, SLERP
USFWS, Panama City (Cooper)
NWFWM, Havana (Cairns)

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY PERMIT

Permittee: Florida Department of Transportation

Permit No: 200002933(IP-DH)

Issuing Office: U.S. Army Engineer District, Jacksonville

NOTE: The term "you" and its derivatives, as used in this permit, means the permittee or any future transferee. The term "this office" refers to the appropriate district or division office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers having jurisdiction over the permitted activity or the appropriate official of that office acting under the authority of the commanding officer.

You are authorized to perform work in accordance with the terms and conditions specified below.

Project Description: To fill 42.9 acres of wetlands to widen US98 from the intersection of US 98 and US331 eastward through the intersection of US98 with Peach Creek. The project includes the upgrade and modification of various intersections along the project route. The work is to be completed in accordance with the attached drawings and mitigation project description: Sheets 1 through 27, labeled "FDOT/60020-3521, 200002933(IP-DH), Project Drawings, September 25, 2001", and Sheets 1 through 32, labeled "FDOT/60020-3521, 200002933(IP-DH), US98 Mitigation Projects, September 25, 2001."

Project Location: The project is located along the existing route of US98 in various wetlands along the project route and Peach Creek in Sections 32, 33, 34, 35 & 36, Township 02 South, Range 19 West, Walton County, Florida.

General Conditions:

1. The time limit for completing the work authorized ends on September 25, 2006. If you find that you need more time to complete the authorized activity, submit your request for a time extension to this office for consideration at least one month before the above date is reached.
2. You must maintain the activity authorized by this permit in good condition and in conformance with the terms and conditions of this permit. You are not relieved of this requirement if you abandon the permitted activity, although you may make a good faith transfer to a third party in compliance with General Condition 4 below. Should you wish to cease to maintain the authorized activity or should you desire to abandon it without a

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good faith transfer, you must obtain a modification of this permit from this office, which may require restoration of the area.

3. If you discover any previously unknown historic or archeological remains while accomplishing the activity authorized by this permit, you must immediately notify this office of what you have found. We will initiate the Federal and State coordination required to determine if the remains warrant a recovery effort or if the site is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
4. If you sell the property associated with this permit, you must obtain the signature and mailing address of the new owner in the space provided and forward a copy of the permit to this office to validate the transfer of this authorization.
5. If a conditioned water certification has been issued for your project, you must comply with the conditions specified in the certification as special conditions to this permit. For your convenience, a copy of the certification is attached if it contains such conditions.
6. You must allow representatives from this office to inspect the authorized activity at any time deemed necessary to ensure that it is being or has been accomplished in accordance with the terms and conditions of your permit.

Special Conditions:

1. The permittee shall provide as-built drawings of the authorized work, and a completed As-Built Certification Form. The drawings and Certification Form are to be submitted within 60 days of completion of the authorized work, or at the expiration of the construction authorization of the permit, whichever comes first. The drawings and Certification Form must be signed and sealed by a professional engineer registered in the State of Florida. In the event that the completed work deviates from the approved permit drawings and special conditions, the permittee shall describe, on the Certification Form, the deviations between the work authorized by the permit and the work as constructed. A blank form is attached. Please note that the depiction and description of the deviations on the drawings and Certification Form does not necessarily mean that that the Corps will approve them. The drawings shall include the following: 1) Location of the authorized work footprint, as shown on the permit drawings, with an overlay of the work as constructed; 2) Clear indication of any deviations which have been described on the As-Built Certification Form; and 3) The Department of the Army

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Permit number. As-built drawings and Certification Forms shall be submitted to: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Mail the completed form to the Regulatory Division, Enforcement Branch, Post Office Box 4970, Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019.

2. The permittee shall ensure that the mitigation projects, as described in the attached mitigation project descriptions, provided by the Northwest Florida Water Management District, is implemented. The mitigation project, as reviewed and approved by the Corps, shall be fully implemented within five years after the initiation of the permitted work.

3. This Corps permit does not authorize you to take a threatened or an endangered species, in particular the flatwoods salamander, *Ambystoma cingulatum*. In order to legally take a listed species, you must have separate authorization under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (e.g., an ESA section 10 permit, or a biological opinion (BO) under ESA section 7, with "incidental take" provisions with which you must comply). The enclosed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) BO contains mandatory terms and conditions to implement the reasonable and prudent measures that are associated with "incidental take" that is also specified in the BO. Your authorization under the Corps permit is conditional upon your compliance with all of the mandatory terms and conditions associated with incidental take of the attached BO, which terms and conditions are incorporated by reference in this permit. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions associated with incidental take of the BO, where a take of the listed species occurs, would constitute an unauthorized take, and it would also constitute non-compliance with your Corps permit. However, the FWS is the appropriate authority to determine compliance with the terms and conditions of its BO, and with the ESA. For further clarification on this point, you should contact the FWS. Should the FWS determine that the conditions of the BO have been violated, normally the FWS will enforce the violation of the ESA, or refer the matter to the Department of Justice.

Further Information:

1. Congressional Authorities: You have been authorized to undertake the activity described above pursuant to:

(x) Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403).

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(x) Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344).

() Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 (33 U.S.C. 1413).

2. Limits of this authorization.

a. This permit does not obviate the need to obtain other Federal, State, or local authorizations required by law.

b. This permit does not grant any property rights or exclusive privileges.

c. This permit does not authorize any injury to the property or rights of others.

d. This permit does not authorize interference with any existing or proposed Federal projects.

3. Limits of Federal Liability. In issuing this permit, the Federal Government does not assume any liability for the following:

a. Damages to the permitted project or uses thereof as a result of other permitted or unpermitted activities or from natural causes.

b. Damages to the permitted project or uses thereof as a result of current or future activities undertaken by or on behalf of the United States in the public interest.

c. Damages to persons, property, or to other permitted or unpermitted activities or structures caused by the activity authorized by this permit.

d. Design or construction deficiencies associated with the permitted work.

e. Damage claims associated with any future modification, suspension, or revocation of this permit.

4. Reliance on Applicant's Data: The determination of this office that issuance of this permit is not contrary to the public interest was made in reliance on the information you provided.

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5. **Reevaluation of Permit Decision:** This office may reevaluate its decision on this permit at any time the circumstances warrant. Circumstances that could require a reevaluation include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. You fail to comply with the terms and conditions of this permit.
- b. The information provided by you in support of your permit application proves to have been false, incomplete, or inaccurate (see 4 above).
- c. Significant new information surfaces which this office did not consider in reaching the original public interest decision. Such a reevaluation may result in a determination that it is appropriate to use the suspension, modification, and revocation procedures contained in 33 CFR 325.7 or enforcement procedures such as those contained in 33 CFR 326.4 and 326.5. The referenced enforcement procedures provide for the issuance of an administrative order requiring you comply with the terms and conditions of your permit and for the initiation of legal action where appropriate. You will be required to pay for any corrective measures ordered by this office, and if you fail to comply with such directive, this office may in certain situations (such as those specified in 33 CFR 209.170) accomplish the corrective measures by contract or otherwise and bill you for the cost.

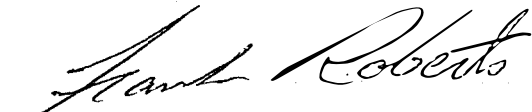
6. **Extensions:** General Condition 1 establishes a time limit for the completion of the activity authorized by this permit. Unless there are circumstances requiring either a prompt completion of the authorized activity or a reevaluation of the public interest decision, the Corps will normally give favorable consideration to a request for an extension of this time limit.

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Your signature below, as permittee, indicates that you accept and agree to comply with the terms and conditions of this permit.

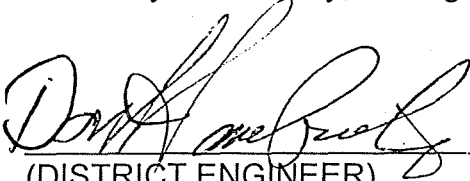


(PERMITTEE)

FRANK ROBERTS
DIST Envir Permit Coord

9-28-01
(DATE)

This permit becomes effective when the Federal official, designated to act for the Secretary of the Army, has signed below.



(DISTRICT ENGINEER)

James G. May
Colonel, U.S. Army

28 Sep 2001
(DATE)

REGIONAL MITIGATION PLAN

BACKGROUND INFORMATION					
Water Management District:	Northwest Florida Water Management District				
Mitigation Project Name:	Devils Swamp; Choctawhatchee River; Camp Helen	Project Number: (to be provided by DEP)			
Project Manager:	Duncan Cairns	Phone Number:	850-539-5999		
County(s):	Walton				
Location (central lat/long):	30° 22' 00" North / 86° 3' 00" West				
IMPACT INFORMATION					
DOT Work Program Item (WPI):	3119123 (FM 2206431)	ERP #:		COE #:	
Drainage Basin(s):	Choctawhatchee River & Bay				
Water Body(s):	Choctawhatchee Bay			SWIM Water Body?	Yes
Acres and Types of impact to be offset:	42.9	Acres	615	(Fluccs code)	
(Provide the above information for each WPI project, as needed.)					

MITIGATION ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION										
Mitigation Type:		Creation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Restoration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enhancement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Preservation	Mitigation Area (acres):	400+
SWIM Project?	No	Aquatic Plant Control Project?	No	Exotic Plant Control Project?	No					
Mitigation Bank?	No	If yes, give FDEP/WMD Mitigation Bank Permit #:					COE #:			
Drainage Basin(s):	Choctawhatchee River & Bay									
Water Body(s):	Choctawhatchee River & Bay							SWIM Water Body?	Yes	
Project Description										
<p>A. Overall project goal:</p> <p>To acquire, preserve, enhance and restore highly degraded wetlands at Devils Swamp in south Walton County. Restore hydrologic function of the Choctawhatchee River floodplain through the construction of low-water crossings/bridges and improve habitat with re-vegetation and soil stabilization. Conduct potamological/wetland restoration at Camp Helen. Implement long-term natural resource management activities to assure the maintenance of high ecological value at all restoration sites.</p>										
<p>B. Brief description of current condition:</p> <p>Devils Swamp (mostly FLUCCS 620, 639, 690) has been highly impacted by forestry activities including bedding, skidder trails, and clear cutting. Logging roads have disturbed the natural hydrology of the Choctawhatchee River floodplain by blocking natural low and high flows, and have also impacted natural habitat. Camp Helen drainages have been impacted by ditching and improper land management.</p>										

C.	<p>Brief description of proposed work:</p> <p>Acquisition, restoration (e.g., re-vegetation, hydrologic restoration, prescribed burns, etc.) and management of portions of Devils Swamp. Construction of low-water crossings/bridges at selected sites, and re-vegetation (cypress and gum species) and soil stabilization on the Choctawhatchee River floodplain. Conduct potamological/wetland restoration at Camp Helen.</p>
D.	<p>Brief explanation of how this work serves to offset the impacts of the specified DOT project(s):</p> <p>The impacted wetlands are FLUCCS 615 – Stream and Lake Swamp in poor condition. Restoration of forested wetlands (FLUCCS 620, 630, 690) at Devils Swamp (located two miles from impact site) to high quality wetlands of high ecological value will appropriately offset wetland functions and type lost as a result of the DOT project. Hydrologic restoration of sites on the Choctawhatchee floodplain will enhance forested wetland habitat, reduce roadway sedimentation, and replace lost flood storage and streamflow attenuation capacity. Potamological/wetland restoration at Camp Helen will improve wetlands and associated drainages.</p>
E.	<p>Brief explanation of why a mitigation bank was/was not chosen, including a discussion of cost:</p> <p>No permitted mitigation bank exists in the Choctawhatchee River and Bay watershed.</p>
F.	<p>Brief explanation of why a SWIM project was/was not chosen as mitigation, in whole or in part, including a discussion of cost, if the anticipated impacts are located within a SWIM water body:</p> <p>No appropriate SWIM project exists.</p>

MITIGATION PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION				
Entity responsible for construction:		Northwest Florida Water Management District		
Contact Name:	Duncan Cairns	Phone Number:	850-539-5999	
Entity responsible for monitoring and maintenance:		Northwest Florida Water Management District		
Proposed timeframe for implementation	Commence Date:	ASAP	Complete Date:	ASAP
Total Project Cost (\$): (attach itemized cost estimate)	\$ 3,389,100			

Attachment includes the following:	
X	1. Detailed description of existing site and proposed work. Table 3 or Section F of the ERP application may be used as guidelines.
X	2. Recent aerial photograph with date and scale.
X	3. Location map and design drawings of existing and proposed conditions. (See figures and typical drawings)
X	4. Detailed schedule for work implementation, including any and all phases.
X	5. Proposed success criteria and associated monitoring plan.
X	6. Long-term maintenance plan
X	7. Detailed explanation of how this work serves to offset the impacts of the specified DOT project(s).

**ATTACHMENT FOR FM 220643-1-51-1 MITIGATION PLAN
(DEVILS SWAMP / CHOCTAWHATCHEE FLOODPLAIN / ~~CAMP HELEN~~)**

The US 98 road widening (Financial Management Number 220643-1-51-1) from SR 83 / US 331 east to Peach Creek is anticipated to impact 42.9 acres of wetlands in south Walton County. The FDOT District-3 Environmental Impact Inventory (6/2/00) provided to the NFWFMD classifies the impact wetlands as low quality, FLUCCS 615 – Stream and Lake Swamps. Measures taken to avoid and minimize wetland impacts are the responsibility of FDOT. Currently, private consultants are hired by FDOT to assess and quantify wetland impacts. The NFWFMD is the agency designing and implementing the mitigation for these impacts under Section 373.4137, Florida Statutes. The mitigation is based on estimates of impacts (acreage and FLUCCS type) provided by FDOT. This attachment includes mitigation proposed in the approved *1998-2001: Regional Mitigation Plan* and modified per Section 373.4137(5), Florida Statutes, to meet section 404 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. s. 1344.

Objective

The objective of this mitigation plan is to adequately compensate for the loss of wetlands and wetland function associated with the FDOT project. To accomplish this, the NFWFMD intends to acquire and restore 214.5 to 429 acres of highly degraded wetlands in Devils Swamp (assuming mitigation ratios of 5:1 to 10:1) and to restore the hydrologic function of several wetland sites on the Choctawhatchee River floodplain. ~~In addition, minor stream/wetland restoration will be undertaken within Camp Helen State Recreation Area managed by the Florida Department of Parks and Recreation.~~ The Choctawhatchee River floodplain mitigation project area is on NFWFMD-owned land south of US 90 that is primarily impacted wetlands that will be hydrologically restored through construction of low-water crossings or bridges and vegetationally enhanced with selected plantings of wetland species. The actual acreage restored and/or credits associated with successful restoration will be determined through consultations with the permitting authorities, although preliminary analysis indicates several hundred acres of wetlands would benefit from a more natural hydrology.

Specific restoration activities at Devils Swamp will include re-vegetation with appropriate wetland species, hydrologic restoration where appropriate and the development and implementation of natural resource management plans, including proper fire regime, to maintain high ecological value. Restoration activities on the Choctawhatchee River floodplain will consist of the removal of hydrologic barriers associated with relict logging roads by the construction of low-water crossings and/or bridges and re-vegetation with native species. ~~Restoration efforts in Camp Helen will include restoration of an historic flow channel and associated re-vegetation.~~ All restored wetlands will be preserved and managed in perpetuity by the NFWFMD ~~with the exception of Camp Helen which will be managed by FDEP.~~

Site Description

Devils Swamp: Devils Swamp is a heavily logged (Figure 1), depressional swamp system that may be generally described as a highly disturbed “bay swamp.” Much of Devils Swamp has been bedded and converted to pine production, although remnant cypress and blackgum remain in the wetter sections. Prior to logging and conversion to pine production, common tree species may have included sweetbay, slash pine, swamp bay, loblolly bay, blackgum, cypress, sweetgum, red maple, water oak and diamond-leaf oak. Understory species may have included wax myrtle, titi, pepperbush, fetterbush, gallberry, and various vines. Groundcover may have included sphagnum moss, ferns, sedges and various grasses (Wolfe, Reidenauer, and Means 1988).

Devils Swamp and the FDOT impacts are both within the Choctawhatchee River and Bay watershed. The proposed mitigation site is approximately two miles from the wetland impacts associated with the FDOT project (Figure 2). The swamp is approximately 5-15 feet higher in elevation than the Choctawhatchee River floodplain (Figure 3), and drains to the floodplain via intermittent streams which cross the adjacent NFWMD-owned lands.

The area being considered for mitigation activities is approximately 2,760 acres (Figure 4). In addition to FM 220643-1-51-1, several other mitigation projects may also be planned for Devils Swamp (see Figure 4). Analysis of a FDEP (Florida Department of Environmental Protection) landuse GIS coverage, SCS (Soil Conservation Service) soils maps, and preliminary field reconnaissance suggests approximately 1,500 acres are wetlands. Based on the FDEP landuse coverage, the wetlands consist of FLUCCS 620 – Wetland Coniferous Forest (9%) , FLUCCS 630 – Wetland Forested Mixed (59%), FLUCCS 690 – Wetland Scrub Shrub (25%), FLUCCS 641 – Freshwater Marshes (6%), and FLUCCS 610 – Wetland Hardwood Forest (1%). Devils Swamp is contiguous with NFWMD-owned lands in the Choctawhatchee River floodplain. Connection between Devils Swamp and the NFWMD-owned floodplain, coupled with restoration of this area to a natural condition, will provide a diverse and ecologically important wetland habitat.

Hydric soils in the Devils Swamp area include “Rutlege-Leon: Nearly level, very poorly drained and poorly drained soils that are sandy throughout,” and “Hurricane-Pamlico: Nearly level to gently sloping, somewhat poorly drained to very poorly drained soils; some are organic underlain by sandy material, and others are sandy throughout,” (*USDA-SCS Soil Survey of Walton County*).

Choctawhatchee River Floodplain: Numerous logging roads are found on the floodplain of the Choctawhatchee River in Walton County. Because of roadfill or inadequate culverts, water is often impounded on the upstream side of the road, thus preventing the natural flow of water. Several sites (see Figures 6, 7 and 8) will be restored to pre-impact hydrologic conditions by the removal of roads and fill, and the installation of bridges and low-water crossings. Ecosystem benefits will include habitat enhancement for both plant and animal life, and water quality improvement. Selected areas will be re-vegetated with cypress and/or gum species. Soil stabilization will be implemented.

~~**Camp Helen Restoration:** Previous ditching and rerouting of natural stream channels through upland areas has adversely impacted the wetlands draining from a natural open water body within Camp Helen. The wetlands to be restored are on the northern side of U.S. 98 in Bay County, immediately to the east of the anticipated FDOT impacts. Restoration will include altering the existing ditch channel and rerouting to a more natural flow pattern. The areas will be revegetated with appropriate native vegetation.~~

Acquisition

Devils Swamp: Devils Swamp is currently owned by the St. Joe / Arvida company. Preliminary negotiations have been conducted regarding ownership of this land, with St. Joe / Arvida indicating a willingness to sell portions of Devils Swamp to the NFWFMD. Depending upon negotiations, land acquisition efforts may be shifted to include St. Joe / Arvida lands on the east or west sides of the Devils Swamp.

~~**Choctawhatchee River Floodplain and Camp Helen Restoration:** Sites under consideration for hydrologic restoration on the Choctawhatchee River floodplain south of US 90 are already owned and managed by the NFWFMD. The site proposed for restoration within Camp Helen is owned and managed by the FDEP Division of Parks and Recreation.~~

Restoration

Devils Swamp: Restoration of Devils Swamp would include re-vegetation with appropriate wetland species (Figure 5), prescribed burns, and hydrologic restoration where needed. Relict bedding from forestry operations might also be breached or regraded in certain areas, although because of the heavy disturbance this would cause, this would be done only in very limited circumstances.

Much of the surrounding uplands have been clear-cut. Eventual restoration of these upland areas to natural conditions (pine flatwoods or longleaf pine / wiregrass community) would provide a buffer of high ecological value for the wetland areas being restored for mitigation purposes. The Devils Swamp area also includes relatively isolated depression wetlands which provide critical ecological habitat.

Short-term activities will focus on hydrologic restoration and re-establishment of wetland vegetation communities (see Figure 5). Long-term management activities will be undertaken to assure the continued health and viability of the restored wetlands and to maintain the high ecological value of the resultant restored/enhanced ecosystem.

Given the magnitude and vast extent of devastation throughout Devils Swamp, restoration efforts will be conducted in phases. Review and approval from federal permitting agencies will be solicited as detailed plans are developed for each phase of the Devils Swamp restoration.

Three other FDOT wetland mitigation projects are planned for Devils Swamp. They are WPI 3119117, WPI 3119122, and WPI 3119124 (see Figure 4). These projects, coupled with FM 220643-1-51-1 (formerly WPI 3119123), will result in the restoration of the most highly disturbed portions of Devils Swamp.

Choctawhatchee River Floodplain: Restoration to pre-impact hydrologic conditions will be accomplished by the removal of roads and fill, and the installation of bridges and/or low-water crossings. Selected areas will be re-vegetated with cypress and/or gum species. Soil stabilization will be implemented, especially in the vicinity of stream crossings.

~~**Camp Helen Restoration:** Stream and wetland restoration will be accomplished by the rerouting of an existing “improved” channel to a more appropriate location and re-vegetation with appropriate wetland vegetation and replanting of the previous channel location with appropriate native vegetation (see Figures 9 and 10).~~

Mitigation Value

Wetlands restoration, preservation and natural resource management at Devils Swamp will be applied toward mitigating the US 98 (FM 220643-1-51-1) project. Given the highly disturbed condition and high restoration potential of Devils Swamp, it is estimated that 200 to 400 acres will need to be completely restored (re-vegetation and hydrologic restoration), assuming mitigation ratios of 5:1 to 10:1, as part of the proposed mitigation. The disturbed wetlands are some 80% forested wetland mixed with the remainder being scrub/shrub and marsh wetlands. The remainder of the sites in Devils Swamp will be restored and appropriately managed in the future for other wetland mitigation projects. Preliminary analysis of mitigation potential on the designated sites in the Choctawhatchee River floodplain suggests 240 acres of wetlands would be enhanced by this mitigation activity.

Approval will be sought from federal permitting agencies as to assigning the appropriate mitigation value for the phases of this mitigation project.

Monitoring and Long-term Maintenance

Appropriate monitoring will be conducted to ascertain the status and likelihood of restoration success. A formal, long-term management and monitoring plan will be developed within one year of land acquisition and formulated in accordance with the “Management Policies for Water Management Areas of the Northwest Florida Water Management District” (see Appendix). Success criteria will be based on establishment of appropriate wetland canopy and understory species, enhanced wildlife utilization, and improved hydrologic function. These criteria will be assessed through periodic site surveys, as well as the possible establishment of long-term vegetation transects, vegetation plots, time sequence photography, and installment of water level monitoring equipment. The long-term

management plan will address issues such as water resources (e.g., NPS abatement), forest and plant resources, fish and wildlife resources, any unique environmental, archaeological and historical resources, public access, ecological research concerns, apiary leases, appropriate burn schedules, and other concerns that may arise. Annual reports on mitigation status will be submitted until it is determined that adequate compensation has been assured.

NFWFMD Personnel to Implement Acquisition, Mitigation and Monitoring:

Ron Bartel – Division Director of Resource Management
William Cleckley – Division Director of Land Management and Acquisition
Duncan J. Cairns – Bureau Chief of Environmental and Resource Planning
Lee Marchman – Bureau Chief of Surface Water
George Fisher – Senior Planner - Lands
Mark Herndon – Director of Field Operations
Dan L. Tonsmeire – Associate Water Resource Planner
Peter A. Krottje – Environmental Scientist
Ron R. Potts – Surface Water Hydrologist
Robert F. Lide – Environmental Scientist
Judy K. Duvall – Associate Hydrologist

NFWFMD personnel, including environmental scientists, engineers, foresters and planners may be called upon as needed.

Work Schedule

Negotiations with St. Joe / Arvida to acquire Devils Swamp are ongoing. Detailed restoration plans for Devils Swamp will be formalized as lands are acquired or substantial interest is obtained. The planned activities will be undertaken as soon as possible following acquisition of the targeted wetlands.

2000 – 2001

- Acquisition of Devils Swamp
- Design of restoration strategy for appropriate Devils Swamp areas
- Design of restoration strategy for Choctawhatchee floodplain including engineering drawings for low-water crossings/bridges, re-vegetation, and soil stabilization
- ~~Design of restoration strategy for Camp Helen including engineering drawings, re-vegetation, and soil stabilization~~

2001 – 2002

- Construction and implementation of mitigation activities

2002 – 2006

- Implementation of monitoring
- Annual reports to the Corps of Engineers describing progress of mitigation

Tasks Completed:

1. A preliminary wetland functional analysis was performed for portions of Devils Swamp in August 1999. Results indicated substantial potential of environmental lift from mitigation activities (e.g., re-vegetation with appropriate species, introduction of appropriate fire regime, breaching of pine bedding, possible filling of ditches and relict tramlines).
2. Initial discussions were held with St. Joe in 1999 and 2000 concerning the NFWFMD obtaining portions of Devils Swamp for mitigation of US 98 impacts. Discussions with St. Joe officials concerning Devils Swamp are ongoing.
3. Estimates for the acquisition of large-scale, current aerial photography of Choctawhatchee and the Devils Swamp tract were obtained in the fall of 1999.
4. Cost estimates for acquisition of Airborne Laser Swath Mapping for Devils Swamp were obtained in Spring 2000.
5. Initial planning for the re-vegetation of Devils Swamp based on soil type and topography was done during late 1999. Species and planting densities were recommended by personnel in the NFWFMD Lands Division (see Figure 5 for species and planting densities).
6. An elevation survey of roads and stream crossings in the Choctawhatchee area was recently conducted by NFWFMD field staff. Staff are in the process of creating topographic profiles of these stream crossings. Elevations were tied to a known elevation monument outside of the restoration area. Three 200' transects (two perpendicular to the road and one that follows the stream channel) were made at 12 potential hydrologic restoration sites.
7. Preliminary reconnaissance has been performed on the Choctawhatchee floodplain to identify and inventory hydrologic restoration sites.
8. Preliminary reconnaissance has been performed on the Camp Helen Restoration to scope the restoration potential.

Anticipated Tasks:

1. Purchase of portions of Devils Swamp from St. Joe / Arvida.
2. Continued development of restoration and management plans for Devils Swamp.
3. Continued development of restoration plans for Choctawhatchee floodplain.
4. ~~Continued development of restoration plans for Camp Helen Restoration.~~
5. Finalization of plans for Devils Swamp, Choctawhatchee ~~and Camp Helen.~~
6. Implementation of mitigation at Devils Swamp, Choctawhatchee ~~and Camp Helen.~~
7. Long-term monitoring and management of mitigation sites.

Legally Binding Commitment

The Florida Statutes specify how NFWFMD lands must be managed and used:

373.139(1)(a) – Lands titled to the governing boards of the districts shall be managed and maintained to the extent practicable, in such a way as to ensure a balance between public access, general public recreational purposes, and restoration and protection of their natural state and condition.

Works Cited

- Overing, J.D., and F.C. Watts. 1989. *Soil survey of Walton County, Florida*. U.S Dept. of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service.
- Wolfe, S.H., J.A. Reidenauer, and D.B. Means. 1988. *An ecological characterization of the Florida Panhandle*. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Report 88(12); Minerals Management Service OCS Study\MMS 88-0063; 277 pp.

Figure 1 – Logged Area of Devils Swamp



Figure 2 - FM 220643-1-51-1
(US 98 from US 331 east to Peach Creek.; 42.9 acres of impact)

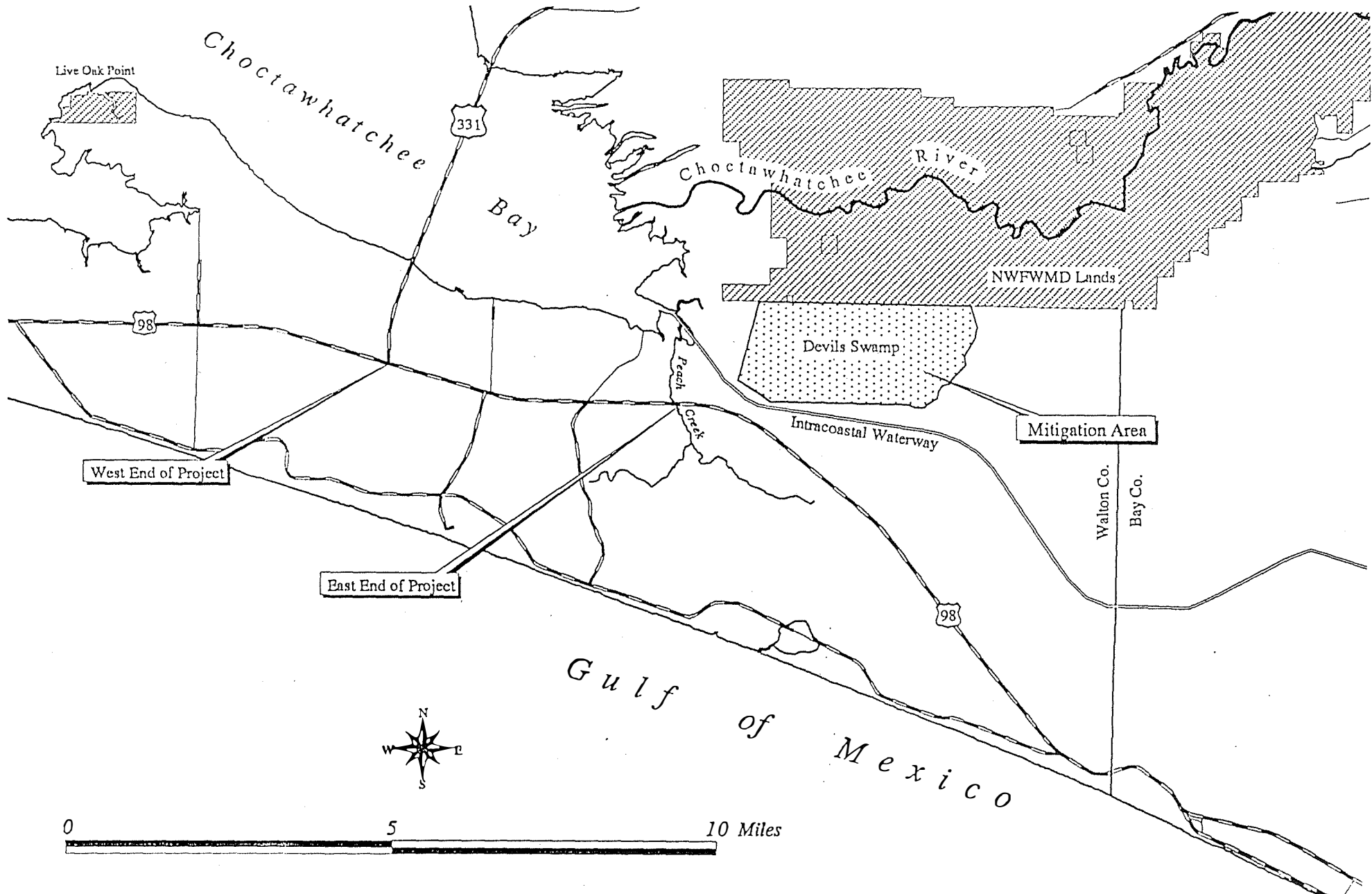


Figure 3 - Devils Swamp Topography

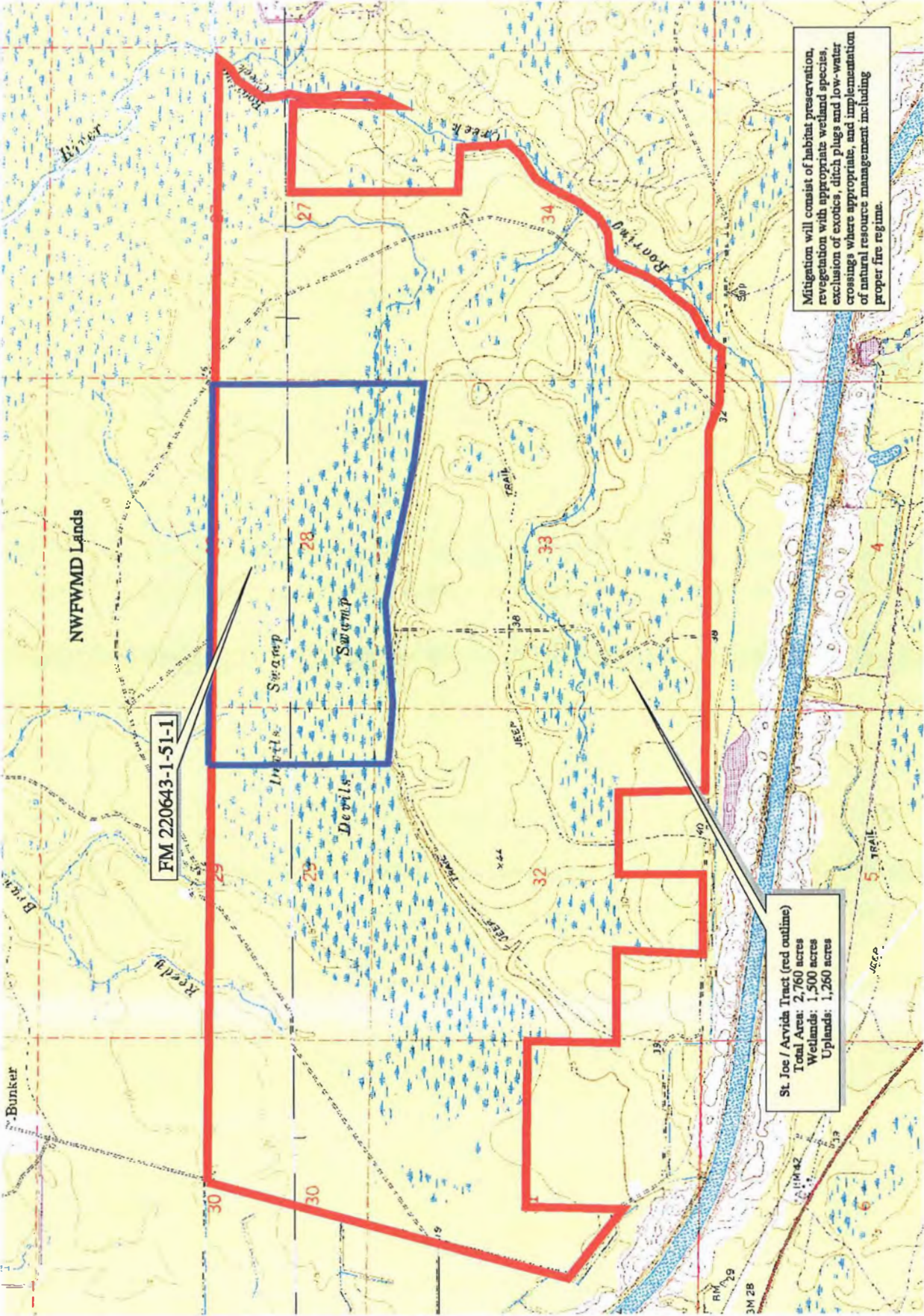


Figure 4 - Devils Swamp Mitigation Area

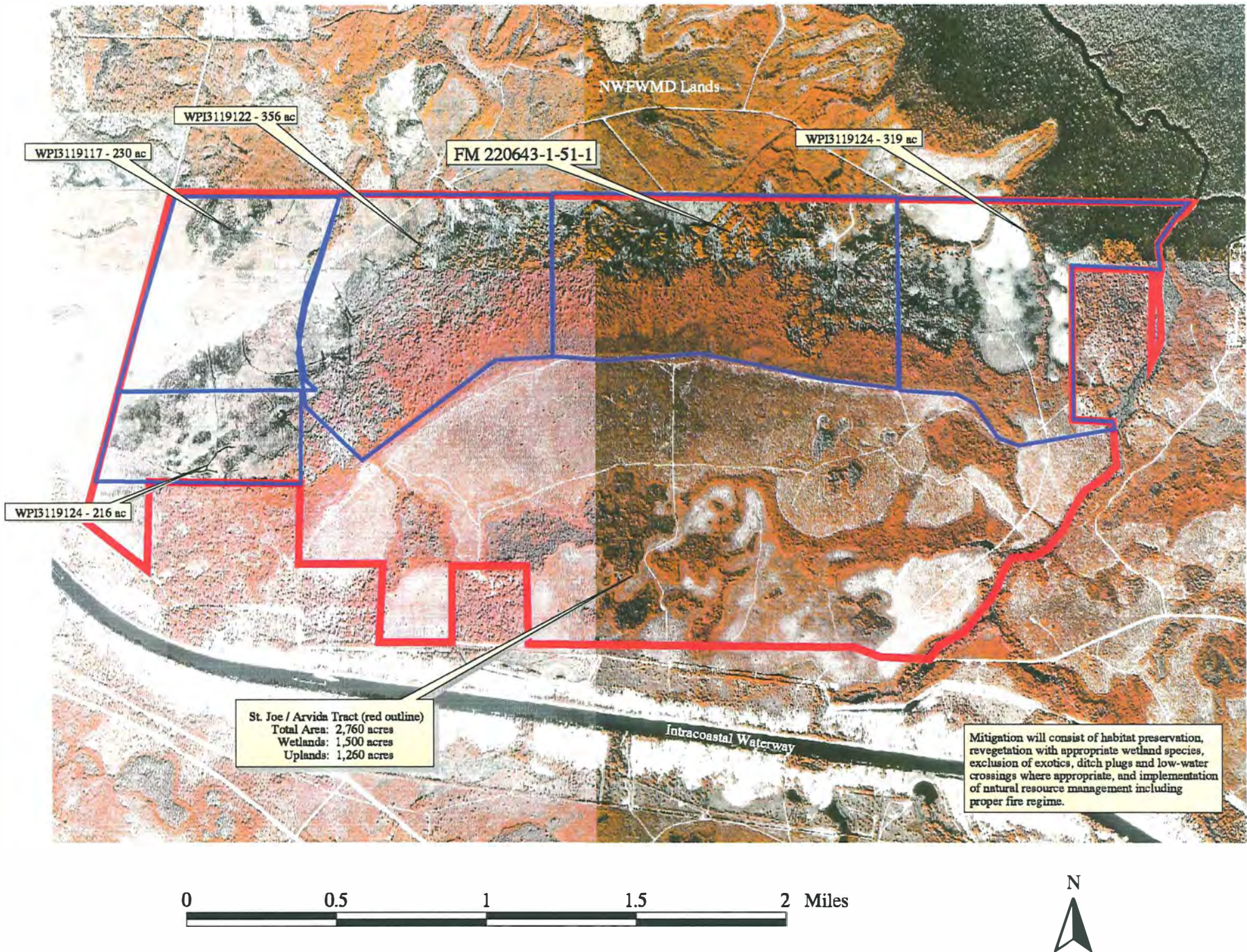


Figure 5 - Draft re-vegetation plan for Devils Swamp

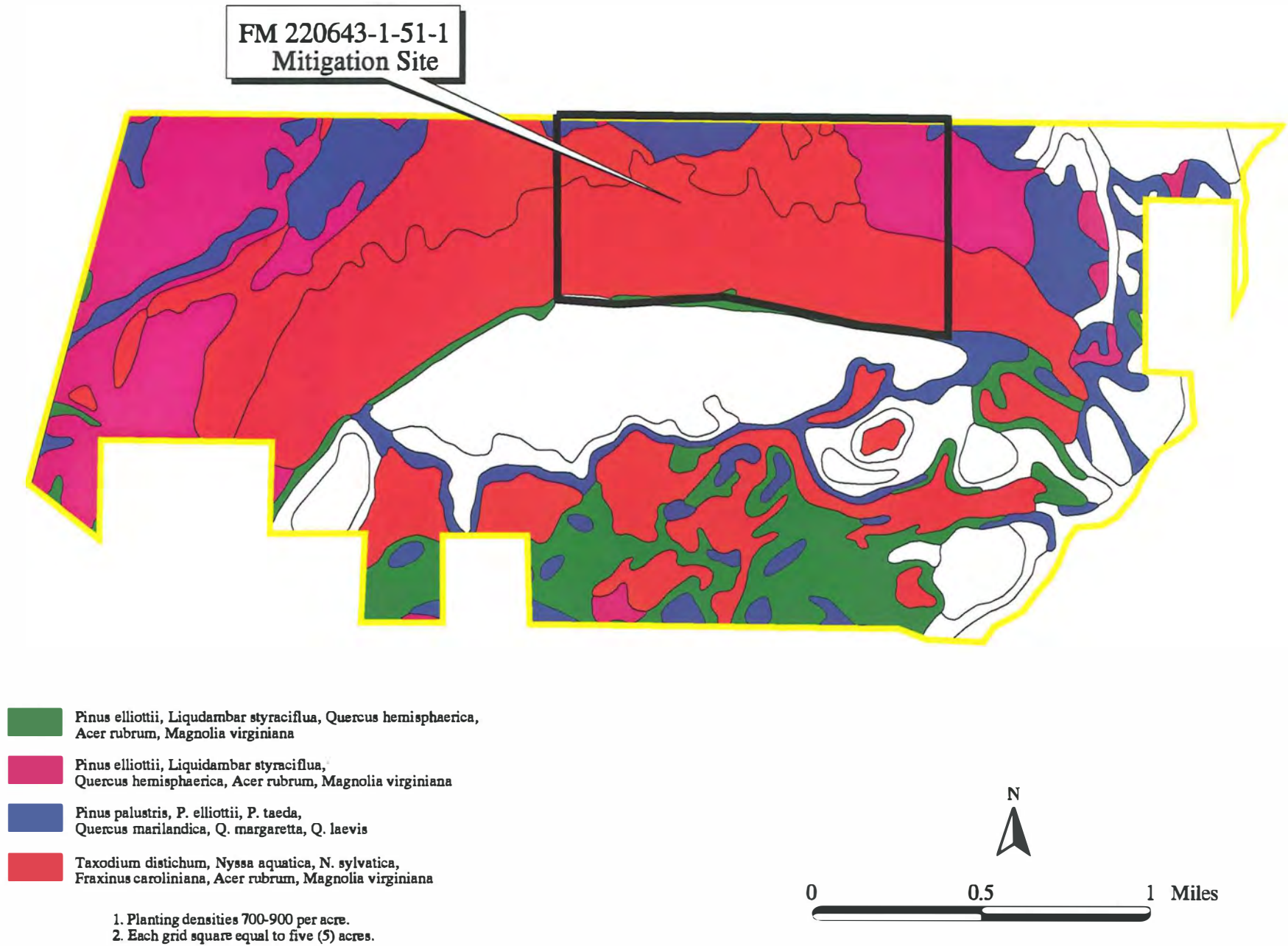


Figure 6 - Potential Choctawhatchee River Floodplain Mitigation Site

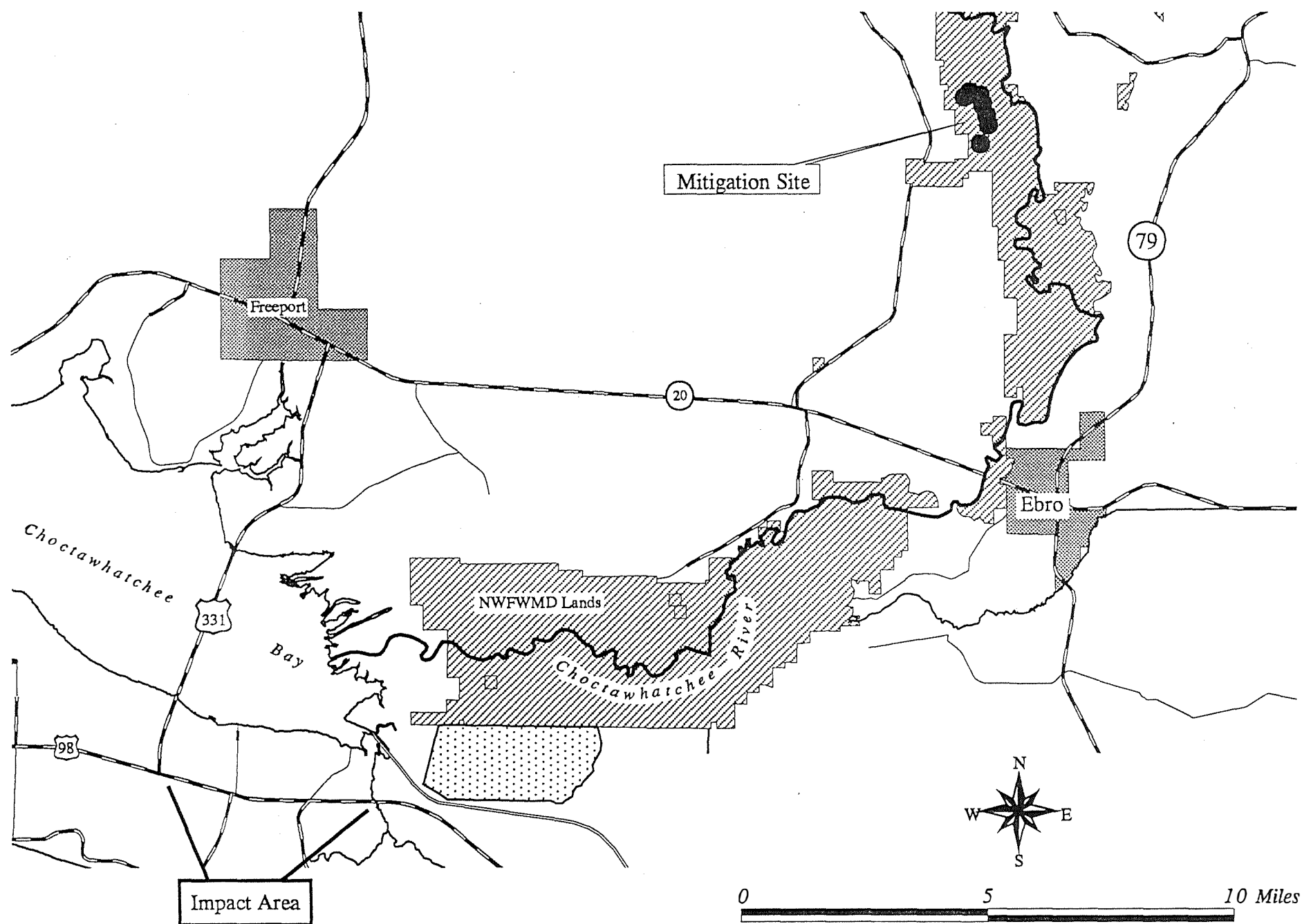


Figure 7 - DOQ of Potential Choctawhatchee River Floodplain Hydrologic Restoration Mitigation Site

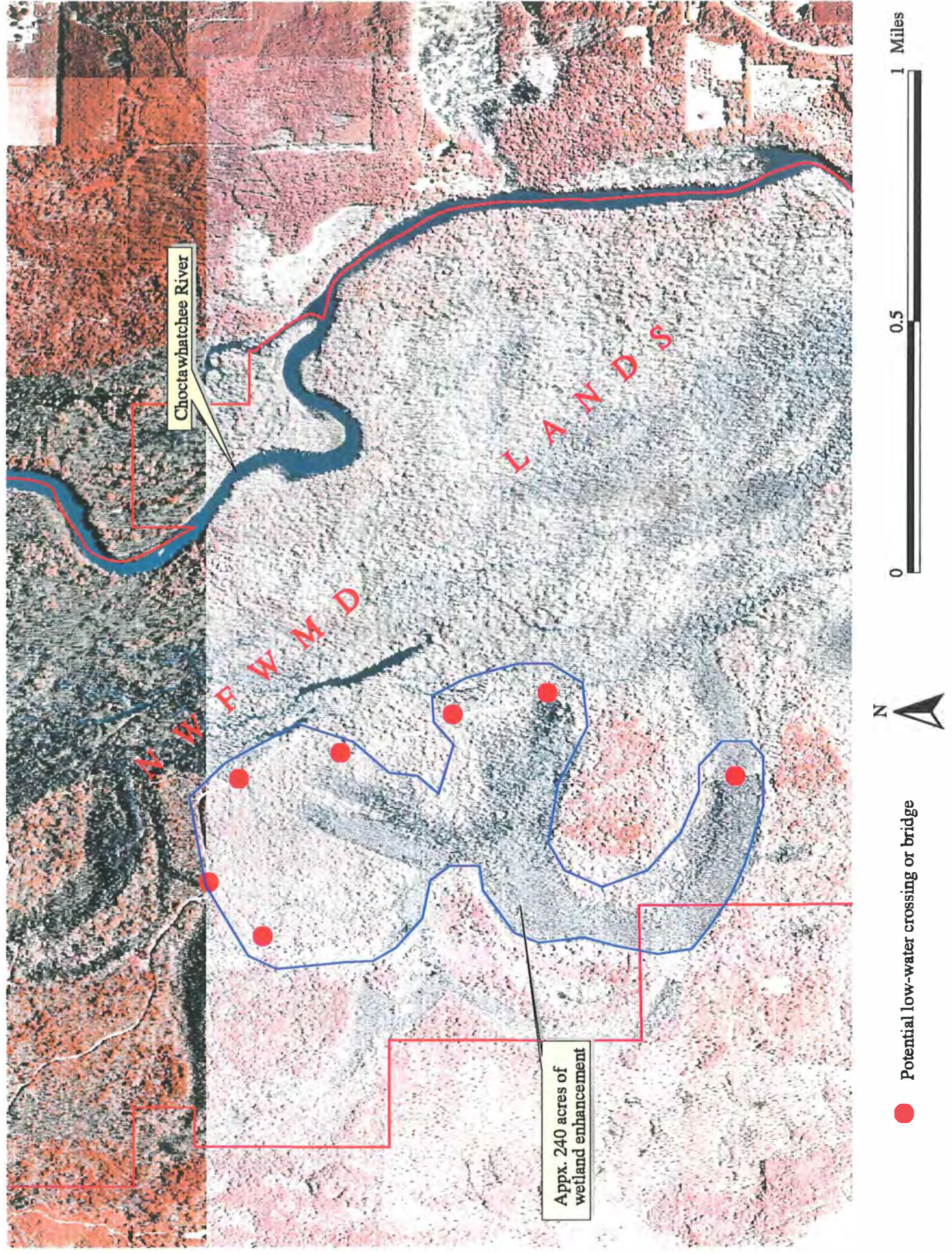


Figure 8 - Choctawhatchee River Floodplain Hydrologic Restoration Mitigation Site Topography

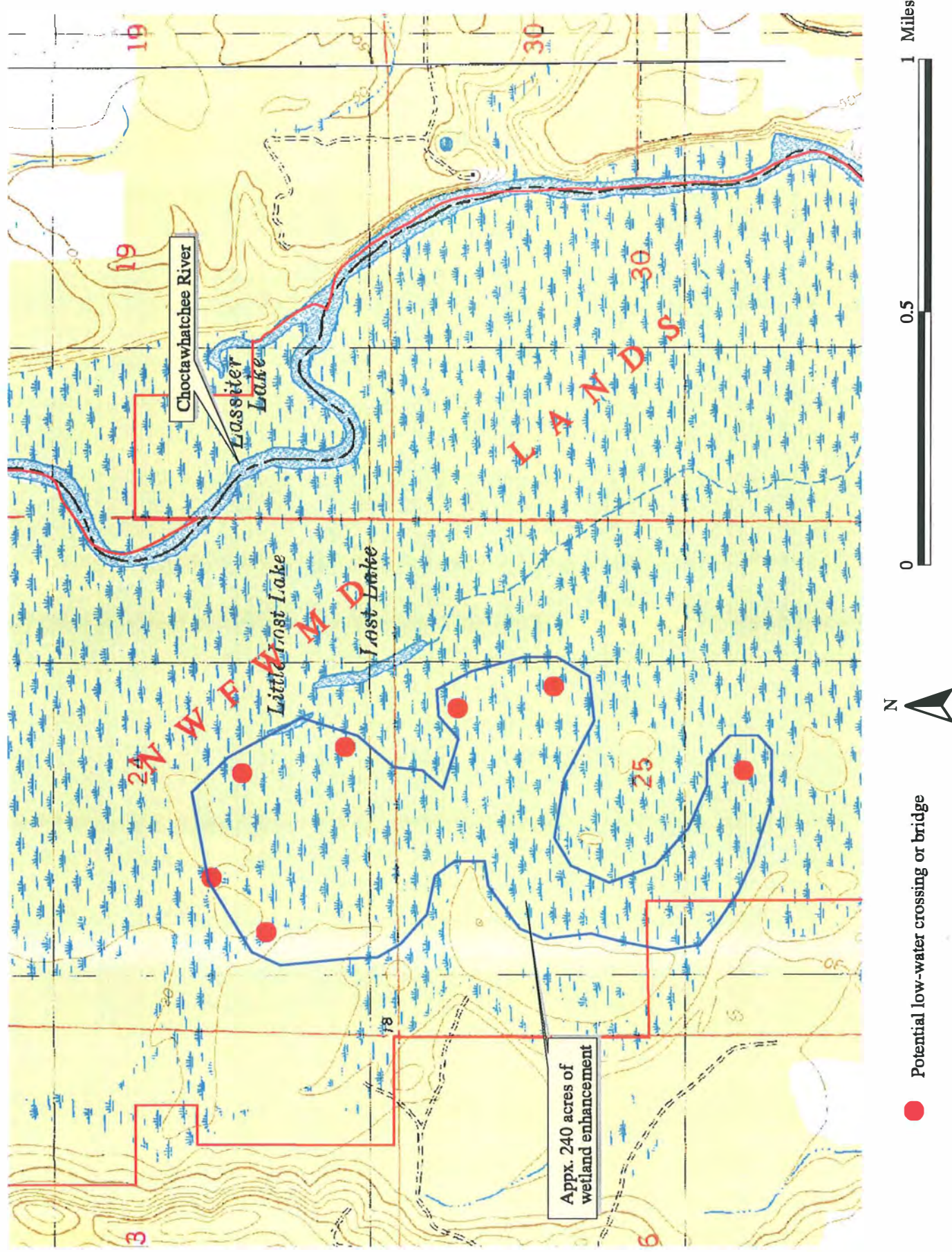


Figure 9 - Location of Camp Helen and Impact Area

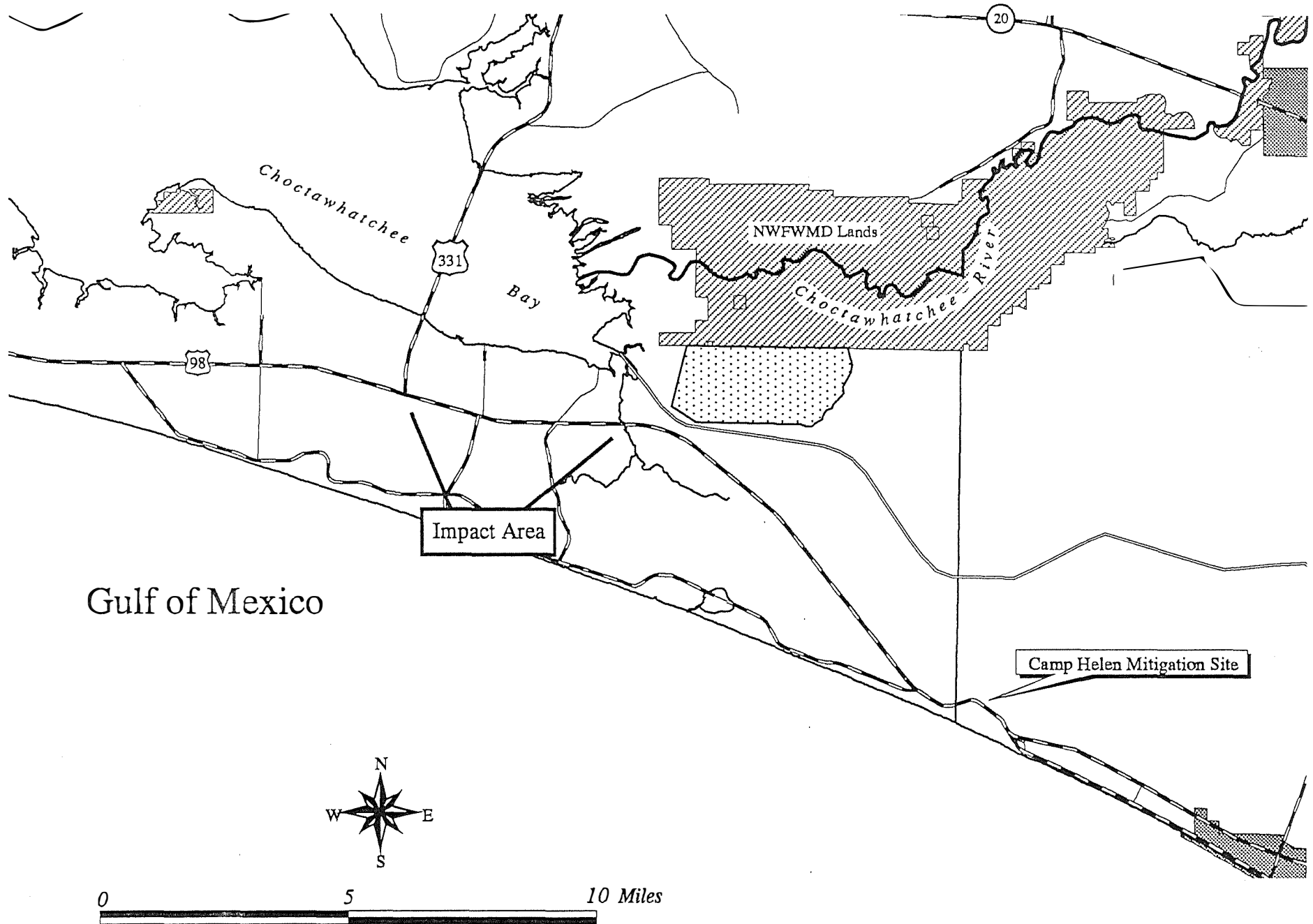


Figure 10 - Camp Helen Mitigation Site



0 100 200 300 400 500 Meters

0 1000 2000 Feet



Wetland Mitigation to offset WPI 3119123				
Mitigation Area	Restoration Acreage	Enhancement Acreage	Applied Mitigation Ratio	Mitigation Value (Acres)
Devils Swamp	200-400	0	10:1 to 5:1	20-80
Choctawhatchee Floodplain	0	240	40:1 to 20:1	6-12
Camp Helen	2-4	0	10:1 to 4:1	0.2-1

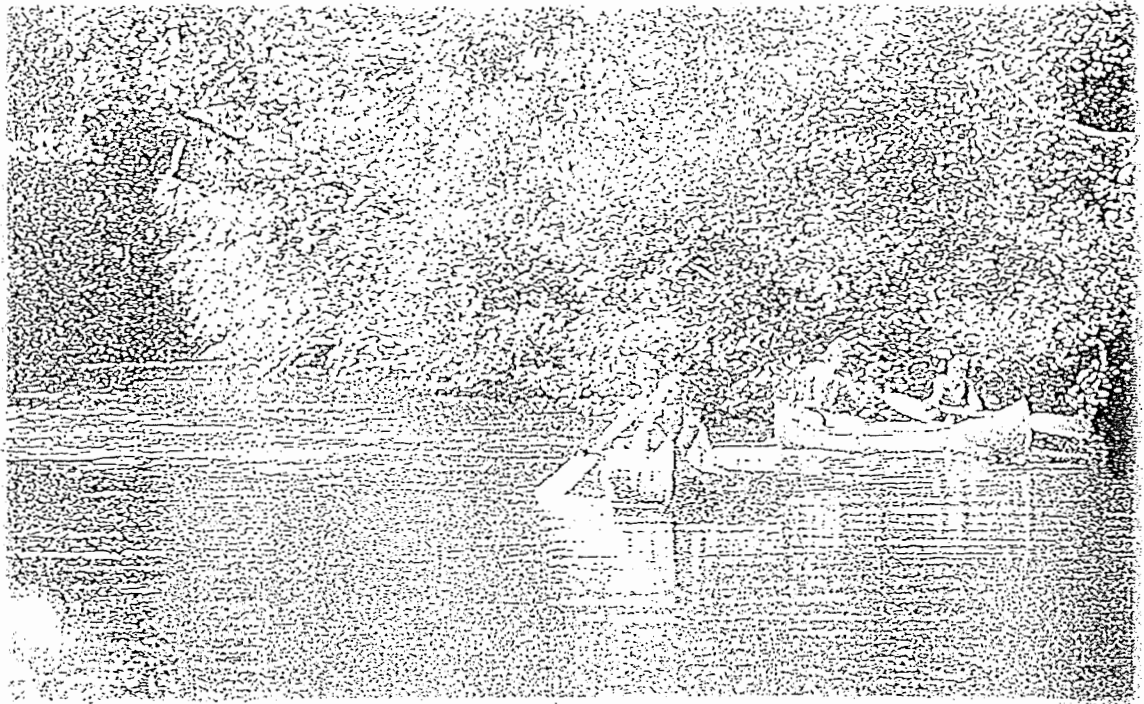
COST ESTIMATES

Land Acquisition	\$	1,600,000
Re-vegetation	\$	569,000
Salaries	\$	120,000
Monitoring	\$	160,000
Maintenance	\$	180,000
Long term management	\$	220,000
Hydrologic restoration	\$	540,100
<hr/>		
Total	\$	3,389,100

APPENDIX

- Management policies for water management areas of the NFWWMD
- NFWWMD prescribed burning policy
- NFWWMD land acquisition procedures

**MANAGEMENT POLICIES
FOR WATER MANAGEMENT AREAS**
of the
Northwest Florida
Water Management District



Canoeists, Econfina Creek. Photo courtesy
of The Panama City News Herald

Adopted by the Governing Board
January 28, 1988

Revised: October 1990
August 1994
November 1996
December 1997

MANAGEMENT POLICIES FOR WATER MANAGEMENT AREAS

of the Northwest Florida Water Management District

Purpose

This document contains the specific policies of the Northwest Florida Water Management District relating to the management and governance of its water management areas. The policies are comprehensive and will be applied consistently to all designated areas managed by the District.

Land management is a constant activity requiring many immediate decisions that are based on a familiarity with local conditions and the natural resources. Managers must have latitude to make those decisions effectively and to exercise professional judgment, but within the bounds of an established policy framework. These policies are intended to provide the general guidance needed for making daily management decisions. A detailed resource inventory and specific management plan will be developed for each water management area. When required, appropriate rules will be adopted to enforce the specific policies.

The policies in this document are subject to public review and comment. It is important to note, however, that these policies attempt to project procedures for managing the water management areas over time and changing circumstances. It may be necessary, therefore, for the Governing Board of the Water Management District to modify some of these provisions. In accomplishing this process, the District will provide notice of proposed changes and will give all interested parties an opportunity to comment.

Management Philosophy

The Northwest Florida Water Management District is authorized by the Florida legislature to acquire land necessary for water management, water supply, and the conservation and protection of water resources. The legislature indicates those lands are to be managed and maintained in an environmentally acceptable manner, and are to be restored and protected in their natural state and condition. Further, the legislature charges the District to evaluate the land for recreational potential, and to make District lands available for general and varied public recreational purposes unless such activities are incompatible with the purposes for which the lands were purchased. Land use priorities for the management of District lands, as established by the legislature, are as follows: conserve and protect water resources, protect or restore ecosystems, and provide for public recreation where it is not incompatible. All land use decisions made by the District will be guided by these priorities.

District lands, herein referred to as "water management areas," provide under these legislative priorities a significant opportunity to host a broad spectrum of public uses while maintaining and restoring a rich and diverse water resource environment. Management will be

focused on providing for water resources protection (including flood storage and nutrient production), a diversity of ecosystems, compatible recreational use, wildlife habitat restoration and enhancement, and the continuation, where possible, of local and traditional land and water resource uses. These lands are held in trust for the citizens of Florida by the Northwest Florida Water Management District and have many public values — including social, economic, recreation, historic, ecologic, scientific and cultural. These values are recognized and will be developed for the widest possible public benefit and for the greatest possible number of uses. In accomplishing this, the District will continually seek and monitor the needs, interests and desires of the citizens of northwestern Florida with respect to its land management programs.

As a general policy, the Water Management District will seek assistance from local governments, the university system, private organizations and individuals from state and federal agencies whose expertise and management capacities will clearly enhance resource management and protection within water management areas. To ensure a cost-effective program, cooperative agreements for specific management responsibilities will be sought in order to avoid duplication or the overlapping of capabilities and responsibilities.

Because real property acquired by the District represents a huge capital investment by Florida taxpayers, it will be a District policy to provide for as many as possible of the future development and management needs of the water management areas through a system of user fees. Funds derived from these user fees and from other revenues generated by the water management areas will be dedicated specifically to land management, maintenance and restoration, and to completing improvement projects identified with assistance from local advisory groups. Such an arrangement will help ensure that these lands become at least partially self-supporting, thus reducing the need to depend completely upon future tax revenues for their continued operation and maintenance.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Introduction

The water management areas of northwest Florida are a resource of unique and extraordinary value. The human and environmental benefits that can be derived are many, but they will require deliberate, enlightened and responsive management if the full potential of this resource is to be realized.

The development of management policies for the water management areas is guided by specific language in the Florida Statutes that relates to purchases made with funds from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund. This source of funding currently supports the District land acquisition and management program. The relevant sections of the statutes are in 373.59(3) and 373.59(10), (Please see appendix).

A. Water Resources

Issue

Water management areas currently owned by the Water Management District have, in the past, been subjected to a variety of activities related to navigation, forestry, agriculture, etc. that have significantly modified natural drainage patterns and processes.

Discussion

The Water Management District has a legislative directive to manage its lands in an environmentally acceptable manner and to restore and protect their natural state and condition. It is also generally recognized that river floodplains in a natural state provide, at no cost, a variety of valuable functions. Among these are nonstructural flood protection, nutrient production, high and diverse biological productivity, sediment removal and the moderation of high and low-flow conditions.

The District does recognize, however, that the Apalachicola and Escambia rivers are federally authorized waterways. Maintenance of these modern navigation channels has long been a source of intense environmental concern which has led, in the case of the Apalachicola, to the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the governors of Alabama, Florida and Georgia. One of the measures called for in this agreement was the development of the Navigation Maintenance Plan for the Apalachicola - Chattahoochee - Flint Waterway. This Plan has been completed and was recognized by the State of Florida as providing the guidelines for evaluating all future alternatives believed necessary to maintaining navigation

of the waterway. The environmental goal in the Plan calls for no further degradation of environmental resources due to navigation maintenance activities, and the Plan provides for the development of mitigation methods in those instances when navigation maintenance measures result in significant and unavoidable environmental impacts.

Policies

1. The Northwest Florida Water Management District will discourage activities that significantly modify the natural (undisturbed) movement of ground or surface water in a water management area, and will, where financially and physically feasible, attempt to restore the river floodplain to its natural condition and productivity. Under this policy, the construction of any permanent structure or facility that will unacceptably alter the flow of waters in the river floodplain is contrary to the management goals of the District.
2. In regard specifically to federally authorized navigation channel maintenance on the Apalachicola and Escambia rivers, the Northwest Florida Water Management District will require a course of action that provides for an appreciable and net positive environmental benefit to the water management area being affected by navigation maintenance activities. When no feasible alternatives exist, the District can provide for the sale, lease or trade of those water management area lands for which the Corps of Engineers can document a specific need relating directly to planned maintenance of a federally authorized channel. The following conditions will apply:
 - a) The overall goal of this policy will be to achieve higher total water, wildlife and forest resource values for the affected water management area as a whole.
 - b) In those instances when degradation of water management area lands can be shown to the satisfaction of the Governing Board to be unavoidable, degradation will be limited to available lands determined to have the lowest possible water, wildlife and forest resource values. In such determinations, previously used disposal sites shall be given the highest priority for future use.
 - c) As a means of reducing as much as possible the need for additional spoil disposal sites within a water management area, the District will encourage and assist the Corps of Engineers in seeking alternate locations and/or methods of disposal and/or environmentally acceptable uses for materials dredged from the rivers.

B. Forest and Plant Resources

Issue

A major consideration in both the Save Our Rivers and the Florida Preservation 2000 programs is the protection and/or restoration of all natural systems and resources, of which the floodplain and upland forests are a key element. In general, however, those lands already

acquired, and those usually available for acquisition by the District, have to some extent in the past been managed for commercial timber production. As a result, the number, age classes and distribution of present vegetation species are considerably less diverse and healthy than is possible or desirable.

Discussion

Forested floodplains, if composed of a diversity of healthy vegetation age-classes and species, are among the most productive of all ecosystems. They provide rich habitats and food chains for a wide variety of native game and nongame species and serve as refuges and migration corridors for still other species. Wildlife benefits, particularly in regard to mast production and den value, are considered to be greatest in relatively mature forests.

Extensive stands of trees in the river floodplains effectively moderate seasonal flood crests both by slowing the flow rate and by causing the flood water to spread evenly across the floodplain. The effects are that much of the sediment and nutrients carried by the flood waters is beneficially deposited on the floodplain rather than at the river mouth, and the release of water to downstream areas is gradual rather than rapid.

A third major benefit of a heavily forested floodplain is the contribution it makes to productivity in downstream areas. Leaves and other organic debris from hardwood species that are picked up by floodwaters form an essential part of the food chains of our estuaries and bays. Much of the productivity of the seafood industry in northwest Florida is directly dependent upon local forested floodplains.

Policies

1. The Northwest Florida Water Management District will strive to restore the forests within the water management areas to a condition characterized by a beneficial range of native species and age-class diversity, with an emphasis on having maximum acreages in the older age classes.
2. Timber salvage, harvesting and sale within the water management areas will be carried out if needed to support the policy to restore the forests to a condition characterized by a beneficial range of native and naturally occurring species and of age-class diversity. Declining and standing dead trees will, whenever possible, be protected as den trees for wildlife.
3. Every means available to the Northwest Florida Water Management District will be used to prevent the illegal girdling or unauthorized removal of timber species from the water management areas.
4. Non-commercial firewood gathering may be allowed in areas and at times identified by the Water Management District.

5. To augment capabilities of the District, management of the forest resources in the water management areas will be accomplished in cooperation with the Florida Division of Forestry and the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission.

C. Fish and Wildlife Resources

Issue

In past years, the fish and wildlife resources in the water management areas either were not managed or were managed primarily for a limited number of game species.

Discussion

As a means of providing the varied recreational opportunities called for in the Florida Statutes, the water management areas should be managed to provide the greatest possible diversity of wildlife species. In part, this can be accomplished by maintaining stream channels in a natural state, with numerous snags, bordering wetlands and thickets, overhangs, sand bars and depressions providing varied natural habitats. As much as possible, the water bodies should also be protected from excessive loads of sediments or nutrients resulting from land clearing, erosion, stormwater runoff and waste disposal.

A diversity of wildlife resources can be effectively promoted through a systematic program of floodplain forest management designed primarily to establish and maintain a broad array of habitat conditions. As an example, the clearing of a limited number of small (10 to 50 acres) and widely spaced forested patches, if done concurrently with the releasing of naturally established seeds or seedlings or the artificial planting of a variety of selected species beneficial to native wildlife, is considered to be an effective and cost-efficient method for accomplishing this purpose in those areas where the forest resources have been seriously degraded by earlier uses.

While seasonal hunting of various game species will undoubtedly remain one of the most popular uses of the water management areas, other recreational uses can be encouraged by the establishment of protected zones, or "wildlife refuge areas," where hunting is generally prohibited.

Policies

1. District management of the water management areas will focus on actively establishing and maintaining a wide variety of aquatic and forested floodplain habitats for all indigenous game and nongame species of wildlife.
2. No activities that contribute to a decline of water quality affecting fish, forest and wildlife resources within the water management areas will be allowed.
3. A portion of each water management area, selected in cooperation with the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission on the basis of physical and biological suitability, can be

established and protected as a "wildlife refuge area" where appropriate recreational activities other than hunting will be encouraged throughout the year.

4. To augment capabilities of the District, the management of fish and wildlife resources in the water management areas will be accomplished in cooperation primarily with professional and civic organizations with expertise in wildlife management and with the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, the Florida Division of Forestry and, on the Apalachicola River, the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve.

D. Unique Environmental, Archaeological and Historical Resources

Issue

Preliminary reconnaissance and research concerning the water management areas indicate the presence of several archaeological and historical sites and a considerable number of physically unique areas such as nesting areas, habitats of endangered or threatened species, mature stands of timber, and a variety of exceptionally attractive scenic landscapes.

Discussion

For the most part, the areas of unique physical or cultural characteristics are little known especially beyond the academic or scientific communities. It is possible and desirable, in some instances, to make a few of these areas more generally accessible to the public. Management must, however, be essentially protective in nature so as to ensure the preservation of the unique or significant features.

Policies

1. The Water Management District will take such steps as necessary to identify all sites within the water management areas that have particular value for archaeological, historical or environmental purposes. Identification of such sites will occur through research and examinations, and in cooperation with the state university system and appropriate agencies of Florida government.
2. The subsequent protection and preservation of the cultural and environmental resources, along with the appropriate development of public access and enhancement of public use and appreciation, will be coordinated with the Florida Division of Historical Resources, the Division of Forestry, the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, and other agencies and universities as needed.
3. "Protected Areas," where access is strictly controlled, will be established as needed to protect specialized habitat features, archaeological sites or sensitive physical landscapes.

PUBLIC USES

A. Recreational Use

Issue

The Florida Statutes indicate that, to the extent possible, the water management areas should be made available to the general public for a wide variety of recreational purposes. The development and continued maintenance of these recreational opportunities will, however, greatly benefit from a dependable source of funding derived from and devoted specifically to the water management areas.

Discussion

The water management areas are among the last remaining publicly owned lands in northwest Florida where traditional uses and activities related to river floodplains can still be practiced. These are highly beneficial and productive water management lands, but they are expressly available for public uses so long as these uses have minimal or no detrimental impacts on the floodplain environment. To help achieve this, development and management for public use can favor widely scattered, low intensity activities (hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, etc.) and attempt to resolve potential user conflicts in favor of those uses having the least environmental impact.

Another of the primary management concerns of the Water Management District is that access to these public lands be provided on an equitable basis. Because these water management areas were purchased with public funds derived from statewide sources, it is considered essential that the enjoyment and benefits from this public resource be made available and allocated to all interest groups and citizens of Florida. This can be achieved in large part by a program by which users contribute, by means of annual resource area permits or annual lease fees, toward the long-term management, development and maintenance of the water management areas. These fees make possible an increased level of maintenance and development of publicly used facilities.

Policies

The following are specific policies to provide for equitable recreational access and resource protection:

1. Hunting: Major portions of the water management areas will be, with the assistance of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, made available for hunting with an appropriate resource area permit and "hunting stamp." In order to provide the maximum possible hunting use, consideration will be given to setting aside suitable areas for still hunting, for hunting with dogs, and for other types of restricted hunting seasons.
2. Fishing: Fishing from river or stream banks or in enclosed lakes or ponds in a Type II Wildlife Management Area will require a resource area permit. No resource area permit will be

required of any resident when fishing with live or natural bait, using poles or lines which are not equipped with a fishing line retrieval mechanism, and fishing for noncommercial purposes in the county of his residence.

3. **Camping:** It will be a Water Management District priority to establish as many dispersed, primitive campsites as possible within the water management areas. Use of these sites will be on a first-come, first-served basis, and will require a resource area permit in those areas established as Type II Wildlife Management Areas. The Water Management District will develop a reservation system for campsites, if necessary. Because many of the campsites will be subject to seasonal floods, it is not anticipated that camping facilities (grills, privies, shelters, tent-pads or picnic tables) or provisions for motor homes will be provided for all sites. Use of a primitive campsite will be limited to 14 consecutive days, except during the hunting season when longer stays may be allowed.
4. **Horseback Riding:** Horseback riding on all designated roads and trails in the water management areas will be allowed whenever possible throughout the year. The District will promote, through appropriate entities, the development and maintenance of a horseback riding trail network, including the provision of primitive campsites and trail-head parking for vehicles and horse trailers.
5. **Hiking:** The Water Management District will promote, in cooperation with the Florida Trail Association, the development and maintenance of a hiking trail network serving featured and scenic areas, including the provision of primitive campsites and trail-head parking.
6. **Boating and Canoeing:** Because the water management areas contain numerous wetland habitats, boating and canoeing will be featured recreational activities. The Water Management District will develop, in cooperation with the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and participating units of local government, a construction and maintenance plan for boat ramps and associated parking areas within the water management areas. It will be a District goal also to develop a system of self-guided canoe trails for each of the water management areas. No resource area permit will be required for boating or canoeing or for use of a boat ramp within or bordering a water management area.
7. **Nature Studies:** Various nature studies, including bird watching and wildlife photography, will be promoted, when appropriate, throughout the water management areas. Nature studies will be featured activities, however, in the identified wildlife refuge areas.
8. **Group Use:** Any group wishing to use a water management area for a short-term event shall first apply for and receive a "special resource area permit" from the Water Management District. Designated uses that will require this permit include trail rides, field trials, group camping and religious services.

9. **Prohibited Uses:** Prohibited recreational uses will be those that are considered highly disruptive to other recreational uses or those that are clearly or potentially destructive of the floodplain habitats. Primary among these are organized target or skeet shooting and the off-road use of any type of motorized vehicle. All privately owned motorized vehicles are required to stay on roads designated as open for public use and shall be specifically prohibited from using designated hiking or horseback riding trails. There are no exceptions for motorcycles, four-wheel drive or all-terrain vehicles.
10. **Information and Education:** Management of the water management areas for public recreational purposes is designed principally to serve area residents. The District, therefore, will undertake a variety of information and education activities in an effort to make these lands available for public use and to increase public understanding of water resource management issues and recreational opportunities on these lands.

B. Research, Academic and Cooperative Programs

Issues

The varied cultural, biological and physical characteristics and attributes of the water management areas have been only partially researched. Additional information concerning these resources, as well as further detailed research on effective and cost-efficient management techniques, would enhance the ability of the Water Management District to manage and protect these properties for a greater range of uses.

Discussion

It is generally recognized that optimum and effective management of natural and cultural resources requires considerable detailed information concerning local conditions, effective management practices and the resource base. Research and technical investigations focusing on topics other than water resources are, however, largely beyond the expertise and responsibility of the Water Management District.

Policies

1. The Water Management District will actively promote and support all research and academic endeavors that will help ensure the derivation of maximum resource protection and productivity and of public benefits from the water management areas.
2. The Water Management District will seek and encourage participation in cooperative research programs with other agencies of government, educational institutions and public and private conservation organizations that will contribute to more effective management and use of these lands.

C. Apiary Leases

Issue

The leasing of apiary sites in the river floodplains is a traditional and highly beneficial land use practice in northwest Florida. Demand and competition for these sites are growing, particularly during the spring months when honey is produced from the various tupelo trees in the floodplain.

Discussion

Beekeeping in the floodplains is considered highly beneficial to area botanical communities in that, as a result of the bees, increased numbers and varieties of plant species are pollinated and propagated. The amount of land required for an individual apiary is relatively small, and the widely spaced sites do not require exclusive use and are usually occupied only briefly during the spring tupelo season. Beekeeping constitutes a considerable financial stimulus to the local economy as well.

Policies

1. The Water Management District will provide for the continuation of annual lease agreements for apiary sites within the water management areas. The following conditions will apply:
 - a. These leases will not be transferable or assignable in whole or in part without approval by the District.
 - b. The Water Management District will follow, to the extent possible, current State of Florida guidelines and standards regarding lease fees, distances between sites and from District property boundary lines, bear proofing and proof of adequate liability insurance.
 - c. The lessee will maintain the lease site and any existing structures, but no new construction, excavation, timber removal or additional improvements can be undertaken without prior written permission of the District
2. If an existing annual lease is not renewed, the leaseholder will have 30 days from the expiration of the lease, and after being informed by the Water Management District, to remove all structures and improvements. Future leasing of this abandoned apiary site will then be determined through a publicly announced drawing conducted by the District.
3. The Water Management District will promote the establishment of additional apiary sites in suitable areas within the water management areas. Leasing of these sites will be determined through publicly announced drawings conducted by the District.

D. Agricultural Use

Issue

In the past, some portions of the water management areas have been used for seasonal livestock grazing and, less frequently, for agricultural cropping.

Discussion

The primary objectives in the District's administration of its water management areas is to provide for as broad a spectrum of public recreational uses as possible and to protect and enhance the water, wildlife, forest and fisheries resources. Agricultural use of these lands, including livestock grazing and the mechanical cultivation of crops, is viewed as generally disruptive to the natural environment. Traditional agriculture is also a land use that can exclude all or many public recreational uses.

Policy

1. All livestock grazing and the cultivation of any commercial or row crops are prohibited within the water management areas.

E. Other Uses

Issue

It is anticipated that there will be an ever-increasing number of user and development-related demands being directed at these properties. Many of the demands have the potential to significantly alter the desirable conditions and beauty, or the water management functions, of these public lands.

Discussion

The Florida legislature has specifically charged the Water Management District to conserve and protect water resources, to maintain its lands in an environmentally acceptable manner, and to restore and protect them in their natural state and condition. In addition to managing its lands in such a manner as to satisfy these directives, the District considers the restoration and preservation of the natural beauty and attractiveness of the water management areas to also be important objectives. Accordingly, management of all developmental activities will fully consider both the environmental and the aesthetic consequences and impacts.

Policies

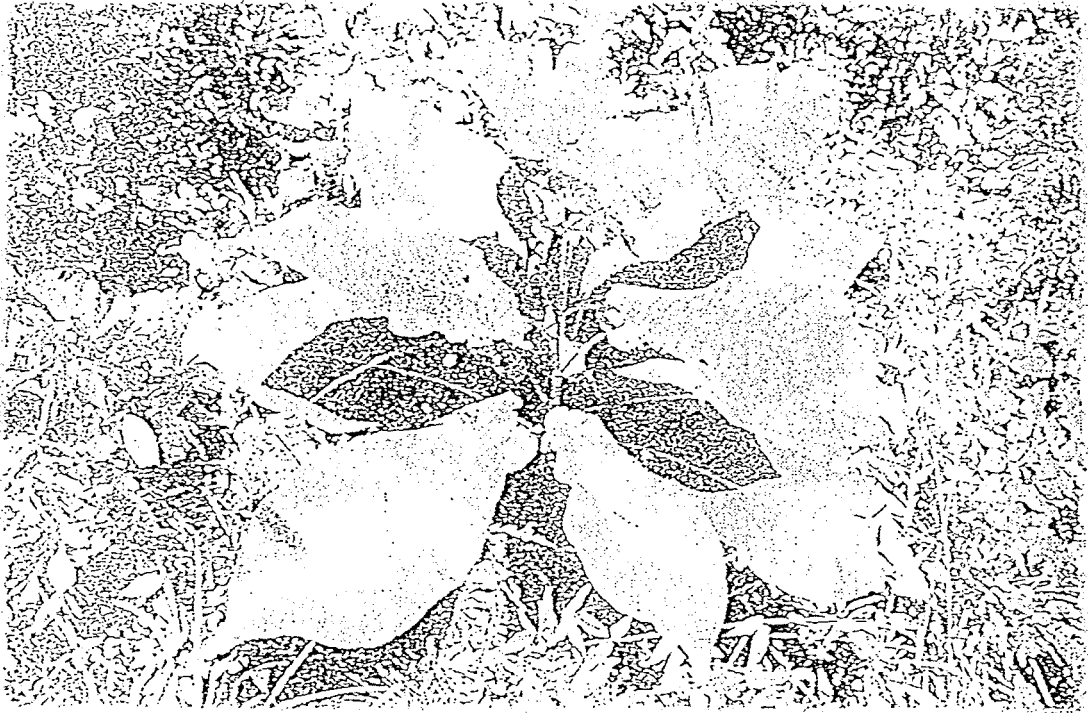
The following are policies the Water Management District will follow as a means of providing for protection of the natural and aesthetic values of the water management areas:

1. Advertising and Signs: Because signs on lands the District owns detract from the natural beauty of the landscape and may place the District in an unfavorable public posture, all advertising and all signs that are not related to management or navigation are prohibited in the water management areas.

2. Utility Rights-of-Way: Easements for utility rights-of-way on lands owned by the Water Management District will, where appropriate, require a "Works of the District" permit. A request for a new right-of-way will be granted only if environmental and aesthetic disruption is minimal, use of an identified utility corridor is not feasible, and the purpose can be demonstrated to be in the general public interest. When appropriate, negotiated lease fees will be imposed.
3. Mining: Within the water management areas, mining of all minerals under the District's control will require permits from the District. All mineral exploration and mining activities must be carried out in such a manner that they will not be detrimental to the water, forest and wildlife resources.
4. Boat Ramps: The Water Management District can grant easements to appropriate public entities for the construction and operation of public boat ramps and related parking areas at suitable sites within the water management areas. Privately owned or constructed boat ramps are not allowed.
5. Public Recreation Areas: The Water Management District will consider granting easements to appropriate agencies or participating units of local government for the construction and operation of small, low-intensity public recreation areas at suitable sites within the water management areas.
6. Concessions: When appropriate, the Water Management District can lease suitable sites within the water management areas for the establishment of commercial concessions. The purpose of such leases is to provide opportunities for recreation, such as canoe rentals, horseback riding or bait shops, that otherwise would not be locally available. The Water Management District may contract, under a competitive bid, with the private sector to provide the service. Whenever possible, the concession facilities should be mobile and temporary in nature. The concessions must at all times be maintained and operated in a manner acceptable to the District.
7. Access Points: The Water Management District will designate and maintain all ingress and egress points to the water management areas. The District will identify those situations in which public access depends on travel over private roads and will arrange with the appropriate landowners to secure road use agreements to serve public purposes. The District will also seek to eliminate (by persuasion, legal restraints, screening or, if feasible, land acquisition) those activities on lands adjacent to the water management areas that reduce aesthetic quality or detract from the recreation experience.
8. Roads: The District will design for each water management area an environmentally sound and minimal network of safe all-weather or seasonal roads that shall serve the dual purposes of providing for public access and management of the resources. To the extent possible,

interagency and intergovernmental agreements will be used to carry out the maintenance of the road network.

9. Fences: Because fencing can impede the natural flow of floodwater and affect the distribution and movement of wildlife, the construction of any permanent fences within the floodplain of a water management area will require prior written permission from the Water Management District. Boundary fences on lands adjacent to a water management area normally will be the sole responsibility of the adjacent landowner.



Ashe Magnolia, Econfina Creek

OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

A. Interagency and Intergovernmental Management Coordination

Issue

Fully effective and efficient recreational management and resource protection for the water management areas require the allocation of significant financial resources and the efforts of considerable numbers of people with highly specialized professional skills. Included in the latter are at least wildlife biology, forestry, archaeology, recreation planning, hydrology and hydrogeology. Regular maintenance and supervision, and law enforcement capabilities when needed, are also essential elements in the successful operation of a land management program.

Discussion

The Northwest Florida Water Management District's current and projected area of special expertise and responsibility is primarily water resource management. In the management of its lands for multiple uses and purposes, the District can avoid an expensive duplication of staff expertise and an overlapping of operational responsibilities by securing as much assistance as possible from other experienced land and resource management agencies. Chief among those with appropriate capabilities are the Florida Division of Forestry, the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, the Division of Historical Resources, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Florida Division of Recreation and Parks. The full and active participation of city and county governments in the continued management and development of the water management areas is also highly desirable and mutually beneficial. While, for example, the local government receives an increasing variety of conveniently located recreational opportunities and continuing environmental benefits for its residents, the Water Management District can profit especially from an increased level of local supervision and law enforcement capabilities.

It is clear that management agreements transferring specific management responsibilities to other agencies or units of local government can and should be arranged whenever possible so that overlapping or duplication of effort is minimized. Because of legislative directives that the water management areas be purchased and preserved for water management purposes, however, it is not advisable for the District to transfer total or permanent management responsibility to any other agency or a local government.

Policies

1. The Water Management District will attempt to avoid duplication of expertise, staffing and operational responsibilities by actively seeking arrangements for selected management activities on District lands by other established and interested entities, both public and private. In all instances, these arrangements will be made through cooperative agreements that protect

the District's water management interests and that enhance the management and public value of the water management areas.

2. The participation of city and county governments in the operation of neighboring water management areas will be actively encouraged. The purposes of this participation are to ensure that recreational use and development of District lands will be, to the extent possible, coordinated with local decision makers as well as to gain an increased level of supervision and protection for District lands.

B. Management Assistance Committee

Issue

Regular and informed input from the general public, local governments, private conservation and recreation organizations, state agencies and other affected or involved entities is clearly essential to the resolution of conflicts and the management and efficient development of the water management areas.

Discussion

This committee should be primarily technical in nature and composed of individuals and members of private organizations with experience in resource management as well as representatives of all governmental agencies that have programs capable of affecting and/or enhancing the administration of the water management areas. This committee should consist principally of individuals who have broad knowledge of agency policies and programs and who have expertise in land, water, wildlife or forest management, recreation management and development, resource conservation or other appropriate specialties. Among the organizations and agencies to participate with the District on this committee are the Florida Trail Association, Florida Defenders of the Environment, Division of Forestry, Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Division of Historical Resources, Division of Recreation and Parks, Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The committee should meet periodically to discuss issues relating to the policies and programs affecting the water management areas.

Policies

An advisory committee will be used as a means of providing for regular technical and management input, helping resolve conflicts between competing uses, review of District policies and programs, and coordinating and enhancing governmental programs relating to the water management areas.

1. This "Management Assistance Committee," composed of representatives from private organizations and governmental agencies having programs that can contribute to and benefit from the effective management of District lands, will review land management policies and

help coordinate agency programs and work efforts. This committee will meet periodically, and a summary of its proceedings will be prepared for public distribution.

2. This Management Assistance Committee will not be considered as a substitute for required regular public workshops or public hearings.

C. Program Revenues

Issues

The water management areas represent a large financial investment by the taxpayers of Florida. Future maintenance and development of these lands particularly for recreational purposes is not, however, a burden that should be continually carried by all the taxpayers. The costs of operation, maintenance and additional improvements are better shifted, by means of a system of user fees, to those individuals and groups who most directly use the land and its resources.

Discussion

Throughout Florida, there is a growing conviction that development and growth must pay more of their own costs. This is particularly evident in the environmental sector where users are increasingly being expected to pay directly for the services or benefits received, rather than continuing to pass on the costs to the population as a whole.

Applying a user-pays policy to the water management areas is not a new practice. The former owners of these lands sold timber, leased camp and apiary sites, and provided for the selling of hunting permits. The program envisioned by the Water Management District calls for the continuation, with modifications, of some of these revenue-generating practices. Revenues generated by the water management areas can be directly applied to actual development and improvement of recreational benefits and facilities. In this program, funds from apiary and right-of-way leases and from other commercial activities would be dedicated primarily to environmental improvements within the water management areas.

In view of the rapid regional and statewide loss of lands available for general public use, the access assured by a relatively inexpensive resource area permit for hunting, fishing and camping would also become more valuable with passing time. This permit will help as well to provide the revenues needed to continue development and upkeep of these lands during changing future conditions.

Policies

The following are policies the Water Management District will use for generating and expending revenues relative to the water management areas:

1. Resource Area Permits: As a primary means of providing for continued access and recreational development, the District will issue, through local outlets, a resource area permit. This permit will be required for persons using District property that has been declared as a Type II Wildlife Management Area for the purposes of hunting, fishing or camping. The fee for an annual permit will be \$11.00 if purchased from a county tax collector, and \$11.50 if purchased from an agent. No permits are required for persons 65 or older or under 16 years of age, or for persons who have a handicapped certification.
2. Special Resource Area Permits: Any group wishing to use a water management area for a single, short-term event must first apply for and receive a special resource area permit from the Water Management District. Uses requiring this permit include trail rides, field trials, group camping and religious services. A fee of \$20.00 will be charged for a special resource area permit.
3. Hunting Stamps: In addition to a resource area permit or, if applicable, a special resource area permit, persons using District lands that have been declared a Type II Wildlife Management Area for any type of hunting purposes will also be required to possess a valid hunting stamp. The annual fee for this stamp will be \$5.00. Hunters 65 or older or under the age of 16, and those physically handicapped, are exempt.
4. Revenues: Revenues from recreational land uses such as resource area permits, special resource area permits and hunting stamps, as well as revenues from timber sales, apiary site leases, right-of-way easements, concessions, etc. will be used solely for land management activities on District owned lands or to acquire land or retire the debt on land acquisition revenue bonds.

D. Regulatory Considerations

Issue

A means is required by which the Water Management District can legally protect the water management areas from activities either harmful to the natural resources or detrimental to the full development and enjoyment of the recreational opportunities.

Discussion

The "Works of the District" rule was adopted in 1978 to provide protection for lands owned or controlled by the Water Management District. A "Work of the District" is a water body, land area or a facility that has been officially designated, by rule, in public meetings by the Governing Board of the District. The rule establishes procedures to be followed by those wishing to "connect to, withdraw water from, discharge water into, place construction within or across, or otherwise make use of a Work of the District, or to remove any facility or otherwise terminate such activity." Any use of a Work of the District requires a "Work of the District" permit but specific exemptions can be made within the rule to accommodate other uses such as recreational.

The uses of Works of the District which are not exempt, however, require that the permittee maintain any facilities in a good and safe condition, prevent erosion, sedimentation and the discharge of debris, and carefully protect water quality standards. A permit will not be granted if the proposed use is not in compliance with any applicable laws, rules or orders or if it will interfere with the proper operation and maintenance of a water management area under Chapter 373, Florida Statutes.

Policies

1. The Water Management District may designate as Works of the District any water management areas that have not been so designated.
2. The Works of the District rule will be a major legal instrument by which the Water Management District permits and regulates uses other than recreational within and, as appropriate, in areas adjoining the water management areas.



Controlled Burn, Garcon Point

NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Prescribed Burning Policy.

This document is a statement of policy concerning the use of prescribed burning on District lands. All aspects of prescribed burning from the ecological perspective to the critical issue of smoke management will be discussed. The intent of this document is to examine the uses of prescribed burning as a land management tool.

The Ecology of Fire in Florida's Plant Communities

Florida is blessed with a rich array of flora and fauna. Many plant and animal species are dependent upon the maintenance of specific habitats for their survival. Naturally occurring fires or man-induced fires (e.g. prescribed burning) are essential for maintaining some of these specific habitats.

The exclusion of fire in fire-maintained habitats continues the process of vegetative succession towards a "climax" community. Fire disrupts this process and allows certain plant communities to stabilize at various sub-climax levels. Examples of upland fire-maintained habitats include pine flatwoods and sand hills where wetland fire-maintained habitats include marshes, cypress ponds and strands, and seeps. Many other plant communities are fire maintained or influenced, but the overriding principle is that fire creates and maintains these habitats. Many present-day plant communities owe their identities to the timing, frequency, and intensity of fire.

Fire History in Florida

Indians in Florida used fire extensively for a multitude of uses. Fire in pine forests improved access and hunting, and enhanced the gathering of desirable plant and animal species. European settlers used fire to clear brush and timber for farming and to improve rangeland for livestock grazing.

At the turn of this century, man's view of fire changed from one of indifference to a realization of its immense destructive power on the natural landscape. This change in opinion was brought about by several factors. "Many disastrous fires occurred during this time period due to drought, large continuous areas of heavy fuels created by logging practices, and increasing sources of ignition" (1973, Brown & Davis). As a result of these disastrous fires, it was deemed practical and in the best interest of the public to essentially exclude fire from the landscape.

Fortunately, man's perception of fire has evolved from one of fear to one of respect. As the knowledge of fire ecology increased, so did man's use of fire as a beneficial tool in the management of Florida's natural plant communities. Today, prescribed burning is recognized as an essential and cost-effective management tool.

Benefits of Prescribed Burning

"Prescribed fire is the controlled application of fire to existing naturally occurring vegetation under specific environmental conditions following appropriate precautionary measures and allowing the fire to be confined to a predetermined area to accomplish predetermined, well-defined management objectives" (1989, FDOF).

Prescribed burning produces the following benefits:

Hazardous Fuel Reduction

The natural accumulation of needles, leaves, limbs, etc., can become fuel for a wildfire. These fuels, in turn, increase the ignition potential for living fuels. Prescribed burning performed on a periodic basis consumes these fuels and lessens the impact of any potential wildfire that might occur in a given area. Reducing liability costs associated with wildfires is one of the most important benefits derived from prescribed burning.

Silvicultural Applications

Prescribed burning is a very useful management tool in regenerating artificial and natural stands of pine timber. Fire reduces competing vegetation, improves access, exposes mineral soil, recycles nutrients, and reduces debris from harvesting operations.

Wildlife Habitat Improvement

Prescribed burning offers substantial benefits for wildlife, including increases in the "edge effect" which improves foraging areas, creating open areas for feeding, travel, and dusting, stimulating fruit and seed production, and increasing the yield and quality of herbage, legumes, and browse from hardwood sprouts.

It must be noted that these wildlife benefits are dependent upon the size, frequency, and timing of the prescribed burn. Recognizing the biological requirements of the species being managed (e.g. nesting period of quail) is a primary consideration in planning any prescribed burn for wildlife habitat improvement.

Examples of game and non-game species that benefit from prescribed burning include: deer, dove, quail, turkey, Florida panther, gopher tortoise, indigo snake, and red-cockaded woodpecker.

Enhancing Ecological Diversity

"Many species of plants and/or plant communities have structural adaptations, specialized tissues, or reproductive features that favor them in fire-dominated environment" (1989, USDA, FS). Many species are found only within specific habitats in the first or second year after a fire. Exclusion of fire from the natural landscape has decreased the numbers of these species dramatically. Several threatened or endangered species are directly benefited by fire.

The timing, variation, and technique of prescribed burning favors certain species and/or plant communities over others. A thorough knowledge of the fire ecology for each species or plant community to be managed is essential for enhancing the ecological diversity of an area. Also, interspersing fire in specific areas within a large region will create a mosaic of plant community types in various stages of vegetative succession.

Insect and Disease Control

Prescribed burning controls, reduces, and temporarily eliminates many species of insects and diseases within plant communities. Examples include: controlling brownspot needle disease on Longleaf pine, reducing problems from *Fomes annosus* root rot on pines, and eliminating tick and chigger populations in certain areas.

Mechanical and/or chemical alternatives to controlling these insect and disease pests are usually prohibitive from an environmental and economic standpoint. Prescribed burning is usually the only effective alternative available to resource managers.

Aesthetics

Fire enhances the appearance and improves public recreation in many areas. Prescribed burning maintains open stands of timber, increases the numbers and diversity of flowering annuals and biennials, and creates vistas. Any aesthetic enhancement or improvement of an area will be dependent upon the fire ecology of that specific habitat and the desired management objectives.

Other Benefits

Other benefits derived from prescribed burning include improved forage for grazing, nutrient recycling, and improved access for recreational activities.

Use of Fire on District Lands

The District currently owns and manages approximately 106,000 acres of land in northwest Florida. The majority of this ownership is composed of mixed bottomland hardwood forests, primarily in the alluvial floodplains of rivers, but many scattered upland forests are adjacent to these bottomlands. Pine plantations or natural pine stands occur on most of these upland areas.

The District's Lands Division will only use prescribed burning techniques on those communities that are fire maintained. Experimental use of fire will also be considered on a case-by-case basis for portions of the following habitats: "(1) Levee Hammock, (2) Tidal Levee Hammock, (3) Tidal Marsh, and (4) Tidal Woods" (1989, Clewell). Advancements in the science of Fire Ecology coupled with improvements in prescribed burning techniques will also help determine the future role of fire in the management of other habitat types on District lands.

Initial Development of a District Burning Program

Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, mandates that "Lands acquired with moneys from the fund shall be managed and maintained in an environmentally acceptable manner and, to the extent practicable, in such a way as to restore and protect their natural state and condition."

The major emphasis of the District's prescribed burning program will be on habitat restoration and maintenance. In order to begin this process, the initial objective will be to reduce hazardous fuel levels in specific areas. Subsequent prescribed burns will concentrate management efforts towards restoration of fire-maintained habitats based upon planned, specific objectives.

Due to limited manpower and the lack of heavy equipment, District prescribed burns will be conducted in cooperation with the Florida Division of Forestry. All prescribed burns will be performed by certified prescribed burn personnel who have successfully completed an "Interagency Basic Prescribed Fire Training" course, or have equivalent knowledge in prescribed burning techniques.

The timing and frequency of prescribed burns will be dependent upon specific management objectives. No prescribed burns will be carried out until the required burn plan and a smoke management plan are complete. Specific burn units will be designated for each water management area.

Site-Specific Burn Plan

The primary step in developing a prescribed burn plan for each river area will involve type-mapping the tract for identification of fire-maintained plant communities. Each identified community will then be assessed for prescribed burning feasibility based upon factors such as size, location, vegetative composition, ecological considerations, and location of planned man-made or natural firebreaks.

Establishment of firebreaks and the use of existing roads, natural firebreaks, etc., will determine the area to be burned. Man-made breaks will be constructed using the most economic and ecologically desirable methods available. All initial firebreaks will be converted to disc-harrow firebreaks during the second season, and they will be maintained at the natural ground elevation. Natural firebreaks include river swamps, creeks, sloughs, etc., or any natural feature that will impede the spread of fire.

In order to lessen the impacts to vegetation, natural firebreaks will be used whenever possible. Man-made firebreaks will be located in the least sensitive environmental areas identified in the unit.

Smoke Management

The most critical issue affecting the continued use of prescribed fire in Florida is smoke management. Next to controlling the burn, knowing what effect the fire's smoke may have on the public's health and safety is of the utmost concern to land managers. "The potential for smoke to create serious highway traffic hazards and public nuisances is real and must be included in

any prescription planning. We cannot control atmospheric conditions, but we can and must control the effects of actions that we initiate" (1990, FDOF).

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NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT ACQUISITION PROCEDURES
(Revised October 8, 1999)

Initial Contact with the District

The District deals only with willing sellers. Once contacted, the District requests that the Seller fill out a Project Proposal and Acquisition Application (application-see attached). Upon receipt of the application, the property is evaluated by District staff for water resource protection/preservation benefits and whether or not the Seller's asking price is realistic, based on District knowledge of land sales in the area.

If the Seller has presented a realistic asking price and the property possesses water resources protection/preservation benefits, is contiguous to existing District lands or provides for public access, staff seeks approval from the Governing Board to have the property appraised.

Appraisal Mapping and Preliminary Title

Order digital aerial photograph(s) and delineate property boundaries and safe upland line. Aerial(s) are provided to appraisers and, if necessary, a forestry consultant during the appraisal process, along with any available timber information.

Appraisals

The District requests fee and time quotes from eight contract appraisers to conduct appraisal(s). Lowest price quote(s) is awarded the appraisal assignment.

Each appraisal is reviewed by a review appraiser for the District. The District currently has five review appraisers under contract who each provide a fee and time quote to conduct either a desk review or a desk review with a field inspection component. A desk review with a field inspection component entails actual field inspection of the subject property, as well as field inspection of significant comparable sales used by the appraiser(s) in their appraisal report(s). Lowest price quote is awarded the assignment.

The District requires conformance to USPAP and the Supplementary Standards issued by DEP on all appraisals.

If the value of the property is expected to be greater than \$500,000.00, then two appraisals are required, per Governing Board policy.

If a timber inventory/appraisal report is necessary, then the District requests fee and time quotes from five contract forestry consultants to conduct a forest inventory. Lowest price quote is awarded the forest inventory/appraisal assignment.

District staff, i.e. professional foresters, conduct a desk review/field inspection of the forest inventory/appraisal report. Errors, omissions, and discrepancies are noted/documented by District staff, and the forestry consultant is required to correct these errors and/or omissions and/or discrepancies to the District's satisfaction to bring the forest inventory/appraisal report into compliance with District specifications for conducting forest inventories.

The final forest inventory/appraisal report is then sent to the appraiser(s) for inclusion into the final appraisal report(s); however, the appraiser does not generally certify the timber value.

Negotiations and Contracting

Once the appraisals are approved by the review appraiser and a negotiation strategy is approved by the Executive Director, then staff can begin to make offers and counter offers to the Seller in writing. Once an agreement on purchase price and other conditions is met, then a contract is prepared by the District's attorneys. Once the purchase and sale agreement is executed by the Seller, staff seeks Governing Board approval of the agreement and related costs, etc.

Environmental Assessments

The District has eleven environmental consultants under contract who are asked to provide fee and time quotes each time an environmental audit is needed by the District, or the District may request a quote from its own Division of Resource Management to conduct environmental audits on small tracts (usually less than 500 acres). Lowest price quote is awarded the assignment.

Currently, we are using "Revised Environmental Audit Requirements for the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida" for Phase I, July 1, 1997.

● Once an Environmental Assessment is received, District staff conducts a desk and, if necessary, a field review of the report and requires corrective action be taken to bring the report into compliance with District/BOT specifications.

On really large tracts, a review of the environmental audit might be conducted.

Boundary Map/Acreage Certification

The District has one contract surveyor who provides a quote to conduct a boundary map/acreage certification or survey. If the boundary map/acreage certification or survey expense exceeds \$10,000.00, it is Governing Board policy that the boundary map/acreage certification or survey be put out for bids under the competitive negotiation process. Another option is to have the Seller obtain the boundary map/acreage certification or survey.

In nearly all cases, the District opts to conduct a boundary map/acreage certification in lieu of a survey.

The boundary map/acreage certification or survey is reviewed by District staff for errors and, if necessary, sent to the surveyor for correction.

Title and Closing

The Title Commitment/Policy and Exam are ordered by Stowell, Anton and Kraemer, the District's attorneys.

Closing is handled by Stowell, Anton and Kraemer with input from the District regarding the closing statements.

After the closing has occurred, the District receives a closing transcript containing all pertinent documents relating to the closing, i.e. warranty deed, closing statements, affidavits, certification of representations and warranties, purchase and sale agreement, final title policy, etc.