



By [kathymfoster](#) September 4, 2014

## **NWFWMD Celebrates Opening of Burnt Sock Landing .....**

VERNON — The Northwest Florida Water Management District held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Sept. 3rd to celebrate the grand opening of Burnt Sock Landing, a new public access and recreation site along Holmes Creek in Washington County.

The District recently completed public access and recreational improvements to the site, including road improvements and a parking area. Additional improvements included stabilizing the dirt boat ramp, which will improve water quality by reducing sediments flowing into the spring-fed creek and allow users to hand launch canoes, kayaks and small boats.

“The District owns and manages more than 60,000 acres along Holmes Creek and the downstream Choctawhatchee River to improve the health of these waterways and the natural resources that surround them,” said Executive Director Jon Stevenson. “This includes enhancing areas like Burnt Sock Landing, which will improve water quality along the creek and the 57 crystal clear springs that feed its flow.”

Burnt Sock Landing is an exclusive canoe, kayak and small boat launch, which will enrich public access to the District’s northern-most ownership along Holmes Creek—a popular state-designated canoe trail. The landing will allow paddlers to enjoy the unique natural sights along this undisturbed stretch of the waterway.

“The District is proud to celebrate the completion of this project, which is helping us protect Holmes Creek and also expand public access to this beautiful waterbody,” said District Governing Board member Gary Clark. “Projects like these are win-win for our communities, as they protect our waterways and make it easier for our citizens to get out and enjoy them.”



The District will partner with Washington County to implement additional restoration and protection projects further downstream on Holmes Creek. The District will invest more than \$250,000 for improvements designed to improve water quality and increase public access at Hightower, Spurling and Like Oak Landings.

The District's Division of Land Management works to protect, restore and offer public access to many of the important springs, streams and rivers of the Panhandle through its ownership of more than 211,000 acres across Northwest Florida.

Washington County Commissioners Charles Brock, Joel Pate, Alan Bush, Todd Abbott and Lynn Gothard were on hand at the event and were pleased to have the Water Management District direct attention to the tourist/recreation aspects of the county. Brock took a few minutes to remind those in attendance of the history of the county's waterways and what they have meant to the development of the county. He also told Steverson he would be pleased to work on more such projects in Washington County.

Everyone present wanted to delve into the origin of name of the landing and while several stories made their rounds, the one with the most credence dealt with some fishermen, a cold wet day, moonshine and the decision to dry their wet socks over an open fire.

Speaking at the ribbon cutting was Ted Everett, Executive Director of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, who said, "As a Washington County resident myself, I know how important our area's rivers, creeks and springs are to our communities and way of life. Our clear, sparkling waters are not only where our residents love to spend their weekends, but they attract visitors to our area. I'm proud to be celebrating the completion of this project — which is helping us protect Holmes Creek and also expand public access to this beautiful water body. By opening Burnt Sock Landing, we're making it much easier for paddlers to enjoy the northern stretch of Holmes Creek—a popular, state-designated canoe trail. Projects like these are win-win for our communities, as they protect our waterways and make it easier for our citizens to get out and enjoy them."

Everett added, "The District will invest more than \$250,000 for improvements designed to improve water quality and increase public access at Hightower, Spurling and Like Oak Landings. They continue to move forward with springs restoration and protection projects nearby, along Econfinia Creek. If you haven't had a chance to check out how beautiful the project at Pitt and Sylvan Springs turned out, please make it a point to stop by. They're hard at work on a similar project for Williford Springs. We are grateful for the support of the local governments and businesses and look forward to continuing to work with the District to enhance and protect the natural treasures of Washington and Holmes counties.

For more information, please visit:

<http://nwfwater.com/lands/recreation/area/choctawhatchee-holmes/burnt-sock-landing/>



# Burnt Sock Landing



Before



After



Before



After







Washington County Commissioner Charles Brock was pleased with the final results of the construction project.





Ted Everett, Executive Director of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, stressed the importance of cleaning up the creek.



Jon Steverson, Executive Director of the Northwest Florida Water Management District, said the District is currently protecting 57 fresh water springs through projects such as this.







