

SALTERS LAKE MITIGATION SITE

2023 Annual Monitoring Report

USACE Permit No.: SAJ-2015-00440 (NW-RLT), issued 7/21/2017

Permittee: Florida Department of Transportation, District Three
C/o Colby Cleveland
1074 Highway 90
Chipley, FL 32428

Responsible Party for Monitoring: Northwest Florida Water Management District
81 Water Management Drive
Havana, FL 32333

Date of Inspection: 9/8/2023

Summary:

The purpose of this project (Salters Lake Mitigation Site) is to provide offsetting mitigation for 0.30 acres of wetland impacts (0.26 acres permanent; 0.04 acres temporary) caused by FDOT replacement of a minor bridge on Hanks Road at Breastworks Branch in Escambia County, Florida. Mitigation was implemented near Salters Lake in the Escambia River floodplain on conservation lands owned and managed by the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD). Mitigation consisted of hydrologic enhancement of an estimated 6.49 acres of palustrine forested wetlands (FLUCCS 615 – Bottomland) via installation of one low-water-crossing (LWC) on a management access road.

The Salters Lake LWC is located at 30.9456° North, 87.2664° West. From US 29 in Century, Florida, turn east onto Salters Lake Road, cross the railroad tracks, turn right, then turn left. Approximately 800 FT before the Salters Lake boat launch, turn right onto a dirt road that traverses a timber stand and continue for approximately 0.2 miles to reach the LWC. Driving distance from US 29 to the LWC is 1.4 miles. Access is allowed by the NFWFMD at any time without notification (exercise caution during hunting season).

Raised above natural grade, the unnamed management road near Salters Lake bisected a palustrine forested slough and disrupted natural hydrologic flows and moisture regimes. The low-water-crossing designed to enhance the hydrology of adjacent wetlands was installed in early May 2019 (completed 5/10/2019). Annual inspection by NFWFMD staff on 9/8/2023 concluded that the low-water-crossing is at design elevation, is functioning as designed with no blockage from woody debris or other materials, invasive exotic vegetation is not present, and that natural hydrologic flows continue to be enhanced. Monitoring inspections will continue through 2024 or as directed by the USACE. In the event of failure or blockage of the low-water-crossing, remedial action will be taken.

Performance Standards per USACE Permit and Approved Mitigation Plan:

- Low-water-crossing installed at appropriate elevation. [Met]
- Non-failure of low-water-crossing. [Met]
- At least 80 percent cover by appropriate wetland species (i.e., FAC or wetter). [Met]
- Cover of Category I and II invasive exotic plant species within the 6.49-acre mitigation polygon, pursuant to the most current list established by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council at <http://www.fleppc.org>, and the nuisance species, dogfennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*), Bermudagrass (*Cynodon* spp.), Bahiagrass (*Paspalum notatum*), and cattail (*Typha* spp.) shall total less than 5 percent. [Met]
- Less than 20 percent mortality of planted wetland species. [Not Applicable]
- Hydrologic enhancement will result in soils that are, at a minimum, saturated to the surface between 5 and 12.5 percent of the growing season. [Met]

Monitoring Requirements:

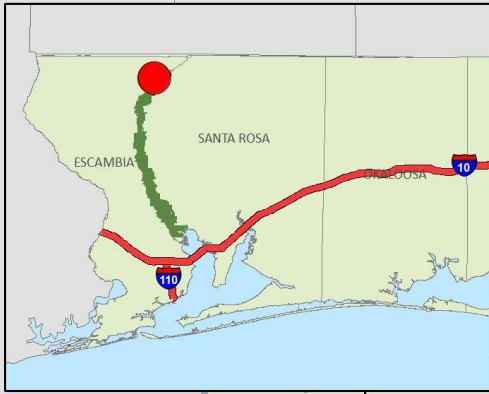
- Time-zero inspection and photo-documentation (Spring 2019) within 60 days of installation of LWC.
- Semi-annual (2019 – 2021) inspection and photo-documentation for two years after installation of LWC.
- Annual (2022 – 2024) inspection and photo-documentation for three years subsequent to semi-annual inspection requirement.
- Annual reports submitted to the USACE for duration of monitoring and posted at the NFWFMD wetlands website.

During the most recent site inspection of 9/8/2023, all performance standards were found to be met.

Conclusions:

The 2019 installation of the Salters Lake low-water-crossing has enhanced the hydrology of the adjacent bottomland forested wetlands by removing an impediment to natural hydrologic flows. The low-water-crossing is at an appropriate elevation and functioning as designed. Adjacent wetlands are of high-quality and are being managed for ecological integrity by the NFWFMD. Invasive or exotic plant species are not present within the enhancement polygon. Monitoring inspections will continue through 2024 or as directed by the USACE. In the event of failure of the low-water-crossing, or if any invasive or exotic plant species establish greater than 5 percent cover within the enhancement polygon, remedial actions will be taken.

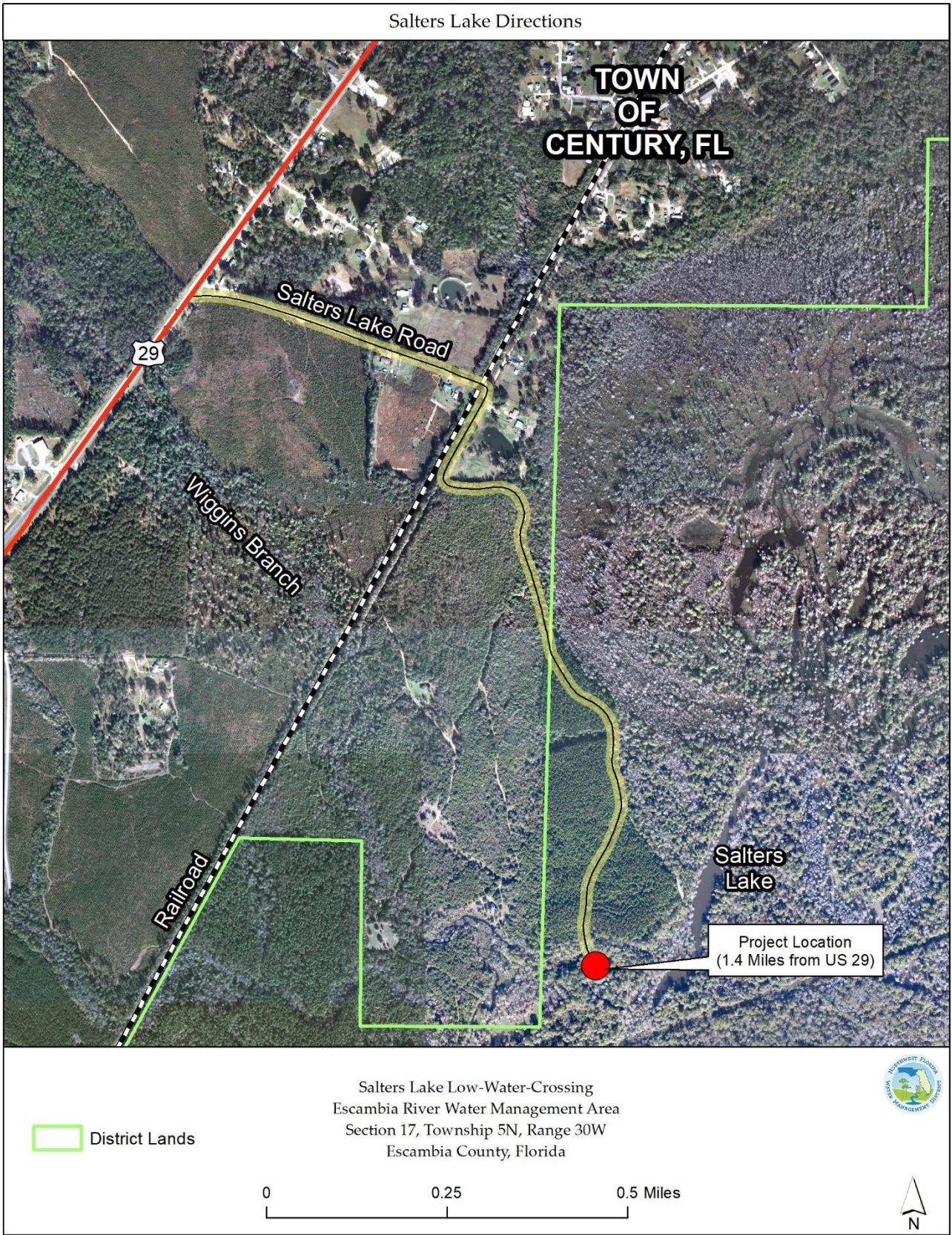
Salters Lake Location Map



General Location Map
Salters Lake Low-Water-Crossing
Escambia River Water Management Area
Escambia County, Florida

 District Lands





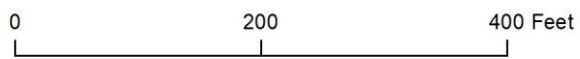
Salters Lake Low-Water-Crossing (2016 Imagery)



Low-Water-Crossing (Installed May 2019)

-  Blockage
-  Approaches
-  Existing Road
-  Slough

Salters Lake Low-Water-Crossing
Escambia River Water Management Area
Escambia County, Florida





Salters Lake LWC; Pre-construction (10/28/2016)



Salters Lake LWC (9/8/2023)