

**SAND HILL LAKES MITIGATION BANK**  
**FDEP PERMIT NO. 0227351-001**  
**SEMIANNUAL STATUS REPORT**  
**PERIOD: JANUARY – JUNE 2024**

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For the period January – June 2024:

1. Efforts to limit damage to vegetation at SHLMB by feral hog and beaver are ongoing. Contract 24-060 with USDA APHIS-WS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Wildlife Services) to manage feral hog and beaver populations was executed 2/15/2024 and remains in effect through 9/30/2026. Three hog traps were installed at SHLMB (Figure 1) resulting (through June 30, 2024) in 42 feral hogs being eliminated at SHLMB. USDA APHIS-WS also removed beaver dams at two sites (Figure 2) and eliminated three beavers.
2. Prescribed fire (growing season burn; 5/29/2024) was implemented on approximately 90 acres of hydric pine flatwoods/savanna and longleaf pine/wiregrass upland buffers (Figure 3).
3. Minor occurrences of cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) were observed and spot treated with herbicide (Figure 4).
4. Perimeter fencing was inspected, and perimeter firebreaks were reconditioned.
5. Mowing of nuisance shrubs adjacent to management access roads was conducted.
6. Public fishing and hunting continued at the Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank (SHLMB) in accordance with permit conditions. Records are maintained by FWC.
7. Security and law enforcement patrols continued in accordance with permit conditions; no known violations were reported.
8. Water level gages were read monthly in accordance with permit conditions. All ponds are moderately full (levels in most ponds were highest in February 2024 and have since been slowly dropping). Data is available upon request.
9. Five-year renewal of FWC contract (Contract 24-062) to manage public access for hunting, fishing, and other public use as allowed by the mitigation banking permit was completed (effective 7/1/2024).

Anticipated restoration and/or management anticipated for July – December 2024:

1. Additional burns are anticipated to be implemented in 2024. The goal is for fire-dependent upland communities to be burned on two-year cycles (burn cycles are offset so that some upland burns occur each year). Hydric pine flatwood/savanna communities are generally burned on a one-year cycle as conditions warrant and fuel loads allow.
2. Sandhill (longleaf pine/wiregrass community) polygons where oak/shrub densities exceed desired conditions will be managed with fire, herbicide, and/or mowing.
3. Water level gages will continue to be read monthly in accordance with permit conditions.
4. Security and law enforcement patrols will continue in accordance with permit conditions.
5. Public fishing and hunting, overseen by FWC, will continue in accordance with permit conditions.
6. Inspections of perimeter fencing will continue with repairs made as warranted. Application of herbicide to vegetation growing on perimeter fencing is planned.
7. Exotic vegetation, if observed by NFWMD or FWC staff, will be treated with herbicides.
8. Quantitative vegetation monitoring will be conducted in Fall 2024 with results included in the SHLMB 2024 Annual Report (to be submitted in January 2025).

Overall, the site is in excellent ecological condition. Management activities continue in accordance with permit conditions. Issues identified above (e.g., minor occurrence of exotic and/or nuisance vegetation; feral hog populations; perimeter fencing maintenance; shrub densities in selected polygons) are being addressed.

Certification:

We certify, to the best of our knowledge, that this report represents a true and accurate description of the activities and site conditions at the time of this report. This semi-annual report was written in accordance with Specific Condition 27 of the permit.

*Robert F. Lide*

Robert F. Lide, Senior Environmental Scientist, QMS Team Member

2 July 2024

*Philip Garrett*

Philip Garrett, Senior Environmental Scientist, QMS Team Member

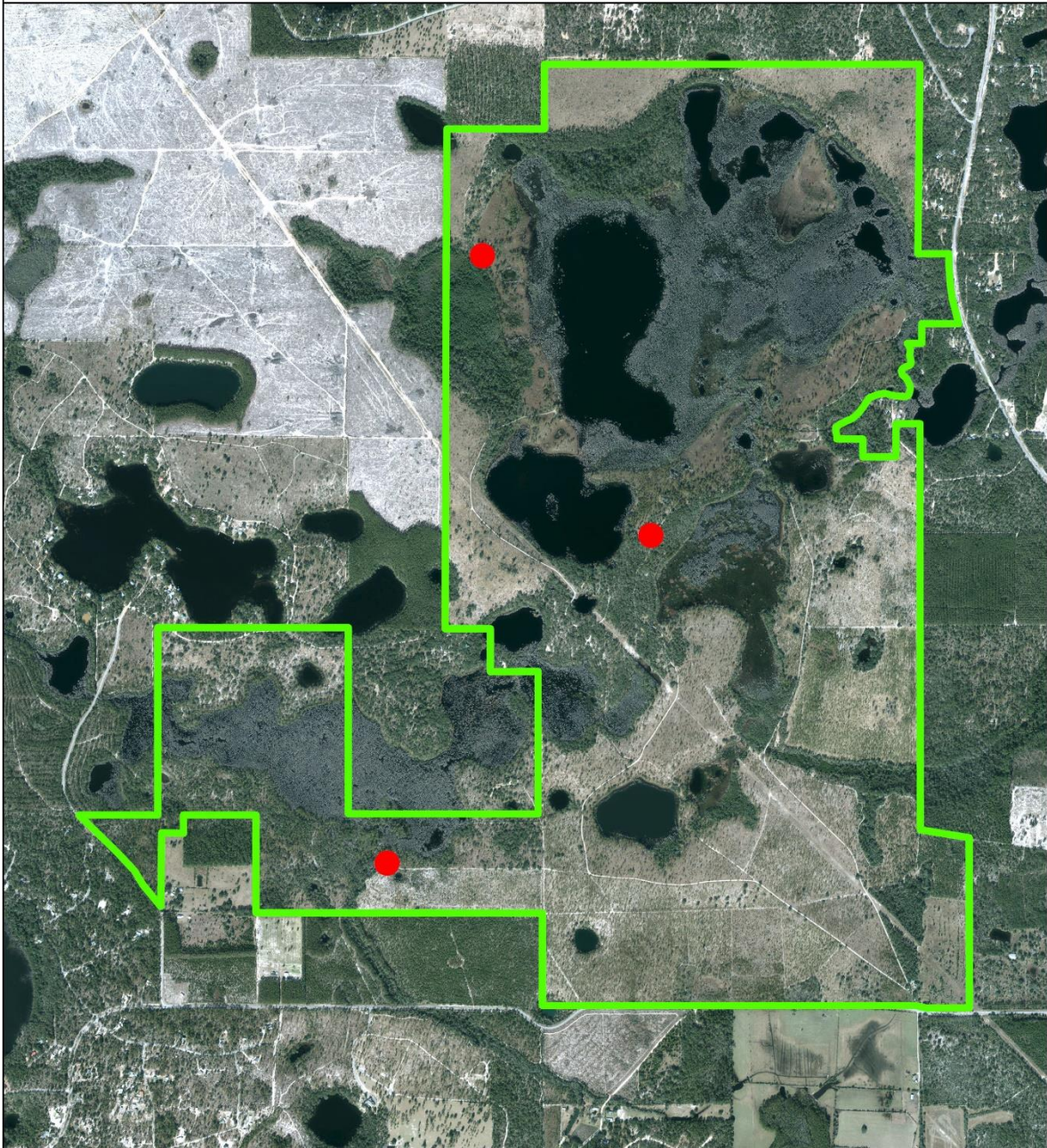
2 July 2024

*Coakley Taylor*

Coakley Taylor, Lands Manager, QMS Team Member

2 July 2024

Figure 1: Feral Hog Traps (JAN - JUN, 2024)



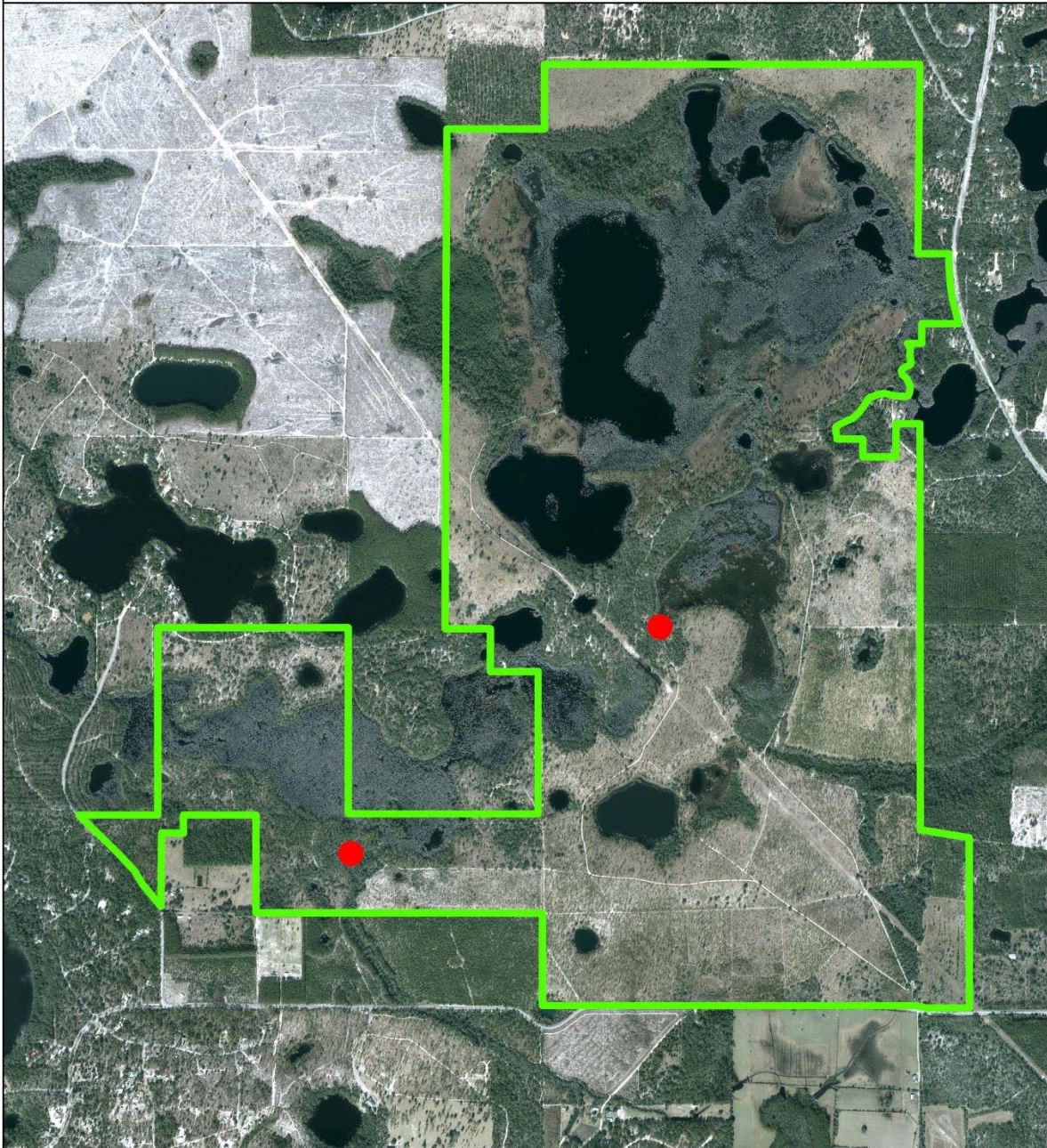
-  Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank
-  Feral Hog Trap



Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank - Econfina Creek WMA  
Washington County, Florida (2022 DOQ)

0 0.5 1 Miles



Figure 2: Beaver Dam Removal Sites (JAN - JUN, 2024)



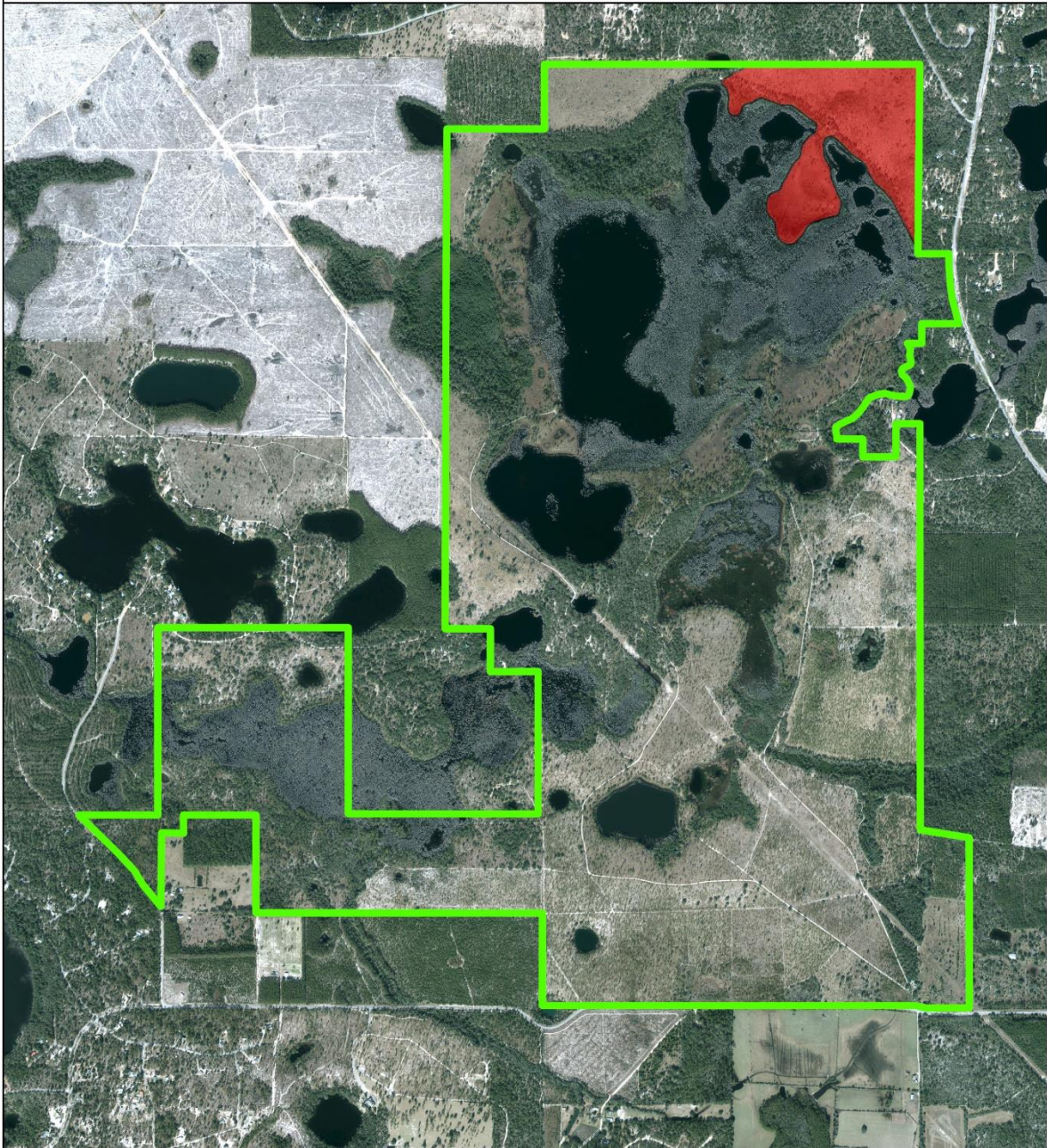
-  Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank
-  Beaver Dam Removal Site



Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank - Econfinia Creek WMA  
Washington County, Florida (2022 DOQ)

0 0.5 1 Miles



Figure 3: Prescribed Fire (JAN - JUN, 2024)



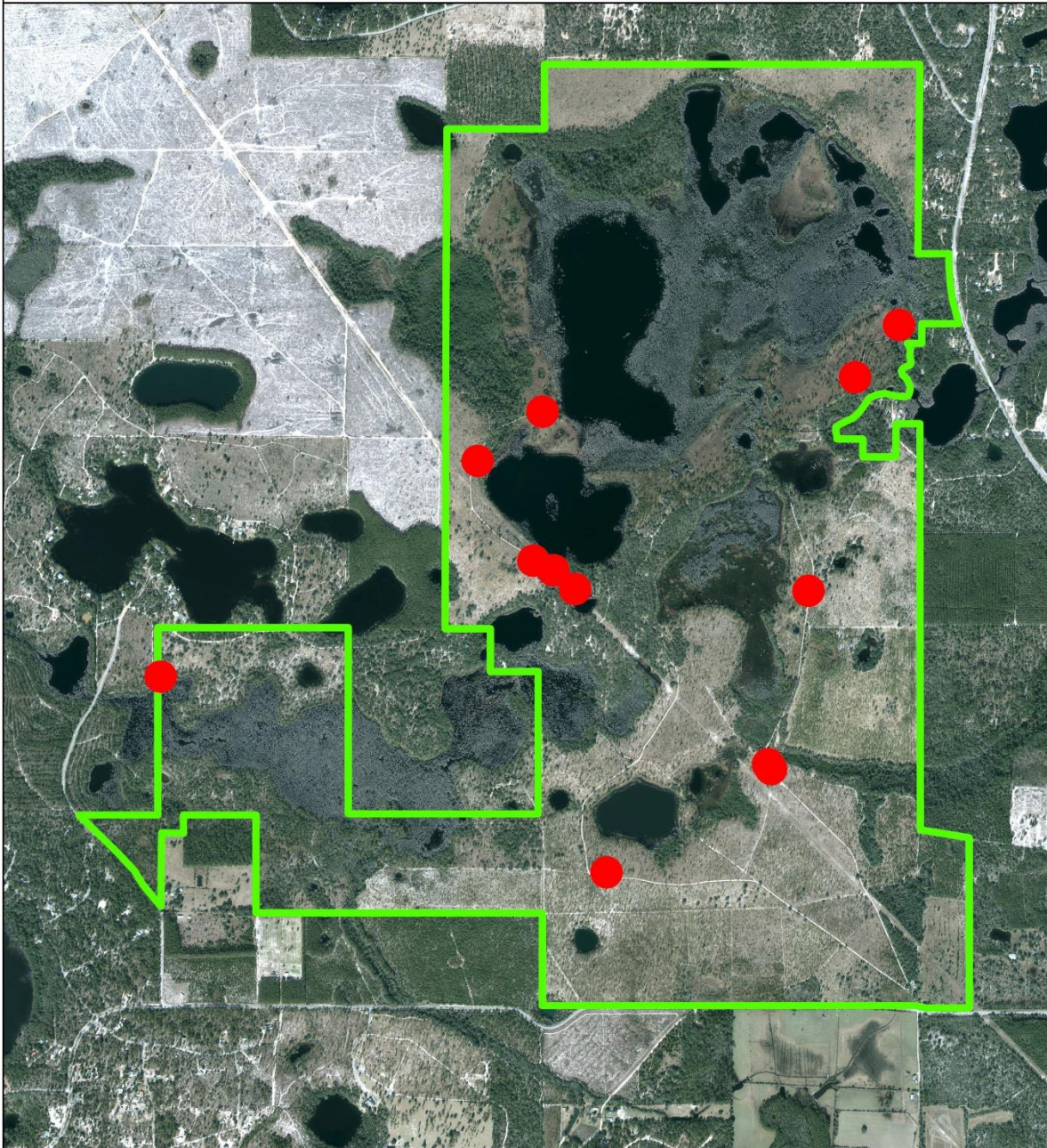
-  Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank
-  Prescribed Fire, 5/29/2024, ~90 Acres

Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank - Econfina Creek WMA  
Washington County, Florida (2022 DOQ)

0 0.5 1 Miles



Figure 4: Spot Herbicide Treatment of Cogon Grass (JAN - JUN, 2024)



-  Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank
-  Cogon Grass Treatment Area

Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank - Econfinia Creek WMA  
Washington County, Florida (2022 DOQ)

0 0.5 1 Miles



Table 1. Representative Photos (JAN – JUN 2024)



Prescribed Fire 5/29/2024



Results of Spot Herbicide Treatment of  
Cogongrass Adjacent to Hydric Pine Savanna  
6/19/2024



Mowed Nuisance Shrubs Adjacent to  
Management Access Road 6/19/2024



Perimeter Firebreak Maintenance 5/29/2024



Sandhills Restoration 5/29/2024



Sandhills Restoration (Nuisance Shrub Density to  
be Managed with Fire, Herbicide, and/or  
Mowing) 5/29/2024