

## SALTERS LAKE MITIGATION SITE

### 2024 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

Dates of Inspection: 9/19/2024; 10/1/2024

#### **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 9/19/2024 concluded that the low-water-crossing is at design elevation, continues to function with no blockage from woody debris or other materials, and that natural hydrologic flows within the slough have been enhanced. Invasive exotic vegetation cover is well within the USACE-approved performance standard of less than 5%, although a minor occurrence of Japanese climbing fern (*Lygodium japonicum*) was observed during the 9/19/2024 inspection (estimated to cover <0.1% of the mitigation polygon).

On 10/1/2024, NFWFMD staff conducted spot-treatment (glyphosate mixture) of the Japanese climbing fern within the mitigation polygon using backpack sprayers.

### **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% 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%. [Met]
- Less than 20% 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% 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 9/19/2024 (with follow up herbicide treatment on 10/1/2024), 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. All performance standards have been met.

This concludes five years of monitoring as required by permit conditions. As all performance standards have been met, and in accordance with Special Condition 11 of USACE Permit SAJ-2015-00440 (NW-RLT), the NFWFMD requests written verification from the USACE that mitigation success has been demonstrated and that further monitoring and reporting are not required. Unless otherwise directed by the USACE, no further monitoring reports shall be submitted. Although scheduled monitoring has concluded, periodic inspections will continue and the NFWFMD, consistent with permit conditions, will maintain the site in a natural state in perpetuity.

# Salters Lake Location Map



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

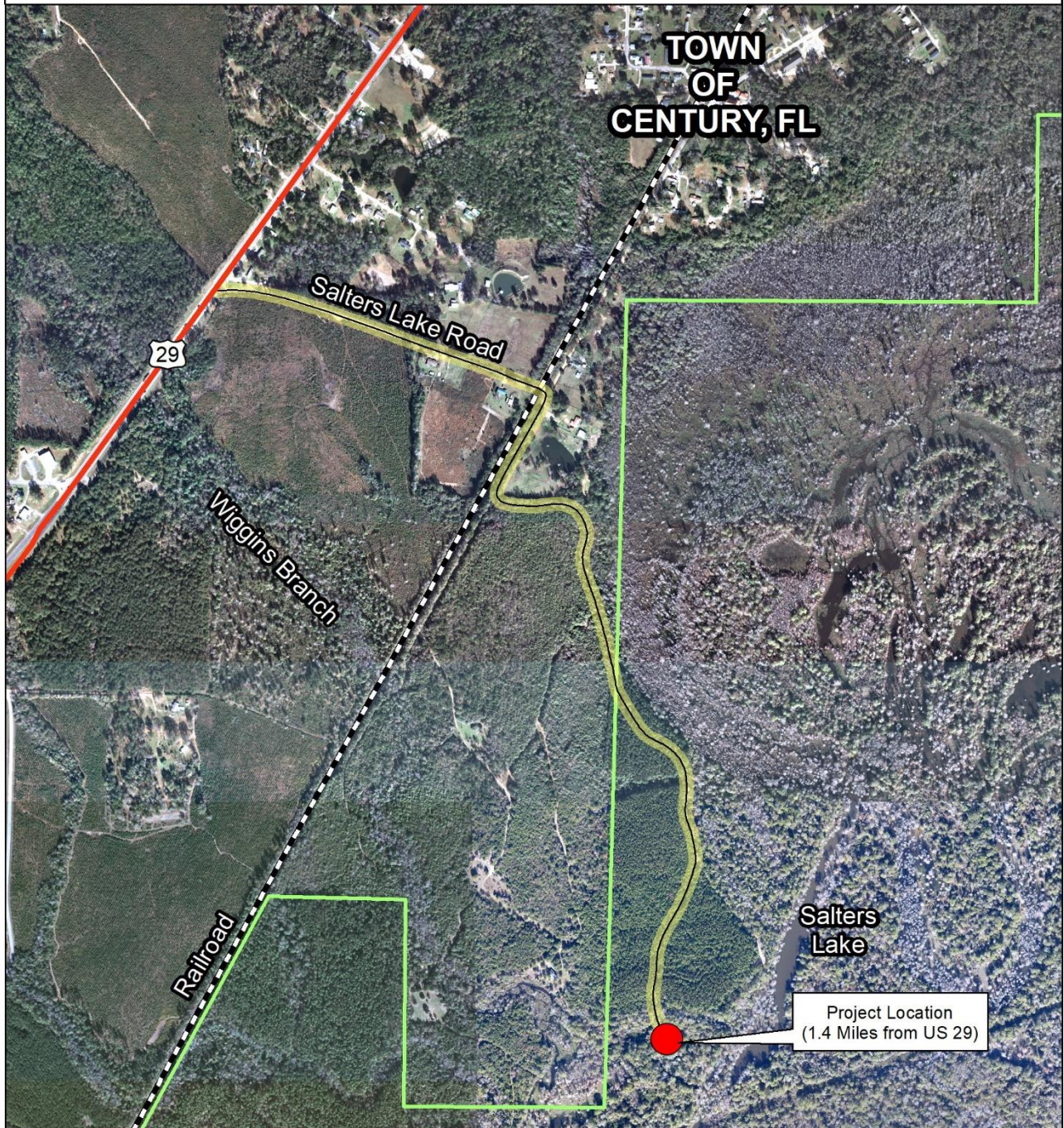
 District Lands

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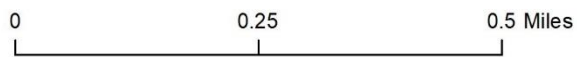


Salters Lake Directions



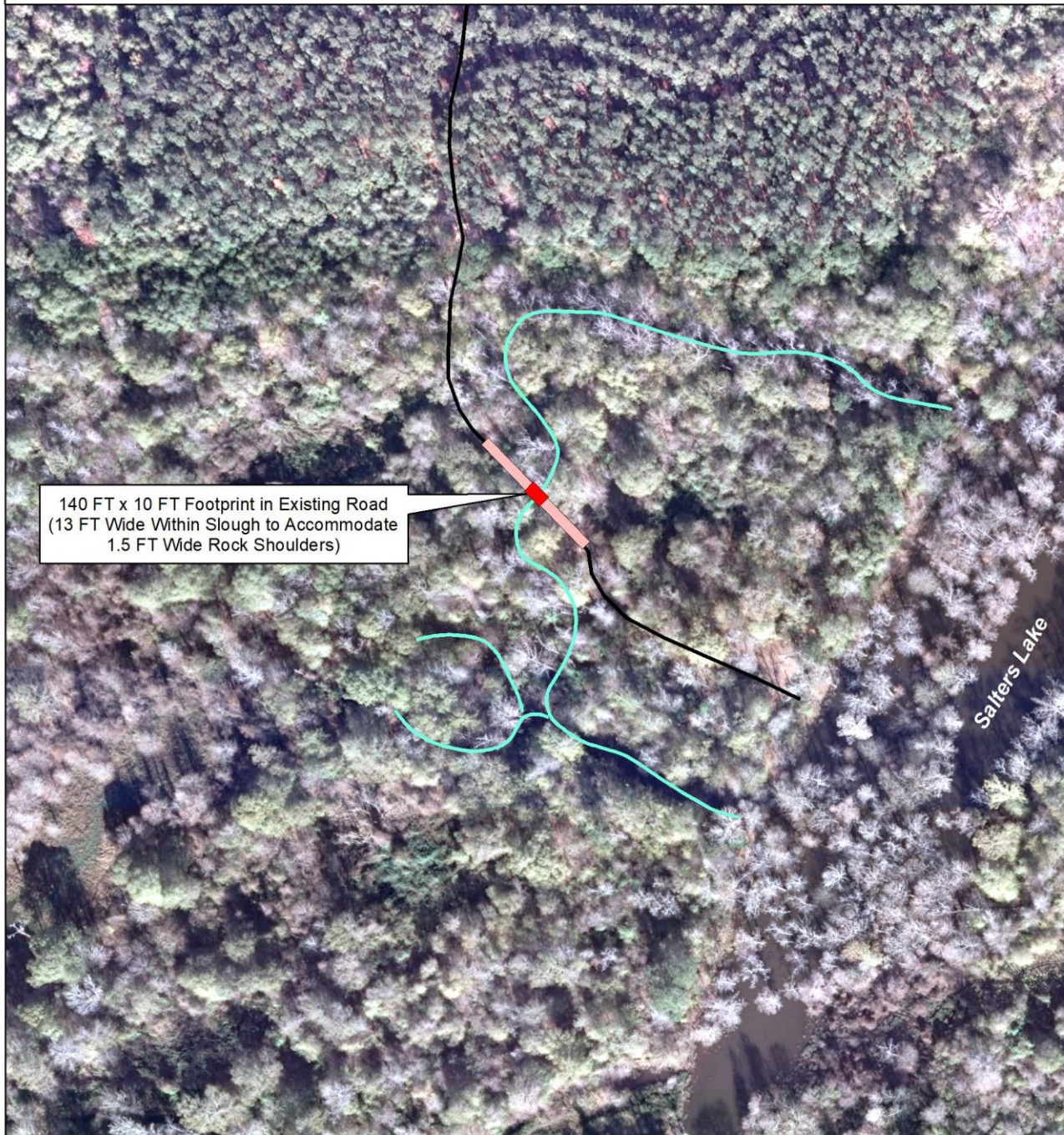
 District Lands

Salters Lake Low-Water-Crossing  
Escambia River Water Management Area  
Section 17, Township 5N, Range 30W  
Escambia County, Florida





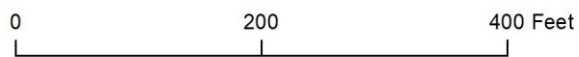
Salters Lake Low-Water-Crossing (2016 Imagery)



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 (9/19/2024)





Herbicide Treatment (Glyphosate) of Japanese Climbing Fern at Salters Lake LWC (10/1/2024)