

Regional Mitigation Plan Update

February 2025



Northwest Florida Water Management District
81 Water Management Drive
Havana, FL 32333-4712

Program Development Series 25-01

NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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Introduction

Section 373.4137(4), Florida Statutes (F.S.), requires the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD or District), in consultation with Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP); United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT); other appropriate federal, state, and local governments; and other interested parties, to develop and approve an annual regional mitigation plan before March 1st of each year for FDOT mitigation needs submitted to the District. The NFWFMD mitigation program includes the Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank (owned and operated by the District), the District's In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Program authorized by the USACE (Permit SAJ-2011-00287), and other mitigation projects implemented by the District.

Although FDOT is not required to participate in the District mitigation program (section 373.4137(2)(a), F.S.), FDOT District-3 opts to mitigate through the District when use of a private mitigation bank is not feasible. This Regional Mitigation Plan Update satisfies the requirements of section 373.4137(4), F.S., to annually develop a mitigation plan for submittal to, and approval by, FDEP. To facilitate a policy-level review, FDEP guidance requests that regional mitigation plan submittals be in the form of a summary and only address new projects. Detailed information and permit-level project plans are posted at the District website (www.nfwwater.com/Water-Resources/Regional-Wetland-Mitigation-Program). Approval from FDEP is obtained prior to implementation of mitigation.

Consideration of Private Mitigation Banks

Per section 373.4137(2)(c), F.S., FDOT must investigate use of a mitigation bank before including a project on the environmental impact inventory (Inventory) submitted to the District. If the District identifies use of a mitigation bank to offset an FDOT impact included on the Inventory, the District shall exclude that project from the mitigation plan and FDOT shall be responsible for purchase of bank credits (section 373.4137(3)(d), F.S.).

Private mitigation bank service areas cover approximately one-third of northwest Florida (Figure 1). The District strongly encourages development of private mitigation banks, especially in areas not currently served by private banks. The District does not compete with private mitigation banks and will develop or provide mitigation to FDOT only when use of a private mitigation bank is not feasible. Use of a mitigation bank as offsetting mitigation for an FDOT impact is dependent upon approval by state and federal permitting authorities.

Consideration of current service area coverages, as indicated in Figure 1, suggests that development of additional credits within several regions of northwest Florida may be needed to support future transportation improvements. Additional palustrine credits within the Blackwater River and Yellow River basins and additional estuarine and submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) credits districtwide may be particularly useful to support future transportation needs.

2025 Project Update

Since approval of the 2024 Regional Mitigation Plan Update, nine road projects with an estimated cumulative total of 8.2026 acres of wetland impact have been added to the FDOT District-3 Inventory that may require mitigation through the NFWFMD mitigation program (Figure 2; Table 1).

Hanna Mill Pond Road at Hanna Millpond; FPID 441188-1. Improvements to Hanna Mill Pond Road at Hanna Millpond are anticipated to impact an estimated 0.50 acres of jurisdictional, palustrine forested wetlands. Located in Gadsden County (Ochlockonee River and Bay Watershed), this impact is not within the service area of any private mitigation bank. It is, however, located within the service area of the Shuler In-Lieu Fee mitigation project, a component of the NFWFMD In-Lieu Fee mitigation program. Proposed mitigation is debiting of palustrine forested UMAM credits (number and type to be confirmed when ERP¹ and 404² permits are issued) from the Shuler credit ledger (26.12 federal and 24.82 state palustrine forested credits available). Additional information, as plans are developed and permitting proceeds, will be posted on the NFWFMD website.

CR 268 High Bridge Road at Little River Bridge No. 500045; FPID 439383-1. Replacement of the CR 268 Little River Bridge is anticipated to impact an estimated 1.00 acres of jurisdictional, palustrine forested wetlands. Located in Gadsden County (Ochlockonee River and Bay Watershed), this impact is not within the service area of any private mitigation bank. It is, however, located within the service area of the Shuler In-Lieu Fee mitigation project, a component of the NFWFMD In-Lieu Fee mitigation program. Proposed mitigation is debiting of palustrine forested UMAM credits (number and type to be confirmed when ERP and 404 permits are issued) from the Shuler credit ledger (26.12 federal and 24.82 state palustrine forested credits available). Additional information, as plans are developed and permitting proceeds, will be posted on the NFWFMD website

Hub Presley Road at Pond Creek Bridge No. 604152; FPID 450864-1. Replacement of the Hub Presley Road Pond Creek Bridge No. 604152 is anticipated to impact an estimated 0.37 acres of jurisdictional wetlands. Located in Walton County (Pensacola Bay System Bay Watershed), this impact is not within the service area of any private mitigation bank. It is, however, located within the service area of the Yellow River Ranch In-Lieu Fee mitigation project, a component of the NFWFMD In-Lieu Fee mitigation program. Proposed mitigation is debiting of UMAM credits (number and type to be confirmed when ERP and 404 permits are issued) from the Yellow River Ranch credit ledger (10.01 federal and 2.02 state credits currently available; 5.59 state / federal credits remain to be released when Final Success Criteria are met). Additional information, as plans are developed and permitting proceeds, will be posted on the NFWFMD website

Klondike Road at Unnamed Branch Bridge No. 484060; FPID 449054-1. Replacement of the Klondike Road Unnamed Branch Bridge No. 484060 is anticipated to impact an estimated 0.1726 acres of jurisdictional wetlands. Located in Escambia County (Perdido River and Bay Watershed), this impact is not within the service area of any private mitigation bank. It is, however, located within the service area of the Dutex In-Lieu Fee mitigation project, a component of the NFWFMD In-Lieu Fee mitigation program. Proposed mitigation is debiting of UMAM credits (number and type to be confirmed when ERP and 404 permits are issued) from the Dutex credit ledger (50.82 federal and 50.65 state credits available). Additional information, as plans are developed and permitting proceeds, will be posted on the NFWFMD website

CR 278 at Chipola River Bridge No. 530026; FPID 449055-1. Replacement of the CR 278 Chipola River Bridge No. 530026 is anticipated to impact an estimated 1.80 acres of jurisdictional wetlands. Located in Jackson County (Apalachicola River and Bay Watershed), this impact is not within the service area of any private mitigation bank or any NFWFMD In-Lieu Fee mitigation area. Proposed mitigation is TBD. Options to be pursued may include application of Proximity Factors to allow out-of-service-area-use of mitigation banks or development of permittee-responsible standalone projects. If a private mitigation bank option becomes available prior to permitting, this project will be withdrawn from the NFWFMD mitigation program and FDOT will be responsible for purchasing credits from a private bank. The NFWFMD will obtain FDEP approval before proceeding with any mitigation for this impact. Additional information, as plans are developed and permitting proceeds, will be posted on the NFWFMD website

US 90 Chipola River Bridge No. 530005; FPID 219344-3. Replacement of the US 90 Chipola River Bridge No. 530005 is anticipated to impact an estimated 0.40 acres of jurisdictional wetlands. Located in Jackson County (Apalachicola River and Bay Watershed), this impact is not within the service area of any private mitigation bank or any NFWFMD In-Lieu Fee mitigation area. Proposed mitigation is TBD. Options to be pursued may include application of Proximity Factors to allow out-of-service-area-use of mitigation banks or development of permittee-responsible standalone projects. If a private mitigation bank option becomes available prior to permitting, this project will be withdrawn from the NFWFMD mitigation program and FDOT will be responsible for purchasing credits from a private bank. The NFWFMD will obtain FDEP approval before proceeding with any mitigation for this impact. Additional information, as plans are developed and permitting proceeds, will be posted on the NFWFMD website

CR 274 at Tenmile Creek Bridge No. 470035; FPID 445448-1. Replacement of the CR 274 Tenmile Creek Bridge No. 470035 is anticipated to impact an estimated 0.96 acres of jurisdictional wetlands. Located in Calhoun County (Apalachicola River and Bay Watershed), this impact is not within the service area of any private mitigation bank or any NFWFMD In-Lieu Fee mitigation area. Proposed mitigation is TBD. Options to be pursued may include application of Proximity Factors to allow out-of-service-area-use of mitigation banks or development of permittee-responsible standalone projects. If a private mitigation bank option becomes available prior to permitting, this project will be withdrawn from the NFWFMD mitigation program and FDOT will be responsible for purchasing credits from a private bank. The NFWFMD will obtain FDEP approval before proceeding with any mitigation for this impact. Additional information, as plans are developed and permitting proceeds, will be posted on the NFWFMD website

Oak Grove Road at Chestnut Creek Bridge No. 604136; FPID 449075-1. Replacement of the Oak Grove Road Chestnut Creek Bridge No. 604136 is anticipated to impact an estimated 0.30 acres of jurisdictional wetlands. Located in Walton County (Choctawhatchee River and Bay Watershed), this impact is not within the service area of any private mitigation bank or any NFWFMD In-Lieu Fee mitigation area. Proposed mitigation is TBD. Options to be pursued may include application of Proximity Factors to allow out-of-service-area-use of mitigation banks or development of permittee-responsible standalone projects. If a private mitigation bank option becomes available prior to permitting, this project will be withdrawn from the NFWFMD mitigation program and FDOT will be responsible for purchasing credits from a private bank. The NFWFMD will obtain FDEP approval before proceeding with any mitigation for this impact. Additional information, as plans are developed and permitting proceeds, will be posted on the NFWFMD website

¹ State Environmental Resource Permit.

² Federal Clean Water Act Permit.


US 98 (from east of Ramble Bay Lane to Ortega Street); FPID 220426-6. Improvements to US 98 (from east of Ramble Bay Lane to Ortega Street) are anticipated to impact an estimated 2.70 acres of jurisdictional wetlands. Located in Santa Rosa County (Pensacola Bay System Watershed), this impact is not within the service area of any private mitigation bank or any NFWWMD In-Lieu Fee mitigation area. However, the eastern end of the footprint of this impact is less than one mile from a private mitigation service area and the entire footprint is less than two miles from a private service area. Proposed mitigation is TBD. Options to be pursued may include application of Proximity Factors to allow out-of-service-area-use of mitigation banks or development of permittee-responsible standalone projects. If permittees determine that a private mitigation bank can be used to offset this impact, this project will be withdrawn from the NFWWMD mitigation program and FDOT will be responsible for purchasing credits from a private bank. If mitigation is developed by the NFWWMD, approvals will be obtained from FDEP before proceeding. Additional information, as plans are developed and permitting proceeds, will be posted on the NFWWMD website

Conclusion

The District concludes that this Regional Mitigation Plan Update complies with the mitigation requirements of section 373.4137, F.S., and 33 USC Section 344, subject to approval by FDEP. Approval by the Governing Board of the District or its designee and FDEP shall authorize the activities proposed in the mitigation plan, and no other state, regional or local permit or approval shall be necessary. Per section 373.4137(5), F.S., the District, upon notice and coordination with FDOT, may deviate from the approved mitigation plan to comply with federal permitting requirements.

All Regional Mitigation Plan documents may be accessed online at <https://www.nfwwater.com/Water-Resources/Regional-Wetland-Mitigation-Program>. Printed copies may be requested from the Northwest Florida Water Management District, 81 Water Management Drive, Havana, FL 32333-4712.

Pursuant to sections 373.4137(4) and (6), F.S., the District hereby approves modifications to the Regional Mitigation Plan. Modifications to the District-approved Regional Mitigation Plan may not be implemented prior to approval by FDEP. Through consultation with the aforementioned entities, the District's Regional Mitigation Plan has been designed and evaluated to meet state and federal mitigation requirements (section 373.4137, F.S., and 33 United State Code section 1344); however, it is the responsibility of FDOT to propose offsetting mitigation to state and federal permittees.



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2/3/2025

Date

For More Information

Website:

<https://www.nfwwater.com/Water-Resources/Regional-Wetland-Mitigation-Program>

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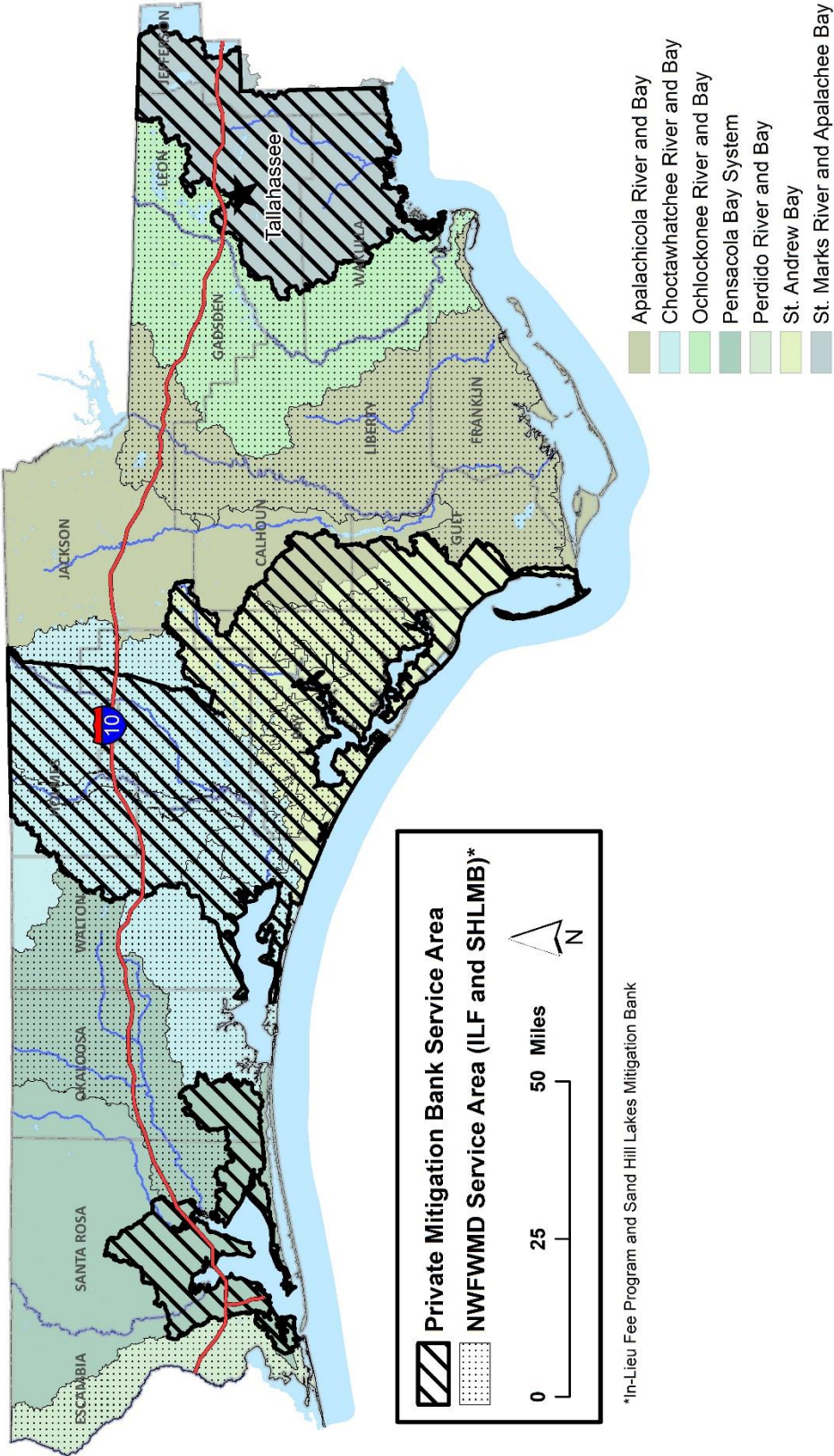
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Northwest Florida Water Management District



*In-Lieu Fee Program and Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank

Figure 1. Mitigation Service Areas in Northwest Florida

Northwest Florida Water Management District 2025 Regional Mitigation Plan Update FDOT Project and Proposed Mitigation

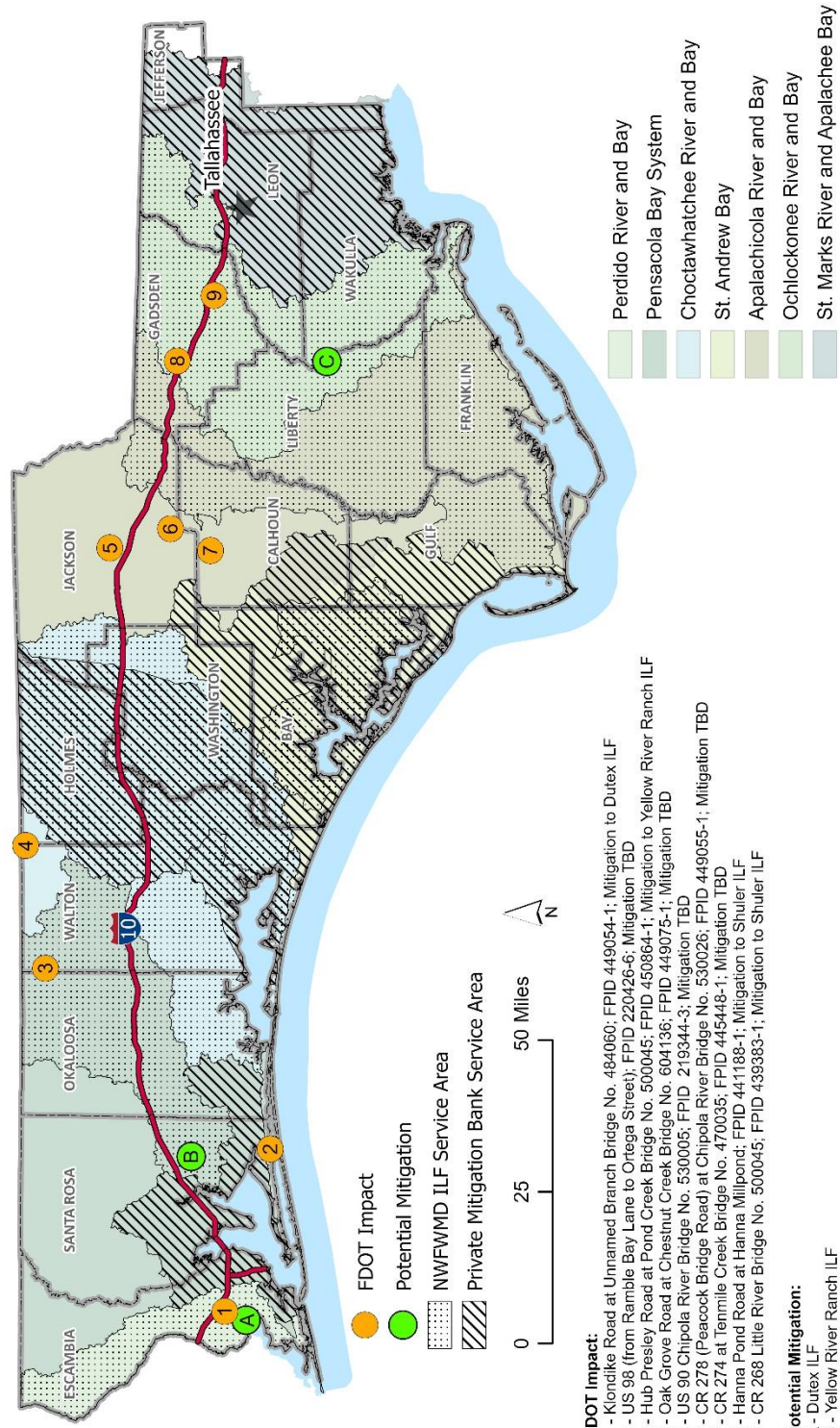


Figure 2. Location Map of FDOT Impacts

Table 1. Impact and Mitigation Overview

| Impact and Mitigation Overview – February 2025 ¹ | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Impact | Mitigation ² | Impact Location | | Habitat / Community Type Impact | Total Impact Acres | T/E Species Impact |
| | | County | Drainage Basin | | | |
| Hanna Mill Pond Road at Hanna Millpond; FPID 441188-1 | Shuler In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area | Gadsden | Ochlockonee River and Bay Watershed | Palustrine Forested | 0.50 | TBD |
| CR 268 High Bridge Road at Little River Bridge No. 500045; FPID 439383-1 | | | | TBD | 1.00 | TBD |
| Hub Presley Road at Pond Creek Bridge No. 604152; FPID 450864-1 | Yellow River Ranch In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area | Walton | Pensacola Bay System | Palustrine Forested | 0.37 | TBD |
| Klondike Road at Unnamed Branch Bridge No. 484060; FPID 449054-1 | Dutex In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area | Escambia | Perdido River and Bay Watershed | Palustrine Forested | 0.1726 | TBD |
| CR 278 at Chipola River Bridge No. 530026; FPID 449055-1 | TBD | Jackson | Apalachicola River and Bay Watershed | TBD | 1.80 | TBD |
| US 90 Chipola River Bridge No. 530005; FPID 219344-3 | TBD | Jackson | | Palustrine Forested | 0.40 | TBD |
| CR 274 at Tenmile Creek Bridge No. 470035; FPID 445448-1 | TBD | Calhoun | | Palustrine Forested | 0.96 | TBD |
| Oak Grove Road at Chestnut Creek Bridge No. 604136; FPID 449075-1 | TBD | Walton | Choctawhatchee River and Bay Watershed | Palustrine Forested | 0.30 | TBD |
| US 98 (from East of Ramble Bay Lane to Ortega Street); FPID 220426-6 | TBD | Santa Rosa | Pensacola Bay System | TBD | 2.70 | TBD |
| | | | | | 8.2026 | (Total) |

¹Habitat/community type and estimated impact acreage provided by FDOT District-3; subject to verification by permitting authorities.

²Where mitigation is TBD, the use of Proximity Factors to allow out-of-service-area use of mitigation banks or development of permittee-responsible standalone projects may be pursued.

Table 2. Mitigation Plan Overview

| Mitigation Plan Overview – February 2025 | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mitigation Name | Location | | Habitat / Community Type | Mitigation Type | Number of Credits | Land Acquisition |
| | County | SWIM Drainage Basin | | | | |
| Shuler In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area | Liberty | Ochlockonee River and Bay | Palustrine Forested Wetlands | In-Lieu Fee Program | TBD | No |
| Yellow River Ranch In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area | Santa Rosa | Pensacola Bay System | Palustrine Forested and/or Emergent Wetlands | In-Lieu Fee Program | TBD | No |
| Dutex In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area | Escambia | Perdido River and Bay Watershed | Palustrine Forested Wetlands | In-Lieu Fee Program | TBD | No |

Table 3. Cost Estimates

| Cost of Mitigation Plan – February 2025 | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Mitigation Name | Planning / Design Cost | Construction Cost | Acquisition or Credit Purchase Cost | Management Cost | Total Cost ¹ | Mitigation Cost per Acre of Impact |
| Shuler In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area | \$0 | \$0 | TBD | \$0 | \$216,478.50 | \$144,319 |
| Yellow River Ranch In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area | \$0 | \$0 | TBD | \$0 | \$53,398.03 | \$144,319 |
| Dutex In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area | \$0 | \$0 | TBD | \$0 | \$24,909.46 | \$144,319 |
| CR 278 at Chipola River Bridge No. 530026; FPID 449055-1; Mitigation | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD | \$259,774.20 | \$144,319 |
| US 90 Chipola River Bridge No. 530005; FPID 219344-3; Mitigation | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD | \$57,727.60 | \$144,319 |
| CR 274 at Tenmile Creek Bridge No. 470035; FPID 445448-1; Mitigation | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD | \$138,546.24 | \$144,319 |
| Oak Grove Road at Chestnut Creek Bridge No. 604136; FPID 449075-1; Mitigation | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD | \$43,295.70 | \$144,319 |
| US 98 (from East of Ramble Bay Lane to Ortega Street); FPID 220426-6; Mitigation | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD | \$389,661.30 | \$144,319 |
| | | | | | \$1,183,791.03 | |

¹For FDOT Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025), in accordance with section 373.41.37, FS, mitigation, when conducted through a water management district, is funded at a rate of \$144,319 per acre of direct wetland impact. Mitigation funding is anticipated to increase to \$149,115 per acre in Fiscal Year 2026 (beginning July 1, 2025). Two impacts (FPID 441188-1; FPID 439383-1; total direct wetland impact = 1.50 acres) are projected to be mitigated at the Shuler ILF site via debiting of credits. One impact (FPID 450864-1; direct wetland impact = 0.37 acres) is anticipated to be mitigated at the Yellow River Ranch ILF site via debiting of credits. One impact (FPID 449054-1; direct wetland impact = 0.1726 acres) is anticipated to be mitigated at the Dutex ILF site via debiting of credits. Proposed mitigation for all other impacts in this table is TBD.