Plum Creek Mitigation Site Inspection Report (September 2025)
USACE Permit No. SAJ-2006-4627 (MOD-AWP)
USACE Permit No. SAJ-2005-08619 (MOD-AWP)

On September 3, 2025, Northwest Florida Water Management District (NWFWMD) staff conducted a site inspection and photo monitoring at the Plum Creek Mitigation Area (Choctawhatchee River and Bay Watershed; Washington County) for mitigation associated with replacement of the SR 79 Holmes Creek Bridge (SAJ-2006-4627, MOD-AWP) and replacement of the SR 79 Open Creek Bridge (SAJ-2005-08619, MOD-AWP). Acquired from the Plum Creek Timber Company in 2009, this project seeks to preserve, enhance and restore approximately 130 acres of wetlands and associated upland buffers proximate to Holmes Creek. Specific goals are restoration of approximately 70 acres of Pine Flatwoods uplands (FLUCCS 411), restoration of approximately 30 acres of Wetland Forested Mixed wetlands (FLUCCS 630) situated in a former beaver pond, and preservation of another approximately 30 acres of Wetland Forested Mixed wetlands (FLUCCS 630).

Plant diversity at Plum Creek continues to be robust (a 2024 vegetation assessment by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory observed 259 plant taxa onsite). During the most recent inspection, longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*), planted in 2010 in upland areas, appeared to be healthy and thriving. Pond cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*), planted in 2019 as part of restoration of forested wetlands, also appeared healthy with the former beaver pond on track for successful restoration. Furthermore, preserved forested wetlands onsite continue to be of high quality. However, in upland areas, excessive vine (especially *Vitis* spp.) and shrub (especially *Ilex vomitoria*) cover is likely affecting desirable native groundcover. Chinese tallow (*Triadica sebifera*) is also present in low numbers. As part of ongoing management, prescribed fire (last conducted in 2022) will be implemented by 2026 with the goal of returning the site to a 2-year growing-season fire regime (a current ban on prescribed fire in this area due to drought conditions has contributed to the delay in implementation of fire). Herbicide treatments and mechanical shrub reduction may also be necessary manage exotic or invasive vegetation and other nuisance species. Management of beaver populations and periodic dam construction to ensure continued success of forested wetland restoration in the beaver pond area may become necessary.

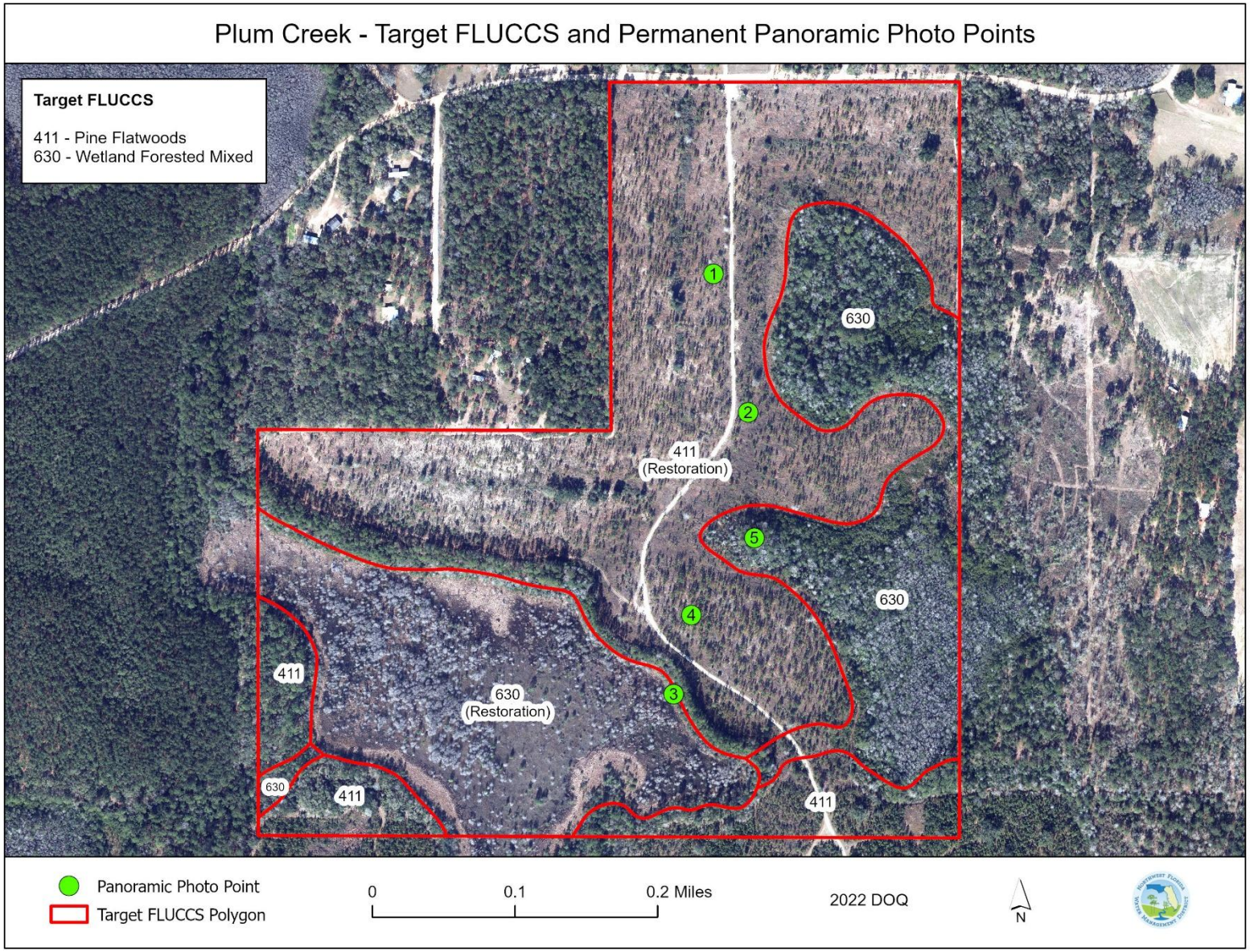

Figure 1. Target FLUCCS and Permanent Panoramic Photo Points (Established 2010)

Plum Creek Photo Point No. 1 – 9/3/2025

Plum Creek Photo Point No. 2 – 9/3/2025

Plum Creek Photo Point No. 3 – 9/3/2025

Plum Creek Photo Point No. 4 – 9/3/2025

Plum Creek Photo Point No. 5 – 9/3/2025