Northwest Florida Watersheds Partnership Program

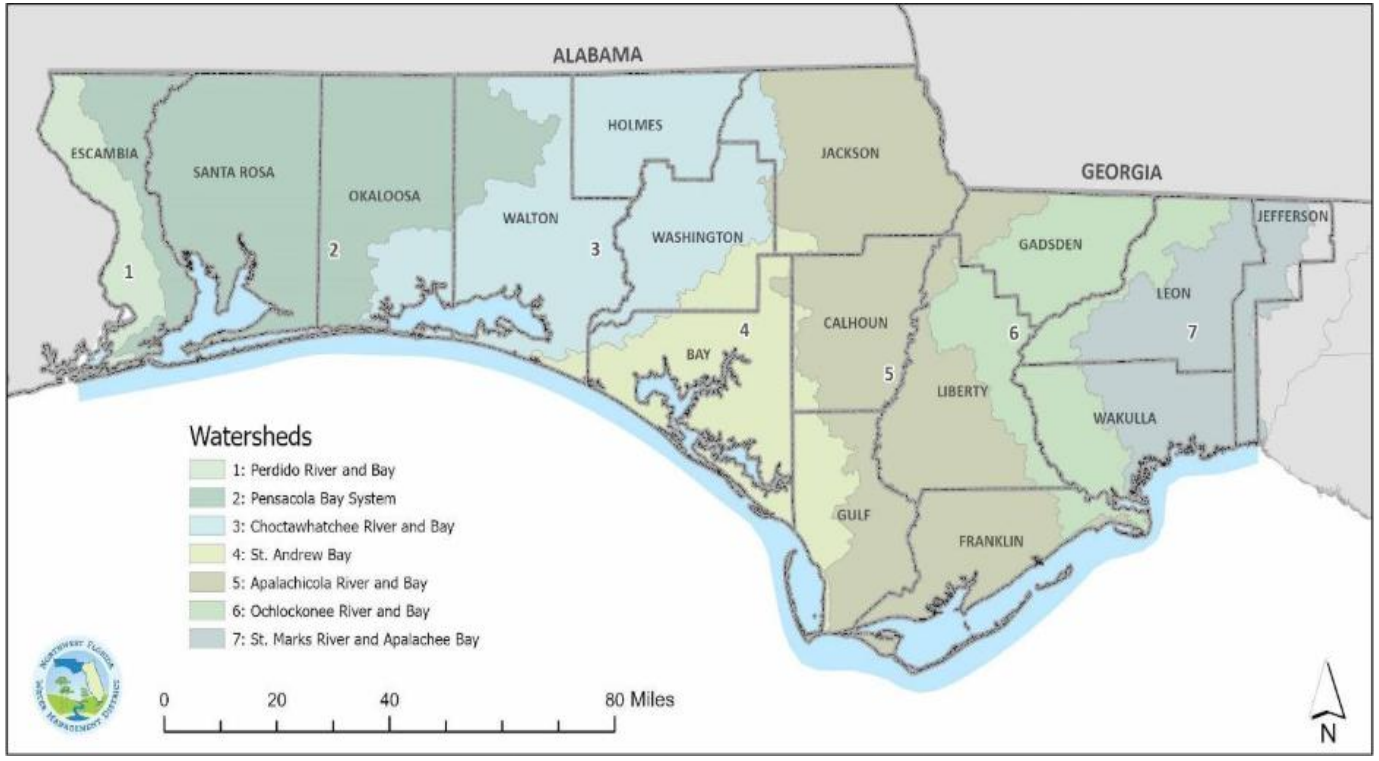
"Celebrating 50 Years of Preserving Water Resources in Northwest Florida"


FRANKLIN COUNTY
APALACHICOLA RIVER AND BAY WATERSHED

Surface Water Improvement & Management (SWIM) Program: Partnership Program Video

- The Florida Legislature passed the SWIM Act in 1987 to improve and manage the water quality and natural systems of Florida's surface waters, including lakes, rivers, streams, estuaries, springs, and wetlands.

- The District's SWIM priority list includes the seven major watersheds of northwest Florida.
- The central component of the SWIM Program is the development of plans for each watershed.
- SWIM plans provide:
  - Watershed characteristics
  - Descriptions of anthropogenic impacts to water quality and aquatic habitats
  - Strategies to restore and to protect watershed resources
- The SWIM plans were last updated and approved by the Governing Board in 2017 and 2018.



Northwest Florida Watersheds Partnership Program

- Collaborative program to identify priority sub-basins in each SWIM watershed and focus resources to implement projects that address water resource issues.
- Outreach and coordination will be key to maximizing partnerships and innovation.
- FY 2025-26 Legislative Budget Request is $25 million
  - $22.5 million for grant program
  - $2.5 million for program implementation

Perdido River Near Otto Hill

Perdido Beach

Why Now?

- Florida is the fastest growing state in the U.S.
- The District includes some of the fastest growing counties in Florida (Gulf #3, Walton #6, Bay #15, Santa Rosa #17, and Wakulla #18).
- Collaborative partnerships and additional funding are needed to address pressing water resource issues in Northwest Florida.
- With the creation of the three panhandle estuary programs and the Pensacola & Perdido Bays Estuary Program becoming the first newly designated National Estuary Program in 30 years, there is significant local momentum to identify and fix priority resource issues.

Blackwater River Marsh

Project GreenShores and Admiral Mason Park

Partnership Program Implementation

- To ensure timely implementation, the District is developing sub-basin prioritization criteria, a public involvement plan, and a sub-basin work plan template.
- Public involvement activities anticipated to include:
  - Public meetings in all seven watersheds
  - Coordination with state agencies
  - Presentations at estuary program meetings
  - Meetings with local governments, regional planning councils, and interested parties
  - Creation and maintenance of a program webpage
- The District is pursuing funding for the Program during the 2025-2026 legislative session.

Choctawhatchee River at Highway 20

Live Oak Point Oyster Breakwater

Sub-basin Prioritization

- The goal is to identify seven priority sub-basins, one in each of the seven major SWIM watersheds.
- Sub-basin prioritization criteria focus on:
  - Water Quality
  - Water Supply
  - Natural System Restoration
- Water Quality criteria includes impairment status and the potential for stormwater management needs.
- Water Supply criteria includes delineated areas of water resource concern and population growth.
- Natural Systems criteria includes changes in aquatic habitat (i.e., wetlands, lakes, tidal marsh) area as an indicator of restoration priorities.

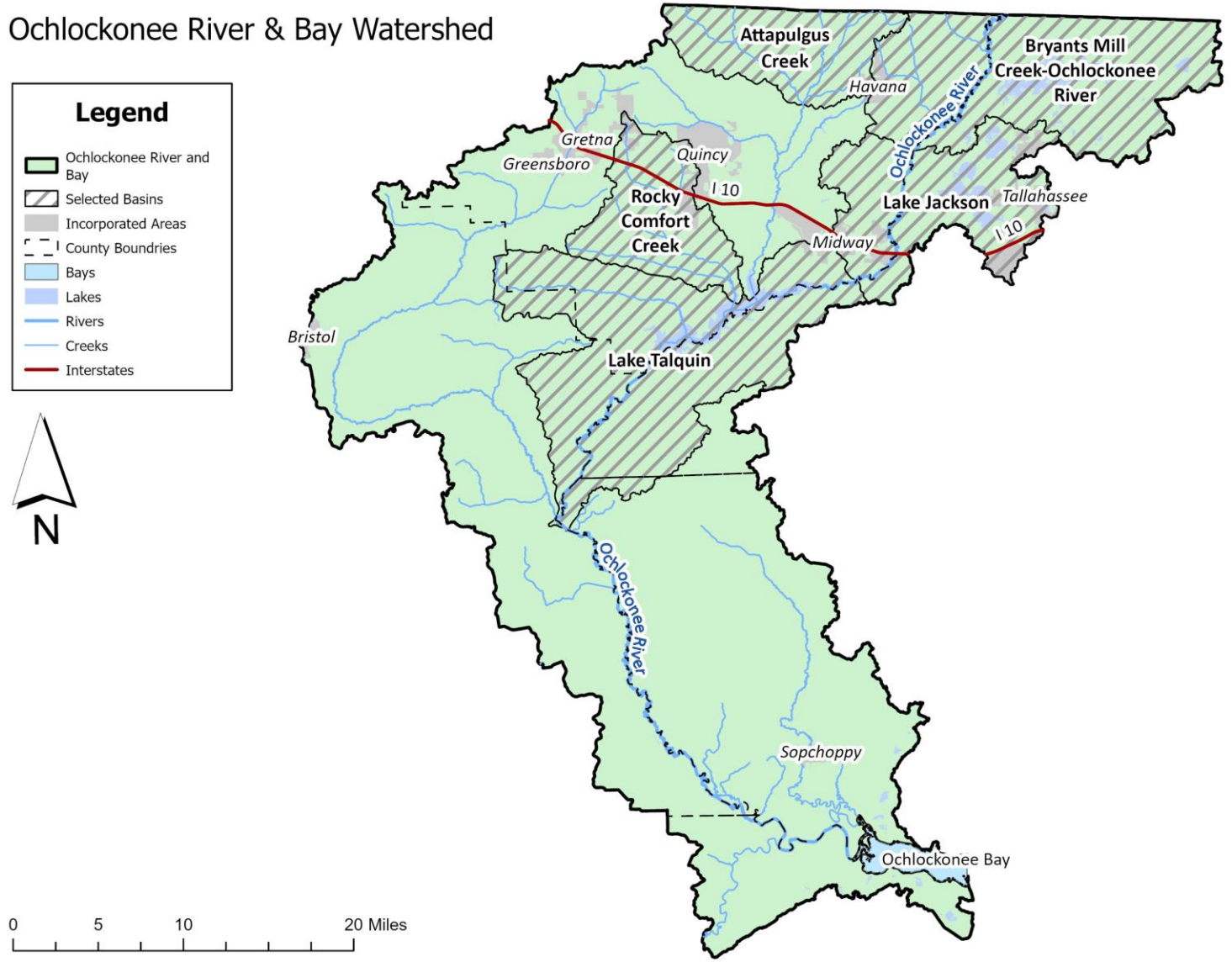
Longleaf Restoration in Econfina Creek WMA

Lake Powell Beach Outfall

Ochlockonee River and Bay Watershed

Five Candidate Priority Basins

All basins are within the Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) Area for Upper Wakulla River and Wakulla Springs.



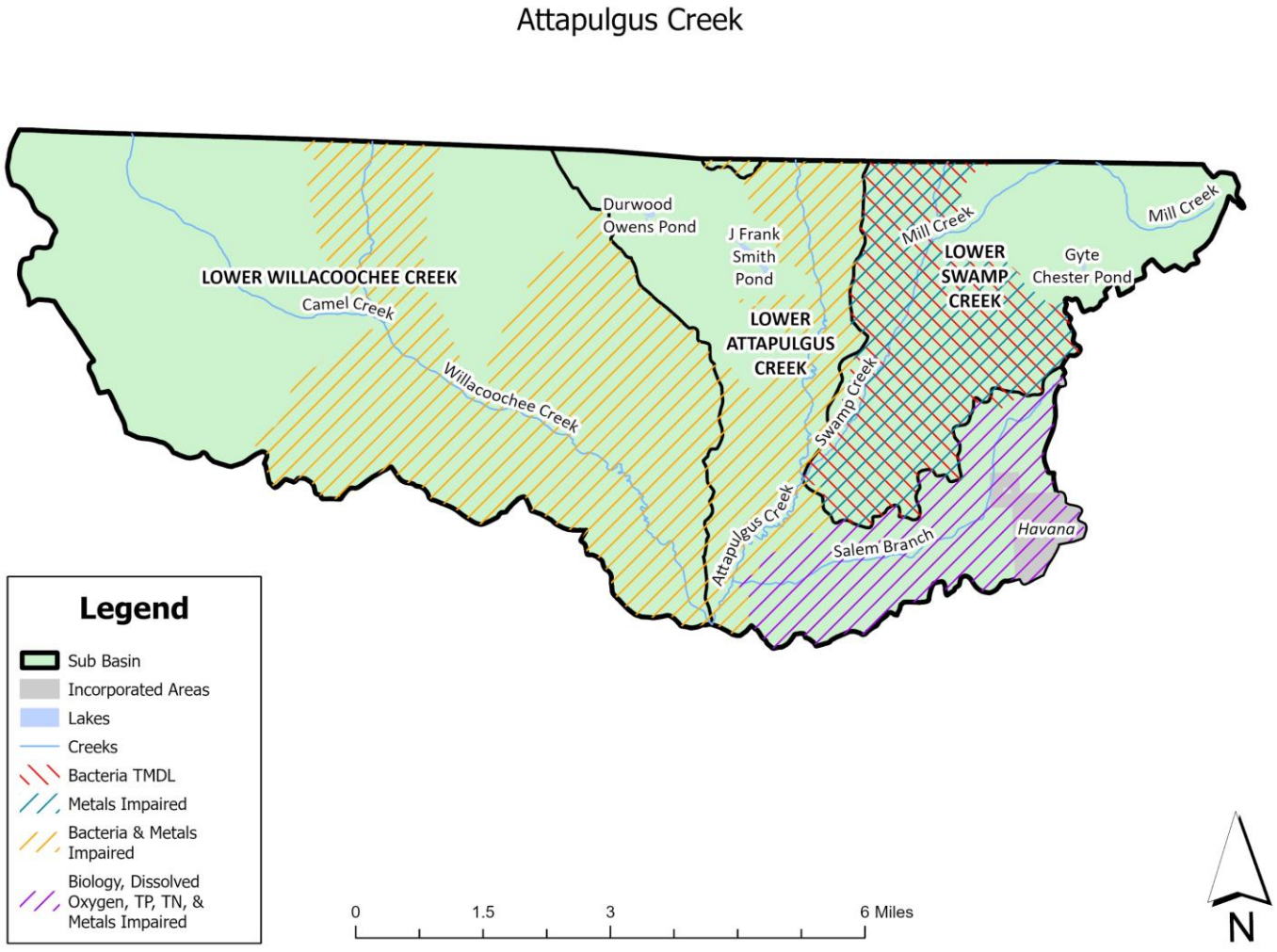
Attapulgus Creek

Description: This basin, encompassing Lower Willacoochee Creek, Lower Attapulgus Creek, Lower Swamp Creek, and Salem Branch, drains to the Little River, and then to Lake Talquin.

Water Quality: Includes waterbodies impaired for biology, iron, total nitrogen, total phosphorus, dissolved oxygen, and bacteria. A TMDL has been adopted for Lower Swamp Creek for bacteria. Additionally, the basin is in the middle range for amount of floodplain and vulnerable critical assets.

Water Supply: The basin is partially within an Area of Resource Concern. However, the basin is within the lower range for historical (2010 –2020) and projected (2024 -2045) population increases.

Natural Areas: This basin ranks in the top 10% for changes in aquatic habitat (i.e.,wetlands, streams, lakes) from 2010 to 2022.



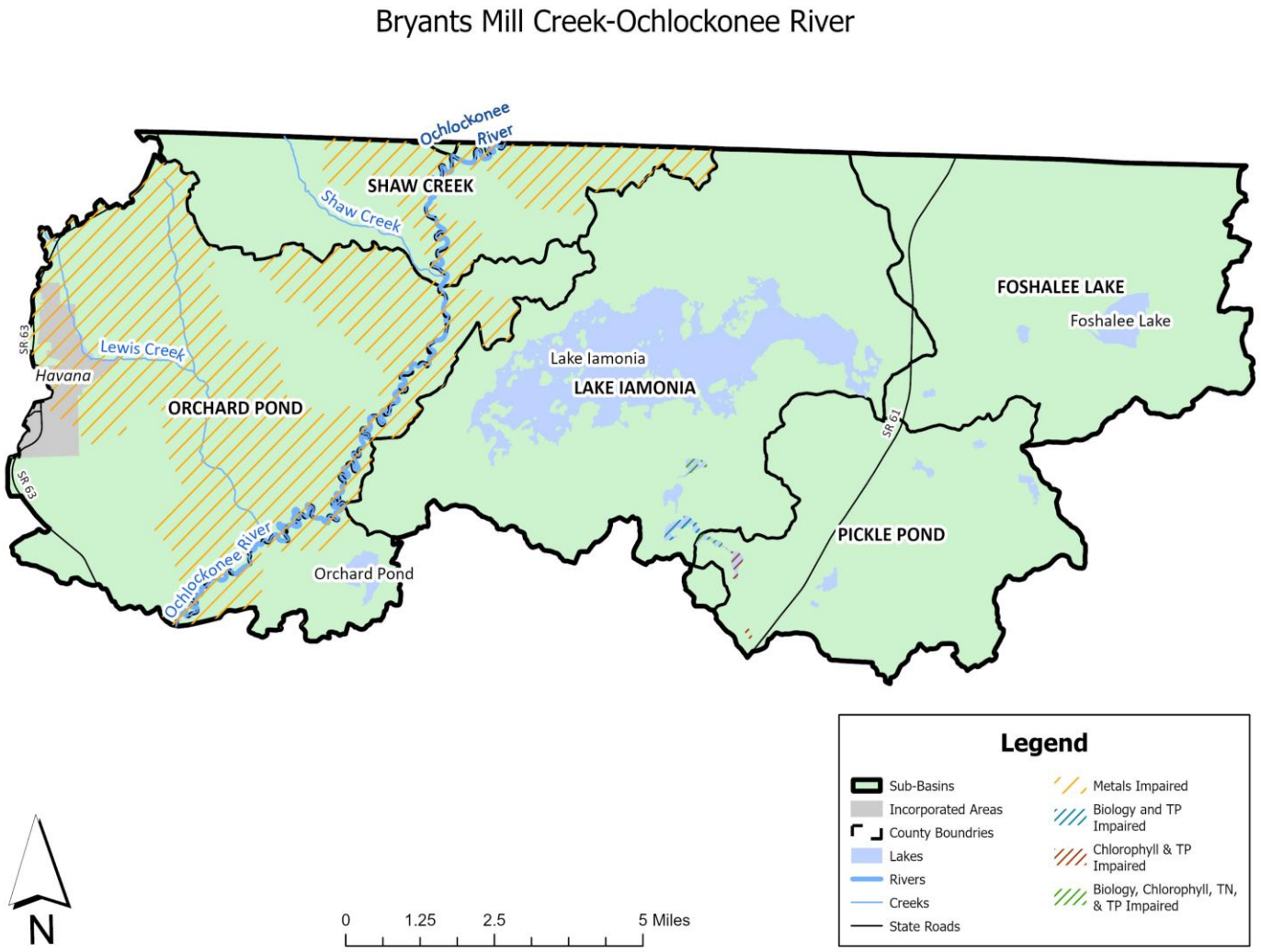
Bryants Mill Creek-Ochlockonee River

Description: This basin encompasses the upper portion of the Ochlockonee River as well as the Lake Iamonia and Foshalee Lake sub-basins.

Water Quality: Includes impaired waters for metals, total phosphorus, total nitrogen, chlorophyll, and biology. The basin has a high amount of critical assets susceptible to flooding. Additionally, the basin is in the top 25% for amount of floodplain contained.

Water Supply: The basin is in the top 40% for historical (2010 –2020) and projected (2024 - 2045) population increases.

Natural Areas: The basin ranks in the top 25% for changes in aquatic habitat from 2010 to 2022.



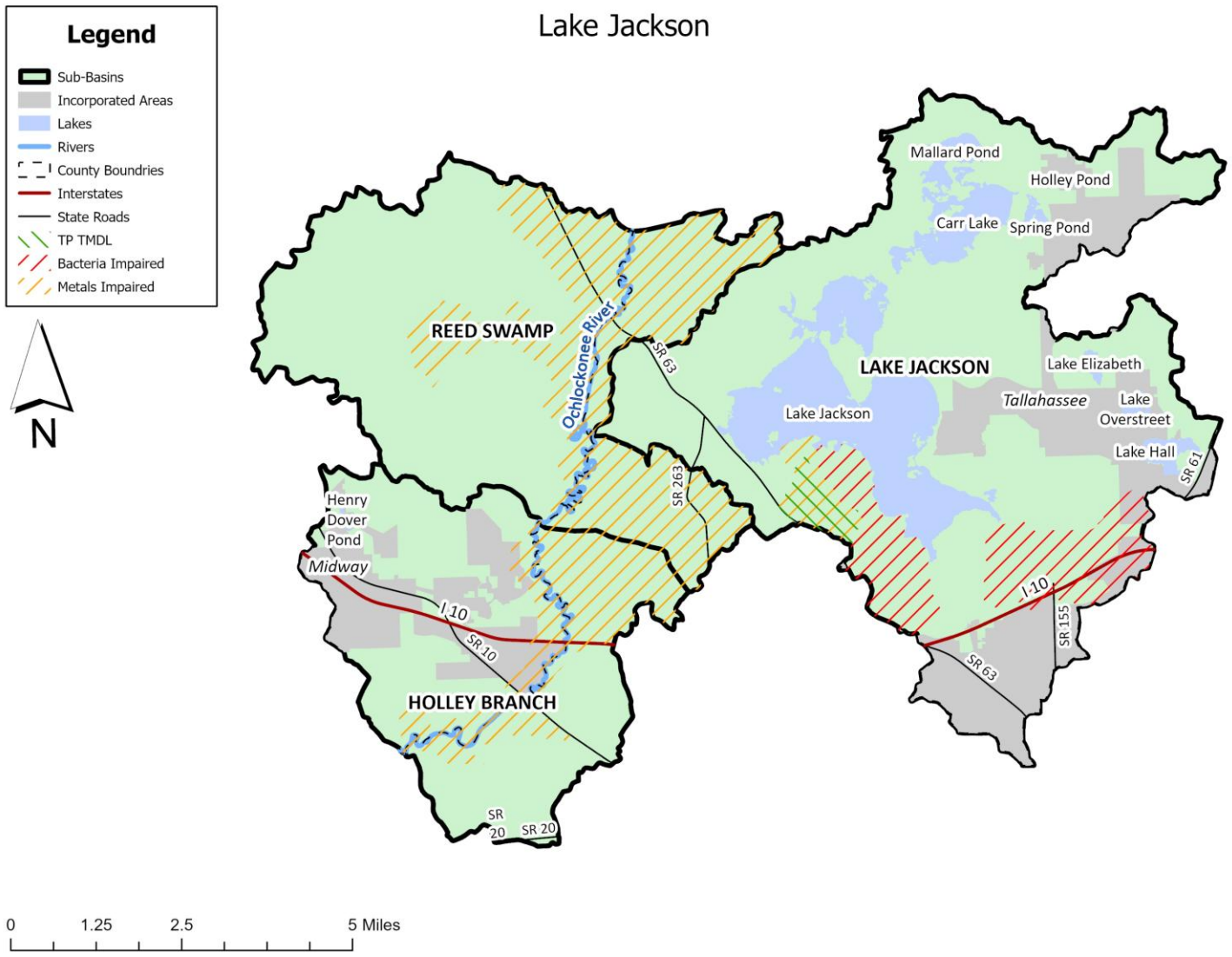
Lake Jackson

Description: This basin encompasses Lake Jackson and two basins that drain to the Ochlockonee River: Reed Swamp basin and Holley Branch. It includes northwest Tallahassee.

Water Quality: Includes waterbodies impaired for dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, bacteria, and metals. The basin is among the top 25% of basins, based on total area with a 1 percent annual chance of flooding.

Water Supply: The basin is within the top 30% for historical (2010 –2020) and projected (2024 - 2045) population increase.

Natural Areas: This basin ranks in the top 10% for changes in aquatic habitats from 2010 to 2022 and there are restoration plans in place (e.g., Lake Jackson).



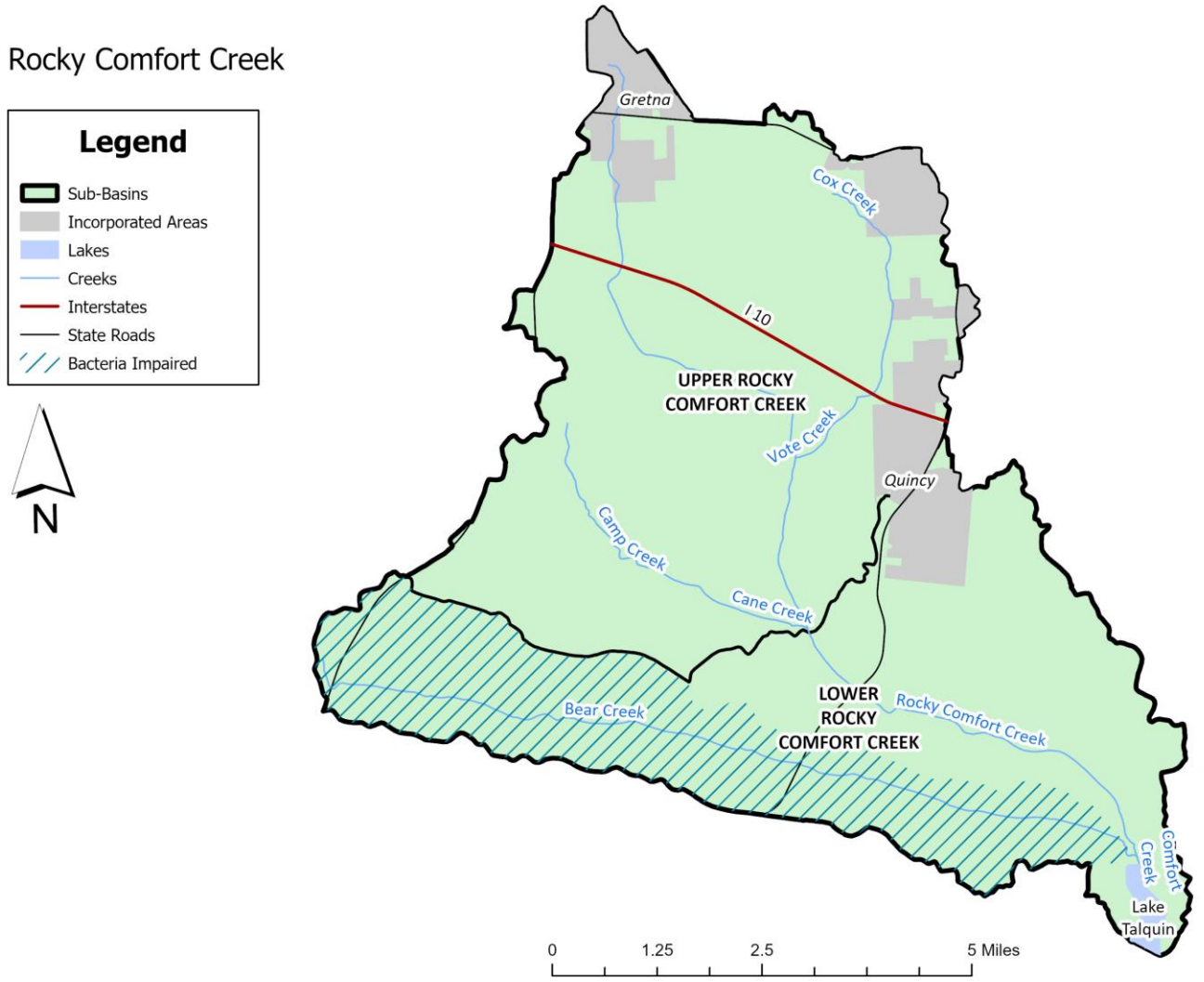
Rocky Comfort Creek

Description: This basin includes Upper and Lower Rocky Comfort Creek sub-basins, and much of the cities of Quincy and Gretna.

Water Quality: Includes bacteria impairment, but no waters with adopted TMDLs. This basin has a moderate amount of critical assets susceptible to flooding and is among the top 50% for area with a 0.01 annual chance of flooding.

Water Supply: The basin is within an Area of Resource Concern. However, the basin has relatively low historical (2010 –2020) and projected (2024 - 2045) population increases.

Natural Areas: Basin ranks in the top 20% for changes in aquatic habitat area from 2010 to 2022 and has restoration plans in place.



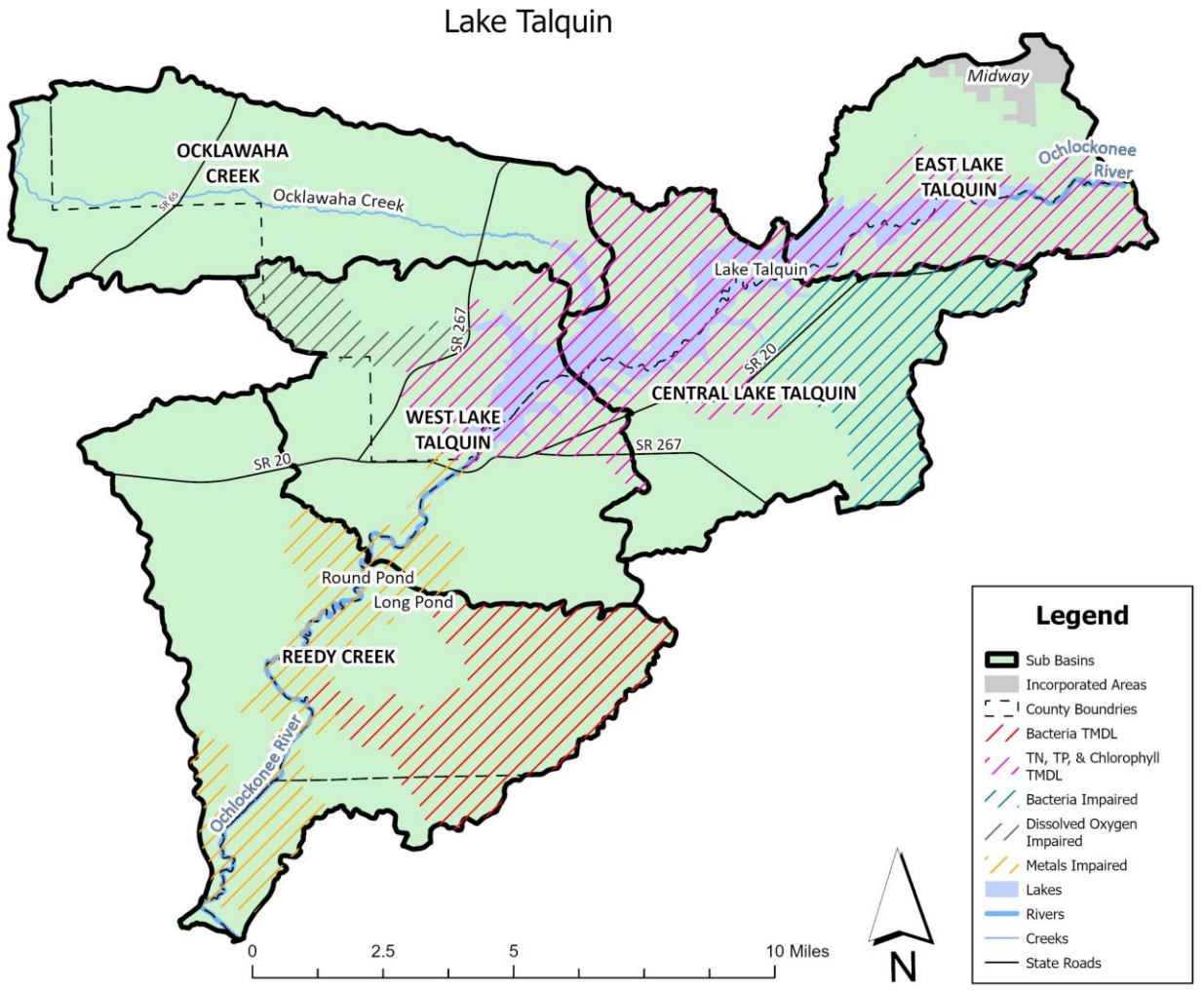
Lake Talquin

Description: The Lake Talquin basin includes the East, West, and Central Lake Talquin sub-basins as well as the Ocklawaha and Reedy Creek subbasins.

Water Quality: Includes waters impaired for bacteria, chlorophyll, dissolved oxygen, and metals. TMDLs have been adopted to address nutrient (total nitrogen and total phosphorus) impairments. Additionally, the basin is among the top 25% for area with 0.01 annual chance of flooding.

Water Supply: The basin is partially within an Area of Resource Concern. This basin is not estimated to be heavily impacted by historical (2010 –2020) or projected (2024 - 2045) population increases.

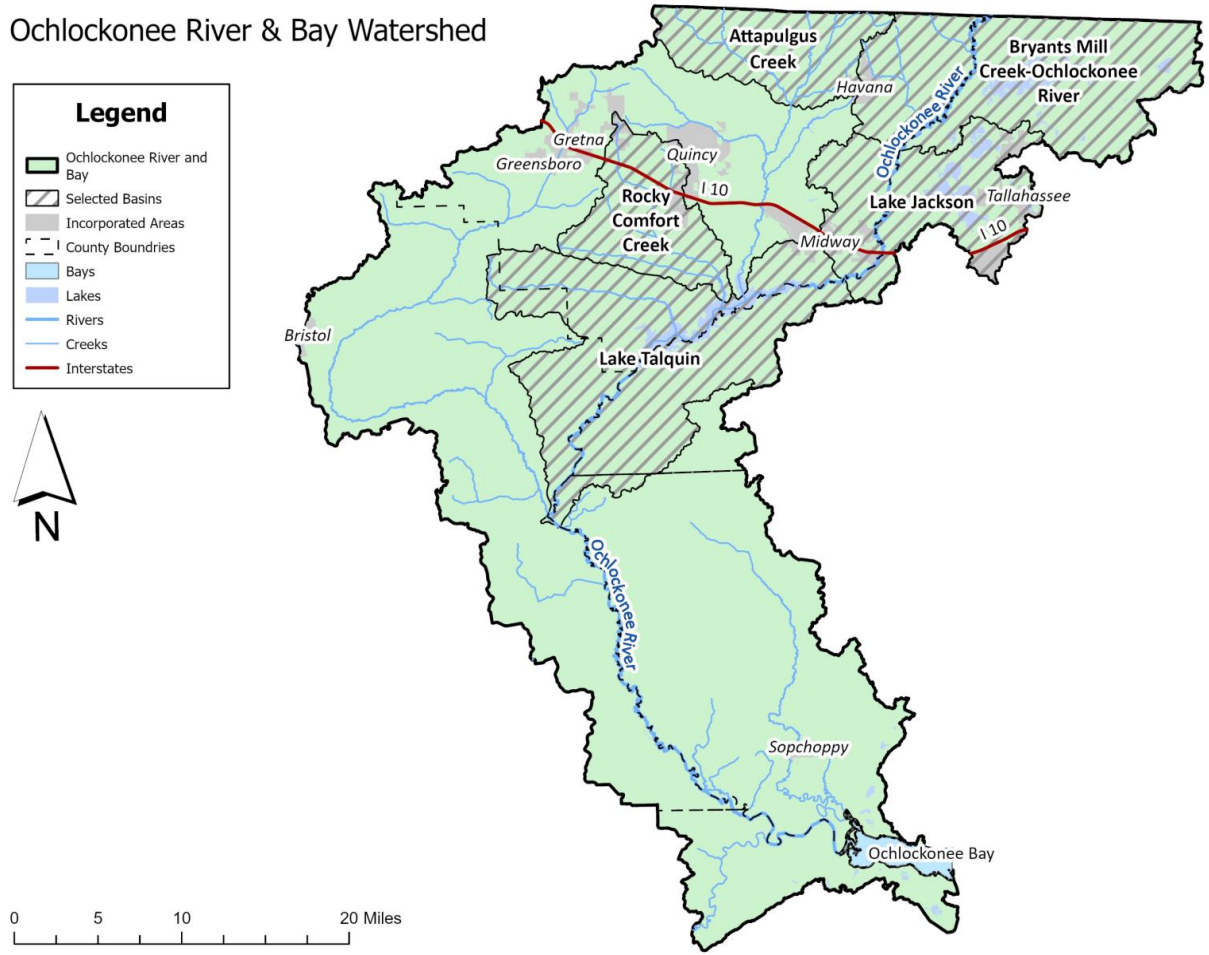
Natural Areas: Basin ranks in the lower percentages for changes in aquatic habitat from 2010 to 2022.



Ochlockonee River and Bay Watershed

Recommended Projects (from SWIM Plan)

- Stormwater Planning and Retrofits
- Septic-to-Sewer Projects
- Wastewater Treatment Improvements
- Agriculture and Silviculture BMPs
- Riparian Buffer Zones
- Sedimentation Abatement
- Hydrologic and Wetland Restoration
- Innovative Technology Projects (e.g., Farmer-to-Farmer Project)
- Comprehensive Monitoring Program
- Interstate Coordination



Ochlockonee River and Bay Watershed

Septic Tank Locations

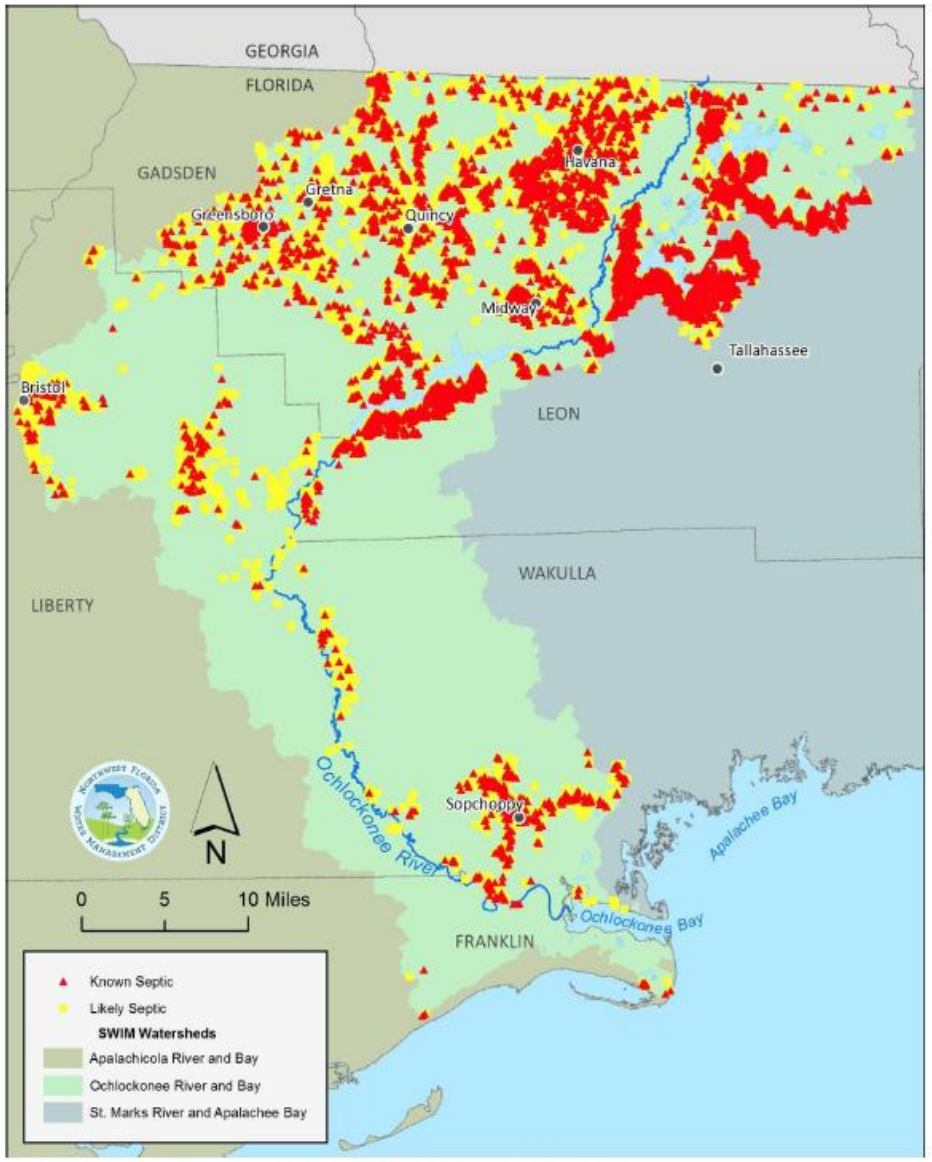


Figure 3-3 Septic Tank Locations in the Ochlockonee River and Bay Watershed

Sub-basin Work Plans

Once the seven priority sub-basins are identified, work plans will be developed to include:

- Sub-basin descriptions
- Water resource issues and strategies
- Project types, potential partners and collaborations
- Project implementation plans and estimated funding needs

Agricultural BMPs at Stoutamire Farms

OysterCorps Shoreline Stabilization, St. George Island

Grant Program Implementation

- If funding is received, the District will implement a grant program and solicit project proposals.
- Eligible project types are anticipated to include:
  - **Water quality** (restoration planning, stormwater, sediment abatement, septic to sewer, wastewater improvements)
  - **Aquatic habitat** (estuary program support, habitat restoration, living shorelines)
  - **Water supply** (reuse, source water protection, water conservation, water supply development including transmission and storage)
- Submitted projects will be evaluated and presented to the Governing Board for approval.
- Sub-basin work plans will be updated annually to reflect progress achieved (e.g., acres of habitat restored, lbs. of nitrogen removed, etc.).

May Nursery Algae Harvester Site

Sopchoppy River

Next Steps

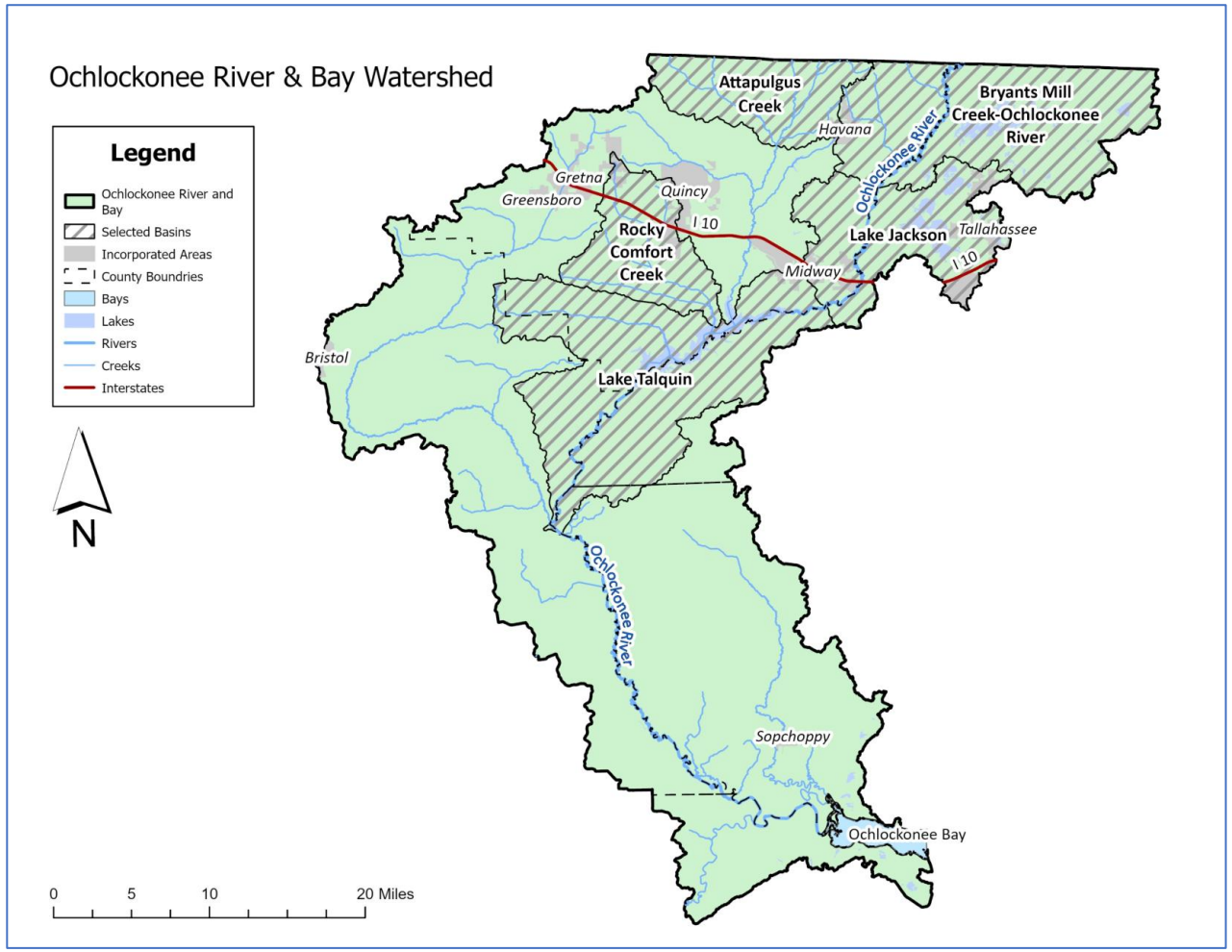
- **October:** Outreach to share information and solicit feedback on the Partnership Program elements including:
  - Sub-basin prioritization
  - Sub-basin resource issues and strategies
  - Planned and potential projects
  - Sub-basin work plans
- **November – January:** Develop work plans for prioritized sub-basins
- **Public Comment Period:** October 1 – October 24
  Send to: Donnie.Hicks@nwfwater.com or Darryl.Boudreau@nwfwater.com

Wakulla River

Wakulla Beach

Ochlockonee River and Bay Watershed

15-30 Minutes for Basin Prioritization Activity and Discussion



Public Comment and Results

Public Comment Period: Through October 24

Send to: Donnie.Hicks@nwfwater.com or Darryl.Boudreau@nwfwater.com

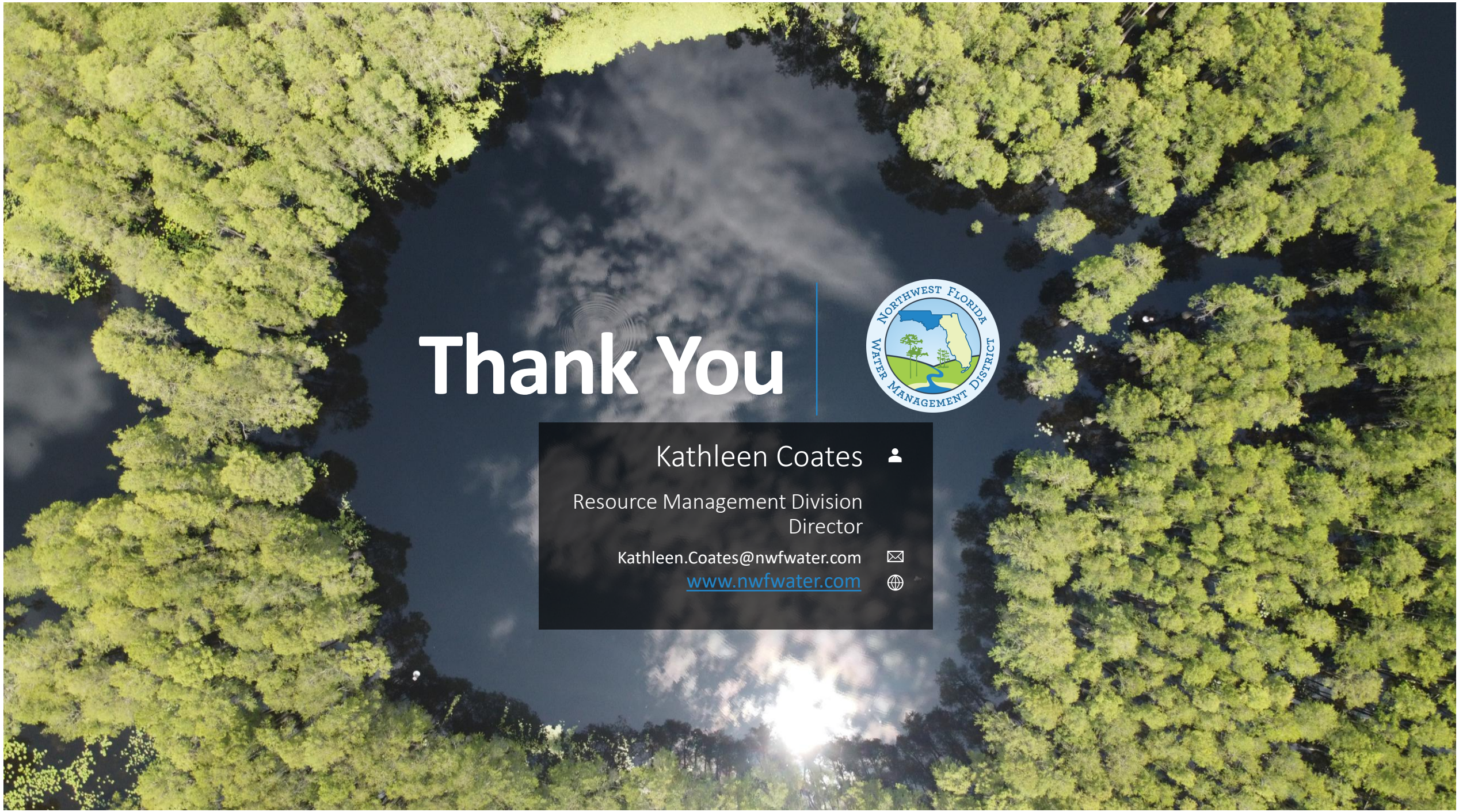
Northwest Florida Watershed Partnership

Survey:

Website:

Port St. Joe

John B. Gore Park


Thank You
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NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT