

Northwest Florida Watersheds Partnership Program

“Celebrating 50 Years of Preserving Water
Resources in Northwest Florida”



Agenda Overview



- Introductions and Goals
- Watershed Partnership Video
- Overview of the Northwest Florida Watersheds Partnership Program
 - aka the Partnership
- Draft List of Basins
- Dot Map Exercise
- Survey
- Open Discussion

An aerial photograph showing a river cleanup project. Several workers in dark clothing are wading in the shallow, muddy water, using tools to remove debris. Two pickup trucks, one white and one dark, are parked on a sandy bank in the upper left. A paved walkway and some trees are visible on the right side of the image. The water is murky brown, and there are large piles of removed debris in the foreground.

**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.



St. Marks River and Apalachee Bay SWIM Program Recommended Projects



- Stormwater Planning and Retrofit
- Septic Tank Abatement
- Advanced Onsite Treatment Systems
- Woodville Karst Springs Water Quality Protection and Enhancement
- Agriculture and Silviculture BMPs
- Riparian Buffer Zones
- Aquatic, Hydrologic and Wetland Restoration
- Strategic Land Conservation
- Watershed Stewardship Initiative
- Sub-Basin Restoration Plans
- Wastewater Treatment and Management Improvements
- Interstate Coordination
- Analytical Program Support
- Comprehensive Monitoring Program



Wakulla Spring

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



St. Marks River



Sally Ward Spring

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.



Lake Munson



Lake Lafayette

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



St. Marks Lighthouse



Horn Spring

Sub-basin Prioritization



- The goal is to identify seven priority sub-basins, one in each of the seven major SWIM watersheds.
- District has completed initial screening.
- Sub-basin prioritization criteria focus on:
 - Water Quality
 - Water Supply
 - Natural System Protection
- 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 area as an indicator of restoration priorities.



Dickerson Bay



Wakulla Beach

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



Lake Ella



Lake Miccosukee

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.).



Lake Bradford



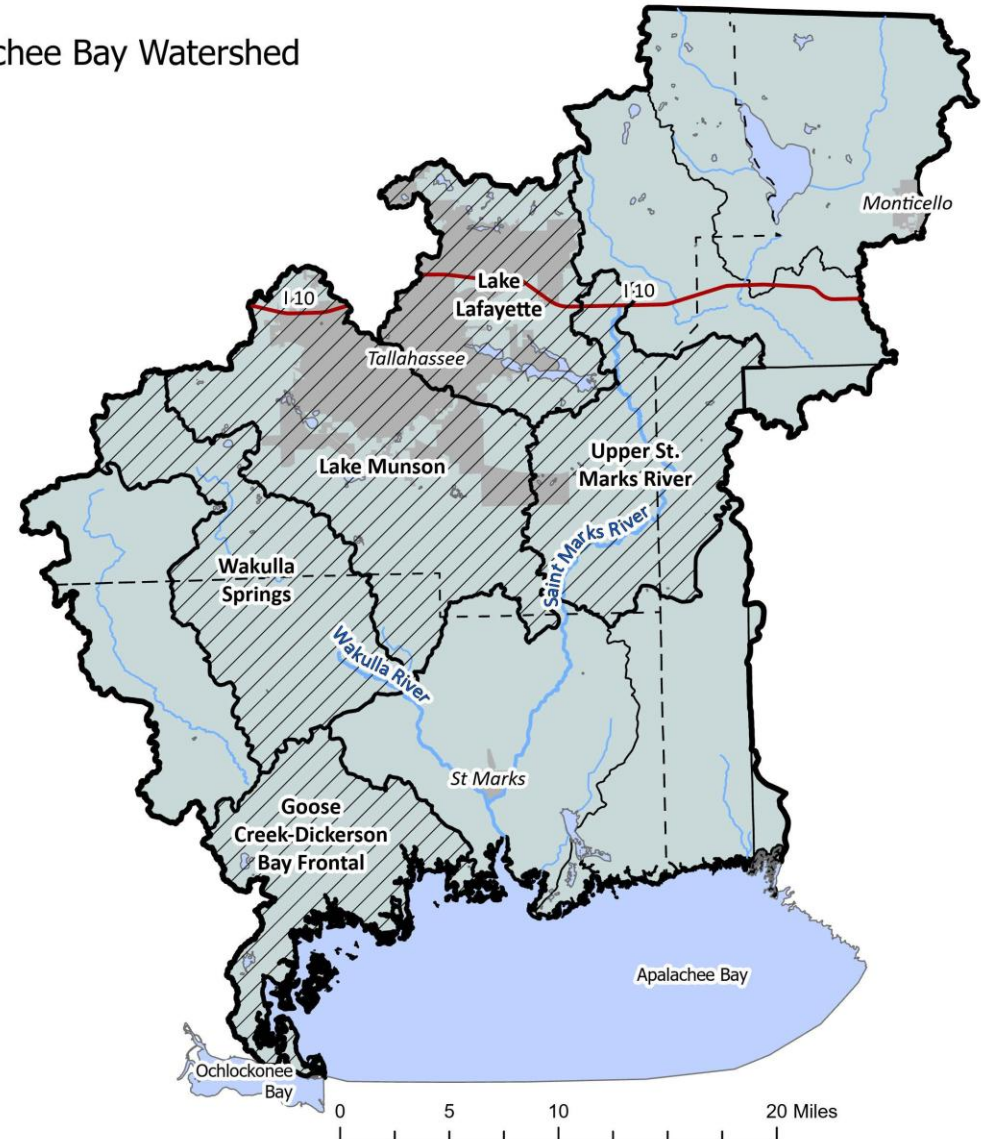
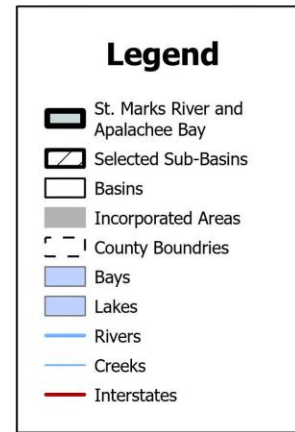
Lost Creek

St. Marks River and Apalachee Bay Watershed



Candidate Priority Basins

St. Marks River & Apalachee Bay Watershed



Lake Lafayette



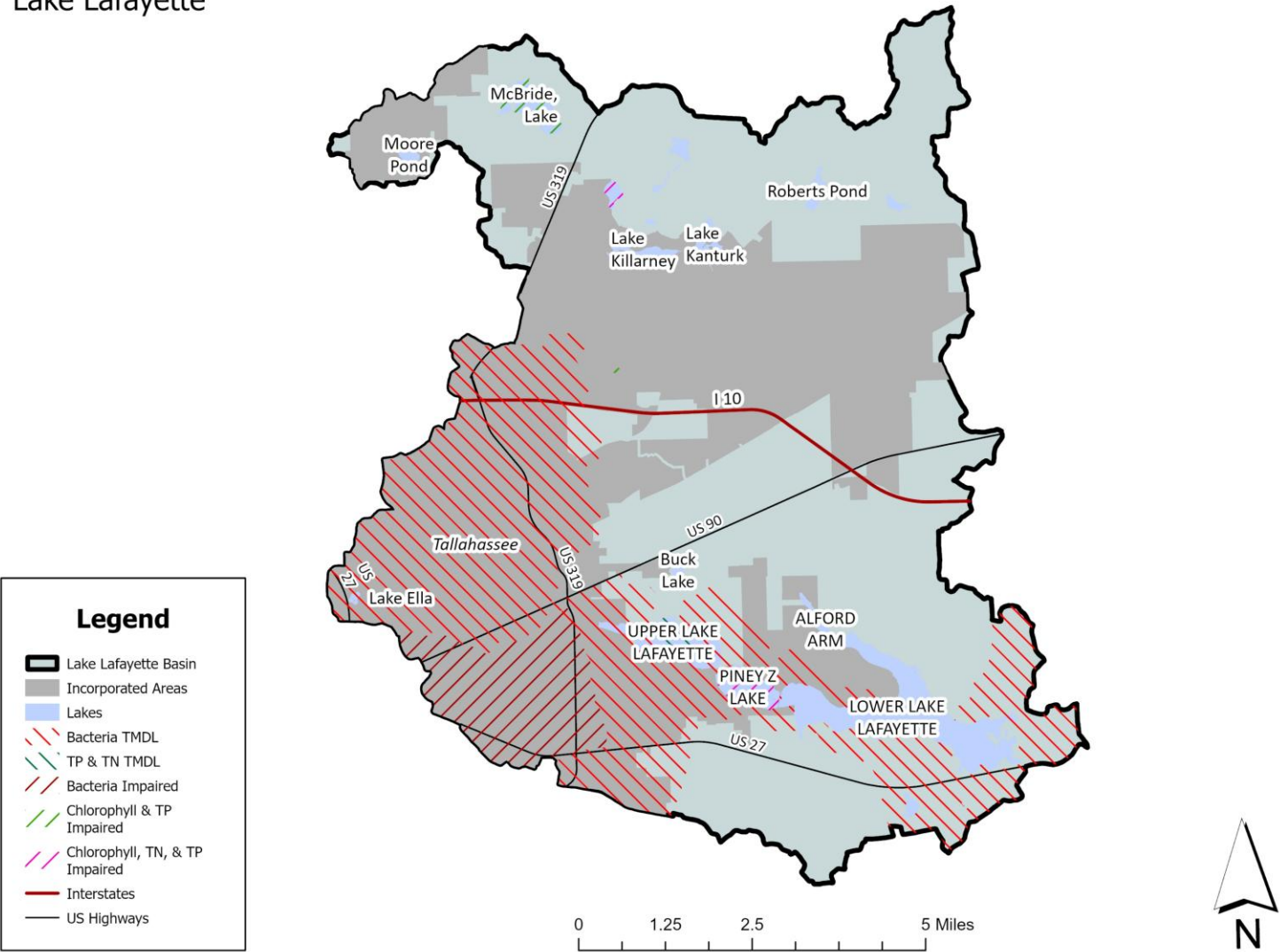
Description: This basin drains into Lake Lafayette and includes the northeastern portion of the City of Tallahassee.

Water Quality: Includes impaired waters for bacteria, TP, TN, and Chlorophyll. This has a high middle amount of critical assets susceptible to flooding. Additionally, the basin is among the top 25% for amount of floodplain contained.

Water Supply: The basin is among the top 20% for historical (2010 –2020) and projected (2024 - 2045) population increases.

Natural Areas: Basin ranks in the top 30% for decreases in aquatic habitat area from 2010 to 2022.

Lake Lafayette



Upper St. Marks



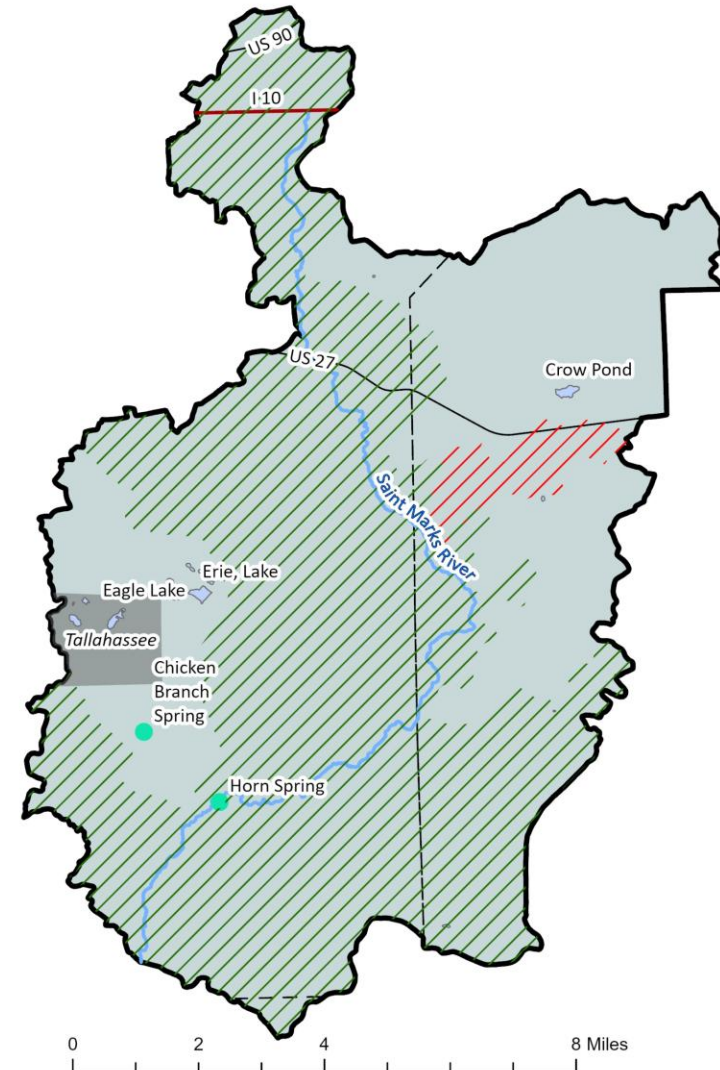
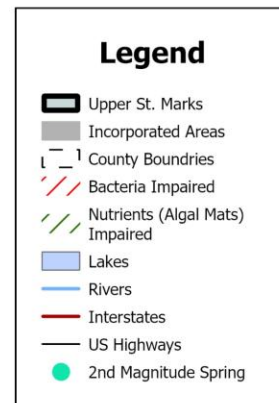
Description: This basin includes the headwaters of the St. Marks River down to near the Leon County/Wakulla County border.

Water Quality: Includes impaired waters for bacteria and nutrients (algal mats). Basin is under risk of storm surge and has a moderate amount of critical assets that are susceptible to flooding. Additionally, the basin is in the low middle range for amount of floodplain contained.

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

Natural Areas: The basin ranks in the top 20% for decreases in aquatic habitat from 2010 to 2022.

Upper St. Marks



Lake Munson



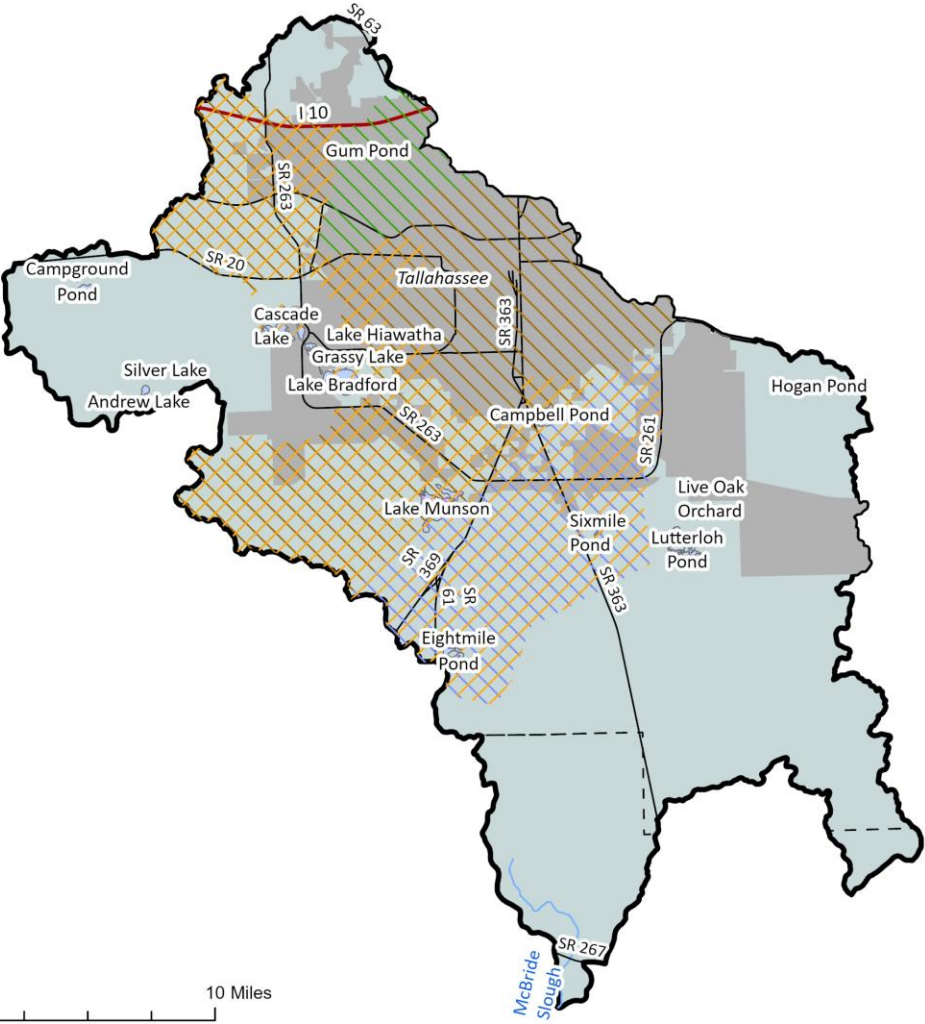
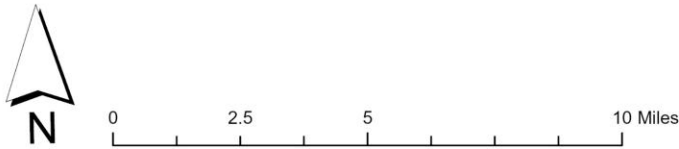
Description: This basin includes much of the southwestern portion of the City of Tallahassee.

Water Quality: Has known impaired waters for TN, TP, biological oxygen demand (BOD), un-ionized ammonia (NH3N), pathogens, and metals. Basin has a high number of critical assets susceptible to flooding. Additionally, the basin is among the high middle percentages for amount of floodplain contained.

Water Supply: The basin is in the top 10% for historical (2010 –2020) and projected (2024 - 2045) population increases.

Natural Areas: Basin ranks in the middle tier for decreases in aquatic habitat from 2010 to 2022 and has restoration plans in place.

Lake Munson



Wakulla Springs



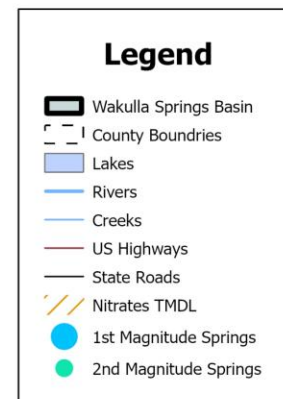
Description: This basin, encompasses parts of the western part of the watershed including Wakulla Spring and Fisher Creek.

Water Quality: Includes waterbodies impaired for nitrates. Much of the basin is at risk of storm surge and has a low amount of critical assets susceptible to flooding. Additionally, the basin is in the middle range for amount of floodplain contained.

Water Supply: The basin is within the top 20% for historical (2010 –2020) and projected (2024 -2045) population increases.

Natural Areas: This basin ranks in the low middle percentages for decreases in aquatic habitat from 2010 to 2022 and has restoration plans in place.

Wakulla Springs



Goose Creek-Dickerson Frontal



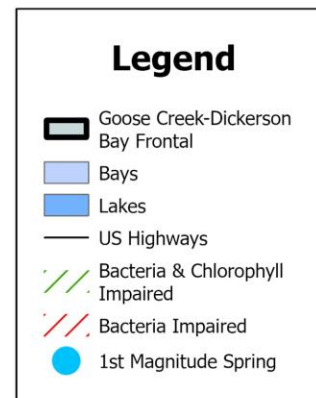
Description: This basing includes much of the lower Crawfordville area, in addition to Spring Creek, Panacea, and Wakulla Beach.

Water Quality: Includes waterbodies impaired for bacteria and chlorophyll. This basin is vulnerable to storm surge and has a high number of critical assets susceptible to flooding. The basin is among the top middle range of basins, based on area with a 1 percent annual chance of flooding.

Water Supply: The basin is within the top 10% for historical (2010 –2020) and projected (2024 - 2045) population increases.

Natural Areas: This basin ranks in the top 10% for decreases in aquatic habitats from 2010 to 2022 and has restoration plans in place.

Goose Creek-Dickerson Frontal



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
- **Public Comment Period:** ends October 24
 - Send to: Donnie.Hicks@nwfwater.com or Darryl.Boudreau@nwfwater.com
- **November – January:** Develop work plans for prioritized sub-basins



Wakulla River



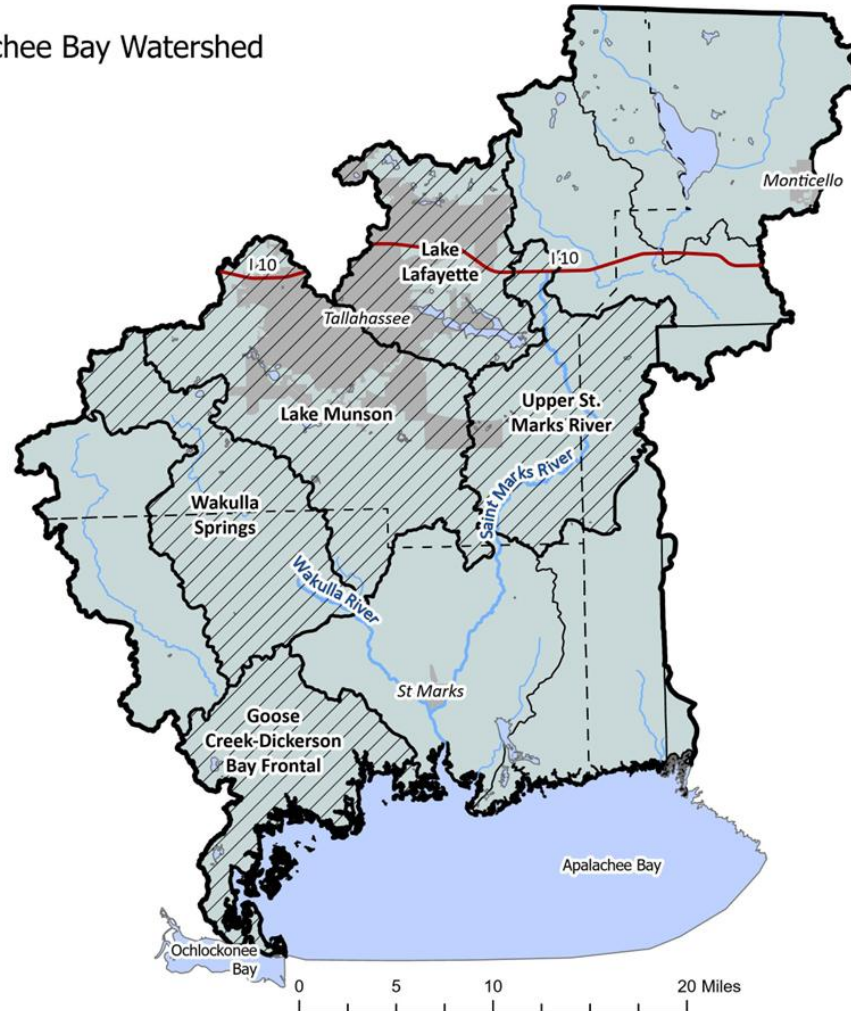
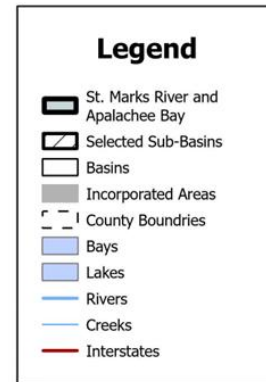
Wakulla Beach

St. Marks River and Apalachee Bay Watershed



15-30 Minutes for Basin Prioritization Activity and Discussion

St. Marks River & Apalachee Bay Watershed



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:



Cascades Park



Wakulla River

Thank You



Paul Thurman 

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Evaluation

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www.nwfwater.com 