

Northwest Florida Water Management District

Consolidated Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Publication Number: AR-26



Cypress Spring

Northwest Florida Water Management District

Consolidated Annual Report

March 1, 2026



NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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Executive Summary

This Consolidated Annual Report fulfills the requirement of section 373.036(7), Florida Statutes (F.S.), that the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD, or District) annually prepare and submit a report on the management of water resources to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR). Chairs of legislative committees with substantive or fiscal jurisdiction over water management districts and the governing boards of counties having jurisdiction or deriving funds for operations in the District also receive copies. The report is available to the public online at <https://nfwfwater.com/data-publications/reports-plans/consolidated-annual-reports/>.

The March 1, 2026, NFWFMD Consolidated Annual Report includes all elements required by section 373.036(7)(b), F.S., as well as one optional chapter on the District's Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program. Contents of the report are:

1. Strategic Water Management Plan Annual Work Plan Report
2. Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels (MFL) Annual Priority List and Schedule
3. Annual Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan
4. Alternative Water Supplies Annual Report
5. FY 2025-2026 Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program
6. Florida Forever Work Plan Annual Report
7. Mitigation Donation Annual Report
8. Water Projects in the Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program
9. Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Program Annual Report

The chapters that follow provide the status and record of District program accomplishments for the previous fiscal year (FY 2024-25) that contribute to the continued implementation and achievement of the District's mission and responsibilities.

Fiscal year 2024-25 accomplishments prioritized water quality projects with continued implementation of restoration and protection projects for Wakulla and Jackson Blue springs and springs associated with the Chipola River, Econfina Creek, and Holmes Creek. Additional District-funded projects provided water quality and aquatic habitat protection and restoration in Apalachicola Bay, St. George Sound, St. Joseph Bay, St. Andrew Bay, and Choctawhatchee Bay. The District also prioritized support for water supply and water resource development projects including reuse projects in Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties. The District continued hydrologic and water quality monitoring and minimum flow development for Jackson Blue Spring and adopted a minimum flow for the Gainer Spring Group. The District also continued floodplain risk mapping assistance for northwest Florida communities, continued management of District lands and recreation sites, and continued progress toward recovery from hurricane-related damages.

*The **mission** of the Northwest Florida Water Management District is to implement the provisions of Chapter 373, Water Resources, Florida Statutes (F.S.), in a manner that best ensures the continued welfare of the residents and water resources of northwest Florida.*

*The District works with state and federal agencies and local governments to achieve its mission through four interrelated **areas of responsibility**: water supply, water quality, flood protection, and natural system protection.*

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Chapter 1

Strategic Water Management Plan

Annual Work Plan Report



Strategic Water Management Plan (SWMP) Annual Work Plan Report

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Chapter 1. Strategic Water Management Plan (SWMP) Annual Work Plan Report

Overview

The mission of the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD or District) is to implement the provisions of Chapter 373, Water Resources, Florida Statutes (F.S.), in a manner that best ensures the continued welfare of the residents and water resources of northwest Florida. The District works to achieve its mission through four interrelated areas of responsibility: water supply, water quality, flood protection and floodplain management, and natural system protection. Water management plans developed pursuant to section 373.036(2), F.S., guide implementation of the District's mission and responsibilities.

The District's Governing Board annually approves a [Strategic Water Management Plan](#) (SWMP) for a five-year planning horizon. This element of the Consolidated Annual Report is the annual work plan report on the implementation of the SWMP for the previous fiscal year (section 373.036(2)(e)4). The FY 2025-26 SWMP was approved September 10, 2025. Listed below are the SWMP strategic priorities consistent with the priorities supported by the District's adopted FY 2025-26 budget. Addressed in this annual work plan report for each strategic priority are, at a minimum, success indicators, deliverables, and milestones.

Strategic Priorities for Fiscal Years 2025-2030

Watershed Protection and Restoration

- **Water Quality Protection and Improvement:** Work with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), local and regional cooperators, and other state and federal agencies and stakeholders to identify, secure funding for, and implement regionally significant water quality improvement projects.
- **Flood Protection and Regional Resilience Enhancement:** Enhance flood protection and support regional resilience efforts, including through land acquisition; the Risk MAP program; developing resources, data, and projects to respond to sea level rise and compound flooding; and Environmental Resource Permitting.
- **Regulatory Services:** Continue to implement Environmental Resource Permitting to provide for flood protection, stormwater management, water quality protection, and protection of wetland resources and functions.

Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels (MFLs)

- **Priority MFLs:** Continue data collection and modeling in support of technical assessments for two Outstanding Florida Springs, Jackson Blue Spring and the Gainer Spring Group; three second magnitude springs, the Sylvan Spring Group, the Williford Spring Group, and Morrison Spring; the Floridan aquifer in coastal Bay County; and the Shoal River.

Water Supply

- **Water Supply Development:** Support the development of alternative water supplies and assist underserved communities in implementing traditional water supply development projects. Support water conservation through partnerships with utilities, education and outreach, and

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- **Water Supply Planning:** Implement the 2024 updated Region II Regional Water Supply Plan. Develop an updated Districtwide water supply assessment by 2028 based on current water demand projections and a comprehensive assessment of water sources.
- **Water Resource Development:** Develop updated alternative water supply and regional water resource management strategies to proactively ensure the sustainability and resilience of northwest Florida communities and natural systems.
- **Regulatory Services:** Continue to regulate ground and surface waters to protect water resources, existing permitted users, and public health and welfare.

Summary of Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Accomplishments

Fiscal year 2024-25 accomplishments include implementation of spring restoration and protection, stormwater retrofit, and water supply development projects; monitoring of springs water quality and flows; continued development of MFL technical assessments; floodplain risk mapping; and continued efforts to recover from damages caused by Hurricane Michael.

1.1 Watershed Protection and Restoration

Strategic Priority and Success Indicators

The goal of the watershed restoration and protection strategic priority is to protect and restore watershed resources and functions, with emphasis on water quality; wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitats; and compatible public access. Success indicators are:

- (1) Project accomplishment (percent complete);
- (2) Pollutant load reduction (pounds per year);
- (3) Trends in nitrate concentrations;
- (4) Total area and floodplain area protected through land acquisition (acres);
- (5) Area restored (acres);
- (6) Percent of the District with updated DFIRMs meeting FEMA standards and criteria;
- (7) Balance of released mitigation credits;

Water Quality Protection and Improvement

Current Activities and Accomplishments

Recently completed and current activities focus on protecting and, where necessary, restoring water quality as essential for ensuring the health and productivity of northwest Florida's waterbodies and watersheds. Efforts focused on water quality are integrated with broad-based efforts to protect and restore watershed resources, including floodplains, wetlands, and aquatic and riparian habitats. The District supports and implements cooperative stormwater retrofit, septic-to-sewer, agricultural best management practices, and other water quality improvement projects, as well as spring and streambank restoration, wetland mitigation, environmental resource permitting, land management, and hydrologic and water quality monitoring. Specific activities include:

- Helping producers implement agricultural best management practices (BMPs) for water conservation and water quality improvement within the Jackson Blue Spring and Chipola River Springs basins;
- Assisting Jackson and Wakulla counties and municipalities with septic-to-sewer retrofits within the contribution areas of Jackson Blue and Wakulla springs;
- Planning and design for habitat restoration and public access improvements and spring bank restoration at Cypress Spring on Holmes Creek;
- Acquiring land to protect Wakulla Spring, Jackson Blue Spring, Cypress Spring, and the Gainer Spring Group and nearby springs on Econfina Creek;
- Assisting the city of DeFuniak Springs with wastewater force main replacement project;
- Stormwater retrofit project for the city of Port St. Joe to improve water quality and flood protection;
- Continued assessment of St. Joseph Bay, East Bay, and the Intracoastal Waterway to evaluate freshwater flows and water quality and to develop management recommendations;
- Monitoring and resource assessments for major spring systems Districtwide; and
- Implementation of pilot distributed wastewater program.

Evaluation of Indicators

(1) Project accomplishment (percent completion on schedule)

The District had numerous ongoing projects in FY 2024-25 that contributed to water quality protection or improvement. Twenty projects within six major watersheds and nine counties were active during the fiscal year.

Table 1.1 lists projects by major watershed from west to east. Projects listed are current through December 2025. A map of the seven major watersheds within the District is in Section 1.5: Watershed Restoration and Protection. Those listed as “Continuing” under Percent Complete represent projects or programs with continuing implementation and no established end date.

Table 1.1 Water Quality Projects

Project	Description (Cooperators)	Total District Cost (or as noted)	Status	Percent Complete
Choctawhatchee River and Bay Watershed				
Cypress Spring Land Acquisition and Restoration	303.55-acre conservation easement, with shoreline restoration and site enhancement at Cypress Spring; Cypress Spring and Holmes Creek springs groundwater contribution areas (BlueTriton)	\$1,600,000	Permitting	59%
Live Oak Point Living Shoreline	Construct a 4,695 LF breakwater and accompanying salt marsh planting at Live Oak Point peninsula	\$518,914	Complete	100%
Choctawhatchee Basin Restoration Program	Shoreline restoration and education and outreach for Choctawhatchee Bay (Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance)	\$50,000 (annual cost)	In progress	Continuing
St. Andrew Bay Watershed				
Port St. Joe Stormwater Improvements	Construct stormwater retrofit and develop a stormwater master plan (city of Port St. Joe, DEP, TIG)	\$775,000	Design/Permitting	10%
St. Andrew Bay and Apalachicola River and Bay Watersheds				
St. Joseph Bay Assessment	Water flow and quality monitoring in the Gulf County Canal, Intracoastal Waterway, and Lake Wimico (USGS)	\$2,659,520	Data Collection	Continuing
Apalachicola River and Bay Watershed				
Mobile Irrigation Laboratory (MIL)	Technical assistance to producers, primarily within the Jackson Blue Spring contribution area to improve irrigation efficiency (FDACS; Jackson SWCD)	\$71,125 (annual cost)	All funds expended and projects complete for FY 2023-24	Continuing
Jackson Blue Spring and Chipola River Springs Agricultural BMP Cost Share Program	Financial assistance to producers in the Jackson Blue Spring and Chipola River Springs contribution areas to implement irrigation efficiency and water quality BMPs (Producers, FDACS, NRCS)	\$11,168,375	Years 1-6 complete, Years 7-9 in progress, and Year 10 in planning	Continuing

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Project	Description (Cooperators)	Total District Cost (or as noted)	Status	Percent Complete
Agricultural Livestock BMP Producer Cost Share Grant Program	Financial assistance to producers in the Jackson Blue Spring and Chipola River Springs contribution areas to implement stand-alone agricultural livestock retrofits and equipment to restore and protect springs.	\$500,000	In progress	Continuing
Sod-based Crop Rotation Project	Continuation of cost-share program to help agricultural producers improve water quality and reduce water use in and around Jackson Blue Spring (Producers, FDACS, NRCS)	\$1,146,500	In progress	Final Year in Closeout
Jackson County Septic to Sewer Retrofit – Indian Springs Phases I-II	Convert residential subdivision in Jackson Blue Spring area from septic to sewer to reduce nitrogen loading (Jackson County and city of Marianna)	\$17,277,224	Construction	42%
Jackson County Septic to Sewer Retrofit – Blue Spring Road	Convert county park and residential subdivision in Jackson Blue Spring area from septic to sewer (Jackson County and city of Marianna)	\$10,169,272	Construction	52%
Jackson County Septic to Sewer Retrofit – Tara Estates	Convert residential subdivision adjacent to Chipola River from septic to sewer to reduce nitrogen loading (Jackson County, city of Mariana)	\$2,622,770	Construction	60%
Distributed Wastewater Pilot Program	Implement a distributed wastewater program benefiting waterbodies not attaining water quality standards	\$2,000,000	Planning	5%
Ochlockonee River and Bay Watershed				
EPA Farmer to Farmer Grant - Algae Harvesting and Biomass Reuse Agricultural Demonstration Project	Employment of a dissolved air flotation system to demonstrate capture and reuse of nutrients from an agricultural operation (EPA, Producer, IFAS)	\$959,754	Complete	100%
St. Marks River and Apalachee Bay Watershed				
Septic Connection to Existing Sewer in the Wakulla BMAP	Convert residential subdivision in Wakulla Spring area from septic to sewer to reduce nitrogen loading (city of Tallahassee)	\$637,000	Construction	71%
Wakulla County Septic to Sewer Retrofit – Magnolia Gardens Phases I-III	Convert residential subdivision in Wakulla Spring area from septic to sewer to reduce nitrogen loading. Wakulla County (DEP, Wakulla County)	\$10,829,691	Complete	100%
Wakulla County Septic to Sewer Retrofit – Wakulla Gardens Phases I-IV	Convert residential subdivision in Wakulla Spring area from septic to sewer to reduce nitrogen loading (DEP, Wakulla County)	\$19,953,021	Construction	94%

(2) Area restored (Acres)

With breakwater construction completed in August, 2025, the Live Oak Point Living Shorelines project is restoring approximately 2.24 acres of littoral salt marsh habitat, enhancing a further 8.42 acres of existing salt marsh, and protecting over 4,000 FT of shoreline.

(3) Pollutant load reduction (Pounds per year)

As of September 2025, estimates of pollutant load reduction attributed to the Jackson Blue Spring Agricultural BMP Cost Share Program, septic-to-sewer projects, and stormwater retrofit projects are summarized in the table below.

Table 1.2 Pollutant Load Reduction

Project	Pollutant Load Reduction (lbs/yr TN)
Apalachicola River and Bay Watershed	
Jackson Blue Spring Agricultural BMP Cost Share Program	201,721
Sod-based Crop Rotation Project,	0
Jackson County Septic to Sewer Retrofit – Indian Springs Phases I-II	1609
Jackson County Septic to Sewer Retrofit – Blue Spring Road	0
Jackson County Septic to Sewer Retrofit – Tara Estates	38
Lighthouse Estates Septic to Sewer Retrofit	1,290
St. Marks River and Apalachee Bay Watershed	
Septic Connection to Existing Sewer in the Wakulla BMAP	468
Wakulla County Septic to Sewer Retrofit – Magnolia Gardens Phases I-III	4,0725
Wakulla County Septic to Sewer Retrofit – Wakulla Gardens Phases I-IV	6,965

*Yearly pollutant load reduction average 2014 – 2025

(4) and (5) Trends in nitrate concentrations and spring flows

Spring flow and nitrate concentration data are available for Gainer Spring Group, Jackson Blue Spring, the St. Marks River Rise, and Wakulla Spring.¹ Current information is summarized in Table 1.3. The table indicates apparent trends based on examination of changes in flows and concentrations over time. It should be noted trends are based on visual examination of data and may not be statistically significant. Trends in spring flows and nitrate/nitrite concentrations are presented in Figures 1.1 – 1.4. Additional and updated information on major springs in northwest Florida is available at www.nfwfwater.com/water-resources/springs/.

¹Values are measured and reported as nitrate + nitrite. Nitrite (NO₂) is converted into nitrate (NO₃) in the environment.

Table 1.3 Trends in Spring Flows and Nitrate/Nitrite Concentrations Indicator

Spring/Spring System	Average Flow ¹ (cfs)/Trend	Nitrate Concentration (mg/L) ²
Gainer Spring Group ³	170/Increasing, with recent decline	0.17/Stable, with recent volatility
Jackson Blue Spring ³	105/Variable ⁴	3.94/Increasing
St. Marks River Rise	418/Stable	0.03 – 0.31/Variable ⁵
Wakulla Spring	589/Increasing, with recent stabilization	0.38/Decreasing

¹ Periods of record (flow): Gainer Spring Group, 2002-2026; Jackson Blue Spring, 2002-2025; St. Marks River Rise, 1999-2024; Wakulla Spring, 2004-2025.

² Periods of record (water quality): Gainer Spring Group, 2002-2025; Jackson Blue Spring, 2002-2025; St. Marks Rise, 2001-2025; Wakulla Spring, 1997-2025. Value presented is the most recent five-year median.

³ Discharge measurements include only manual measurements.

⁴ Flow from Jackson Blue Spring is influenced by the operation of the dam used to maintain water levels in Merritts Mill Pond.

⁵ Water quality under the influence of surface water drainage.

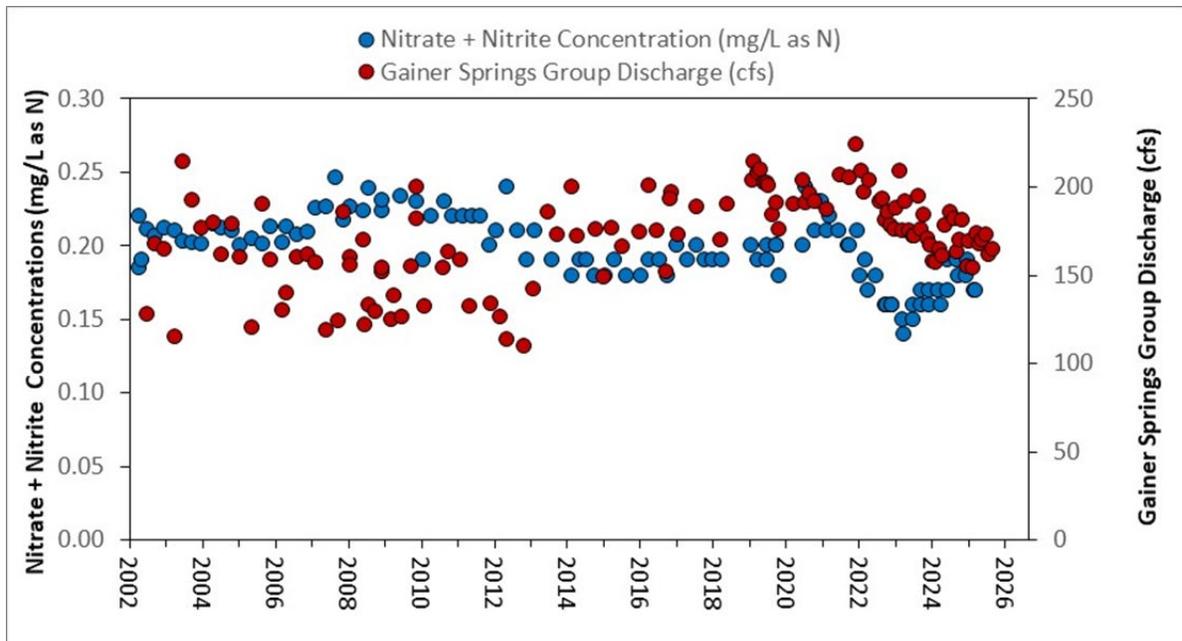


Figure 1.1 Nitrate and Nitrite Concentration and Discharge: Gainer Spring Group (2002-2026)

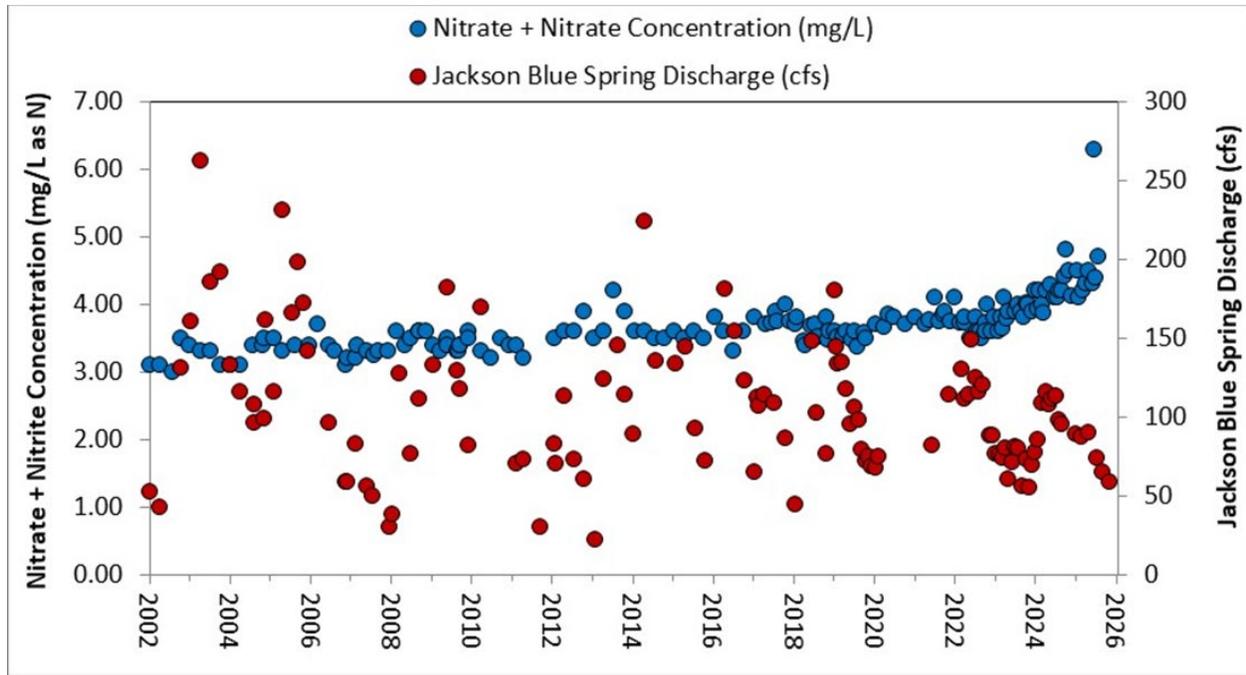


Figure 1.2 Nitrate and Nitrite Concentration and Discharge: Jackson Blue Spring (2002-2025)

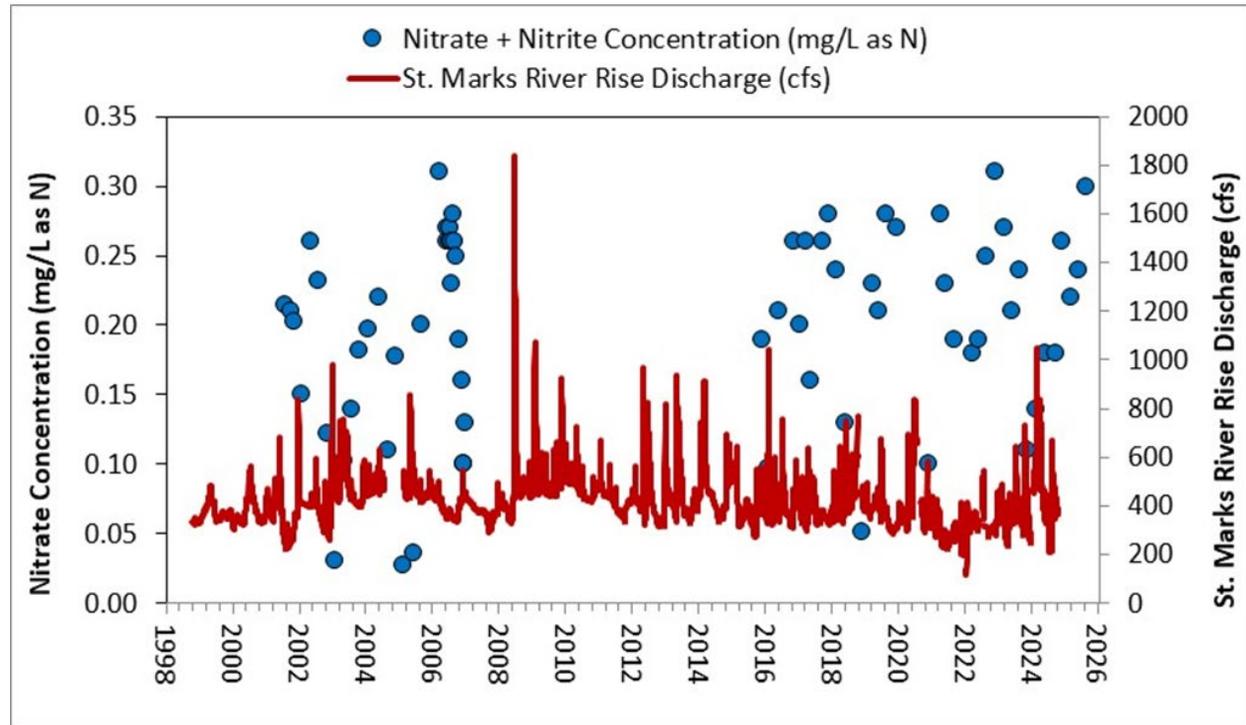


Figure 1.3 Nitrate and Nitrite Concentration and Discharge: St. Marks River Rise (1999-2025)

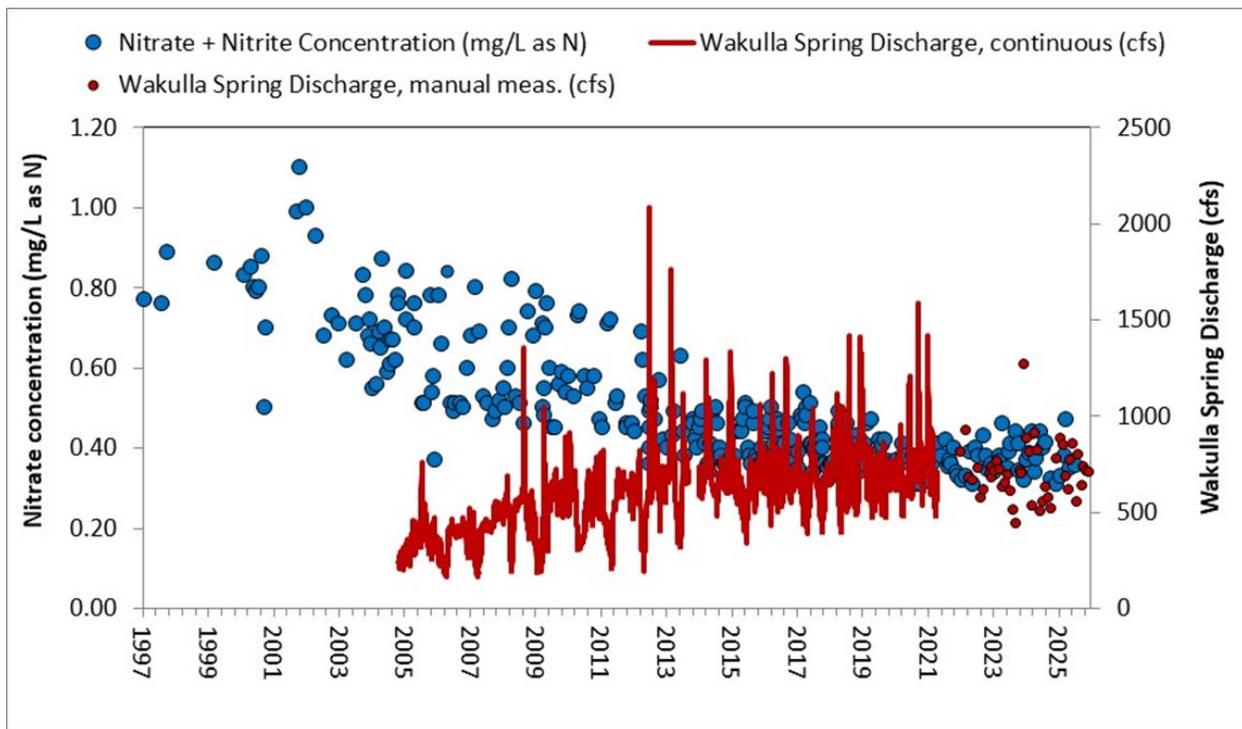


Figure 1.4 Nitrate and Nitrite Concentration and Discharge: Wakulla Spring (1997-2025)

(6) Established minimum flows for Outstanding Florida Springs and other priority springs

Section 373.802, F.S., defines Outstanding Florida Springs (OFS) as all historical first magnitude springs, including their associated spring runs, not including submarine springs and river rises. Section 373.042, F.S. requires the District to establish minimum flows for such springs by July 1, 2026. Within northwest Florida, OFS include Wakulla Spring, Jackson Blue Spring, and the Gainer Spring Group. The MFL for Wakulla Spring was adopted on May 18, 2021 and the Gainer Spring Group (via Middle Econfina Creek) was adopted on June 29, 2025. The minimum flows for Jackson Blue Spring is scheduled for adoption in 2026. Additional information may be found in Section 1.2 and tables 1.4 and 1.6.

Milestones and Deliverables

Table 1.4 shows the status of milestones and deliverables for water quality. Projects listed as “Continuing” are ongoing projects or programs with no established end date. The previously cited Advanced Septic Systems Pilot Project is ongoing and being completed by Leon County in cooperation with DEP.

Table 1.4 Water Quality Milestones and Deliverables

Milestone	Target Date	Status
(1) City of Tallahassee Septic Connections within Wakulla BMAP	2025	In progress
(2) Farmer to Farmer Algae Abatement Demonstration	2025	Complete
(3) Magnolia Gardens Septic to Sewer Project	2025	Complete
(4) Wakulla Gardens Septic to Sewer Project	2026	In progress
(5) Port St. Joe Stormwater Improvements	2026	In progress

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(6) St. Joseph Bay Assessment	Continuing	Continuing
(7) Stream Debris Assessment and Removal	2026	In progress
(8) Septic to Distributed Wastewater Treatment System Program	2029	In progress
(9) City of DeFuniak Springs Wastewater Force Main Replacement	2026	In progress
(10) Blue Spring Road, Indian Springs, and Tara Estates Sewer Extensions	2028	In progress

Deliverable	Status
(1) Project completion reports	Project completion reports are developed for each project upon completion.

Flood Protection

Current Activities and Accomplishments

Long-term activities to maintain natural floodplain functions include land acquisition within most of the major riverine floodplains of northwest Florida and ongoing land management, as well as wetland mitigation for Florida Department of Transportation (DOT). Additionally, the District's environmental resource permitting (ERP) regulatory program seeks to manage surface waters and protect floodplain functions to avoid flood damage to property.

The effects of Hurricane Michael (2018), compounded by Hurricane Sally (2020), continue to affect and exacerbate flooding in portions of the District. In addition to causing immense damage to structures, communities, and forests, fallen trees and vegetative debris smothered numerous streams, rivers, and accompanying floodplains. This caused flooding to persist for months across much of the region, particularly impacting the Econfina Creek, Deer Point Lake, and Chipola River basins. In response, the District conducted and continues to pursue efforts to remove and address debris on District lands, along with other efforts at hurricane recovery. Additionally, the District developed a detailed hydrologic and hydraulic analysis of floodplain alterations affecting Econfina Creek and the Chipola River, with an evaluation of management alternatives. The analysis was provided to the Division of Emergency Management and Department of Environmental Protection to assist in hurricane recovery efforts and future emergency management planning.

From the winter of 2018-19 to 2022, persistent flooding affected residents across a substantial portion of northwest Florida, primarily in Bay, Gulf, and Washington counties. The District developed a technical report to provide an evaluation of the underlying causes and factors driving the flooding that has been experienced. The report is intended to increase understanding and assist in the development of both near-term responses and long-term planning and mitigation. The District has completed stream debris assessments and modeling for Bear Creek, Bayou George Creek, Lower Econfina Creek, Upper Econfina Creek, Wetappo Creek, Lower Chipola River, and Cedar Creek. Now that the assessments and modeling are finished, we are contracting with waterway debris removal contactors to begin the clean-up process. Debris removal on Bayou George and Bear Creek is currently underway and is expected to be completed by Spring 2026. The next priority is Econfina Creek, with work scheduled to begin in early 2026.

The District continues to work in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on the Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning (Risk MAP) program. This effort includes collaboration with state and local agencies to deliver detailed data to foster informed risk management decisions and actions that mitigate flood risk through a consistent approach to assessing potential vulnerability and

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losses. Risk MAP projects for the Lower Ochlockonee River, Apalachee Bay-St. Marks River, Pea River, Lower Choctawhatchee River, Escambia River, Blackwater River, St. Andrew Bay-St. Joseph Bay, Choctawhatchee Bay and Yellow River watersheds are ongoing.

The District continues to provide detailed Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR)-based elevation and surface feature data for properties across northwest Florida. The data provided is more detailed than most previous topographic maps. This provides a valuable tool for many of the District's water resource management and flood protection functions. Residents and technical experts can also use the data to plan for activities including landscaping, resource protection, flood risk evaluation, and construction. Additionally, the District makes detailed floodplain information available to the public through <http://portal.nfwmdfloodmaps.com>.

Evaluation of Indicators

(1) Area of floodplain protected through land acquisition (acres)

Areas of floodplain protected through fee or less-than-fee acquisition are currently 231,218 acres, representing 98% of total District managed area.

(2) Percent of the District with updated DFIRMs meeting FEMA standards and criteria

One hundred percent of the District had updated digital flood insurance rate maps (DFIRMs) meeting FEMA standards and criteria in 2014. Preliminary DFIRMs for the Lower Ochlockonee River, Pea River and Lower Choctawhatchee River watersheds will be completed by the end of April 2026. DFIRMs went effective for the following: Apalachicola River (Franklin Portion: October 10, 2024) and Bay County (October 24, 2024). Final DFIRMs for Escambia County became effective on August 19, 2025. Additionally, DFIRMs for Apalachicola River & Bay, New River, and the Chipola River became effective 11/14/2025.

Milestones and Deliverables

Table 1.5 Flood Protection Milestones and Deliverables

Milestone	Target Date	Status
(1) Preliminary DFIRMs for the Lower Ochlockonee River, Pea River, and Lower Choctawhatchee River watersheds	2026	On schedule
(2) DFIRM completion incorporating coastal remapping studies for Apalachicola River & Bay, New River and the Chipola River watersheds	2026	On schedule

Deliverable	Status
(1) Risk MAP regulatory and non-regulatory products according to discovery report for each HUC 8 watershed within the District	On schedule
(2) Florida Forever Work Plan Annual Report	Annual

Regional Resilience Enhancement

District staff continue to participate in multi-agency project planning and development for Gulf of Mexico restoration and protection. These include activities associated with the federal Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act (RESTORE Act), Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc., Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF), and Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA). Additionally, the District has continued to fund restoration and associated outreach activities conducted by the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance.

In its ongoing upland restoration through reforestation programs, the District completed hand planting of 200 acres of longleaf pine habitat and 36 acres of native grass restoration in January 2025. Approximately 145,000 longleaf pine tubelings were planted within the Perdido River water management area (WMA). Additionally, 110,000 wiregrass plugs were planted within the Perdido River WMA.

In 2025, prescribed fire, a key restoration and management tool, was implemented on approximately 991 acres at the Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank (SHLMB). The Ward Creek West mitigation site was also burned in 2025. Spot herbicide treatment of cogon grass, an exotic invasive species, was conducted at the SHLMB. Implementation of a living shoreline (approximately 4,130 feet in length) at the Live Oak Point mitigation site was completed in August, 2025. These restoration activities improve wetland functions and offset wetland losses authorized for projects conducted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

Evaluation of Indicators

(1) Area protected through land acquisition (acres)

The District has acquired, by fee or less-than-fee, 226,662 acres through FY 2024-25.

(2) Area restored (acres)

The status of cooperative watershed project implementation and restoration is found in Table 1.12. The table lists projects by major watershed identified by the District's Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program, illustrated in Figure 1.5. Many of the projects are also shared with the water quality strategic priority, as shown previously in Table 1.1.

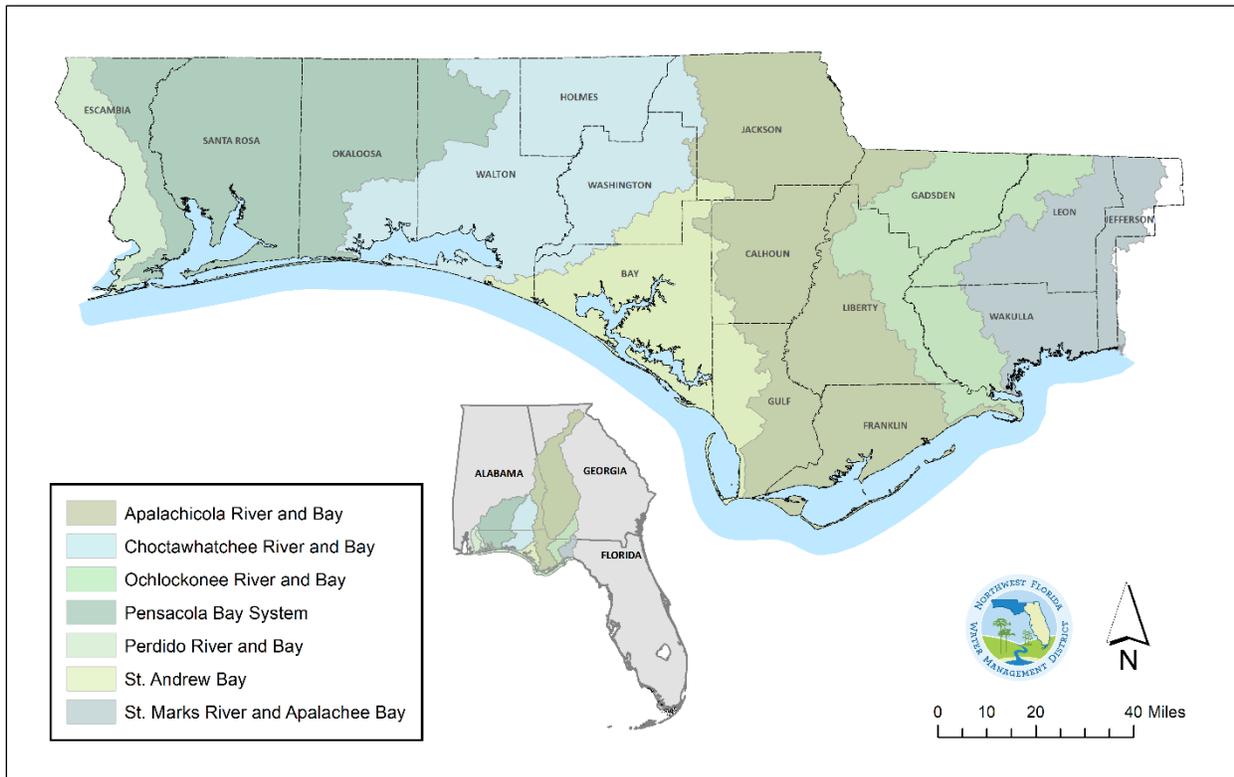


Figure 1.5 Northwest Florida Watersheds

Table 1.6 Watershed Protection and Restoration Cooperative Projects

Project	Description/Cooperators	Total District Cost (or as noted)	Restoration or Treatment Area (Acres)	Status	Percent Complete
Choctawhatchee River and Bay Watershed					
Choctawhatchee Basin Restoration Program	Shoreline restoration and education and outreach around Choctawhatchee Bay; Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance	\$50,000	2.11	All funds expended and project complete for FY 2024-25	100%
Live Oak Point Living Shoreline	Construct 4,000+ FT of breakwater with salt marsh planting at Live Oak Point peninsula; 2.24 acres of restoration with 8.42 acres enhancement	\$461,071	10.86	Complete	100%
Apalachicola River and Bay Watershed					
Jackson Blue Spring and Chipola River Springs Agricultural BMP Cost Share Program	Financial assistance to producers in the Jackson Blue Spring and Chipola River Springs contribution areas to implement irrigation efficiency and water quality BMPs. Producers, FDACS, NRCS	\$11,168,375	NA	Years 1-6 complete, Years 7-9 in progress, and Year 10 in planning	Continuing
Agricultural Livestock BMP Producer Cost Share Grant Program	Financial assistance to producers in the Jackson Blue Spring and Chipola River Springs contribution areas to implement stand-alone agricultural livestock retrofits and equipment to restore and protect springs.	\$500,000	NA	In Progress	NA – Continuing program
Sod-based Crop Rotation Program	Cost-share program designed to help agricultural producers improve water quality and reduce water use demands in and around Jackson Blue Spring	\$1,146,500	NA	In Progress	Final Year in Closeout

(3) Balance of released mitigation credits

Wetland mitigation “credit” is a measure of the environmental functional improvement (lift) generated from implementation of wetland mitigation projects. Credits are produced by restoration, enhancement, preservation, or creation activities, and are normally calculated by the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM), as defined in section 373.4137(18), F.S, although other assessment methods, including the Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedure, have also been used. Since the establishment of the District’s wetland mitigation program in 1997 to comply with section 373.4137, F.S. (providing mitigation for FDOT projects), and through the end of FY 2024-25, 855.80 credits have been developed and released by permitting authorities. A total of 551.94 credits have been used (“debited”) to offset wetland impacts, leaving a Regional Mitigation Plan balance of 303.86 credits at the end of the fiscal year. Over time, the number of mitigation credits developed and used annually through this program has declined as private mitigation banks have come online for parts of northwest Florida allowing the FDOT to use a private

mitigation bank first when needed. Additional information may be found at: <https://www.nfwwater.com/Water-Resources/Regional-Wetland-Mitigation-Program>.

Milestones and Deliverables

Table 1.7 Regional Resilience Enhancement Milestones and Deliverables

Milestone	Target Date	Status
(1) Live Oak Point Living Shoreline	2025	Complete

Deliverable	Status
(1) Annual Regional Wetland Mitigation Plan and Mitigation Monitoring Reports	Annual monitoring for the regional wetland mitigation plan and FDOT mitigation projects was completed in the fall of 2025 with most projects meeting or exceeding success criteria. Remedial actions, if needed, will be planned for sites not meeting success criteria. Monitoring reports were completed in accordance with permit requirements and posted to https://www.nfwwater.com/Water-Resources/Regional-Wetland-Mitigation-Program for public review.
(2) Land Management Plan	Ongoing activities include prescribed burns, planting native pine tree species seedlings and native groundcover, erosion control, improving site access, and managing and maintaining public access sites and roads. Land management plans are posted to https://nfwwater.com/lands/land-management/ .
(3) Florida Forever Work Plan Annual Report	Completed annually
(4) Project completion reports	As projects are completed

1.2 Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels

Strategic Priority and Success Indicators

The goal of the Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels (MFLs) strategic priority is to develop and implement science-based MFLs that protect water resources and associated natural systems. Success indicators are:

- (1) MFL technical assessment accomplishment (percent complete per the approved schedule);
- (2) Waterbodies meeting their adopted MFLs (number and percentage);
- (3) Established minimum flows for Outstanding Florida Springs and other priority springs;
- (4) Trends in spring flows.

Current Activities and Accomplishments

Progress is continuing in the District's efforts to develop MFLs in northwest Florida. The NFWFMD FY 2025-26 MFL priority list includes one first magnitude spring (Jackson Blue Spring), one second magnitude spring (Morrison Spring), two coastal aquifer systems (Floridan Aquifer Coastal Region III, Bay County and Floridan Aquifer Coastal Planning Region II, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton counties), and one river system (Shoal River). Additional waterbodies will be scheduled in future years. The list represents an ambitious yet achievable MFL program, which is being implemented in an efficient and technically sound manner.

FY 2024-25 Accomplishments

During FY 2024-25, District staff worked concurrently on two MFL waterbodies: Jackson Blue Spring and multiple, combined springs located along Econfina Creek including the Gainer Spring Group, Sylvan Spring Group, and Williford Spring Group. The MFL evaluation and rule-making process for Econfina Creek, including the Gainer Spring Group, Sylvan Spring Group, and Williford Spring Group was completed on June 29, 2025.

Both surface water and groundwater models were constructed, calibrated, and utilized during FY2024-25 for the Jackson Blue Spring MFL. A draft MFL Technical Assessment was completed and the making process was initiated.

Data collection and monitoring efforts continued for established MFLs including St. Marks River Rise, Wakulla Spring, Sally Ward Spring, and the Middle Econfina Creek including Gainer, Sylvan, and Williford springs groups; as well as water bodies on the FY 2024-245MFL Priority List including Morrison Spring and the Floridan Aquifer in Coastal Region III, Bay County.

Activities Planned for FY 2025-26

During FY 2025-26, The MFL technical assessment report (including scientific peer review) and rule-making for Jackson Blue Spring is scheduled for completion. Scientific peer review of the technical assessment is ongoing and a public workshop on the draft rule language was held on January 14, 2026. Rule adoption is anticipated to occur as soon as May 2026, pending any rule revisions.

Data collection and monitoring efforts continued for established MFLs including St. Marks River Rise, Wakulla Spring, Sally Ward Spring, and the Middle Econfina Creek including Gainer, Sylvan, and Williford springs groups; as well as water bodies on the FY 2025-26 MFL Priority List including Morrison Spring and the Floridan Aquifer in Coastal Region III, Bay County.

Evaluation of Indicators

The status and percent complete of MFL technical assessments are described in Table 1.8, and the status of the District's adopted MFLs is addressed in Table 1.9.

(1) MFL technical assessment accomplishment

Table 1.8 MFL Technical Assessment Status

MFL Waterbody	Target Date for Rule Adoption	MFL Status	Percent Complete
St. Marks River Rise	2019	Minimum flow adopted as part of Chapter 40A-8, F.A.C., Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels	100%
Wakulla Spring	2021	Minimum flow adopted as part of Chapter 40A-8, F.A.C., Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels	100%
Sally Ward Spring	2021	Minimum flow adopted as part of Chapter 40A-8, F.A.C., Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels	100%
Floridan Aquifer, Coastal Region II	2021	MFL rule determined to not be needed at this time	100%
Gainer Spring Group	2025	Minimum flow adopted as part of Chapter 40A-8, F.A.C., Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels	100%
Williford Spring Group	2025	Minimum flow adopted as part of Chapter 40A-8, F.A.C., Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels t	100%
Sylvan Spring Group	2025	Minimum flow adopted as part of Chapter 40A-8, F.A.C., Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels	100%
Jackson Blue Spring	2026	Under development	98%
Floridan Aquifer, Coastal Bay Co.	2029	Scheduled for completion 2026-2027	25%
Floridan Aquifer, Coastal Region II	2032		
Shoal River	2033	Scheduled for completion in 2030-2031	0%
Morrison Spring	2034	Scheduled for completion in 2032-2033	0%

(2) Waterbodies meeting their adopted MFLs (number and percentage)

Table 1.9 Adopted MFL Status

MFL Waterbody	Date of Rule Adoption	MFL Status	Number and Percentage Meeting MFLs
St. Marks River Rise	June 12, 2019	Meeting	(1/3) 100%
Wakulla and Sally Ward Spring System	May 18, 2021	Meeting	(2/3) 100%
Middle Econfina Creek, Including the Gainer Spring Group, Sylvan Spring Group, and Williford Spring Group	June 29, 2025	Meeting	(3/3) 100%

Milestones and Deliverables

Deliverables and milestones for the MFL strategic priority include completed technical assessments according to the approved schedule. Target dates and status are shown in Table 1.10.

Table 1.10 MFL Milestones and Deliverables

Milestone	Target Dates	Status
Technical Assessment for Coastal Floridan Aquifer in Bay County	2027	In progress
Technical Assessments for Jackson Blue Spring	2025	In progress
Deliverable	Status	
Complete MFL technical assessments and rule adoption according to the approved 2024-25 MFL Priority List and Schedule	All technical assessments currently on schedule	
Spring discharge data	In progress	

The Department-approved MFL Priority List and schedule can be found in Chapter 2 of the Consolidated Annual Report and online at: <https://nfwfwater.com/water-resources/minimum-flows-minimum-water-levels/>.

1.3 Water Supply

Strategic Priority and Success Indicators

The goal of the water supply strategic priority is to plan and facilitate sustainable water supplies for future reasonable and beneficial uses, with emphasis on development of alternative water supply sources, including reclaimed water, water conservation, and integrated projects contributing to water quality and resiliency. Success indicators are:

- (1) Water supply made available (volume in million gallons per day [mgd] and trend);
- (2) Public water supply demands met (volume [mgd] and percentage);
- (3) Public supply per capita water use (gallons per capita per day [gpcd] and trend);
- (4) Project accomplishment (percent complete).

Current Activities and Accomplishments

The District continues supporting alternative water supply (AWS) development in priority areas of greatest need. Reuse of reclaimed water projects are ongoing in Bay, Escambia, Okaloosa, and Santa Rosa counties. More information on these projects is included in Table 1.9. The District also developed a grant program in accordance with DEP guidance to solicit AWS development project applications for statewide funding assistance.

Districtwide water use is estimated annually, reported in Annual Water Use Reports. Reported agricultural water use is provided to the FDACS Florida Statewide Agricultural Irrigation Demand (FSAID) project annually. Reported and estimated water use is provided to USGS every five years with the most recent collaboration with 2020 water use data.

The 2023 Water Supply Assessment has been completed and was approved in December 2023. The Governing Board recommended the continuation of the Region II Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) for Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton counties. The 2024 Region II RWSP has been completed and was approved by Governing Board in January 2025.

The District continues water conservation analysis and interdistrict water conservation coordination. Also, data are compiled annually on wastewater systems that provide reclaimed water as a potential alternative water supply source and a draft Reuse Summary Report was completed.

Water resource modeling, hydrogeologic evaluations, monitor well construction, aquifer performance testing, groundwater and transient flow models, and MFL technical assessments are all programmatic components of water resource development and provide technical tools for WSA resource assessments. See section 1.4 for more information and for current MFL activities and accomplishments.

The District's ongoing water use and well permitting programs are important supporting efforts to facilitate adequate and sustainable water supplies. Conditions of water use permit compliance include water conservation requirements, and reuse evaluations are required in specific areas of resource concern. Technical assistance is available for applicants interested in aquifer storage and recovery. Also, well permitting includes abandoned well plugging to protect water sources.

Evaluation of Indicators

(1) Water supply made available

Sufficient water for existing and future reasonable-beneficial uses can come from traditional and non-traditional (alternative) water sources and may be made available for public supply or for other water use categories. Methods of quantification vary according to reporting requirements and are refined as information becomes available.

Public water supply demands met are based on permitted allocations that will not cause harm to water resources and are consistent with the public interest pursuant to Chapter 40A-2, F.A.C., and section 373.223, F.S. Current permitted allocations are compared to the most recent WSA demand projections over a 20-year planning horizon (Table 1.8). Chapter 4 of the Consolidated Annual Report outlines the water development associated with projects funded in whole or in part with the Water Protection and Sustainability Program (WPSP) Trust Fund. The anticipated water from completed WPSP projects is a combination of facility capacities, engineering estimates, permitted allocations, and water resource technical assessments. The District’s water supply development (WSD) grant program has supported 70 projects across northwest Florida that include potable water distribution system improvements, replacing aging infrastructure, evaluating and developing AWS projects, and addressing local drinking water quality issues. As of December 2025, 83 projects have been completed. The WPSP Trust Fund, District WSD grant funds, and additional AWS funding sources have enabled the District to further support AWS development (Table 1.12). Two large reclaimed water projects are expected to make 8.35 mgd in reuse flow available and provide an additional 18.5 MG in reuse storage capacity.

(2) Public water supply demands met

Metrics submitted to DEP annually track the quantity (mgd) and percentage of public supply increase in demand that has been met Districtwide, which includes areas with and without RWSPs. The data in Table 1.11 is based on the 2023 WSA demand projections and 2024 Region II Water Supply Plan metrics.

Table 1.11 Public Supply Increase in Demand and Future Demands Met

Planning Region	2025-2045 Net demand change (mgd)	Future demand met (mgd)	Percent of net demand change met
Region II	21.1	3.4	16.1%
Other Regions	23.7	23.7	100%
Total Districtwide	44.8	27.1	60.5%

Region II unmet demands are anticipated to be addressed through water conservation and AWS sources such as reclaimed water, surface water development, and/or aquifer storage and recovery.

(3) Public Supply Per Capita Water Use

Public supply per capita water use rates are a function of water use (gross and residential), population estimates, and levels of precipitation. The District experienced droughts in 1999-2000, 2006-2007, and 2011. The District 2023 uniform gross per capita water use was 115.31 gpcd. The 2023 uniform residential per capita water use was 64.71 gpcd.

(4) Project accomplishment

The descriptions, benefits, accomplishments, and outcomes of alternative water supply projects are summarized in Table 1.12, below.

Table 1.12 Water Supply Projects Accomplishments

Program/Project	Project Type*	Brief Description Benefits and Accomplishments	Outcomes	Status / Percent Complete
AWS Grant Program	WSD	Annual grant program conducted in cooperation with DEP.	Projects TBD	Continuing
Pensacola Beach Reclaimed Water System Expansion	WSD	Design and construction of a 2.5 MG ground storage tank and 1.24 miles of distribution line to expand the Pensacola Beach reclaimed water system.	Construction underway	90%
South Santa Rosa Reuse Initiative	WSD	Four-phase multi-jurisdictional project to design and construct over 12 miles of reclaimed water transmission mains, WWTP upgrades, RIBs, and reclaimed water storage to offset potable water use and eliminate effluent discharges to Santa Rosa Sound. Upon completion, the project will result in approximately 1.4 mgd of beneficial reuse, 0.5 million gallons of reclaimed water storage, and elimination of wastewater discharges into Santa Rosa Sound.	Funding awarded for all four phases. Engineering in progress.	25%
Pace Water System Ground Storage Tank & Booster Pump Station	WSD	Designing and constructing a 2.0 MG ground storage tank and booster pump station in Santa Rosa County to improve ability to provide reclaimed water.	Construction underway	85%
North Bay Reuse Project	WSD	Construction of approximately 6-miles of reclaimed water line.	Construction underway	25%
Gretna Ground Storage Tank	WSD	Construction of 300,000 gallon ground storage tank to replace one damaged during Hurricane Michael.	Construction underway	60%
Campbellton Water Meter Replacement	WSD	Installation of new water meters in the Town of Campbellton	Construction	99%
Deer Moss Creek Subdivision Reuse Project	WSD	Construction of 22,550 L.F. of reclaimed water main and a second reclaimed water holding pond	Construction underway	50%
Gulf County FAS Supply Well	WSD	Construction of one 16-inch upper Floridan aquifer production well	Construction underway	20%

*Project Types: Water Resource Development (WRD) and Water Supply Development (WSD)

Milestones and Deliverables

Table 1.13 Water Supply Milestones and Deliverables

Milestone	Target Date	Status
(1) Quincy Water Meter Replacement Project	2026	In progress
(2) Gulf County FAS Production Well Project	2026	In progress
(3) Gretna Ground Storage Tank	2026	In progress
(4) Pace Water System Reclaimed Water Project	2026	In progress
(5) Deer Moss Creek Subdivision Reuse Project	2027	In progress
(6) Districtwide Water Supply Assessment Update	2028	Planning
(7) South Santa Rosa Reuse Initiative, Phase I-IV	2031	In progress

Deliverable	Status
(1) Water use data	Completed annually
(2) Districtwide water supply assessment updates	Update complete
(3) RWSP updates	Every 5 years, 2024 Region II RWSP complete
(4) Project completion reports	As projects are completed

Consolidated Annual Report

Chapter 2

Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels Annual Priority List and Schedule



Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels Annual Priority List and Schedule

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Chapter 2. MFLs Annual Priority List and Schedule

Introduction

Section 373.042, F.S., requires each water management district to develop minimum flows and minimum water levels (MFLs) for specific surface and ground waters within its jurisdiction. The MFL for a given waterbody is the limit at which further withdrawals would significantly harm the water resources or ecology of the area. MFLs are established using best available data and consideration is given to natural seasonal fluctuations; non-consumptive uses; and environmental values associated with coastal, estuarine, riverine, spring, aquatic, and wetlands ecology as specified in Chapter 62-40.473, F.A.C.

The multi-year process of MFL establishment involves identification of priority waterbodies, data collection, technical assessments, peer review, public involvement, rulemaking, and rule adoption. Adopted MFLs are considered when reviewing consumptive use permit applications. A recovery or prevention strategy must be developed for any waterbody where consumptive uses, currently or anticipated within the next 20 years, will result in flows or levels below an adopted MFL.

MFL Priority List and Schedule

The NFWFMD FY 2025-26 MFL Priority List and Schedule includes one first magnitude spring (Jackson Blue Spring); one second magnitude spring (Morrison Spring); two coastal aquifer systems (Floridan Aquifer, Coastal Bay Co. and Floridan Aquifer, Coastal Planning Region II); and one river system (Shoal River) (Figure 2.1, Table 2.1). The MFL Priority List and Schedule are re-evaluated annually and adjustments are made as appropriate. Additional waterbodies are anticipated to be scheduled in future years (Table 2.2). The waterbodies comprising the priority list continue to represent an ambitious yet achievable MFL program, which is being implemented in an efficient and technically sound manner.

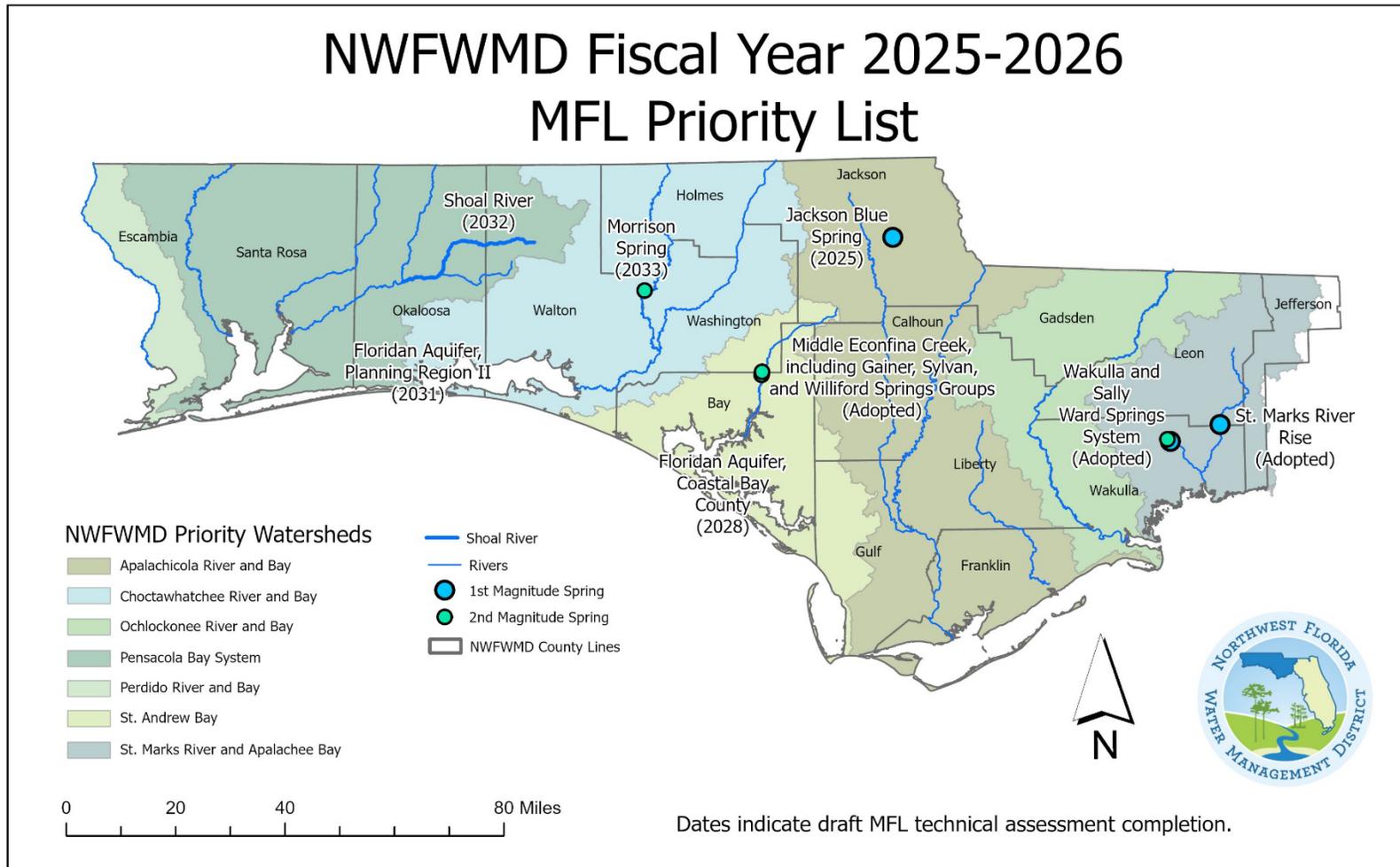


Figure 2.1 NFWWMD FY 2025-26 MFL Priority Waterbodies

Table 2.1 Northwest Florida Water Management District FY 2025-26 Priority List and Schedule

New or Re-Evaluation	Waterbody Name or Compliance Point ¹	System Name ²	Waterbody Type ³	County(s)	Voluntary Peer Review to be Completed?	Cross-Boundary Impacts from Adjacent WMD?	Latitude ⁴	Longitude ⁴	Rulemaking Status ⁵
NFWWMD Minimum Flows and Levels to be adopted in 2026									
New	Jackson Blue Spring	Jackson Blue Spring	Spring - 1	Jackson	Yes	No	30.790333	-85.140175	Ongoing
NFWWMD Minimum Flows and Levels to be adopted in 2029									
New	Coastal Floridan Aquifer	Coastal Floridan Aquifer, Coastal Bay County	Aquifer	Bay	Yes	No	To be determined	To be determined	N/A
NFWWMD Minimum Flows and Levels to be adopted in 2032									
New	Coastal Floridan Aquifer	Coastal Floridan Aquifer, Coastal Planning Region II	Aquifer	Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton	Yes	No	To be determined	To be determined	N/A
NFWWMD Minimum Flows and Levels to be adopted in 2033									
New	Shoal River	Shoal River	River	Walton, Okaloosa	Yes	No	30.753267	-85.509575	N/A
NFWWMD Minimum Flows and Levels to be adopted in 2034									
New	Morrison Spring	Morrison Spring	Spring-2	Walton	Yes	No	30.657864	-85.904080	N/A

¹A spring with one vent should be labeled as "Example Spring." A spring with multiple associated vents should be labeled as "Example Springs." Multiple springs grouped together in a system should be labeled as "Example Spring Group." (Please refer to Florida Spring Classification System and Spring Glossary, Special Publication No. 52, for more details.) Include on individual lines, with specific names, if it is known at this time that there will be multiple waterbodies or compliance points (such as springs or multiple river gages) associated with the MFL.

²Include a system name if the waterbody (or compliance point) is a part of a larger system (i.e., river and spring waterbodies belong to one overall system, multiple priority springs represent individual MFLs but belong to one system). If not, then the Waterbody Name and System should be the same.

³Aquifer, Estuary, Lake, River, River-Estuary, Spring-1, Spring-2, Spring-3, Wetland. Number indicates spring magnitude.

⁴For rivers, use the coordinates for the most upstream gage used to measure flow. For lakes, use the lake's center point. For springs, use the coordinates for the gage used to measure flow unless the gage is not located on the spring/spring run, in which case, use the spring's vent. For aquifers, wetlands, and estuaries, use the coordinates for the wells or gage used to measure the water source's level. Please use Decimal Degrees (DD) formatting.

⁵Rulemaking Status would be the last action taken: Notice of Rule Development published; Notice of Proposed Rule published; Rule challenge pending; Rule adopted, Ratification not required; Rule adopted, Awaiting ratification; Rule adopted, Ratified. If formal rulemaking has not yet begun, enter N/A.

Table 2.2 Potential Waterbodies for Future Years

New or Re-Evaluation	Waterbody Name	Waterbody Type**	County(s)
New	Sand-and-Gravel Aquifer	Aquifer	Okaloosa, Santa Rosa
New	Horn Spring	Spring - 2	Leon
New	Holmes Blue Spring	Spring - 2	Holmes
New	Ponce De Leon Spring	Spring - 2	Holmes
New	Blue Hole Spring	Spring - 2	Jackson
New	Mullet Spring	Spring - 2	Washington
New	Telogia Creek	River	Gadsden

**River, Lake, Spring - Magnitude, Wetland, Aquifer.

Reservations

Regulatory reservations have been established for the Apalachicola and Chipola rivers (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Waterbodies Subject to Regulatory Reservations

Waterbody	Counties	Reservations
Apalachicola River	Calhoun, Gadsden, Gulf, Franklin, Jackson, Liberty	The magnitude, duration, and frequency of observed flows are reserved, essentially in total, all seasons for the protection of fish and wildlife of the Chipola River, Apalachicola River, associated floodplains and Apalachicola Bay (40A-2.223, F.A.C.).
Chipola River	Calhoun, Gulf, Jackson	

Consolidated Annual Report

Chapter 3

Annual Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan



Annual Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan

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Chapter 3. Annual Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan

Introduction

The five-year capital improvements plan (CIP) includes projected revenues and expenditures for capital improvements from fiscal years 2025-26 through 2029-30. As directed by section 373.536(6)(a)(3), F.S., the CIP has been prepared in a manner comparable to the fixed capital outlay format set forth in section 216.043, F.S. The format for this plan is drawn from the standard budget reporting format prescribed by the Executive Office of the Governor. Capital improvement projects may be budgeted in either of two standard program categories. Those programs and their activities and sub-activities are represented below:

2.0 Acquisition, Restoration and Public Works

- 2.1 Land Acquisition
- 2.2 Water Source Development
 - 2.2.1 Water Resource Development Projects
 - 2.2.2 Water Supply Development Assistance
 - 2.2.3 Other Water Source Development Activities
- 2.3 Surface Water Projects
- 2.4 Other Cooperative Projects
- 2.5 Facilities Construction and Major Renovations
- 2.6 Other Acquisition and Restoration Activities

3.0 Operation and Maintenance of Lands and Works

- 3.1 Land Management
- 3.2 Works
- 3.3 Facilities
- 3.4 Invasive Plant Control
- 3.5 Other Operation and Maintenance Activities

Activities and sub-activities under program 2.0 Acquisition, Restoration and Public Works that may include capital improvement projects are: 2.1 Land Acquisition, 2.2.1 Water Resource Development Projects, 2.2.2 Water Supply Development Assistance, 2.3 Surface Water Projects, 2.5 Facilities Construction and Major Renovations, and 2.6 Other Acquisition and Restoration Activities. The District has applicable capital improvement projects in categories 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, and 2.6.

Activities under program 3.0 Operation and Maintenance of Lands and Works that may include capital improvement projects are: 3.1 Land Management and 3.2 Works. The District has applicable capital improvement projects in category 3.1.

The CIP includes expenditures for basic construction costs (permits, inspections, site development, etc.) and other project costs (land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, etc.).

This CIP contains only those projects that will be owned and capitalized as fixed assets by the District. The District does not capitalize construction projects having a total project cost of less than \$50,000. Therefore, land management activities and small capital projects less than \$50,000 may be included in the District's budget but not reported in the CIP.

Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan

The purpose of the Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan is to project future needs and anticipate future funding requirements to meet those needs. The development and construction of all capital projects are budgeted either under program heading *2.0 Acquisition, Restoration and Public Works* or under program heading *3.0 Operation and Maintenance of Lands and Works*.

The District’s capital improvements projects are categorized according to the following activities:

- Land Acquisition;
- Surface Water Projects;
- Facilities Construction and Major Renovations;
- Land Management.

District plans that also provide information on long-range capital improvements include: the Florida Forever Work Plan, Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program, and Northwest Florida Regional Mitigation Plan.

Table 3.1 NFWMD Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan, Fiscal Years 2025-26 through 2029-30

2.0 ACQUISITION, RESTORATION, AND PUBLIC WORKS					
2.1 Land Acquisition					
Revenues (\$)	Fiscal Year				
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Land Acquisition Trust Fund (Lands)	533,370	536,305			
Land Acquisition Trust Fund (Springs)	8,100,328	8,081,425	5,000,000	1,000,000	500,000
TOTAL	8,633,698	8,617,730	5,000,000	1,000,000	500,000
Expenditures (\$)	Fiscal Year				
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Acquisition of Land	8,200,328	8,181,425	4,750,000	900,000	400,000
Pre-acquisition Costs	433,370	436,305	250,000	100,000	100,000
TOTAL	8,633,698	8,617,730	5,000,000	1,000,000	500,000
2.3 Surface Water Projects					
Revenues (\$)	Fiscal Year				
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
FDOT Mitigation Funds	1,391,406	1,624,323	900,000	900,000	400,000
TOTAL	1,391,406	1,624,323	900,000	900,000	400,000

Chapter 3. Annual Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan

Expenditures (\$)	Fiscal Year				
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
FDOT Mitigation	1,391,406	1,624,323	900,000	900,000	400,000
TOTAL	1,391,406	1,624,323	900,000	900,000	400,000

2.5 Facilities Construction and Major Renovations

Revenues (\$)	Fiscal Year				
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Florida Forever	0	0	0	0	0
Water Management Lands Trust Fund	0	0	0	0	0
Cash Carryover	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
Regulatory General Fund	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000

Expenditures (\$)	Fiscal Year				
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Construction and Renovations	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
TOTAL	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000

2.6 Other Acquisition and Restoration Activities

Revenues (\$)	Fiscal Year				
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Land Acquisition Trust Fund (Springs)	2,131,622	2,099,686	0	0	0
TOTAL	2,131,622	2,099,686	0	0	0

Expenditures (\$)	Fiscal Year				
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Cypress Spring Restoration	2,131,622	2,099,686	0	0	0
TOTAL	2,131,622	2,099,686	0	0	0

3.1 Land Management

Revenues (\$)	Fiscal Year				
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Land Acquisition Trust Fund (Lands)	20,000	50,000	0	0	0
TOTAL	20,000	50,000	0	0	0

Expenditures (\$)	Fiscal Year				
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Pavilions	20,000		0	0	0
Pedestrian Bridge		50,000			
TOTAL	20,000	50,000	0	0	0

TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES (\$)	12,251,726	12,466,739	5,975,000	1,975,000	975,000
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Project Descriptions

The following pages provide a brief description of each capital improvements plan activity.

PROGRAM: 2.0 ACQUISITION, RESTORATION, AND PUBLIC WORKS
ACTIVITY: 2.1 LAND ACQUISITION

Project Title: Pre-acquisition costs for land acquisition purchases

Type: N/A

Physical Location: N/A

Square Footage/Physical Description: N/A

Expected Completion Date: N/A

Historical Background/Need for Project: To preserve and protect the water resources within the District's 16-county boundary.

Plan Linkages: Florida Forever Work Plan, Strategic Water Management Plan

Area(s) of Responsibility: Water Supply, Water Quality, Flood Protection, and Natural Systems

Alternative(s): None

Basic Construction Costs (includes permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities outside building, site development, other): N/A

Other Project Costs (includes land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other): Land acquisition ancillary costs include appraisals, survey, Phase I ESA, baseline report, legal fees, and other professional services and fees associated with the purchase of lands. Specific costs will vary based on individual land acquisition purchases.

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (includes salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses): N/A

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing: N/A

PROGRAM: 2.0 ACQUISITION, RESTORATION, AND PUBLIC WORKS
ACTIVITY: 2.1 LAND ACQUISITION

Project Title: Jackson Blue Spring Land Acquisition

Type: Unimproved land approximate to a first magnitude spring

Physical Location: Jackson Blue Spring basin, Jackson County

Square Footage/Physical Description: Acquisition of conservation easements or fee simple purchase of property in Jackson County within the Jackson Blue Spring Basin Management Action Plan area.

Expected Completion Date: On or before December 31, 2027

Historical Background/Need for Project: The Jackson Blue Spring acquisition project will further the District's mission of protecting the water resources of Jackson Blue Spring through the acquisition of fee simple or conservation easements.

Plan Linkages: Florida Forever Work Plan, Strategic Water Management Plan, Apalachicola River and Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan, Jackson Blue Spring and Merritt's Mill Pond Basin Management Action Plan

Area(s) of Responsibility: Water Supply, Water Quality, Flood Protection, and Natural Systems

Alternative(s): Fee simple acquisition of each project proposed for conservation easement and less than fee simple purchase of a project proposed for fee simple acquisition.

Basic Construction Costs (includes permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities outside building, site development, other): N/A

Other Project Costs (includes land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other): Land acquisition ancillary costs include appraisals, survey, Phase I ESA, baseline report, legal fees, and other professional services and fees associated with the purchase of lands. Specific costs will vary based on individual land acquisition purchases.

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (includes salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses): N/A

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing: Land management costs associated with fee simple ownership and monitoring costs associated with the purchase of a conservation easement are included in the Division of Asset Management's overall responsibilities.

PROGRAM: 2.0 ACQUISITION, RESTORATION, AND PUBLIC WORKS

ACTIVITY: 2.1 LAND ACQUISITION

Project Title: Chipola River Land Acquisition

Type: Unimproved land within the Chipola River Springs Groundwater Contribution Area

Physical Location: Chipola River basin, Jackson and Calhoun counties

Square Footage/Physical Description: Acquisition of conservation easements or fee simple purchase of property in Jackson and Calhoun counties within the Chipola River Springs Groundwater Contribution Area.

Expected Completion Date: On or before December 31, 2027

Historical Background/Need for Project: The Chipola River Springs land acquisition project will further the District's mission of protecting the water resources of the Chipola River Springs Groundwater Contribution Area through the acquisition of fee simple or conservation easements.

Plan Linkages: Florida Forever Work Plan, Strategic Water Management Plan, Apalachicola River and Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan, Jackson Blue Spring and Merritt's Mill Pond Basin Management Action Plan

Area(s) of Responsibility: Water Supply, Water Quality, Flood Protection, and Natural Systems

Alternative(s): Fee simple acquisition of each project proposed for conservation easement and less than fee simple purchase of a project proposed for fee simple acquisition.

Basic Construction Costs (includes permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities outside building, site development, other): N/A

Other Project Costs (includes land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other): Land acquisition ancillary costs include appraisals, survey, Phase I ESA, baseline report, legal fees, and other professional services and fees associated with the purchase of lands. Specific costs will vary based on individual land acquisition purchases.

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (includes salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses): N/A

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing: Land management costs associated with fee simple ownership and monitoring costs associated with the purchase of a conservation easement are included in the Division of Asset Management's overall responsibilities.

PROGRAM: 2.0 ACQUISITION, RESTORATION, AND PUBLIC WORKS
ACTIVITY: 2.1 LAND ACQUISITION

Project Title: Wakulla Spring Land Acquisition

Type: Unimproved land approximate to a first magnitude spring

Physical Location: Wakulla Spring basin, Leon and Wakulla counties

Square Footage/Physical Description: Properties in Leon and Wakulla counties in Priority Focus Areas I and II of the Wakulla Springs Basin Action Management Plan area.

Expected Completion Date: On or before December 31, 2027

Historical Background/Need for Project: The Wakulla Spring acquisition project will further the District's mission of protecting the water resources of Wakulla Spring through the acquisition of fee simple or conservation easements.

Plan Linkages: Florida Forever Work Plan, Strategic Water Management Plan, St. Marks River and Apalachee Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan, Upper Wakulla River and Wakulla Springs Basin Management Action Plan

Area(s) of Responsibility: Water Supply, Water Quality, Flood Protection, and Natural Systems

Alternative(s): Fee simple acquisition of each project proposed for conservation easement and less than fee simple purchase of a project proposed for fee simple acquisition.

Basic Construction Costs (includes permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities outside building, site development, other): N/A

Other Project Costs (includes land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other): Land acquisition ancillary costs include appraisals, survey, Phase I ESA, baseline report, legal fees, and other professional services and fees associated with the purchase of lands. Specific costs will vary based on individual land acquisition purchases.

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (includes salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses): N/A

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing: Monitoring costs associated with the conservation easement are included in the Division of Asset Management's overall responsibilities. If fee simple ownership is acquired, the District will request land management activities be provided by another agency in the local area.

PROGRAM: 2.0 ACQUISITION, RESTORATION, AND PUBLIC WORKS
ACTIVITY: 2.1 LAND ACQUISITION

Project Title: Econfina Creek Land Acquisition

Type: Unimproved land within the Econfina Springs Groundwater Contribution Area

Physical Location: Econfina Creek, Bay and Washington counties

Square Footage/Physical Description: Properties in Bay and Washington counties within the Econfina Creek Groundwater Contribution Area.

Expected Completion Date: On or before December 31, 2027

Historical Background/Need for Project: The Econfina Creek acquisition project will further the District's mission of protecting the water resources of Econfina Creek; Gainer Spring Group, a first magnitude and Outstanding Florida Spring; and several second magnitude spring groups through the acquisition of fee simple or conservation easements.

Plan Linkages: Florida Forever Work Plan, Strategic Water Management Plan, St. Andrew Bay Watershed Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan

Area(s) of Responsibility: Water Supply, Water Quality, Flood Protection, and Natural Systems

Alternative(s): Fee simple acquisition of a project proposed for conservation easement and less than fee simple purchase of a project proposed for fee simple acquisition.

Basic Construction Costs (includes permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities outside building, site development, other): N/A

Other Project Costs (includes land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other): Land acquisition ancillary costs include appraisals, survey, Phase I ESA, baseline report, legal fees, and other professional services and fees associated with the purchase of lands. Specific costs will vary based on individual land acquisition purchases.

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (includes salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses): N/A

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing: Land management costs associated with fee simple ownership and monitoring costs associated with the purchase of a conservation easement are included in the Division of Asset Management's overall responsibilities.

PROGRAM: 2.0 ACQUISITION, RESTORATION, AND PUBLIC WORKS
ACTIVITY: 2.3 SURFACE WATER PROJECTS

Project Title: Regional Mitigation for FDOT Wetlands Impacts

Type: Wetlands, waterbodies, and buffers that qualify as mitigation for FDOT wetland impacts

Physical Location: Various locations; watersheds within the District

Square Footage/Physical Description: Land purchases and habitat restoration activities (hydrologic restoration, shrub reduction, planting, prescribed fire, herbicide, etc.), to include construction of various capital restoration structures (e.g., low water crossings and water control structures).

Expected Completion Date: Program is ongoing, year-to-year.

Historical Background/Need for Project: Section 373.4137, F.S. provides that districts mitigate for FDOT wetland impacts that are not within the service area of a mitigation bank or when credits from a mitigation bank are not deemed appropriate.

Plan Linkages: Northwest Florida Regional Mitigation Plan, Florida Forever Work Plan, SWIM plans, Strategic Water Management Plan, Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank Instrument, In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Program Final Instrument

Area(s) of Responsibility: Water Supply, Water Quality, Flood Protection, and Natural Systems

Alternative(s): Specific projects may be excluded from the mitigation plan, in whole or in part, upon the election of the FDOT, a transportation authority if applicable, or the District.

Basic Construction Costs (includes permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities outside building, site development, other): Variable; multiple projects. Costs are determined by project type (habitat restoration, hydrologic restoration and enhancement, land acquisition, etc.).

Other Project Costs (includes land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other): An amount equal to 15 percent of the total construction and land acquisition costs are typically estimated for engineering design work, surveying, land appraisals, environmental audits, etc.

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (includes salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses): Variable; multiple projects. Costs are determined by project type (habitat restoration, hydrologic restoration and enhancement, land acquisition, etc.).

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing: Variable; multiple projects. Costs are determined by project type (habitat restoration, hydrologic restoration and enhancement, land acquisition, etc.).

PROGRAM: 2.0 ACQUISITION, RESTORATION, AND PUBLIC WORKS
ACTIVITY: 2.5 FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION AND MAJOR RENOVATIONS

Project Title: Renovations

Type: No renovations scheduled during FY 2025-26.

Physical Location: N/A

Square Footage/Physical Description: No renovations scheduled during FY 2025-26.

Expected Completion Date: N/A

Historical Background/Need for Project: No projects scheduled during FY 2025-26.

Plan Linkages: Strategic Water Management Plan, District Budget

Area(s) of Responsibility: Water Supply, Water Quality, Flood Protection, and Natural Systems

Alternative(s): None

Basic Construction Costs (includes permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities outside building, site development, other): \$75,000 budgeted for Renovations in FY 2025-26 for unanticipated repairs.

Other Project Costs (includes land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other): N/A

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (includes salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses): N/A

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing: None

PROGRAM: 2.0 ACQUISITION, RESTORATION, AND PUBLIC WORKS
ACTIVITY: 2.6 OTHER ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

Project Title: Cypress Spring Restoration and Protection

Type: Spring and Shoreline Restoration and Protection

Physical Location: Located off Highway 79 on Cypress Springs Road within the Choctawhatchee River Water Management Area.

Square Footage/Physical Description: Spring and shoreline restoration utilizing structural and non-structural techniques and public access improvements.

Expected Completion Date: By June 30, 2027

Historical Background/Need for Project: A significant number of recreational users access Cypress Spring by boat, canoe, and kayak from nearby Culpepper Landing and Cotton Landing. Intensive use by the public has adversely impacted the spring's shoreline and aquatic and floodplain habitats. The Cypress Spring Restoration project provides for design and construction of shoreline restoration and access improvements to protect the spring run and Holmes Creek from continued degradation.

Plan Linkages: Florida Forever Work Plan, Strategic Water Management Plan, Choctawhatchee River and Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan

Area(s) of Responsibility: Water Supply, Water Quality, Flood Protection, and Natural Systems

Alternative(s): None

Basic Construction Costs (includes permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities outside building, site development, other): Estimated \$2,135,000 million for permitting, construction, and inspections.

Other Project Costs (includes land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other): Estimated \$165,000 for design, engineering, and other professional services.

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (includes salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses): None

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing: \$39,809.00

PROGRAM: 3.0 OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF LANDS AND WORKS
ACTIVITY: 3.1 LAND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Project Title: Pavilions on District Lands

Type: Public-use improvement providing pavilions at District day-use sites or campsites, as needed.

Physical Location: Locations to be determined.

Square Footage/Physical Description: Pavilions at District day-use sites are 288 square feet while pavilions at District campsites are 144 square feet.

Expected Completion Date: By September 30, 2026.

Historical Background/Need for Project: The District provides pavilions at day-use sites and campsites located on District lands.

Plan Linkages: Strategic Water Management Plan, District Budget

Area(s) of Responsibility: Water Supply, Water Quality, Flood Protection, and Natural Systems

Alternative(s): None

Basic Construction Costs (includes permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities outside building, site development, other): A total of \$20,000 is budgeted for pavilions.

Other Project Costs (includes land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other): None

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (includes salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses): None

Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing: None

Appendix

Definitions for programs and activities used in this Five-Year Capital Improvement Program are included below. The definitions follow the water management district standard budget format.

2.0 Acquisition, Restoration and Public Works

This program includes the development and construction of all capital projects (except for those contained in Program 3.0), including water resource development projects/water supply development assistance, water control projects, support and administrative facilities construction, cooperative projects, land acquisition (including Save Our Rivers/Preservation 2000/Florida Forever), and the restoration of lands and waterbodies.

2.1 Land Acquisition: The acquisition of land and facilities for the management and protection of water resources. This activity category does not include land acquisition components of “water resource development projects,” “surface water projects,” or “other cooperative projects.”

2.2 Water Source Development: The acquisition of land and facilities for the management and protection of water resources. This activity category includes land acquisition components of “water resource development projects,” “water supply development assistance projects,” or “other water source development activities.”

2.3 Surface Water Projects: Those projects that restore or protect surface water quality, flood protection, or surface-water related resources through the acquisition and improvement of land, construction of public works, and other activities.

2.5 Facilities Construction and Major Renovations: Design, construction, and significant renovation of all District support and administrative facilities.

2.6 Other Acquisition and Restoration Activities: Restoration and protection of springs, spring shorelines, and creek and river shorelines located on District lands while allowing for public access and recreation.

3.0 Operation and Maintenance of Lands and Works

This program includes all operation and maintenance of facilities, flood control and water supply structures, lands, and other works authorized by Chapter 373, F.S.

3.1 Land Management: Maintenance, custodial, public use improvements, and restoration efforts for lands acquired through Save Our Rivers, Preservation 2000, Florida Forever, or other land acquisition programs.

Consolidated Annual Report

Chapter 4

Alternative Water Supplies Annual Report



Alternative Water Supplies Annual Report

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Chapter 4. Alternative Water Supplies Annual Report

Section 373.707, F.S., directs each water management district to submit an annual report on the disbursement of all budgeted funds for the purpose of alternative water supply (AWS) development. This report describes AWS projects receiving state alternative water supply grant funding, as well as funding from the Water Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund (WPSPTF), the District's general fund, and cooperators.

The District completed several AWS projects using \$21.57 million in WSPS funds from FY 2005-06 through FY 2008-09, leveraging more than \$78 million in local contributions. In addition, two AWS projects funded through DEP's AWS funding were completed in 2023 in Bay and Okaloosa counties. These completed projects constructed approximately 1.4 miles (Panama City Beach Parkway Reuse System Extension Project) and 11 miles (Okaloosa-Eglin AFB-Niceville Reclaimed Water Project) of reclaimed water main. Current AWS projects underway through the end of FY 2024-25 are included in Table 4.1. These projects have received funding from DEP's AWS funding program, the WSD grant program, the District's general fund, and local contributions.

Section 373.707(8)(b), F.S., provides that 10 percent of state revenues dedicated to WSPS be distributed to the District. In 2019, \$100,000 was allocated to the District. This funding was committed to the South Santa Rosa Reuse Initiative in the District's water supply planning Region II (Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton counties). An additional \$180,000 in WSPS funds was appropriated in FY 2020-21 to provide further support for alternative water supply development.

Notably, the District is providing funding for the South Santa Rosa Reuse Initiative, a four-phase project that will develop reclaimed water capacity as an alternative water supply source to meet long-term needs in southern Santa Rosa County and reduce or eliminate a pollutant loading discharge into Santa Rosa Sound. Funding has been awarded through DEP's AWS program in the amount of \$10,100,000 through October 2031.

The District was awarded \$500,000 in FDEP AWS grant funding in FY 2025-26 for two projects. The first project is a new Water Conservation Grant Program, which will provide a total of \$250,000 through multiple grants to local governments to implement water conservation programs that reduce water use. The second grant, which is also for \$250,000, will enable the District to perform AWS feasibility studies to evaluate surface water and managed aquifer recharge as options for meeting future water demands and offsetting impacts to the Floridan aquifer in Planning Region II (Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties). A Regional Water Supply Plan has been in place since 2001 for Planning Region II due to significant drawdowns in the Upper Floridan aquifer and concerns for long-term saltwater intrusion.

Additionally, the District and cooperators have contributed funding for agricultural programs that have resulted in water conservation and water quality improvements by improving irrigation efficiency, conserving water, and reducing nutrient loading. These include the agriculture cost-share program, sod-based crop rotation cost-share program, and mobile irrigation laboratory program. Specific funding and benefits for these programs can be found in Chapter 1.

Table 4.1 Current Alternative Water Supply Projects (through September 2025)

Project	Region	Local Sponsor	Activity	Status	Funding Source ¹	Anticipated Water ²	NWFWMD Contribution	Total
North Bay Wastewater Reuse	III	Bay County	Water reuse	Construction	GF	1.5 mgd	\$500,000	\$7,656,968
Pensacola Beach Reclaimed Water System Expansion	I	Emerald Coast Utilities Authority	Water reuse	Construction	WSD	0.23 mgd 2.5 MG	\$947,000	\$7,972,800
South Santa Rosa County Reuse Initiative, Phases I-IV	II	Santa Rosa County; Holley-Navarre Water System; Gulf Breeze; Eglin AFB	Water reuse	Construction	AWS	4.35 mgd 0.5 MG	\$10,100,000	\$32,875,000
Deer Moss Creek Subdivision	II	City of Niceville	Water reuse	Construction	AWS	4 mgd 18 MG	\$2,970,000	\$5,940,000
Chumuckla Hwy. Ground Storage Tank and Booster Pump Station	II	Pace Water System	Water reuse	Construction	AWS	2.0 MG	\$1,110,725	\$2,221,450
City of Port St. Joe Membrane Backwash Recycle Project	V	City of Port St. Joe	Water reuse	Construction	GF	0.02 mgd	\$80,000	\$198,500
Totals						10.1 mgd 23 MG	\$15,707,725	\$56,864,718

¹Funding sources include the Water Protection and Sustainability Program, District General Fund, Water Supply Development Grant Program, and DEP’s Alternative Water Supply Program

²Anticipated water flow (mgd) and/or storage capacity (MG) to be made available at project completion

Consolidated Annual Report

Chapter 5

FY 2025-2026 Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program



FY 2024-2025 Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program

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Chapter 5. FY 2025-2026 Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program

INTRODUCTION

Florida’s water management districts are required by sections 373.036 and 373.709, Florida Statutes (F.S.), to conduct water supply planning in regions where existing sources of water are determined to be inadequate to supply water for existing and future reasonable-beneficial uses and to sustain water resources and related natural systems for at least a 20-year planning period. This determination is based on a technical assessment of existing and anticipated future water sources, existing water uses, projected future needs for a 20-year planning horizon, and water conservation efforts. District governing boards re-evaluate the determination at least once every five years.

The Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD or District) established seven water supply planning regions in 1996 (Figure 1). The most recent Districtwide water supply assessment (WSA) was completed in 2023. Consistent with the findings of successive assessments beginning in 1998, a regional water supply plan (RWSP) for Region II (Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton counties) was first approved and has been in implementation since February 2001. The most recent RWSP update was in 2024. Additional information is available at: <https://nwfwater.com/Water-Resources/Water-Supply-Planning>.

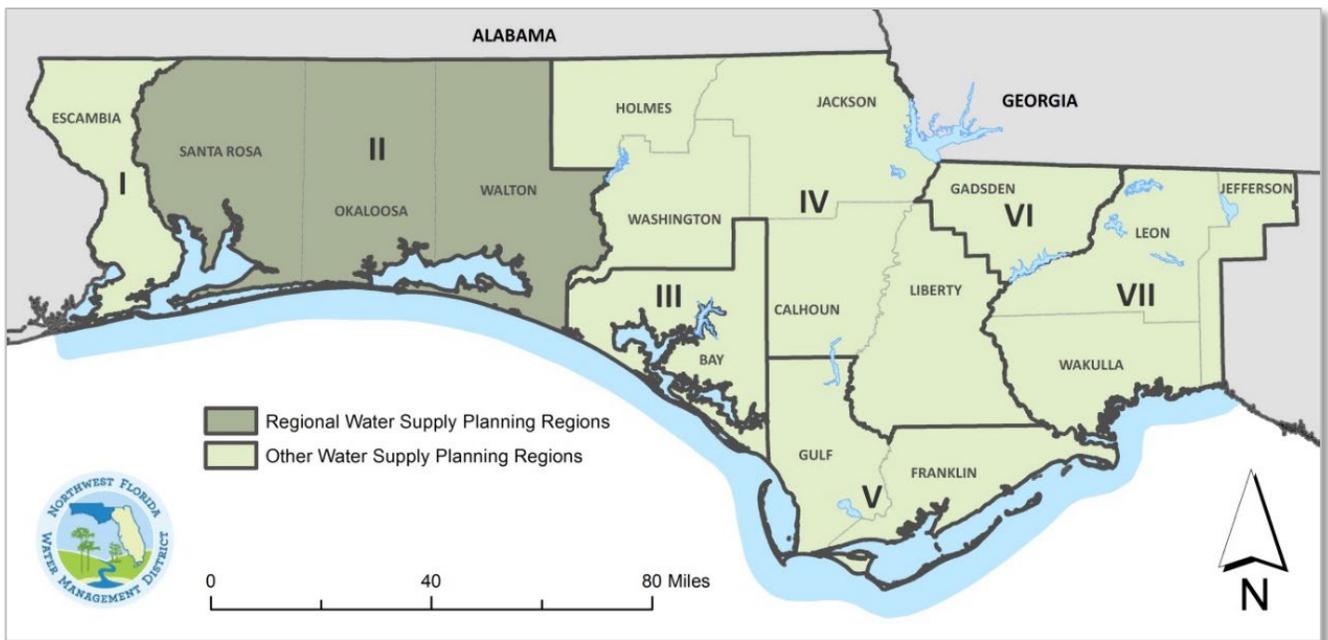


Figure 1. NFWFMD Water Supply Planning Regions

Districts are required by section 373.536(6)(a)4, F.S., to prepare a Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program (WRDWP or Work Program) as part of the annual budget reporting process. Work Programs describe the District’s implementation strategy and funding plan for the water supply and water resource development components of RWSPs. A Work Program must be prepared for each approved regional water supply plan pursuant to section 373.709, F.S.

This Work Program for the Region II RWSP covers fiscal year (FY) 2025-26 through FY 2029-30. It is consistent with the projects and strategies described in the Region II RWSP and the District's final adopted budget for FY 2025-26.

PURPOSE

Pursuant to section 373.536(6)(a)4, F.S., the Work Program must address all elements of the water resource development component in the approved RWSP and identify water supply projects proposed for District funding and assistance. The annual funding plan identifies anticipated District funding and additional funding needs. The Work Program must also:

- Identify projects that will provide water,
- Explain how each water resource development and water supply development project will produce additional water available for consumptive uses,
- Estimate the quantity of water to be produced by each project,
- Provide an assessment of the contribution of RWSPs in supporting the implementation of minimum flows and minimum water levels (MFLs) and water reservations, and
- Ensure sufficient water is available to meet the water supply needs of existing and future reasonable-beneficial uses for a 1-in-10-year drought event and to avoid the adverse effects of competition for water supplies.

A proposed Work Program is to be furnished within 30 days after adoption of the District's final budget and posted on the District website for public review. The final Five-Year WRDWP is incorporated into the District's March 1 Consolidated Annual Report.

WORK PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Work Program presented herein, including the District's implementation strategy and five-year funding plan, has been developed to ensure water is available to meet the water supply needs of existing and future reasonable-beneficial uses for a 1-in-10-year drought event, to maintain the function of natural systems, and to avoid the adverse effects of competition for water supplies. The Work Program is specifically focused on implementation of the Region II RWSP, with additional description of Districtwide and supporting activities.

The Fiscal Year 2025-26 Work Program describes current progress toward implementing water resource development projects included within the Region II RWSP. The Work Program also describes funded alternative water supply development projects. The Work Program further includes five-year funding plans for water resource development and water supply development projects, to include the current year budgeted amounts and proposed funding levels for the following years.

For Fiscal Year 2025-26, \$1,681,260 is budgeted for water resource development within Region II, and \$3,987,542 is budgeted for alternative water supply development and water conservation within the region. The Work Program identifies approximately 7.4 million gallons per day (mgd) of reclaimed water to be made available through currently funded alternative water supply development projects within the region. For Fiscal Year 2026-27 through Fiscal Year 2029-30, the annual funding averages approximately \$2.5 million. Planned activities include engineering feasibility studies for new surface water sources, managed aquifer recharge, and analyses of potential redistributions of coastal groundwater withdrawals to inland areas to reduce drawdowns in the upper Floridan aquifer and alleviate

saltwater intrusion risks. Capital costs for new surface water supplies are estimated to range from \$200 million to \$498 million (Table 2) and funding sources have not yet been identified. Additional work planned includes data collection and technical assessments to support the establishment of minimum flows and minimum water levels for the upper Floridan Aquifer in coastal Region II, the Shoal River, and Morrison Spring.

REGION II WORK PROGRAM

The 2024 update to the Region II RWSP was approved by the District’s Governing Board in January 2025 and was developed following the recommendation in the 2023 WSA that the RWSP be continued. Water demand projections provided in the 2024 RWSP included newly published agricultural water demand projections provided by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Water use in the region totaled nearly 76 mgd in 2020 and is projected to increase by 40 percent to approximately 107 mgd by 2045 (Table 1). Public supply represents about 70 percent of the total estimated and projected water use. Under a 1-in-10 year drought condition, public supply and recreational landscape irrigation together are projected to comprise about 86 percent of the 2045 demand.

Table 1. 2020 Estimated Water Use and 2025-2045 Demand Projections for Region II

Use Category	Estimates	Future Demand Projections - Average Conditions					2020-2045 Change	
	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	mgd	%
Public Supply	54.17	59.70	64.06	67.88	71.46	74.90	20.73	38.3%
DSS	2.07	1.80	1.74	1.62	1.46	1.27	-0.79	-38.5%
Agriculture	2.92	5.9	6.32	6.87	7.46	8.02	5.11	175.1%
Recreational	12.14	13.30	14.28	15.09	15.82	16.49	4.35	35.8%
ICI	4.69	4.99	5.55	5.87	6.07	6.07	1.38	29.4%
Power	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/a	n/a
TOTALS*	75.98	85.69	91.95	97.32	102.27	106.75	30.76	40.5%

*Figures expressed in million gallons per day (mgd). Numbers may not sum due to rounding.

WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Water resource development is “the formulation and implementation of regional water resource management strategies, including the collection and evaluation of surface water and groundwater data; structural and nonstructural programs to protect and manage water resources; the development of regional water resource implementation programs; the construction, operation, and maintenance of major public works facilities to provide for flood control, surface and underground water storage, and groundwater recharge augmentation; and related technical assistance to local governments, government-owned and privately owned water utilities, and self-suppliers to the extent assistance to self-suppliers promotes the policies as set forth in s. 373.016.”¹ As indicated in section 373.705, F.S., water resource development is primarily a role of the water management districts, although utilities may provide assistance.

The 2024 Region II RWSP includes water resource development projects encompassing strategies to support alternative water supply development and promote efficient water use to reduce reliance on the Floridan aquifer and lessen saltwater intrusion risks (Table 2).

¹ Section 373.019(24), F.S.

Table 2. Summary of Region II RWSP Water Resource Development Projects, 2025 through 2045

Project Type	Description	AWS Annual Average Quantity (mgd)¹	Non-AWS Annual Average Quantity (mgd)²	Timeframe	Estimated Capital Costs
Conservation	Conservation projects proposed by utilities through infrastructure improvements, meter upgrades	0.78	N/A	2025 – 2045	\$6,630,245
	Passive water savings through water fixture replacements by consumers ³	4.3	N/A	2025 – 2045	N/A
Reuse	Development or expansion of reclaimed water facilities and infrastructure	11.90	N/A	2025 – 2035	\$99,500,000
Shoal River Surface Water Supply	Shoal River water supply source development, treatment, storage, and conveyance infrastructure	5.00	N/A	2035 – 2045	\$200,000,000 ⁶
Choctawhatchee River Surface Water Supply	Choctawhatchee water supply source development, treatment, storage, and conveyance infrastructure	Up to 10 mgd	N/A	TBD	\$231,000,000 to \$498,000,000
Sand-and-gravel aquifer	Proposed new sand-and-gravel aquifer wells, system interconnections, and replacement wells in Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties	N/A	3.40	2025 – 2045	\$13,900,000
Floridan Aquifer	Proposed new Floridan wells, system interconnections, and replacement wells	N/A	Up to 6.68 ⁷	2025 – 2045	\$47,850,000
Storage	New capacity created through storage tank or pond facilities	25.50	4.10	2025 – 2045	\$61,550,625
Transmission/Distribution³	New capacity created through planned transmission mains or distribution infrastructure	See note 4	See note 4	2025 – 2045	\$88,115,318
	Total Water Sources	32⁵	Up to 10.08⁴		\$748,546,188

¹ Estimates of potential alternative water to be made available.

² Proposed water withdrawals from non-AWS traditional sources.

³ Passive water savings were not utility-proposed projects but are anticipated to result from consumer fixture replacements.

⁴ The capacity for traditional and reclaimed water transmission and distribution systems is included under the Project Types listed above. For example, AWS Annual Average Quantity for reuse reflects the anticipated increase in capacity.

⁵ Water supply quantity totals do not include storage capacity.

⁶ Cost estimates were developed more than 10 years ago and are planned to be updated in FY 2025-2026.

⁷ Groundwater development proposed by utilities. Technical analyses will be needed to determine if the quantities are permissible.

Surface Water Evaluations

Surface water investigations and cooperative efforts have historically focused on the Shoal River as an alternative water supply source for Okaloosa County. This source has the potential to augment potable water supplies in mid-county and coastal areas of the county, which will further support water resource sustainability and reduce reliance on Floridan aquifer withdrawals in coastal areas. Okaloosa County has

acquired land along the Shoal River and has completed significant planning and analysis toward development of this future water supply source. Cost estimates developed more than a decade ago indicated that \$200 million will be needed for project implementation. Based on increased costs for construction projects during recent years, the cost will likely be much higher. The District has received an Alternative Water Supply Grant for FY 2025-2026 to perform additional feasibility studies to support the implementation of the Region II RWSP. Part of this work will include updating design alternatives and cost estimates for the Shoal River water supply project.

Traditional groundwater sources are also limited within many areas of Walton County. In 2024, the District performed a planning level review of potential surface water sources to meet future needs in Walton County, including the Choctawhatchee River. The Choctawhatchee River is the third largest river in Florida in terms of flow, with a watershed that exceeds 3 million acres and spans portions of Florida and Alabama. The median flow at the USGS station near Bruce, Florida, based on the 1994 to 2024 period of record is 3,830 cubic feet per second (approximately 2,061 million gallons per day (mgd)). The Choctawhatchee River is designated as Critical Habitat for Gulf Sturgeon and several listed mussel species occur along the river. Flows from the river support a diverse and productive estuary. Although a specific withdrawal schedule protective of aquatic habitat for this river system remains to be determined, an annual yield of 10 mgd from the Choctawhatchee River would comprise less than 0.5 percent of the median flow. Cost estimates for a 5-to-10 mgd Choctawhatchee River water supply source range from \$231 million to \$498 million depending on the storage options and transmission routes (Table 2). A regional water supply project of this scale will require partnerships among utilities, as well as considerable state and/or federal funding for successful implementation.

Reuse of Reclaimed Water

Reclaimed water remains an essential alternative water supply source for meeting current and future demands in Region II. The District continues to work with local and regional partners to identify viable strategies to further develop, extend, and utilize reclaimed water resources. Reuse planning is focused on achieving potable water offset by providing reclaimed water for such purposes as public access irrigation, toilet flushing, fire protection, and industrial uses. The 2024 RWSP update identifies the potential for 11.9 mgd of reclaimed water from water supply development projects to be made available by 2045. Ongoing efforts are focused on project development in cooperation with local governments and utilities and identification of future opportunities for water reuse and development of integrated water quality and quantity strategies. Such efforts ultimately can result in development of regionally significant water reuse facilities. Among current examples are the South Santa Rosa Reuse Initiative and the Pace Water System and City of Niceville reuse projects described below, as well as Okaloosa County's Shoal River Ranch Water Reclamation Facility. Current reclaimed water projects funded in cooperation with the District are listed in Appendix A.

Water Conservation

Like reuse, water conservation is an essential component of ensuring the long-term sustainability and sufficiency of water supplies within Region II. Enhanced water conservation measures are required of individual water use permittees within the coastal water resource caution area (WRCA).

As part of the 2024 Region II RWSP update, the District engaged consultant services to further identify water conservation savings using the Alliance for Water Efficiency's water conservation tracking tool. The 2024 RWSP update identifies a potential for up to approximately 5.1 mgd in additional water conservation savings by 2045 that may be achieved through passive savings and conservation programs implemented by utilities and local governments. Among the potential strategies are cost-share grants and

incentive programs, facility retrofits for improved efficiency and water loss prevention, conservation rate structures, improved utility data management, and public education and outreach. Conservation rate structures, public education, enhanced data analysis, and water loss prevention efforts are implemented by utilities in response to resource conditions and regulatory requirements. Additionally, passive savings are anticipated to occur as consumers replace older plumbing fixtures with newer, low-volume fixtures. Water use data and analysis have demonstrated progress in reducing per capita water use rates.

The District will continue to seek funding for conservation grant programs to complement ongoing water conservation measures implemented by utilities and addressed through permit conditions. In FY 24-25, the District applied for water conservation grant funding; the anticipated funds are reflected in the FY 26-27 through FY 29-30 budget estimates. Additional efforts to support water conservation measures are reflected in the water supply development assistance budget to support grants to help rural communities acquire and install modern water meters to facilitate a reduction in water loss.

Aquifer Storage and Recovery and Managed Aquifer Recharge

Depending on hydrogeologic characteristics, aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) has the potential to store large quantities of water for subsequent use and managed aquifer recharge may enhance groundwater availability. A few small aquifer recharge projects have been permitted in the region for groundwater remediation and restoration activities. The 2024 RWSP update does not include any proposed ASR projects, although ASR could be a component of future surface water development. An existing reclaimed water ASR system permitted for 1.12 mgd remains in service. As part of the 2024 RWSP update, the District initiated work to begin assessing the potential for managed aquifer recharge to enhance the sustainability of the upper Floridan aquifer. A planning level review suggests hydrogeologic conditions may be suitable for aquifer recharge, though additional feasibility studies are needed. The District received Florida Department of Environmental Protection Alternative Water Supply grant funding for FY 2025-26 to further assess the feasibility of managed aquifer recharge.

Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels

There are currently no adopted MFLs, recovery or prevention strategies, or water reservations in Region II. However, due to the increasing risk of saltwater intrusion associated with consumptive groundwater withdrawals, the upper Floridan aquifer in Region II was added to the MFL Priority List and Schedule in November 2025. The technical assessment is scheduled for completion in 2031, with adoption of minimum aquifer levels planned for 2032. Two additional waterbodies within Region II included on the District's MFL Priority List and Schedule are Morrison Spring, a second-magnitude spring in Walton County, and the Shoal River, which spans central Walton and Okaloosa counties. Rule adoption for these waterbodies is scheduled for 2033 and 2034, respectively.

Groundwater Evaluations

District groundwater evaluation programs include data collection, groundwater flow and saltwater intrusion modeling, water supply feasibility studies and other associated resource assessments.

Sand-and-Gravel Aquifer

The District plans to incorporate sand-and-gravel aquifer resources into larger groundwater models and further evaluate the availability of water from this alternative water supply source to offset projected upper Floridan aquifer withdrawals along the coast. Groundwater levels within the sand-and-gravel aquifer are routinely monitored as part of the District's quarterly water level and continuous monitoring networks. Future iterations of the District's MFL Priority List may include the sand-and-gravel aquifer

in Okaloosa and Santa Rosa counties as a waterbody to be evaluated and scheduled, if necessary, for future years.

Floridan Aquifer

The Floridan aquifer functions as a regional aquifer system across inland and coastal areas. Designation of upper Floridan aquifer withdrawals as “coastal” or “inland” facilitates water use and planning evaluations. However, upper Floridan aquifer withdrawals in inland areas can affect upper Floridan aquifer water levels near the coast. Groundwater flow and transport models were developed and calibrated in 2019 and 2020 to evaluate the need to establish minimum aquifer levels for the upper Floridan aquifer in Region II to protect potable supplies from saltwater intrusion. Although the evaluation determined minimum aquifer levels were not needed at that time, subsequent increases in projected water demands identified in the 2024 RWSP update indicate the risk of saltwater intrusion in the upper Floridan aquifer will continue to increase through 2045. Existing groundwater models are being used to evaluate how the increased risk of saltwater intrusion may be mitigated or even decreased if coastal pumping from the upper Floridan aquifer were redistributed to inland areas. Proposed model simulations include the systematic and incremental redistribution of projected pumping to existing and/or hypothetical upper Floridan aquifer wells located away from the coast.

To refine estimates of saltwater intrusion risk, the District is planning to implement the Enhanced Lower Floridan Aquifer Study during FY 2026-2027 and FY 2027-2028. This project will involve construction of a deep Lower Floridan aquifer monitoring well and the collection of data regarding the properties of the Bucatunna Clay confining unit. In addition, existing data are being evaluated to determine the feasibility of conducting aerial and ground-based electromagnetic (EM) surveys to help map the extent of the Bucatunna Clay confining unit transition zone and the position of the freshwater/saltwater interface along the coast. Data collected during this study will be used to refine groundwater flow and transport models. The updated models will be used to support the evaluation of minimum aquifer levels scheduled for completion in 2031.

Data Collection and Analysis

Hydrologic Data

Hydrologic data collection, monitoring, and analyses are essential to multiple District functions and programs. In Region II, the District maintains a network of rainfall gauges, streamflow gauges, and monitoring wells. Hydrologic and water quality data collection are enhanced by continued cooperation with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and data provided by water use permittees. Data collected and the evaluation of long-term trends inform water resource evaluation programs and activities.

Sand-and-gravel aquifer and upper Floridan aquifer monitoring wells within Region II also provide water level data for numerical groundwater flow and solute transport models, which are used to assess resource sustainability and saltwater intrusion risk. Data collection and monitoring will continue through the five-year work plan period. Contracted services to perform discrete interval water quality sampling to monitor for potential saltwater intrusion will continue through FY 2029-30.

Water Use Data and Planning

Water use data collection and analyses are foundational to regional water supply planning, as well as Districtwide assessments of water use and resource sustainability. Data are analyzed to prepare water use estimates and report metrics annually, with future demand projections generated every five years in

conjunction with WSA updates. Annually, individual water use permittees submit water use/pumpage reports detailing water use over the past year. District staff compile and evaluate these reports to assess water use trends and to calculate per capita use statistics. The projections, together with resource assessments, provide the basis for identifying alternative water supply source development needs within the RWSP.

The most recent WSA was completed in 2023. The next WSA update is scheduled for completion in 2028. Ongoing water supply planning efforts include collaboration with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services on Florida Statewide Agricultural Irrigation Demand annual reports, coordination with the Department of Environmental Protection, other water management districts, and the Florida Legislature’s Office of Economic and Demographic Research.

Water Resource Development Annual Funding Plan

The proposed annual funding plan to support accomplishment of the District’s water resource development priorities, as described above, is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Region II Water Resource Development Annual Funding Plan

Water Resource Development Projects	Budget Activity	FY 24-25 Expenditures	Anticipated Five Year Work Program					FY 25-26 to FY 29-30 Cost Estimate
			FY 25-26 Budget [†]	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	FY 28-29	FY 29-30	
Surface Water	1.1.1 1.1.2	\$7,648	\$163,850	\$736,000	\$236,000	\$236,000	\$236,000	\$1,607,850
Reuse	1.1.1 2.2.1	\$26,940	\$290,260	\$85,000	\$85,000	\$85,000	\$85,000	\$630,260
Conservation	1.1.1 2.2.1	\$37,169	\$91,280	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$291,280
Aquifer Storage and Recovery	2.2.1	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Groundwater Evaluations	1.1.2 2.2.1	\$461,408	\$285,560	\$2,885,000	\$2,635,000	\$685,000	\$685,000	\$7,175,560
Data Collection and Analysis	1.1.1 1.1.2 1.2.0	\$691,340	\$850,310	\$285,000	\$285,000	\$285,000	\$285,000	\$1,990,310
TOTAL		\$1,224,505	\$1,681,260	\$4,041,000	\$3,291,000	\$1,341,000	\$1,341,000	\$11,695,260

[†]Based on approved adopted budget.

WATER SUPPLY DEVELOPMENT

Water supply development involves “the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of public or private facilities for water collection, production, treatment, transmission, or distribution for sale, resale, or end use.”² Water supply development encompasses both traditional and alternative water supply development. Alternative water supply sources may include saltwater, brackish waters, surface water captured predominately during wet weather flows, sources made available through the addition of

² Section 373.019(26), F.S.

new storage capacity, reuse of reclaimed water, downstream augmentation of waterbodies with reclaimed water, stormwater, and any other water supply source designated as nontraditional for a water supply planning region in the applicable regional water supply plan.³ As indicated by section 373.705, F.S., water supply development is primarily the role of local governments, regional water supply authorities, and water utilities, although water management districts may provide assistance.

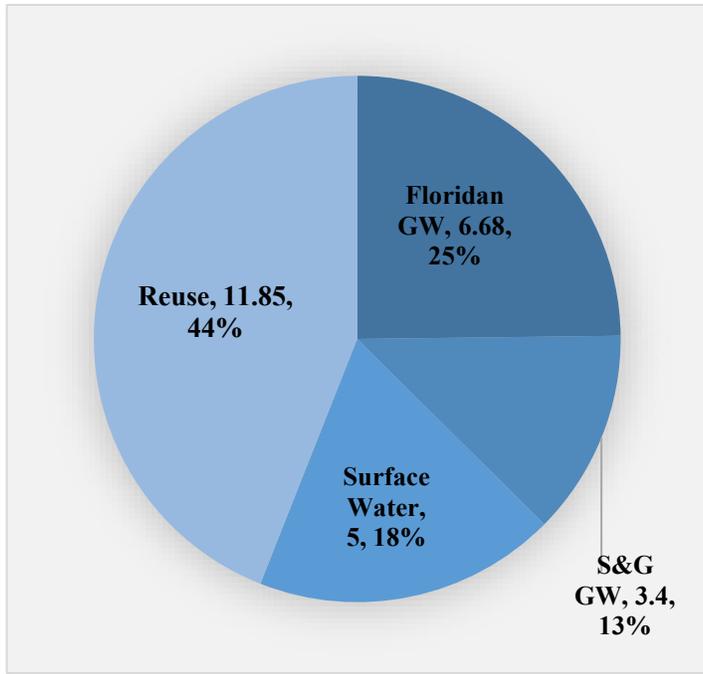


Figure 2. Potential Water Supply Development by Project Source (mgd)

The 2024 Region II RWSP identifies water supply development options that may generate up to 26.93 mgd of water by 2045 for future needs (Figure 2). About 62 percent or roughly 17 mgd are alternative supplies, including reclaimed water, and surface water as an alternative to traditional aquifer withdrawals.

Storage and distribution project options include water storage, distribution infrastructure improvements, and system interconnections. While these projects represent investment into the water distribution system and often increase capacity, they do not create new water supply. Due to this, increases in capacity from these projects are not counted among future potential water supply. Water conservation project options include infrastructure replacements and upgrades, advanced metering systems, and public

information conservation programs. Water conservation and alternative water supply projects meet the goals of the RWSP and are therefore preferred options. Traditional groundwater projects may also continue to be an option for inland areas.

The 2024 RWSP includes, within the water supply development component, reuse project options submitted by utilities in all three Region II counties with a combined total potential reuse flow of approximately 11.9 mgd by 2045. This is in addition to approximately 12.8 mgd of reclaimed water currently provided by utilities in the region for public access irrigation. Most of the project options indicate some availability of local matching funds and proposed implementation within the next five to ten years.

State alternative water supply and water protection and sustainability trust fund (WPSTF) appropriations have been awarded that leverage local and other resources. Ongoing District-supported projects are summarized below:

- The South Santa Rosa Reuse Initiative, a cooperative effort between Santa Rosa County, the Holley-Navarre Water System, the city of Gulf Breeze, and Eglin AFB, will interconnect multiple utilities, improve water reclamation facilities, and expand reclaimed water systems, increasing the reclaimed water resource for the region and eliminating

³ Section 373.019(1), F.S.

wastewater discharge into Santa Rosa Sound. Upon completion, this project is expected to make 1.4 mgd of reclaimed water available.

- The Pace Water System Chumuckla Highway Ground Storage Tank and Booster Pump Station Project will provide for construction of a 2.0-million-gallon ground storage tank and booster pump station to deliver reclaimed water to residential customers and a park complex.
- In FY 2023-24, the City of Niceville began working on the Reclaimed Water to Deer Moss Creek Subdivision Project in cooperation with the District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The project will provide 22,500 linear feet of reclaimed watermain, a holding pond, and high service pumps. Reclaimed water from Okaloosa County will be routed through this facility and provided to the Deer Moss Creek subdivision.

Additionally, the District is working with rural communities to identify funding resources that can reduce water loss and better position these communities to meet current and future water supply infrastructure needs. A grant project with the city of Paxton to reduce water loss through installation of approximately 350 water meters and appurtenances was completed in December 2024. A list of water supply development projects submitted by utilities in support of the 2024 RWSP update is included in Appendix A.

DISTRICTWIDE AND SUPPORTING INITIATIVES

Implementation of water resource development, water supply development, and water quality projects in Region II are complemented by broader regional and Districtwide programs and initiatives. Programs such as these, including in areas where RWSP development is not required, reflect proactive efforts that are protective of resources and advance resource sustainability Districtwide.

Water Supply Development Assistance

The District continues support for water supply development by assisting local governments and utilities with project development and identifying funding sources and options. Limited additional grant funding may be provided as resources allow. Ongoing projects include a \$50,000 grant to the city of Gretna for construction of a ground storage tank, a \$500,000 grant to Gulf County for construction of a Floridan aquifer production well, and a \$50,000 grant to the town of Campbellton for replacement of approximately 100 water meters to reduce water loss.

Water Reuse

Helping local governments and utilities across northwest Florida identify opportunities to develop and expand the reuse of reclaimed water remains a District priority. Projects that both offset the use of potable water sources and reduce wastewater discharges have been identified in several regions. For example, during FY 2024-25, the District provided a \$80,000 grant to the city of Port St. Joe for a reuse project at the Port St. Joe Water Treatment Plant to reduce wastewater generated by the water treatment plant by redirecting the backwash water back to the head of the plant for treatment (recycle).

Water Conservation

In FY 2025-26, the District will extend water conservation cost-share assistance to utilities Districtwide, with emphasis on assisting financially disadvantaged small communities. Among projects considered will be rebate programs for low volume fixtures and appliances, leak detection services, water audits and public education. Additional efforts include agricultural water use efficiency measures, as described below

Water Resource Evaluations

The District conducts monitoring and assessment activities to assess the status and sustainability of water resources across northwest Florida. The 2023 Districtwide WSA, described above, includes evaluations of the sustainability of water resources through 2045 for all seven regions of the District. Additionally, during FY 2021-22, the District completed a hydrogeologic evaluation in Gulf County to assess the suitability of the intermediate aquifer as a water supply source. The work involved construction of a test production well and several monitor wells, water quality testing, and completion of an aquifer performance test. The results indicated modest quantities of potable groundwater are available from the intermediate aquifer system near White City.

Agriculture BMP Cost-Share Program

Significant efforts continue to enhance agricultural water use efficiency and support implementation of associated precision agriculture practices, targeted primarily for the Jackson Blue Spring basin of the Apalachicola River watershed. In 2024, the program was expanded to include the Chipola River Springs groundwater contribution area. Together with the Northwest Florida Mobile Irrigation Laboratory, these efforts are increasing water use efficiency and reducing nutrient applications within the spring basin.

Well Abandonment

The District continues its program to properly plug abandoned and contaminated wells through well permitting and a cost-share assistance program. Well abandonments considered for financial assistance typically include financially constrained public water systems, wells located within a WRCA, and wells within areas delineated under Chapter 62-524, F.A.C. (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Jackson, and Leon counties). Other projects not meeting the previously listed criteria can also be considered, as appropriate.

During FY 2024-25, approximately 305 permits were issued to plug abandoned or contaminated wells Districtwide. Approximately 60 percent of those were in Region II. As there were no requests for financial assistance, permits were issued at no cost to the District other than staff time.

Water Quality

The District's interrelated programs support achievement of statewide goals articulated in the Governor's Executive Orders 19-12 and 23-06 to improve water quality, as well as to further development of alternative water supplies and to enhance coastal resilience. The District's Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program provides a watershed-based planning framework to support water quality protection and improvement throughout northwest Florida.

Building upon the SWIM program, the District recently implemented the Northwest Florida Watersheds Partnership Program to provide funding for planning, data collection, design, and implementation of projects to enhance water quality, aquatic habitat, and water supply in priority sub-basins. Draft work plans have been prepared for seven priority sub-basins that describe water resource issues and solutions, including proposed projects, estimated costs, and funding needs. As of January 2026, the seven work plans include 144 projects with unmet funding needs exceeding \$385 million.

These programs engage stakeholder-driven initiatives and complement and support state water quality restoration efforts, including Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs), the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, nonpoint source management grants, and other cooperative funding programs. Priorities, funding resources, and progress for watershed management and water quality protection and restoration are outlined in Chapter 9 of the District's March 1 Consolidated Annual Report.

Land Acquisition, Restoration, and Management

Since 1984, the District has protected approximately 226,662 acres across northwest Florida for water resource purposes, either in fee simple or through conservation easements. The District

acquires land for water quality protection, flood protection and floodplain management, water recharge, and natural resource conservation. District lands within the Econfina Creek Recharge Area, purchased for water resource development purposes, protect the quality and quantity of recharge for Deer Point Lake Reservoir, the primary source of water for Bay County.

FUNDING SOURCES AND NEEDS

The state constitutional and statutory millage rate cap for the District is 0.05, significantly less than the ad valorem taxing authority afforded the other four water management districts. The District's FY 2025-26 ad valorem tax millage rate, as set by the Governing Board, is 0.0207. To meet its areas of responsibility, the District must rely on other sources of funding, as available. Funding sources used to support water resource and supply development include:

- State Legislative appropriations for alternative water supply and water quality improvement,
- Water Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund (WPSTF),
- Federal funding awarded by the State for alternative water supply,
- Land Acquisition Trust Fund,
- District Fund Balance,
- State Legislative appropriations for General Operations,
- Local government match funding, and
- Ad valorem.

Since FY 2019-20, the Florida Legislature has made significant resources available for alternative water supply development. The funding is available to help communities develop alternative water supplies and to implement water conservation programs, with priority funding given to regional projects in the areas of greatest need. The District conducts an annual grant cycle and submits recommended projects to the Governing Board for consideration. Board-approved projects are forwarded to DEP, which evaluates projects from all five of the water management districts in making final funding awards.

The WPSTF, established by the 2005 Legislature, has enabled the District to provide cost-share assistance for construction of alternative water supply development projects and implementation of priority water resource development projects. In FY 2019-20, limited funding was appropriated to the water management districts for the first time since FY 2009-10. The District received \$100,000, which will help support the South Santa Rosa Reuse Initiative. An additional \$180,000 was appropriated in FY 2020-21 to provide additional support for alternative water supply development and water conservation.

The District has also received a total of \$500,000 in FDEP AWS grant funding for FY 2025-26, which will be utilized for a water conservation grant cost-share program (\$250,000) and for feasibility studies of future surface water sources and managed aquifer recharge in Planning Region II (\$250,000).

Local government and utility funding participation is especially important for several types of water resource development projects, notably alternative surface water, reuse of reclaimed water,

water conservation, and aquifer storage and recovery, as well as for construction of water supply development projects. All projects require substantial local investment once they reach the water supply development stage.

APPENDIX A: WATER SUPPLY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The following table provides a list of Region II water supply development projects. The District has not yet adopted MFLs in Region II and there are no recovery or prevention strategies to report on in this Work Program.

Appendix A. Region II Water Supply Development Projects

Unique ID	Project Name	Cooperating Entity	Project Type	Project Status	Total Water (mgd)	Prior District Funding	FY 2025-26 Budgeted	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28	FY 2028-29	FY 2029-30	Cooperating Entity Match	Project Total
NF-00045A	Shoal River Surface Water	Okaloosa County	Surface Water Storage	On Hold	TBD	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
NWWS-00053 (A-D)	South Santa Rosa Reuse Initiative	Holley-Navarre WS; Santa Rosa Co.; Gulf Breeze; Eglin AFB	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	Underway	1.4	\$2,600,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$22,775,000	\$32,875,000
NWWS-00058A	GST and Booster Pump Station	Pace Water System	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	Underway	2	\$941,450	\$169,275	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,110,725	\$2,221,450
NWWS-00059A	Water Meter Replacement	City of Paxton	PS Conservation	Complete	0.25	\$135,615	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$135,615
NWWS-00060A	Reclaimed Water to Deer Moss Creek Sub - division S/D	City of Niceville	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	Underway	4	\$1,651,733	\$1,318,267	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,970,000
NWWS-00061A	Reuse piping - North	DWU	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$3,200,000
NWWS-00062A	Reuse piping – Crosstown Connector	DWU	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$650,000
NWWS-00063A	Reuse piping - South	DWU	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$300,000
NWWS-00064A	Reclaimed Water Interconnection	Gulf Breeze Regional Water System	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$3,500,000
NWWS-00065A	Jerry D. Mitchem WRF Reclaimed Water Supply	Okaloosa County	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	RWSP or RPS Option Only	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NWWS-00066A	Shoal River Ranch WRF Program	Okaloosa County	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	RWSP or RPS Option Only	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$63,000,000
NWWS-00067A	RW Reuse Capacities	Regional Utilities Inc.	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$4,000,000

NWWS-00068A	Seacrest, Point Washington, Piping / Capacity Upgrade	Regional Utilities Inc	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$3,000,000
NWWS-00069A	Wolfe Creek Sprayfield Capacity Increase	Regional Utilities Inc	Reclaimed Water (for groundwater recharge or natural system restoration)	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,250,000
NWWS-00070A	SWU Reuse Expansion	SWUC	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	RWSP or RPS Option Only	1.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$3,500,000
NWWS-00071A	5 MG GST for Reclaimed Water	City of Niceville	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$6,000,000
NWWS-00072A	RPA Reuse Water Tank at 331	Regional Utilities Inc	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$2,500,000
NWWS-00073A	SWU Reuse Expansion	SWUC	Reclaimed Water for Potable Offset	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$4,000,000
	Pipeline / Distribution Upgrades	Auburn Water System	Distribution / Transmission Capacity	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$22,000
	Pipeline / Distribution Upgrades	Bagdad Garcon	Distribution / Transmission Capacity	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$150,000
	Pipeline / Distribution Upgrades	City of Laurel Hill	Distribution / Transmission Capacity	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$2,850,000
	Meter Replacement	Auburn Water System	PS and CII Conservation	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$330,000
	Flex Net Metering	Auburn Water System	PS and CII Conservation	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$550,000
	Passive Conservation	NWFWMD	PS and CII Conservation	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

	Choctawhatchee River Surface Water Supply Project	NFWFMD	Surface Water	RWSP or RPS Option Only	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$231,000,000
Totals						\$11,389,923	\$3,987,542	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$29,397,391	\$368,004,065

APPENDIX B: BASIN MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN PROJECTS

Basin Management Action Plans provide blueprints for achieving pollutant load reductions specified in TMDLs to meet water quality standards. In 2016, the Florida Legislature amended section 373.036, F.S., to require identification of specific projects related to water quality or water quantity within a work program. To support this requirement, information related to BMAP projects or recovery or prevention strategies within regional water supply planning regions are included within the District's Water Resource Development Work Program. Additional information related to water quality projects and MFLs Districtwide will be reported in the District's March 1 Consolidated Annual Report.

Within northwest Florida, BMAPs have been adopted for three waterbodies: Bayou Chico (Escambia County), Jackson Blue Spring and Merritts Mill Pond (Jackson County), and the Upper Wakulla River and Wakulla Springs (with a contribution area in Wakulla, Leon, and Gadsden counties). Additionally, a small portion of Jefferson County within the District is within the contribution area for the Wacissa River and Wacissa Spring Group BMAP.

As none of these BMAPs are within Regional Water Supply Planning Region II, there are no BMAP projects to include in this five-year work plan update.

Consolidated Annual Report

Chapter 6

Florida Forever Water Management District Work Plan Annual Report



Florida Forever Water Management District Work Plan Annual Report

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Chapter 6. Florida Forever Water Management District Work Plan Annual Report

Introduction

Section 373.199(7), F.S. requires the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD, or District) to annually update the Florida Forever Five-Year Work Plan. The 25th annual update of the plan contains information on projects eligible to receive funding under the Florida Forever Act and Land Acquisition Trust Fund and also reports on land management activities; surplus or exchanged lands; and the progress of funding, staffing, and resource management of projects for which the District is responsible. This plan also applies to land acquisition funds deposited into the Land Acquisition Trust Fund pursuant to s. 28(a), Art. X of the State Constitution.

Florida Forever Program

In 1999, the Florida Legislature passed the Florida Forever Act (s. 259.105, F.S.) which has continued the state's long-term commitment to environmental land acquisition, restoration of degraded natural areas, and high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities. This update has been prepared based on there not being any new Florida Forever funding allocated for the planning period of FY 2025-26 or FY 2026-27.

While previous programs focused almost exclusively on the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands, the Florida Forever program is somewhat different in that it authorizes the use of up to half of the program funding for certain types of capital improvement projects. Eligible uses of these funds include water resource development, stormwater management projects, water body restoration, recreation facilities, public access improvements, and removing invasive plants, among others. The remaining 50 percent must be spent on land acquisition. The table below illustrates actual expenditures for land acquisition using Florida Forever funding since it began. The District successfully expended its allocation of Florida Forever funding by FY 2011.

Table 6.1 Land Acquisition Expenditures by Water Management Area

Water Management Area	Acres	Dollars Expended
Perdido River	6,048	\$13,532,550
Escambia River	697	\$ 1,231,692
Yellow River	205	\$ 630,046
Choctawhatchee River	4,269	\$ 6,165,950
Econfina Creek	3,663	\$ 7,976,220
Apalachicola River	1,912	\$ 3,981,055
Chipola River	1,716	\$ 5,532,488
St. Marks River	830	\$ 1,862,050
Ochlockonee River	1,529	\$ 1,951,197
TOTAL	20,869	\$42,863,248

Since the inception of the District's land acquisition program, the goal has been to protect the floodplains of our major rivers and creeks. In more recent years, the District's land acquisition program has been

focused on springs protection. To date, 226,688 acres have been protected for water resource purposes through the land acquisition efforts of the District either in fee simple or through conservation easements.

Acquisition Planning

The District employs a watershed approach to select and prioritize the water resources and natural systems within the groundwater contribution areas and major river basins of northwest Florida. Primary among the considerations in this process are how specific floodplain or buffer areas help satisfy the District’s water resources and natural system protection objectives; the availability of funds; the seller’s willingness; how different areas fit into the District’s land management strategy; and the size, accessibility, and overall condition of each property. Recommendations from interest groups, landowners, local governments, agency representatives, and other interested parties are given full consideration in the acquisition process. Existing water management areas (WMAs) include the Perdido River, Escambia River, Blackwater River, Yellow River, Garcon Point, Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek, Econfina Creek, Chipola River, and Apalachicola River.

Subject to available funding, the District’s acquisition efforts this year will focus on the purchase of fee simple or less than fee simple (conservation easements) projects that protect the quality and quantity of water that flows into and out of springs. The District’s acquisition efforts will focus on acquiring fee or less than fee simple interest in properties located within the Jackson Blue, Chipola, Econfina, and Wakulla springs and Spring Creek Spring Group groundwater contribution areas.

In developing the annual update, District staff review projects proposed by DEP’s Division of State Lands to minimize redundancy and facilitate an efficient and mutually supportive land-acquisition effort.

Approved Acquisition Areas

The approved acquisition areas listed below are not presented on a priority basis. For each of these waterbodies, it is desirable to acquire both the floodplain and a natural buffer zone to provide further water resource protection.

Table 6.2 Approved Acquisition Areas

Rivers & Creeks Originating In Florida	Rivers and Creeks Originating Outside Florida	Springs	Lakes & Ponds	Other Ecosystems, Basins and Buffers
Wakulla River	Apalachicola River	St. Marks River near Natural Bridge	Lake Jackson	Southwest Escambia County Ecosystem
St. Marks River	Lower Apalachicola River Wetland	Spring Lake Spring Group Area	Sand Hill Lakes	Garcon Point Ecosystem
Econfina Creek and other Tributaries of Deer Point Lake	Chipola River	Bosel Springs Chipola River Springs Waddell Springs		West Bay Buffer
Lafayette Creek	Choctawhatchee River including Holmes Creek	Cypress Spring		Sandy Creek Basin
	Escambia River	Hays Springs		Apalachicola Bay and St. Vincent Sound Buffer
	Blackwater River including Juniper, Big Coldwater, and Coldwater creeks	Econfina Creek Springs		
	Ochlockonee River and its major tributaries	Jackson Blue Spring		

	Yellow and Shoal rivers	Wakulla Spring		
	Perdido River and Bay			

Groundwater Recharge Areas

Such lands may be designated by the District as recharge areas for the Floridan, sand-and-gravel, and other important aquifers and may be acquired in fee simple or less than fee simple.

Donated Lands

The District may accept donations of lands within its major acquisition areas if those lands are necessary for water management, water supply, and the conservation and protection of land and water resources.

Exchange Lands

The District may exchange lands it has acquired for other lands that qualify for acquisition. The District’s Governing Board establishes the terms and conditions it considers necessary to equalize values of the exchange properties. In all such exchanges, the District’s goal will be to ensure there is a net positive environmental benefit.

Mitigation Acquisitions

Under Florida law, unavoidable losses of natural wetlands or wetland functions require “mitigation” through the acquisition or restoration of other nearby wetlands. The District is often the recipient of such lands in the form of donations and also serves as the mitigation agent for the Florida Department of Transportation. Whenever possible, the District attempts to acquire mitigation lands contiguous to its existing ownership, but since wetland type and proximity to the original wetland impact are often paramount, the District will on occasion acquire or manage isolated tracts.

Surplus Lands

Section 373.089, F.S., allows the Governing Board of the District to sell (surplus) lands or interests or rights in lands to which the District has acquired title or to which it may hereafter acquire title. Any lands, or interests or rights in lands, determined by the Governing Board to be surplus may be sold by the District at any time for the highest price, but in no case shall the selling price be less than the appraised value.

District staff conducted an evaluation of all District lands to determine if there were any parcels appropriate for surplus. The parcels recommended for surplus were small, non-contiguous, isolated tracts. The following tract was declared surplus by the District’s Governing Board in 2013.

Table 6.3 District Surplus Lands

WMA	Acres	County	Acquired Date	Status
Escambia River	115	Escambia	April 26, 1994	For Sale

Note to Landowners

The District’s land acquisition process only involves willing sellers and is usually initiated by landowners offering parcels for sale.

This plan includes a number of areas the District has identified for potential purchase. If your property is included in any of our acquisition areas or maps and you do not desire to sell your land to the District, Florida Statutes require the District to remove your property from the acquisition plan at the earliest

opportunity. Please contact the Division of Asset Management at (850) 539-5999 at any time if you wish to remove your property from possible purchase consideration. The District will maintain a list of such requests and annually adjust its acquisition plan accordingly.

Less Than Fee Methods of Land Protection

In less than fee purchases, the District attempts to acquire only those rights in property (i.e., development and land use conversion rights) that are needed to accomplish specific resource protection goals. Such less than fee methods can provide a number of public benefits. First, acquisition funding can be conserved, thereby enabling the protection of more land with limited funds. Also, the property continues in private ownership and thus may remain on local property tax rolls. Moreover, the District does not incur the long-term costs of land management since the property's management and maintenance remains the landowner's responsibility. Not all properties are suitable for less than fee acquisition, but the potential benefits make these kinds of transactions the preferred alternative to the District's typical fee-simple land purchases.

DEP Florida Forever Priority List

The Florida Forever Priority List can be found at:

<https://floridadep.gov/lands/environmental-services/content/florida-forever>.

Critical Wetlands

The 2022 Florida Legislature enacted a law that requires water management districts to annually identify properties that may be classified as "critical wetlands" for potential acquisition using Florida's Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF). In response, the District conducted a systematic review of properties throughout the Florida Panhandle to identify wetland properties considered critically important to protecting or restoring wetlands and water resource values and functions. Letters were sent to the owners of the identified priority parcels, as required by section 373.036, F.S., and the District consulted with affected local governments. An initial list of critical wetlands was approved by the Governing Board on September 10, 2025. To date, the District has not received any LATF funding to purchase critical wetlands. Additional information may be found in the FY 2025-26 Strategic Water Management Plan (<https://nwfwater.com/Data-Publications/Reports-Plans/Water-Management-Plans>).

Florida Forever Goals and Numeric Performance Measures

As outlined in Chapter 18-24, F.A.C., the District is required to report on the goals and measures for lands to be acquired under the Florida Forever program. The following page summarizes the goals and measures applicable to the Northwest Florida Water Management District.

Florida Forever Goals and Numeric Performance Measures

Reported as of October 1, 2025

Rule No. 18-24.0022

(2)(d)1. For proposed acquisitions, see the (Florida Forever) Water Management District Work Plan Annual Report in the Consolidated Annual Report.

(2)(d)2. For proposed acquisitions for water resource development projects, see the (Florida Forever) Water Management District Work Plan Annual Report in the Consolidated Annual Report

(3)(a)2. Refer to (Florida Forever) Capital Improvement Work Plan of the Consolidated Annual Report for funded capital improvements identified in SWIM, stormwater, or restoration plans.

(3)(a)3. NFWFMD lands to be treated for upland invasive, exotic plants = <5,000 acres

The District has not conducted surveys to identify the spatial distribution of invasive exotic plant infestation on District lands. It is known that invasive plant problems exist at varying levels on some District lands, and staff treat with herbicide as needed.

(3)(b) New water to be made available through Florida Forever funding for water resource development - Major water resource development accomplishment has been provided by additions to Econfina Creek Water Management Area (1992-2009). Additionally, Florida Forever funding has in the past contributed to the construction of a 750,000-gallon reuse storage facility for the City of Freeport to serve a 0.6 MGD reuse water service area (project completed in 2009). Funding for water supply development, including construction of water reuse facilities, is primarily provided through State alternative water supply funding, the Water Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund, NFWFMD General Fund, and local funding. See the NFWFMD Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program report and Consolidated Annual Report. This update has been prepared based on there not being any new Florida Forever funding allocated for water resource development projects for the planning period of FY 2025-26 and FY 2026-27.

(4)(a)1. NFWFMD lands that are in need of and are undergoing restoration, enhancement, or management by the District.

In need of restoration, enhancement, and management = 455 acres
Undergoing restoration or enhancement = 996 acres
Restoration completed = 32,480 acres
Restoration maintenance = 32,480 acres

(4)(a)3. Refer to section 3, (Florida Forever) Capital Improvement Work Plan of the Consolidated Annual Report for capital improvements identified in SWIM, stormwater, or restoration plans.

(4)(a)6. NFWFMD lands under upland invasive, exotic plant maintenance control = <10,000 acres

(4)(b) Refer to Water Projects in the Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program of the Consolidated Annual Report for quantity of new water made available through regional water supply plans.

(4)(c) See (Florida Forever) Land Acquisition Work Plan (Table 6.6) of the Consolidated Annual Report for resource-based recreation facilities by type.

Land Acquisition Projects

The Florida Forever Act, particularly section 373.199(3) F.S., identifies information that must be included for each Florida Forever Project. Some of the required information is relatively general and applicable to all projects. To reduce the redundancies of this plan, general information is provided separately as part of the District's Five-Year Plan for the Florida Forever Program. This update has been prepared based on there not being any new Florida Forever funding allocated for land acquisition for the planning period of FY 2025-26 or FY 2026-27. Specific land acquisition project areas are individually identified and detailed information specific to the project is provided in the following pages.

Figure 6.1 Proposed Land Acquisition Areas, 2026

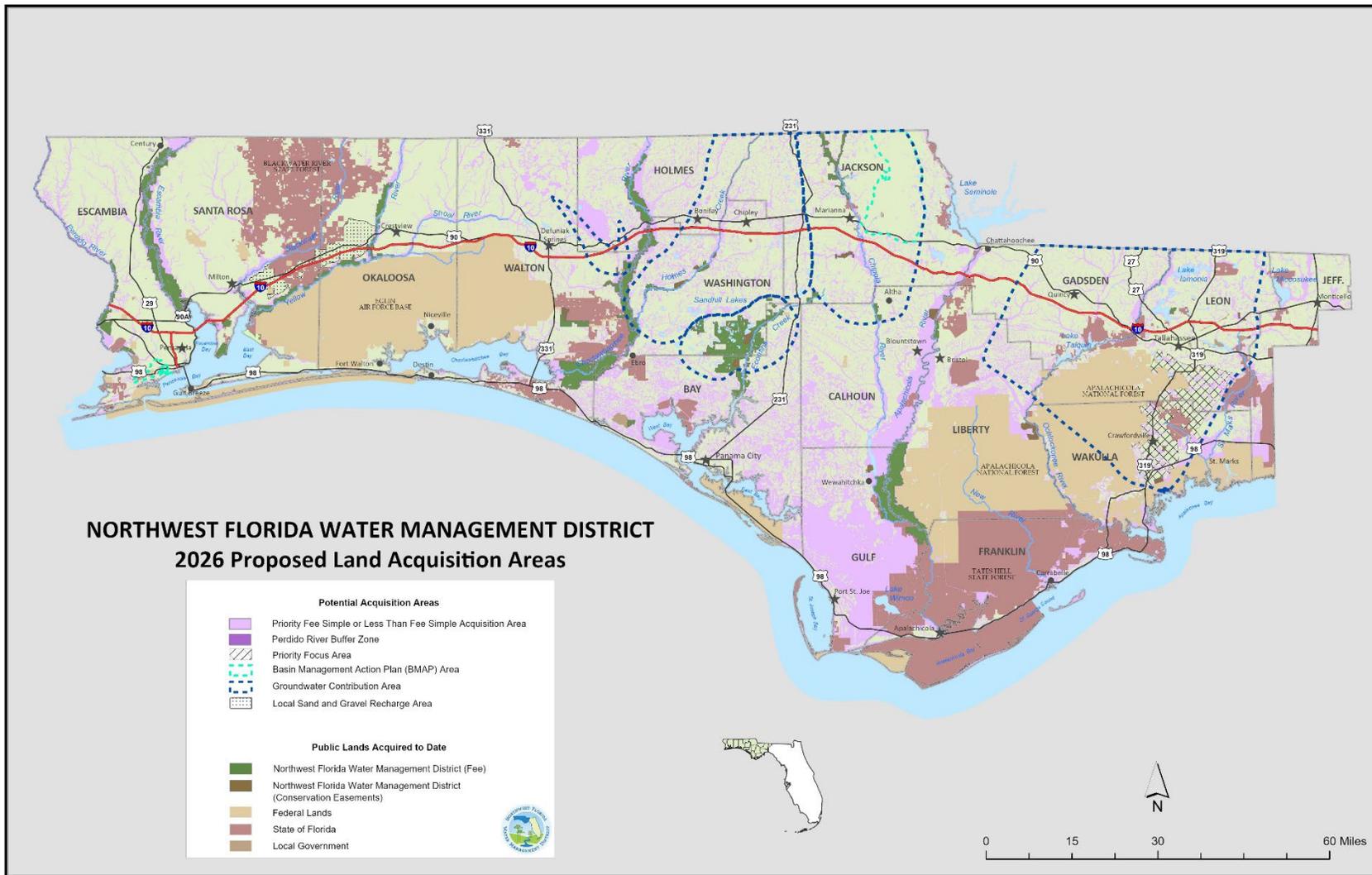
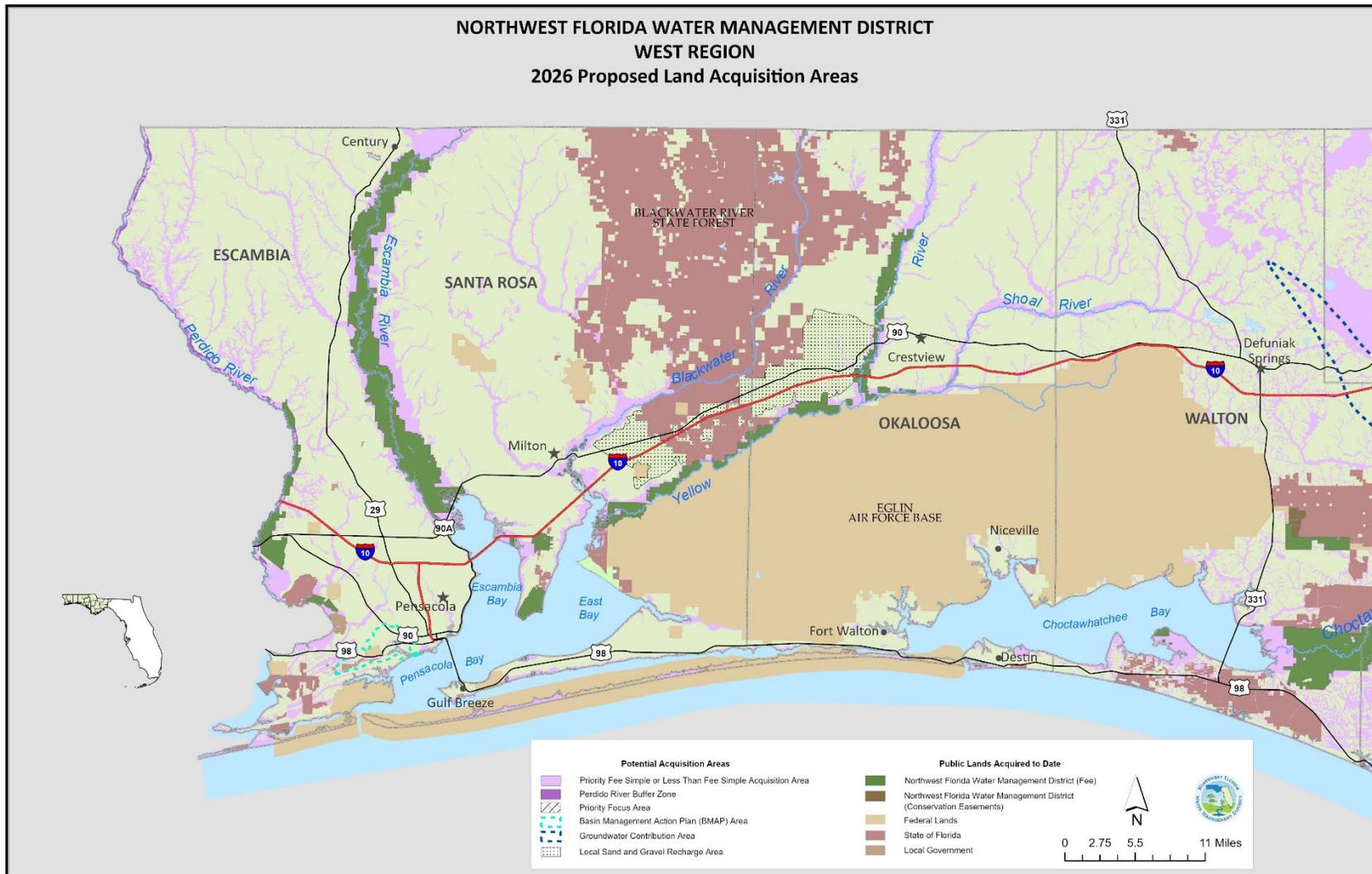


Figure 6.2 Proposed Land Acquisition Areas, 2026, West Region



FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Perdido River and Bay Basin

The Perdido River serves as the state line, separating Florida from Alabama (see Figure 6.2). The Perdido River has been designated an Outstanding Florida Water and Special Water system, a canoe trail, and a recreation area. The upper part of the river is a shifting sand river system, unique to portions of northwest Florida, south Alabama, southern Mississippi, and eastern Louisiana, while the lower end of the river is characteristic of a blackwater stream. The District owns 6,261 acres in fee simple and four acres in less than fee between the Perdido River and Bay.

The project area is mostly undeveloped and contains a diverse list of species. Acquisition of any floodplain area along the Perdido River, whether in fee or less than fee, will enhance water quality protection efforts for the Perdido Bay system.

Purchases within the Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Acquisition Area will be concentrated on floodplain parcels along the river, around the river mouth, and designated tributaries.

The Perdido Bay is an estuarine system which receives fresh water from the Perdido River. Subsidiary embayments within the Perdido Bay estuary include Tarkiln Bay, Arnica Bay, Wolf Bay, Bayou La Launch, and Bayou St. John. Perdido Key separates Perdido Bay, Tarkiln Bay, Arnica Bay, Bayou La Launch, and Bayou St. John from the Gulf of Mexico. Big Lagoon adjoins Perdido Bay to the east, separating it from Pensacola Bay. Currently, the District owns 810.19 acres along Perdido Bay.

Purchases within the Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Acquisition Area will be concentrated on floodplain parcels adjacent to the bay which can enhance water quality protection.

Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Southwest Escambia County Ecosystem

Several major estuarine drainages, including Jones Swamp, Bayou Grande, Big Lagoon, and Tarkiln Bay, intersect in southwest Escambia County (see Figure 6.2). These, in turn, comprise portions of the Pensacola Bay and Perdido Bay watersheds. The Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Areas border a major urban area containing residential and commercial development.

Protecting the ecological integrity of this area is important to the quality of water resources in the Pensacola Bay and Perdido Bay systems. Acquisition will help limit non-point source pollution and untreated stormwater runoff by preventing channelization. Wetlands and upland buffers will also be preserved, and riparian buffer zones will be maintained. Additionally, public access will be improved, and fish, wildlife, and estuarine productivity will be protected.

This acquisition is consistent with a number of major initiatives designed to protect environmental and other public resources in the region. These include water quality treatment systems, acquisition programs for the Jones Swamp Wetland Preserve and the Perdido Pitcher Plant Prairie, and efforts to prevent encroachment on NAS Pensacola. Together with nearby state parks, these acquisitions will provide for a major environmental reserve and greenway system within a rapidly urbanizing area.

Local Sand-and-Gravel Recharge Area

Designated area has groundwater recharge potential.

Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Escambia River Basin

Beginning at the confluence of the Conecuh River and Escambia Creek above the Florida-Alabama border and discharging into Escambia Bay, the Escambia River corridor (see Figure 6.2) contains a rich diversity of plant and animal species, as well as waterfowl and many rare fish. The Escambia River basin is broad and well-drained in the upper reaches, and swampy below Molino, Florida. While the overall water quality is considered good, many point and non-point pollution sources empty into the river. Currently, the District owns 35,413 acres in fee and 19 acres in less than fee along the river.

Purchases within the Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Acquisition Area will be concentrated on floodplain parcels around the river mouth and designated tributaries.

Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Garcon Point Ecosystem

The Priority Fee Simple or Less Than Fee Simple acquisition area contains a portion of the Garcon Point Peninsula, which borders Pensacola, Escambia, East, and Blackwater bays (see Figure 6.2). The project area is largely undeveloped and includes a variety of natural communities that are in good to excellent condition. The entire tract provides considerable protection to the water quality of the surrounding estuary, as well as harboring a number of rare and endangered species.

The emergent estuarine marsh that borders several miles of shoreline within the project is an important source of organic detritus and nutrients and serves as a nursery for many of the species found in Pensacola Bay. These wetlands function as stormwater filtration and a storm buffer area, as well as providing erosion controls to the neighboring uplands. A minimum of 13 endangered or threatened species are known to live in the region including the recently listed federally endangered reticulated flatwoods salamander. The northern wet prairie portion is known to be an outstanding pitcher plant habitat.

Purchases within the Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Acquisition Area will be concentrated on floodplain parcels adjacent to Escambia and East Bays. Currently the District owns 3,245 acres on Garcon Point.

Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Blackwater River Basin

Originating in the Conecuh National Forest in Alabama, the Blackwater River (see Figure 6.2) has a large portion of its Florida watershed further protected by the Blackwater River State Forest. In all, nearly 50 miles of the river corridor is remote and undeveloped. As a result, the Blackwater River is considered one of Florida's best-preserved waterways. Currently the District owns 381 acres along the Blackwater River immediately north and south of Milton in Santa Rosa County.

The Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Acquisition Area includes considerable floodplain. Purchases within the Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Acquisition Area will be concentrated on these parcels. In addition, purchase of lands north and northwest of Eglin Air Force Base (AFB), along the I-10 corridor, would provide approximately 52,000 acres of land that has the potential for future water resource development to supplement the constrained potable water sources in southern Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties. Acquisitions in this area are consistent with the District's Regional Water Supply Plan for Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton counties to protect future supply sources.

Local Sand-and-Gravel Recharge Area

In Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, the sand-and-gravel aquifer is the principal source of potable water for public supply. The sand-and-gravel aquifer is unconfined or poorly confined, making it particularly susceptible to contamination by surface land uses. Land acquisition along the I-10 corridor between the Yellow and Blackwater rivers in Santa Rosa County would protect recharge areas that are important for future water supply sources. This area encompasses approximately 52,000 acres.

Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over the next five years or more. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Yellow and Shoal River Basin

The Yellow River has its headwaters in Conecuh National Forest in Alabama and forms the northern border of Eglin AFB across much of eastern Santa Rosa and western Okaloosa counties (see Figure 6.2). The proposed acquisitions would bring floodplain of the Yellow River in Florida under public ownership. Included in the project is a segment of the lower Shoal River, the largest tributary to the Yellow River. The Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Acquisition Area will be given to tracts containing considerable floodplain. Currently the District owns 16,553 acres along the Yellow River.

Although the Yellow and Shoal rivers exhibit good overall water quality, both are fed largely by rainwater runoff and are thus susceptible to pollution from land-use activities. The Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Acquisition Area would provide water quality protection beginning at the Alabama border. Purchase of lands north and northwest of Eglin AFB, along the I-10 corridor, would provide approximately 52,000 acres of land that has the potential for future water resource development to supplement the strained potable water sources in southern Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties. Acquisitions in this area are consistent with the District's Regional Water Supply Plan for Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton counties to protect future supply sources.

Local Sand-and-Gravel Recharge Area

The sand-and-gravel aquifer is unconfined or poorly confined, making it particularly susceptible to contamination by land uses. Land acquisition along the I-10 corridor between the Yellow and Blackwater rivers in Okaloosa County would protect recharge areas that are important for future water supply sources. This area encompasses approximately 52,000 acres.

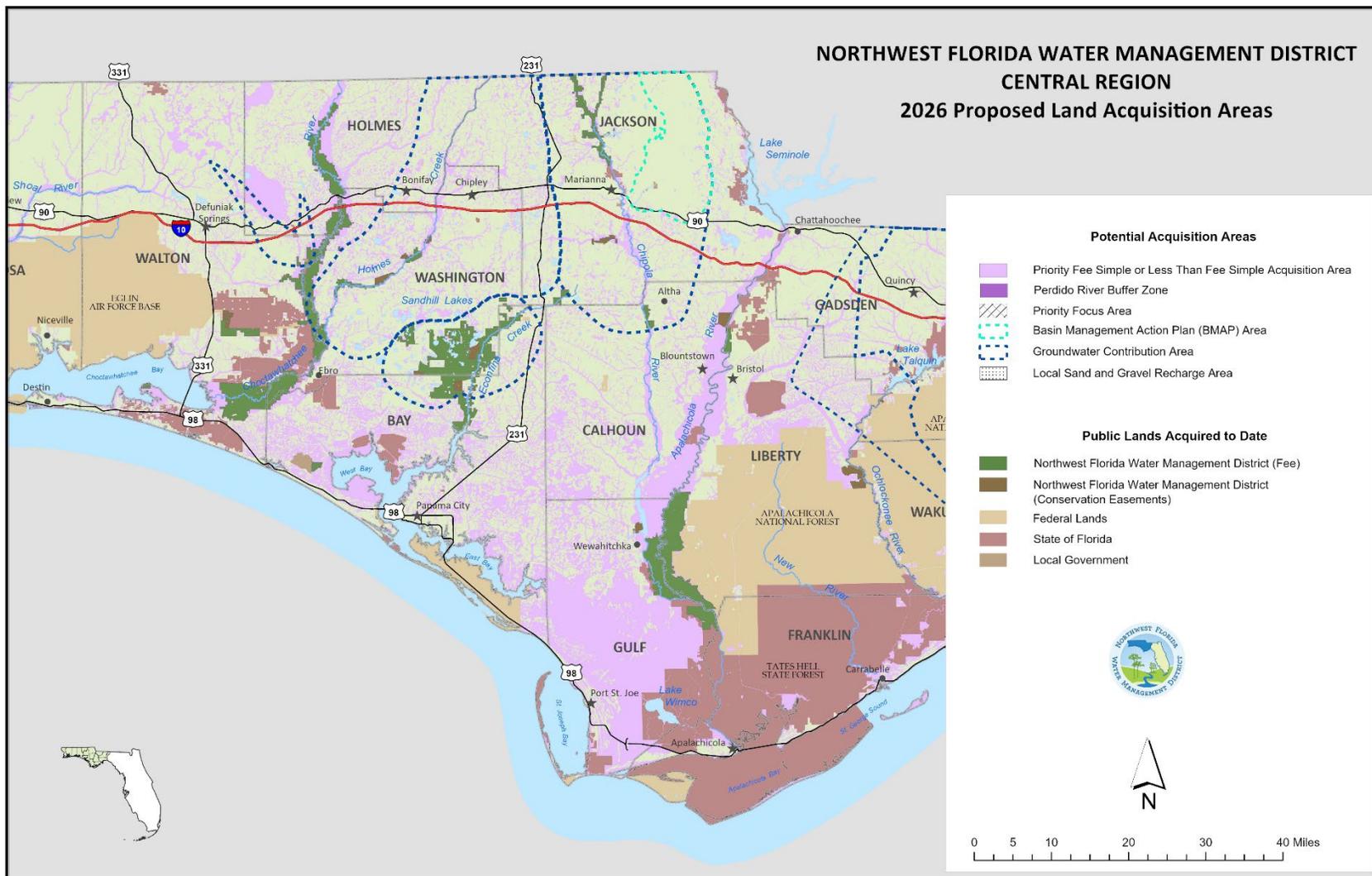
Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

Figure 6.3 Proposed Land Acquisition Areas, 2026, Central Region



FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Lafayette Creek

Originating in south central Walton County, the Lafayette Creek drainage basin is located northeast of Freeport (see Figure 6.3). The main stem of the creek begins about seven miles east of Freeport and runs due west for about six miles before it turns south and empties into LaGrange Bayou/Choctawhatchee Bay. Purchases with the Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Acquisition Area will protect a portion of Magnolia and Wolf creeks, both of which are significant tributaries to Lafayette Creek, as well as protect many diverse natural communities and habitat types. Currently, the District owns 3,160 acres along the creek, including 420 acres for DOT mitigation purposes.

Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Choctawhatchee River and Holmes Creek Basin

Originating in Alabama and flowing into Choctawhatchee Bay, the Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek basin encompasses the second largest floodplain in the state (see Figure 6.3). Approximately 3,133 square miles of the watershed is in Alabama and 2,052 square miles is in Florida. The river is 170 miles long with about 88 miles in Florida. Although the river basin exhibits localized water quality problems, primarily due to agricultural land use in the upper basin, the overall water quality is considered good. The river basin encompasses 57 springs on Holmes Creek and a variety of habitats including bottomland hardwood forests, marshes, and Tupelo-Cypress swamps.

Due to the river corridor's undeveloped nature, the basin provides habitat for a variety of native wildlife, including several endangered plant and animal species. The river also serves as a breeding and migratory area for both the Alligator Gar and the Gulf Sturgeon. The District currently owns 63,735 acres along the river, creek, and bay in fee and less than fee. Purchases within the Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Acquisition Area will be concentrated on parcels containing floodplain along the river and designated tributaries such as Holmes Creek.

Groundwater Contribution Area

In addition, a portion of the Choctawhatchee River is captured within the Morrison Spring and Holmes Creek Springs Groundwater Contribution Areas while all of Holmes Creek is captured within the Holmes Creek Springs Groundwater Contribution Area. Properties within these contribution areas may be considered as a potential acquisition, especially those properties improving the quality or quantity of water for springs.

Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

West Bay Buffer

West Bay is the westernmost embayment of the St. Andrew Bay estuary (see Figure 6.3). The bay supports notable shellfish and seagrass communities, important fisheries, and other environmental and economic resources. The West Bay watershed is characterized by extensive pine flatwoods, as well as hardwood forests, cypress wetlands, mixed-forested wetlands, freshwater marshes, wet prairie, and other wetlands. Salt marshes, inland forested wetlands, and associated upland communities are especially prominent in several areas, including the Breakfast Point peninsula and other lands adjacent to the Burnt Mill and Crooked Creek tributaries.

Like other estuaries, the bay is vulnerable to impacts associated with intensive residential and commercial development. Potential impacts include the long-term degradation as a result of non-point source pollution, as well as habitat loss and fragmentation. Acquisitions within the Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Acquisition Area would help prevent such degradation by preserving intact and extensive ecosystem of forests, scrub, salt marshes, and freshwater wetlands. Preserving the associated wetland and upland communities in the vicinity of the bay protects water quality by providing a substantial riparian buffer and maintaining the natural hydrology in the vicinity of the bay. The District currently owns approximately 719 acres in the vicinity of the West Bay Buffer.

In addition to providing for public use and water resource protection, this acquisition will be consistent with several ongoing initiatives, including the Bay-Walton Sector Plan. These initiatives also include efforts to restore seagrass communities in the bay and to improve the treatment and management of domestic wastewater.

Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Econfina Creek

Econfina Creek is the major contributor to Deer Point Lake, which serves as the public water supply for Bay County, including Panama City, Panama City Beach, and neighboring communities (see Figure 6.3). Properties along the creek contain several spring-run streams. The slope forest communities that border considerable lengths of the creek contain some of the highest species diversity encountered in Florida. The project area features high rolling sandhill habitat, steephead ravines, and numerous sandhill upland lakes. Much of the sand hills area is of excellent quality, with a nearly intact ground cover of wiregrass and dropseed. At least 18 species of rare or endangered plants inhabit the sand hills area. The District currently owns 44,495 acres in fee and less than fee, including the 2,155-acre Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank. Purchases will be concentrated on parcels within the Groundwater Contribution Area as well as purchases that improve the quality or quantity of water for springs.

Groundwater Contribution Area

The upper portion of the acquisition project is a significant groundwater contribution area to the Floridan aquifer and properties within this contribution area may be considered as a potential acquisition, especially those properties improving the quality and quantity of water for springs. The majority of the acreage purchased by the District and targeted for future purchase is one of the most important groundwater contribution areas for the Floridan aquifer in northwest Florida. Recharge rates in the area have been estimated at 25 to 40 inches per year, and this recharge drives the spring flows along Econfina Creek, the largest tributary of the Deer Point Lake Reservoir. The reservoir currently provides approximately 50 million gallons per day for residential, commercial, and industrial water uses in Bay County.

Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Sandy Creek Basin

Sandy Creek is a major tributary of East Bay, the easternmost embayment of the St. Andrew Bay estuary (see Figure 6.3). The creek's basin is characterized by extensive wet pine flatwoods, as well as hardwood forests, salt marshes, cypress wetlands, mixed forested wetlands, freshwater marshes, wet prairie, and other wetlands. Salt and freshwater marshes, inland forested wetlands, and associated upland communities are especially prominent along the creek and its tributaries.

Preservation of the Sandy Creek basin will protect a major tributary basin of East Bay. In doing so, it would preserve water quality and a mosaic of interconnected upland, wetland, stream, and estuarine habitats. Purchases within the Priority Fee Simple and Less than Fee Simple Acquisition Area would protect water quality by providing a substantial riparian buffer and maintaining natural hydrology.

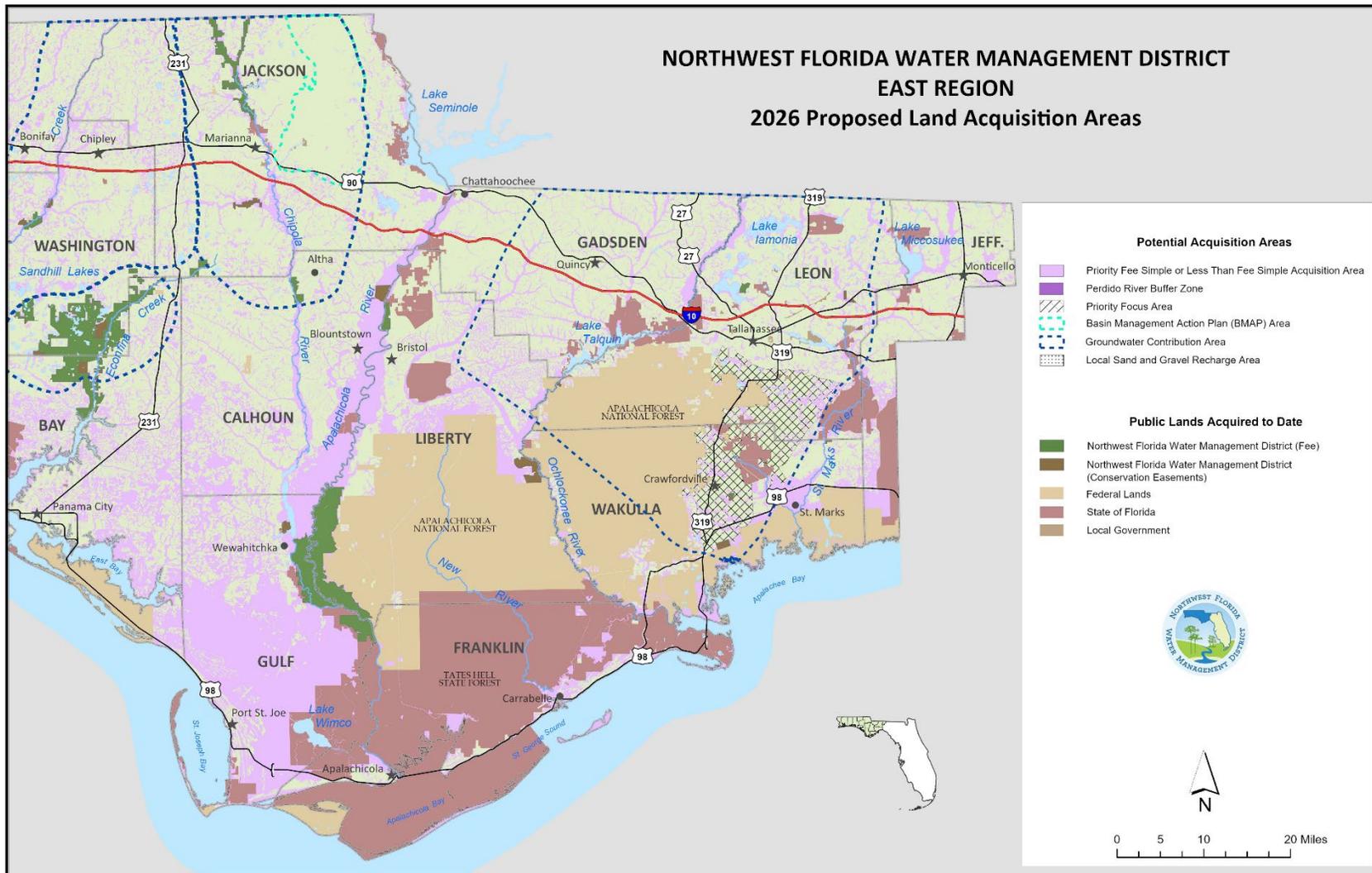
Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

Figure 6.4 Proposed Land Acquisition Areas, 2026, East Region



FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Chipola River Basin

Areas along the Chipola River have been identified as a Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Acquisition Area. The area lies in Calhoun and Jackson counties (see Figure 6.4). Acquisitions along the Chipola River will help protect miles of the riverbank and associated springs. In 2009, the District acquired 1,377.76 acres in fee along the Middle Chipola River, including the “Look-N-Tremble” rapids. The District now owns a total of 9,814 acres in fee simple and holds a conservation easement on 1,011 acres in the Chipola River Basin.

An additional area is identified for Priority Fee Simple or Less than Fee Simple Acquisition along the Chipola River. Spring Lake Spring Group is located in central Jackson County. Acquisition of land in the Spring Lake Spring Group area with its numerous springs and tributaries which flow into the Chipola River will provide enhanced water resource protection to the area.

Jackson Blue Spring BMAP and Chipola Springs Groundwater Contribution Area (GWCA)

The Jackson Blue Spring BMAP Area, east of the Chipola River, and the Chipola River Springs GWCA, have been identified for fee simple or less than fee simple acquisition to provide protection to Blue Spring, several smaller springs, and the associated groundwater contribution area in Jackson County. Properties within this BMAP or contribution area may be considered as a potential acquisition, especially those properties improving the quality or quantity of water for springs.

Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Apalachicola Bay and River

The Apalachicola River and Bay system has been recognized as a resource of state, federal, and international significance. The bay has extensive fish and shellfish resources, and it supports noteworthy commercial and recreational fisheries and other recreational and economic activities. It has been designated an Outstanding Florida Water, a State Aquatic Preserve, and an International Biosphere Reserve. It includes the Apalachicola Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and the St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge (see Figure 6.4). State and federal agencies, as well as the District, have made extensive investments in acquiring and protecting lands throughout the basin.

Like other northwest Florida estuaries, Apalachicola Bay is vulnerable to impacts associated with development. Such potential impacts include the long-term effects of non-point source pollution and habitat loss and fragmentation. The proposed acquisition would help prevent such degradation by preserving the integrated forest and wetland community bordering St. Vincent Sound and Apalachicola Bay. The acquisition would limit new sources of pollution, prevent habitat loss and fragmentation, and protect the stability and integrity of littoral vegetation. The acquisition would also protect water quality by providing a substantial riparian buffer which would help prevent channelization from new impervious surfaces.

The Apalachicola River begins below Lake Seminole at the confluence of the Chattahoochee and Flint rivers (see Figure 6.4). It has the largest floodplain in the state and is widely regarded as one of the state's most important natural resources. The Apalachicola River supports the highly productive fishery in Apalachicola Bay. The District owns 36,823 acres of river floodplain and holds a conservation easement on 2,360 acres.

Major habitat types along the Apalachicola River include coastal marshes, freshwater marshes, flatwoods, and bottomland hardwood swamp. Water tupelo, Ogeechee tupelo, Bald cypress, Carolina ash, and Swamp tupelo have been identified in the floodplain, as well as numerous species of rare fish. Substantial additional acreage of the Apalachicola system is owned by other public agencies and private conservation organizations. Purchases will be concentrated on parcels within the Priority Fee Simple or Less than fee Simple Acquisition Area.

Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Ochlockonee River Basin

The Ochlockonee River originates in the coastal plain of Georgia and traverses parts of five Florida counties (see Figure 6.4). Water quality in the river is lowest when it enters Florida and generally improves as it flows closer to the Gulf of Mexico. The Ochlockonee is primarily fed by rainwater runoff and is therefore susceptible to pollution by land-use activities. Large parts of the watershed are publicly owned, including Joe Budd Wildlife Management Area, Lake Talquin State Forest, and Apalachicola National Forest.

The District's primary focus is to acquire less than fee rights on privately owned floodplain land separating existing federal and state properties. Public ownership of the erosion-prone lands bordering this usually fast-flowing river will reduce water quality degradation. The District presently has 3,675 acres in less than fee holdings in the area.

Public Access

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers

The Wakulla River originates at Wakulla Spring and flows south approximately 10 miles to join the St. Marks River at the town of St. Marks in Wakulla County (see Figure 6.4). The St. Marks River starts east of Tallahassee as a narrow stream, widens considerably below Horn Spring, and then disappears underground at Natural Bridge. After reemerging as a much stronger river at St. Marks River Rise, it flows 11 miles to its confluence with the Wakulla River. The St. Marks River supports one of the most heavily used inshore saltwater fisheries in north Florida, the viability of which is largely dependent on the quality of freshwater flowing into the estuarine system. Both the Wakulla Springs State Park and the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge are major refuges for numerous biological species. The District presently has 1,500 acres under less than fee acquisition and 142 acres in fee simple in the area.

Wakulla Springs BMAP and Priority Focus Area

Within the Upper Wakulla River and Wakulla Springs BMAP, the Priority Focus Area, east of the Apalachicola National Forest, has been identified for fee simple or less than fee simple acquisition to provide protection to the groundwater contribution area for Wakulla and Sally Ward springs. Properties within this contribution area may be considered as a potential acquisition, especially those properties improving the quality or quantity of water for springs.

Land Acquisition

Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: availability of funds, Governing Board policy, threats to the resource, availability of willing sellers, tract size, general market conditions, and available staff resources.

Florida Forever District Work Plan

As required by section 373.199(2), F.S., a District five-year work plan identifies and includes projects that further the goals of the Florida Forever Act (section 259.105, F.S.). These include priorities identified in approved Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) plans, Save Our Rivers land acquisition lists, stormwater management and water resource development projects, springs and water body restoration projects, and other eligible activities that would assist in meeting the goals of Florida Forever.

From 2003 to 2008, the District provided grant funding to local governments for capital improvements that help implement SWIM projects, water resource development projects, and projects included within stormwater master plans. The program awarded more than \$23 million for 55 stormwater retrofit, restoration, and reuse projects. These grants leveraged significant additional funding, with more than \$52 million in local and other match funding allocated to the approved projects.

No significant appropriations of Florida Forever funds for capital improvements have been made since FY 2008-09. Table 6.4 identifies conceptual projects considered eligible for future Florida Forever capital improvement funding.

Table 6.4 Projects Currently Eligible for Florida Forever Funding

Project	Description	Status	Estimated Cost
Unpaved road sedimentation abatement	Unpaved road stabilization to reduce sedimentation and non-point source pollution; supports water quality improvement and habitat restoration objectives of SWIM plans for all District watersheds	Planning	TBD
Spring habitat restoration	Construction activities to restore riparian and aquatic habitats and shorelines associated with northwest Florida springs and to improve compatible public access	Planning	TBD
Stormwater retrofit facilities	Construction of cooperative stormwater retrofit projects, improving water quality and flood protection in accordance with approved SWIM plans	Planning	TBD
Reclaimed water storage facilities	Construction of reclaimed water storage facilities that contribute to water quality improvement and conservation and protection of water resources	Planning	TBD
Hydrologic, wetland, and shoreline restoration	Restoration of shoreline, wetland, and riparian habitats and hydrologic functions to improve water and habitat quality and to enhance public access, consistent with SWIM plans	Planning	TBD

Project specifics, as noted in section 373.199(2), (3), (4) and (5), F.S., will be provided in the future if projects are able to advance beyond the preliminary planning stage.

Future Florida Forever or special legislative appropriations, and funding from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund, federal grants, local governments, other local matching resources, and potentially other sources

may contribute to the implementation of these projects. Final approval of funding for any project requires District Governing Board approval.

Implementation of the FY 2024-2025 Work Plan

Land Acquisition

In 2025, the District acquired 731.02 acres (10.66 acres in Wakulla County and 720.36 acres in Jackson County) for springs protection. .

Land Management

In October 2018, Hurricane Michael severely impacted District lands and the District's Econfina Field Office. Recovery from Hurricane Michael became the highest priority for the District's land managers in the central and eastern land management regions. Recovery activities included initial damage assessments, securing of facilities and clearing debris for essential access, planning and implementing salvage timber harvests, clearing and repairing roads and firelines, clearing and repairing recreation sites, contracting for various hurricane recovery activities, and coordinating with FEMA. In addition to hurricane recovery, the District completed numerous land management activities during Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Management and restoration efforts included prescribed burns, native species planting, exotic plant and animal control efforts, as well as timber harvesting and thinning, across the District's 211,489 managed acres. In addition, the District maintains and improves public access and recreational amenities such as boat ramps, primitive campsites, and swimming and picnic areas. In the pages that follow, Table 6.5 and Table 6.6 provide additional information on specific land restoration activities completed during the year. The Fiscal Year 2025-2026 staffing and management budget by WMA can be found in Table 6.7.

To date, the District has conserved and protected 226,688 acres primarily through fee simple acquisition. These lands help promote wetland and floodplain functions, groundwater recharge, surface and groundwater quality, and fish and wildlife habitat, as well as protect natural systems. All District-owned lands are accessible to the public and are managed to provide public access and resource-based recreation.

District lands include the majority of the Escambia and Choctawhatchee river floodplains, as well as extensive lands along the Perdido, Blackwater, Yellow, Shoal, Apalachicola, and St. Marks/Wakulla rivers; Lafayette, Holmes, and Econfina creeks; and on Perdido Bay, Garcon Point, and Live Oak Point. In addition, the District manages and conducts habitat restoration and maintenance on Yellow River Ranch, Live Oak Point, Ward Creek West, and Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank. The District has acquired the majority of the groundwater recharge area for springs that discharge into Econfina Creek and form a crucial component of the groundwater contribution to Deer Point Lake Reservoir.

Land Management Accomplishments (FY 2024-25)

- District contractors and in-house staff conducted prescribed burns for wildfire-fuel reduction and habitat enhancement on approximately 10,000 acres of District lands. In addition, vegetation management (herbicide) and habitat enhancements were conducted on 1,406 acres.
- 5,579 camping permits were issued at 101 reservation-only sites on District lands.
- 21 special resource area authorizations were issued on District property.
- One timber harvest totaling 227 acres was active, thinning loblolly and slash pine within the Choctawhatchee River Water Management Area.

Chapter 6. Florida Forever Work Plan Annual Report

- More than 19,838 acres of District-owned land were surveyed for invasive exotic plants and control measures were implemented for identified problem areas.
- Improved more than 20 miles of District owned roads for erosion control and improved public access.
- Completed repairs to 980 feet of elevated boardwalk at Pitt and Sylvan Springs Recreation Area, Williford Spring Recreation Area and Devil’s Hole Recreation Area.

Restoration

The District accomplishes water resource restoration through several interrelated programs, primarily Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM), Land Management, longleaf reforestation, and mitigation. This update has been prepared based on there not being any new Florida Forever funding allocated for restoration for the planning period of FY 2025-26 or FY 2026-27.

Approved District plans with substantial restoration components include the following:

- *Apalachicola River and Bay SWIM Plan (2017)*
- *Capital Improvements Plan (Annual)*
- *Choctawhatchee River and Bay SWIM Plan (2017)*
- *Ochlockonee River and Bay SWIM Plan (2017)*
- *Pensacola Bay System SWIM Plan (2017)*
- *Perdido River and Bay SWIM Plan (2017)*
- *St. Andrew Bay Watershed SWIM Plan (2017)*
- *St. Marks River and Apalachee Bay Watershed SWIM Plan (2017)*
- *Tate’s Hell State Forest Hydrologic Restoration Plan (2010)*
- *NFWFMD In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Program Final Instrument (2014)*
- *Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank Mitigation Banking Instrument (2006)*
- *East Region Land Management Plan (2019)*
- *West Region Land Management Plan (2020)*
- *Central Region Land Management Plan (2021)*

Restoration Accomplishments (FY 2024-25)

- The District completed hand planting of 200 acres of longleaf pine reforestation and 36 acres of native grass restoration. These restoration activities improve upland habitat and serve important water resource functions by enhancing water recharge and providing water quality benefits. This work included site preparation and planting of 145,000 longleaf pine tubelings and 110,000 wiregrass plugs within the Perdido River WMA.
- In August, 2025, the District completed a living shoreline habitat and salt marsh restoration project on District lands at Live Oak Point in Walton County. The project includes establishment of approximately 4,130 feet of breakwaters and planting of salt marsh vegetation. Located on the south shore of Choctawhatchee Bay, Live Oak Point contains the largest salt marsh system (approximately 1,000 acres) in Choctawhatchee Bay. Prior to completion of this project, the marsh had been subject to rapid erosion, with recent shoreline retreat averaging 3-4 feet per year.
- The District continued a stabilization and restoration project at Cypress Spring. Improvements include shoreline stabilization and enhancement, boardwalks and steps at entrance and exit

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points, and recreation amenities to prevent further degradation of the shoreline from recreational use. The project will improve water quality, restore the historical shoreline that has been impacted by erosion, and prevent destruction of habitat resulting from erosion and recreational use on the spring run and Holmes Creek.

Table 6.5 Restoration, Enhancement, and Maintenance (2025)

	Acres Burned					Acres Planted					Acres Harvested			Acres Treated	
	Total	Fuel Reduction	Site Preparation	Growing Season	Wiregrass Propagation	Total	Upland/Wet land Wiregrass	Longleaf Pine	Slash Pine	Hardwood	Total	Restoration	Thinning	Habitat Restoration	For Invasive, Non-native or Off-site Species
Water Management Area															
Escambia River															76
Garcon Point	122	122													35
Blackwater River															3
Yellow River	235	235													1,016
Perdido River	642	642													1,754
Choctawhatchee River	1,028	401		627						690		217	473		4,139
Econfina Creek	5,148	4,940			208					766			766		2,207
St. Andrews	605	455			150										5
Carter Restoration	1,359	589		770											
Ward Creek West															
Devils Swamp Restoration															
Chipola River	392	392													25
Apalachicola River						75		75							10
Lake Jackson															15
St. Marks/Wakulla Rivers															5
Totals	9,531	7,776		1,397	358	75		75			1,456		217	1,239	9,290

Table 6.6 Access and Recreation Management (2025)

Water Management Area	Picnic Areas	Day Use Sites	Parking Areas	Reserved Camp Sites	Boat, Canoe/Kayak Landings	Portolet Stations	Horse Trail	Canoe Trail	Hiking Trail	Nature Trail	Bike Trail	Access Road	Camp Site Reservations	General Purpose (boundary signs)	Information Signs on District Lands	Weather Pavilions and Wildlife Viewing Towers
	Number Maintained						Miles Maintained						Issued	Signs		Maintained
Escambia River	6	11	12	28	11	11			1	2		27	1,460	55	10	20
Garcon Point		2	2						3			1		40		
Blackwater River	1	3	3		2					1						1
Yellow River		3	3		3			50				36		33	1	
Perdido River	3	3	4	1	4	8	6	15	6	1	10	32	100	45	4	1
Choctawhatchee River	12	15	15	23	15	11		15	11			55	1,401		33	14
Econfina Creek (incl. Carter Tract)	15	22	22	36	14	15	56	22	18	2		269	2,127		51	49
Chipola River	1	4	5	3	2	2		6				15	208			1
Apalachicola River	2	2	2	10	2	1						9	283			13
Lake Jackson	1	2	2			1	7		10		7	9				2
St. Marks/Wakulla Rivers		1	2			1			3	3	3	3		30	4	1
Totals	41	68	72	101	53	50	69	108	52	9	20	456	5,579	203	103	102

Table 6.7 Projected Funding, Staffing, and Resource Management for FY 2025-26

Region	Water Management Area	Acres	Assigned Staff	Total Funding	Funding for Resource Management
Western	Escambia	35,413		\$84,665	\$84,665
	Escambia Conservation Easements	19		\$250	\$250
	Garcon Point	3,245		\$36,240	\$36,240
	Yellow	16,553		\$38,492	\$38,492
	Blackwater	381		\$5,096	\$5,096
	Perdido	6,261		\$135,200	\$135,200
	Perdido Conservation Easements	4		\$250	\$250
Western Region Total		61,876	4	\$300,193	\$300,193
Central	Choctawhatchee	60,827		\$425,976	\$425,976
	Choctawhatchee/Holmes Conservation Easements	2,908		\$250	\$250
	Econfina	39,618		\$767,578	\$767,578
	St. Andrew/Econfina Conservation Easements	2,722		\$500	\$500
	Ward Creek West	719		\$0	\$0
	Carter Restoration	2,155		\$75,000	\$75,000
Central Region Total		108,949	7	\$1,269,304	\$1,269,304
Eastern	Chipola	9,814		\$109,900	\$109,900
	Apalachicola	36,823		\$39,980	\$39,980
	Apalachicola/Chipola Conservation Easements	3,370		\$250	\$250
	Lake Jackson	539		\$25,100	\$25,100
	St. Marks/Wakulla Rivers	142		\$8,273	\$8,273
	St. Marks/Wakulla Rivers Conservation Easements	1,500		\$250	\$250
	Ochlockonee Conservation Easements	3,675		\$250	\$250
Eastern Region Total		55,863	2	\$184,003	\$184,003
Regional Totals		226,688	13	\$1,753,500	\$1,753,500

Projected Funding, Staffing, and Resource Management for FY 2025-26 (cont.)

Other Projects	Acres	Assigned Staff	Total Funding	Funding for Resource Management
Land Management Administration		5	\$2,332,248	\$40,115
IT Initiative			\$430,343	\$167,291
Land Management Database			\$88,039	\$83,886
Brunson Landing Tract (owned by FDEP)	348		\$9,611	\$9,611
Washington County School Board Donation			\$327	\$327
Reforestation			\$507,645	\$507,645
Cypress Spring Recreation Area			\$36,217	\$36,217
Grand Total	226,279	18	\$5,157,930	\$2,598,592

Consolidated Annual Report

Chapter 7

Mitigation Donation Annual Report



Chapter 7. Mitigation Donation Annual Report

Section 373.414(1)(b)2, F.S., requires the District and DEP to report by March 1 of each year, as part of this report, all cash donations accepted as mitigation for use in duly noticed environmental creation, preservation, enhancement, or restoration projects that offset impacts permitted under Chapter 373, Part IV, F.S., Management and Storage of Surface Waters.

The report is required to include a description of the associated mitigation projects and, except for projects governed as mitigation banks or regional offsite mitigation, must address, as applicable, success criteria, project implementation status and timeframe, monitoring, long-term management, provisions for preservation, and full cost accounting. The report specifically excludes contributions required under section 373.4137, F.S. (regional mitigation for specified transportation impacts). Any cash donations accepted by the District as mitigation during the preceding fiscal year are reported annually.

The District received no cash donations as mitigation in FY 2024-25. The District conducts regional mitigation in support of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in accordance with section 373.4137, F.S.

Consolidated Annual Report

Chapter 8

Water Projects in the Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program



Water Projects in the Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program

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Chapter 8. Water Projects in the Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program

Section 373.036, F.S., requires the Consolidated Annual Report to include:

1. Information on all projects related to water quality or water quantity as part of a five-year work program, including:
 - a. A list of all specific projects identified to implement a basin management action plan (BMAP), including any projects to connect onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems to central sewerage systems and convert onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems to enhanced nutrient-reducing onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems, or a recovery or prevention strategy;
 - b. A priority ranking for each listed project for which state funding through the water resource development work program (section 373.536(6), F.S.) is requested, which must be made available to the public for comment at least 30 days before submission of the consolidated annual report;
 - c. The estimated cost for each listed project;
 - d. The estimated completion date for each listed project;
 - e. The source and amount of financial assistance to be made available by the department, a water management district, or other entity for each listed project;
 - f. A quantitative estimate of each listed project's benefit to the watershed, waterbody, or water segment in which it is located.
2. A grade for each watershed, water body, or water segment in which a project is located representing the level of impairment and violations of adopted minimum flow or minimum water levels. The grading system must reflect the severity of the impairment of the watershed, water body, or water segment.

Water Projects Approach

The District's Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program (WRDWP) applies to the only water supply planning region in northwest Florida that has a regional water supply plan: Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton counties (Region II). The other 13 counties within the District's jurisdiction do not have a regional water supply plan and are therefore not included in the current WRDWP.

Basin Management Action Plans have been adopted for three areas within the District: Bayou Chico in Escambia County; the Upper Wakulla River and Wakulla Springs basin in portions of Wakulla, Leon, and Gadsden counties; and Jackson Blue Spring and Merritt's Mill Pond basin in Jackson County. As none of these BMAPs are within Regional Water Supply Planning Region II, no BMAP projects are included in the WRDWP. Specific projects identified to implement a BMAP are listed in Chapter 9 (Table 9.3).

Section 373.036(7)(b)(9), F.S. requires a grade representing the impacted waterbody level of impairment and violations of adopted MFLs. As the District currently has no adopted MFLs for Regional Water Supply Planning Region II, the water projects listed only include a grade for level of impairment. The grade was provided by DEP and is represented as follows:

- **Impaired—High:** if the Waterbody ID (WBID) is impaired for one or more parameters other than mercury, and either:
 1. The WBID has a state-adopted total maximum daily load (TMDL), or
 2. The WBID has been prioritized for TMDL development through being included on the 303(d)-long-term vision list (i.e., the water is on the 2025 TMDL workplan list).
- **Impaired:** if the WBID is impaired for one or more parameters other than mercury.
- **Not impaired:** if the WBID has no impaired parameters.

WRDWP projects are also required to be ranked if state funding may be requested. As the District relies on state funding for operations and implementation of projects, a ranking is included for projects in Table 8.1 below. The projects are ranked as high, low, or complete. High represents projects that are planned or currently underway, are ongoing efforts, or that represent a priority for the five-year planning timeframe. Projects ranked low are those that have limited activities planned or funding budgeted by the District in the planning timeframe, but that remain applicable activities should funding become available.

Project Ranking and Waterbody Grade

Table 8.1 Ranking and Grades for WRDWP Projects in the NFWFMD

Project Name	Project Type ¹	Priority Ranking	Waterbody, or water segment	Level of Impairment
Region II (Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties)				
Surface Water Sources	WRD	High	Shoal River	Impaired
Reuse	WRD	High	Floridan aquifer; sand-and-gravel aquifer	N/A
Conservation	WRD	High	Floridan aquifer; sand-and-gravel aquifer	N/A
Aquifer Storage and Recovery	WRD	Low	Floridan aquifer; sand-and-gravel aquifer	N/A
Groundwater Evaluations	WRD	High	Floridan aquifer; sand-and-gravel aquifer	N/A
Data Collection and Analysis	WRD	High	Floridan aquifer; sand-and-gravel aquifer	N/A

¹ WRD = Water Resource Development; WSD = Water Supply Development; both are defined in sections 373.019 and 373.705, F.S.

Public Review Period

Florida Statutes require projects within the work plan seeking state funds be available for public comment at least 30 days before being finalized. The District’s Fiscal Year 2025-26 Five-Year WRDWP Update was proposed on October 24, 2025. The proposed work plan was submitted to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Secretary of DEP, chairs of legislative committees with substantive or fiscal jurisdiction over the District, the governing boards of counties within the District’s jurisdiction, and posted on the District website for public review. The WRDWP incorporating any comments received is included as Chapter 5 of this report. Previous revisions to the WRDWP reflect the completion of the updated Region II Regional Water Supply Plan in December 2024. Projects submitted for the Region II Regional Water Supply plan were added in October 2025 to reflect all planned and occurring projects.

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Chapter 9

Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Program Annual Report



Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Program Annual Report

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Chapter 9. Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Program Annual Report

Introduction

Section 373.036(7)(d), F.S., provides that districts may include in the Consolidated Annual Report additional information on the status or management of water resources as deemed appropriate. The District has a long-term program to restore and protect watershed resources. The Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program provides the framework for watershed and project planning for the major riverine-estuarine watersheds indicated in Figure 9.1 below.

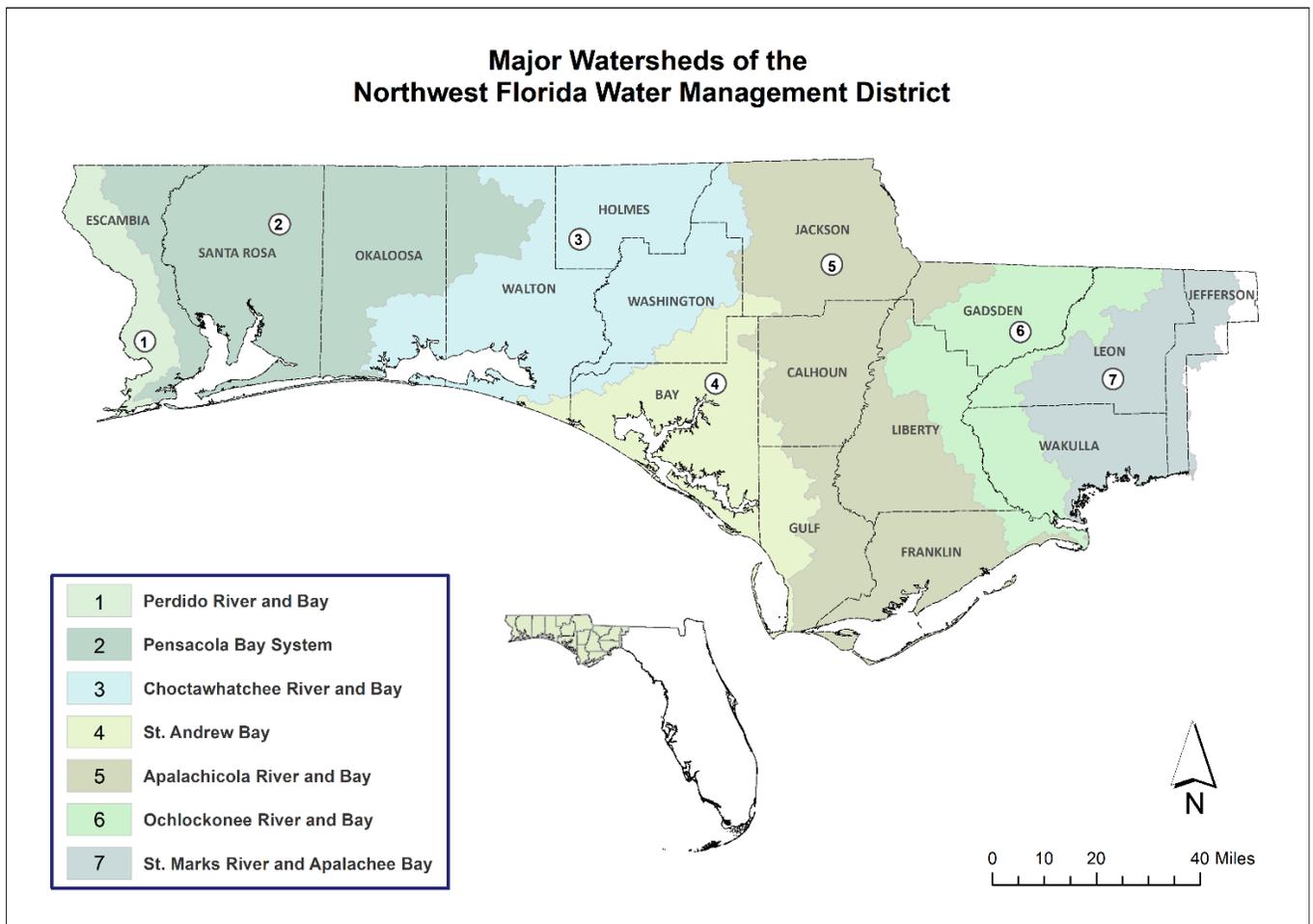


Figure 9.1 NFWMD SWIM Priority Watersheds

SWIM Priority List

The Northwest Florida Water Management District’s SWIM Priority list is provided in Table 9.1. All waterbodies, tributaries, sub-embayments, springs, and contributing basins are considered as being within the listed watersheds as priority waterbodies.

Table 9.1 NFWFMD SWIM Priority List* (West to East)

Watershed
Perdido River and Bay Watershed
Pensacola Bay System
Choctawhatchee River and Bay Watershed
St. Andrew Bay Watershed
Apalachicola River and Bay Watershed
Ochlockonee River and Bay Watershed
St. Marks River and Apalachee Bay Watershed

* Includes all named waterbodies within each watershed.

Pursuant to section 373.453, F.S., the SWIM priority list must be periodically reviewed and updated as needed. Any updates will be reflected in this section.

SWIM Plans and Updates

Surface Water Improvement and Management plans are developed to address cumulative anthropogenic impacts to water quality, aquatic habitats, and related public benefits within the District’s priority waterbodies. The plans incorporate comprehensive strategies to both restore and protect watershed resources and functions. Implementation is accomplished through a variety of activities, such as retrofitting stormwater management systems to improve water quality and flood protection; restoring wetland and aquatic habitats; evaluating water resources and freshwater needs; protecting springs; and public outreach and education. The SWIM program also supports coordination of state and federal grants and implementation of cooperative capital improvement projects with local governments.

Since the late 1980s, the District has developed SWIM plans for major watersheds. In 2015, the District was awarded grant funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF) to support updates to SWIM plans for each of the District’s major watersheds. Seven watershed plans were completed over the course of two years, finishing in November 2017 (Table 9.2). The final plans are available at: <https://www.nfwwater.com/Water-Resources/SWIM>.

Table 9.2 NFWWMD SWIM Plans

Watershed	Plan Approval Dates
Deer Point Lake	1988 (Superseded)
Apalachicola River and Bay	1996, 2017
Lake Jackson	1994, 1997 (Superseded)
Pensacola Bay System	1988, 1990, 1997, 2017
St. Andrew Bay Watershed	2000, 2017
Choctawhatchee River and Bay	1996, 2002, 2017
St. Marks River/Apalachee Bay	1997, 2009, 2017
Perdido River and Bay	2017
Ochlockonee River and Bay	2017

Historically, SWIM plan implementation has integrated and leveraged a variety of funding sources, including SWIM (sections 373.451-373.459, F.S.), the Water Management Lands Trust Fund (former section 373.59, F.S.), the Ecosystem Management and Restoration Trust Fund (former section 403.1651, F.S.), Florida Forever (sections 259.105 and 373.199, F.S.), legislative special appropriations, the Water Protection and Sustainability Program (section 403.890, F.S.), state and federal grants, and funding through local government partnerships. The Land Acquisition Trust Fund (section 375.041, F.S.) has funded spring restoration and protection projects that further SWIM plan objectives. Additionally, Gulf of Mexico restoration funding made available through Deepwater Horizon-related sources in many cases helps to restore and protect watershed resources in a manner consistent with the District's SWIM program. Cumulatively, the overall effort has resulted in significant improvement and protection of water resources Districtwide.

Current Priorities

The District is continuing a multiyear effort to identify and coordinate projects to protect and restore the major Floridan aquifer spring systems of northwest Florida, with emphasis on implementing Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs), habitat and water quality improvements, and the protection of groundwater contribution areas for Wakulla and Jackson Blue springs. Spring restoration and protection is carried out through annual grant cycles conducted in cooperation with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), as well as the District's SWIM, MFL, Land Management and Acquisition, Agricultural BMP Cost-Share, Consumptive Use Permitting, and Environmental Resource Permitting programs. Projects include septic-to-sewer projects, habitat restoration, continued implementation of agricultural best management practices, and land acquisition to protect water quantity and quality. In addition to Wakulla Spring and Jackson Blue Spring, ongoing activities are focused on springs associated with Econfina Creek and the Chipola River.

In 2025, the District initiated the Northwest Florida Watersheds Partnership Program to identify priority sub-basins in each SWIM watershed and focus resources to implement projects that address water resource issues. Draft work plans were completed for each of the initial seven priority subbasins in January 2026. The draft work plans include a total of 144 projects with funding needs exceeding \$385 million. Project types focus on water quality improvement, habitat restoration, and water supply needs. During FY 2025-26, the District will refine the draft work plans, prioritize projects, and begin working with

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local governments to obtain funding for project implementation. Work plans are anticipated to be updated periodically to reflect the progress achieved as well as remaining funding needs.

The District continues work on assessment of St. Joseph Bay and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, including data collection and analysis to evaluate freshwater flows and water quality from the Intracoastal Waterway and its potential effects on St. Joseph Bay. In FY2025-26 these efforts are expanding to include the development of a hydrodynamic, circulation model of the bay to develop a tool for better understanding circulation patterns in the bay under varying environmental conditions. These efforts are currently anticipated to take three years to complete.

For a list of priority SWIM projects underway or in the planning stages, please refer to Chapter 1 (Table 1.1) of this report. Note that there is overlap between the project priorities listed there and within other chapters in this report, particularly for construction projects requiring multiple funding sources to complete. Additional funding sources, including from local governments and state and federal grant sources, may be identified to complement District-provided funding.

Section 373.036(7), F.S., requires the Consolidated Annual Report to list projects identified to implement a Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP). Basin Management Action Plans have been adopted for three areas within the District: Bayou Chico in Escambia County; Jackson Blue Spring and the Merritt's Mill Pond basin in Jackson County; and the Upper Wakulla River and Wakulla Springs basin in portions of Wakulla, Leon, and Gadsden counties. Additionally, a small portion of Jefferson County within the District is within the contribution area for the Wacissa River and Wacissa Spring Group BMAP, although the majority of this BMAP is within the Suwannee River Water Management District. Table 9.3 lists projects identified to implement the referenced BMAPs.

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Table 9.3 Current BMAP Projects in the NFWMD

Cooperator	Project Name	County	Project Type	Five-Year Total Costs	Benefit Description	Water Resource or TMDL Waterbody	Watershed/ Waterbody Grade	Project Status
Bayou Chico (Pensacola Basin) BMAP								
Bayou Chico Association	Bayou Chico Channel Dredging	Escambia	Stormwater	\$10,000,000	Reduced fecal coliform loading	Bayou Chico	Impaired-High	In Progress
Escambia County	Bayou Chico Dredging Phase I	Escambia	Stormwater	\$1,418,623	Reduced fecal coliform loading	Bayou Chico	Impaired-High	In Progress
ECUA	Beach Haven Phase II	Escambia	Wastewater	\$3,100,000	Reduced fecal coliform loading	Bayou Chico	Impaired-High	In Progress
Escambia County	Beach Haven Stormwater Phases II	Escambia	Stormwater	\$ 22,098,665	Reduced fecal coliform loading	Bayou Chico	Impaired-High	In Progress
ECUA	Brownsville Area Sewer Expansion: A	Escambia	Stormwater	\$5,850,000	Reduced fecal coliform loading	Bayou Chico	Impaired-High	In Progress
ECUA	Brownsville Area Sewer Expansion: B	Escambia	Stormwater	\$6,080,000	Reduced fecal coliform loading	Bayou Chico	Impaired-High	In Progress
Escambia County	Jones Swamp Wetland Preserve Management Plan Development & Implementation	Escambia	Stormwater	\$400,000	Reduced fecal coliform loading	Bayou Chico	Impaired-High	In Progress
ECUA	Navy Boulevard Area Sewer Expansion	Escambia	Wastewater	\$6,040,000	Reduced fecal coliform loading	Bayou Chico	Impaired-High	In Progress
ECUA	Lee Street Brownsville Sewer Expansion	Escambia	Wastewater	\$5,510,000	Reduced fecal coliform loading	Bayou Chico	Impaired-High	In Progress

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Current BMAP Projects in the NFWWMD (cont.)

Cooperator	Project Name	County	Project Type	Five-Year Total Costs	Benefit Description	Water Resource or TMDL Waterbody	Watershed/ Waterbody Grade	Project Status
Jackson Blue Spring and Merritt’s Mill Pond BMAP								
NFWWMD; Jackson County	Blue Springs Road Sewer Project and Expansion Phase I, II, & IIIA	Jackson	Wastewater	\$12,493,858	Reduced nutrient loading	Jackson Blue Spring	Impaired-High	In Progress
NFWWMD; Jackson County	Indian Springs Sewer Extension Phases 2B – 2D	Jackson	Wastewater	\$8,898,178	Reduced nutrient loading	Jackson Blue Spring	Impaired-High	In Progress
NFWWMD	Jackson Blue Spring Agricultural BMP Producer Cost-Share Grant Program	Jackson	Water Quality	\$802,032	Reduced nutrient loading and water conservation	Jackson Blue Spring	Impaired-High	In progress
NFWWMD; Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services	Mobile Irrigation Laboratory	Jackson	Water Quantity	\$71,125	Water conservation	Jackson Blue Spring	Impaired-High	Ongoing
NFWWMD; UF-IFAS	Sod-Based Crop Rotation	Jackson	Water Quality; Education & Outreach	\$40,000	Reduced nutrient loading and water conservation	Jackson Blue Spring	Impaired-High	In progress

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Current BMAP Projects in the NFWMD (cont.)

Cooperator	Project Name	County	Project Type	Five-Year Total Costs	Benefit Description	Water Resource or TMDL Waterbody	Watershed/ Waterbody Grade	Project Status
Upper Wakulla River and Wakulla Springs BMAP								
Town of Havana	3 rd SBR at HWWTP	Gadsden	Wastewater	\$2,500,000	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	Planned
Town of Havana	Rebuild/Replace 4 Lift Stations	Gadsden	Wastewater	\$2,817,327	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	Planned
Town of Havana	Replace WWTP Digesters	Gadsden	Wastewater	\$2,500,000	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	Planned
City of Tallahassee	AntiMOX Nitrogen Sidestream Treatment	Leon	Wastewater	\$5,513,793	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	Planned
City of Tallahassee	Septic Connection to Existing Sewer in the Wakulla BMAP	Leon	Wastewater	\$2,587,000	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
City of Tallahassee	Centrate Equalization Tank	Leon	Wastewater	\$5,458,000	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
City of Tallahassee	Public Education for Stormwater, Fertilizer, and Pet Waste	Leon	Education Effort	\$1,700,000	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	Ongoing
City of Tallahassee	Street Sweeping	Leon	Stormwater	\$1,700,000	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	Ongoing
Leon County	Northeast Lake Munson Septic to Sewer Project	Leon	Wastewater	\$15,639,000	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Leon County	Sewering in PSPZ	Leon	Wastewater	\$24,500,000	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Leon County	Woodville Septic to Sewer Project Design and Construction	Leon	Wastewater	\$103,000,000	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Leon County	Septic Upgrade Incentive Program	Leon	Wastewater	\$2,222,222	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Leon County	Fred George Basin Wetland Rehydration	Leon	Wetland Restoration	\$1,000,000	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Leon County/ DOH/NFWMD	Passive Onsite Sewage Nitrogen Reduction Pilot Project	Leon	Wastewater	\$1,500,000	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Leon County	Septic Tank Education	Leon	Stormwater	\$2,500.00	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress

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Cooperator	Project Name	County	Project Type	Five-Year Total Costs	Benefit Description	Water Resource or TMDL Waterbody	Watershed/ Waterbody Grade	Project Status
Leon County	Water Quality Sampling	Leon	Nutrient Studies	\$250,000	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	Ongoing
NFWFMD	Land Acquisition	Basinwide	Land Acquisition	\$944,895	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Wakulla County	Magnolia Gardens Sewer Phase IV	Wakulla	Wastewater	\$2,944,922	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Wakulla County	Edgewood and Golden Gate – Phase I & II	Wakulla	Wastewater	\$6,565,144	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	Planned
Wakulla County	Wakulla East Sewer Feasibility Study	Wakulla	Study	\$75,000	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Wakulla County	Crawfordville East Sewer	Wakulla	Wastewater	\$20,487,354	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	Planned
Wakulla County	Crawfordville West Sewer	Wakulla	Wastewater	\$11,892,817	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	Planned
Wakulla County	Mysterious Waters	Wakulla	Wastewater	\$7,109,063	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	Planned
Wakulla County	Otter Creek WWTP Upgrade and Capacity Expansion	Wakulla	Wastewater	\$8,701,730	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Wakulla County	Lift Station and Force Main Improvements – Phase 2-A, 2-B	Wakulla	Wastewater	\$19,733,111	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Wakulla County	Aquifer Recharge Facilities	Wakulla	Wastewater	\$7,435,400	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Wakulla County	Wakulla Gardens Sewer Phase IV - VII	Wakulla	Wastewater	\$19,206,828	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Wakulla County	Wildwood Phase 1 and 2	Wakulla	Wastewater	\$6,387,525	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress
Wakulla County	Wakulla Springs Watershed	Wakulla	Wastewater	\$1,380,300	Reduced nutrient loading	Wakulla Spring	Impaired	In Progress