

# Regional Mitigation Plan Update

February 2026



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

**Program Development Series 26-01**

# NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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## Introduction

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

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

## Consideration of Mitigation Banks

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

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

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

## 2026 Project Update

Since approval of the 2025 Regional Mitigation Plan Update, seven additional road projects on the FDOT District-3 Inventory, with an estimated cumulative total of 16.17 acres<sup>1</sup> of wetland impact, may require mitigation through the NFWFMD mitigation program (Figure 2; Table 1).

**I-10 (from EB Escambia County Weigh Station to east of US 90A / 9 Mile Road); FPID 437905-2.**

Located in the Perdido River and Bay watershed in Escambia County, this project is anticipated to impact jurisdictional wetlands (at this time, estimates of wetland acreage or functional loss have not been provided by FDOT). Because the potential impacts are not currently within the service area of any mitigation bank, proposed mitigation, if required by state or federal environmental permits, is use of the Dutex ILF Unit of the NFWFMD ILF mitigation program (SAJ-2011-00287). If a mitigation bank option becomes available prior to permitting, in accordance with section 373.4137, F.S., this project will be withdrawn from the NFWFMD mitigation program and FDOT will be responsible for purchasing mitigation bank credits. Approval will be obtained from FDEP before the NFWFMD proceeds with any mitigation for this potential impact. Additional information, as permitting proceeds and mitigation plans are further developed, will be posted on the NFWFMD website (<https://nfwwater.com/water-resources/regional-wetland-mitigation-program/regional-mitigation-plan/>).

**I-10 at SR 297 Pine Forest Road Bridge No. 480067; FPID 454507-1.** Located in the Perdido River and Bay watershed in Escambia County, this project is anticipated to impact jurisdictional wetlands (at this time, estimates of wetland acreage or functional loss have not been provided by FDOT). Because the potential impacts are not currently within the service area of any mitigation bank, proposed mitigation, if required by state or federal environmental permits, is use of the Dutex ILF Unit of the NFWFMD ILF mitigation program (SAJ-2011-00287). If a mitigation bank option becomes available prior to permitting, in accordance with section 373.4137, F.S., this project will be withdrawn from the NFWFMD mitigation program and FDOT will be responsible for purchasing mitigation bank credits. Approval will be obtained from FDEP before the NFWFMD proceeds with any mitigation for this potential impact. Additional information, as permitting proceeds and mitigation plans are further developed, will be posted on the NFWFMD website (<https://nfwwater.com/water-resources/regional-wetland-mitigation-program/regional-mitigation-plan/>).

**CR 65B Old Federal Road at Richlander Creek Bridge No. 500059; FPID 441186-1.** Located in the Ochlockonee River and Bay watershed in Gadsden County, this project is anticipated to impact jurisdictional wetlands (at this time, estimates of wetland acreage or functional loss have not been provided by FDOT). Because the potential impacts are not currently within the service area of any mitigation bank, proposed mitigation, if required by state or federal environmental permits, is use of the Shuler ILF Unit of the NFWFMD ILF mitigation program (SAJ-2011-00287). If a mitigation bank option becomes available prior to permitting, in accordance with section 373.4137, F.S., this project will be withdrawn from the NFWFMD mitigation program and FDOT will be responsible for purchasing mitigation bank credits. Approval will be obtained from FDEP before the NFWFMD proceeds with any mitigation for this potential impact. Additional information, as permitting proceeds and mitigation plans are further developed, will be posted on the NFWFMD website (<https://nfwwater.com/water-resources/regional-wetland-mitigation-program/regional-mitigation-plan/>).

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<sup>1</sup> Of the seven projects in this report that may need mitigation through the NFWFMD mitigation program, FDOT has provided estimates of wetland impacts (totaling 16.17 acres) for four of the projects.

**US 98 (from A-21 Road to Church Street); FPID 220196-5.** Located in the Pensacola Bay System watershed (Santa Rosa Sound basin) in Okaloosa County, this project is anticipated to impact 5.10 acres of jurisdictional wetlands (at this time, estimates of functional loss have not been provided by FDOT). The impacts are not currently within the service area of any mitigation bank or NFWFMD ILF project. However, the impacts occur less than one mile outside of existing mitigation bank service areas. Options may include application of Proximity Factors to allow out-of-service-area use of a mitigation bank, or NFWFMD-development of a permittee-responsible standalone project. If permittees determine that a mitigation bank can be used to offset this impact, in accordance with section 373.4137, F.S., this project will be withdrawn from the NFWFMD mitigation program and FDOT will be responsible for purchasing mitigation bank credits. If mitigation is developed by the NFWFMD, approvals will be obtained from FDEP before proceeding. Additional information, as plans are developed and permitting proceeds, will be posted on the NFWFMD website (<https://nfwfwater.com/water-resources/regional-wetland-mitigation-program/regional-mitigation-plan/>).

**US 98 (from Santa Rosa / Okaloosa County Line to A-21 Road); FPID 220196-6.** Located in the Pensacola Bay System watershed (Santa Rosa Sound basin) in Okaloosa County, this project is anticipated to impact 2.80 acres of jurisdictional wetlands (at this time, estimates of functional loss have not been provided by FDOT). The impacts are not currently within the service area of any mitigation bank or NFWFMD ILF project. However, the impacts occur less than one mile outside of existing mitigation bank service areas. Options may include application of Proximity Factors to allow out-of-service-area use of a mitigation bank, or NFWFMD-development of a permittee-responsible standalone project. If permittees determine that a mitigation bank can be used to offset this impact, in accordance with section 373.4137, F.S., this project will be withdrawn from the NFWFMD mitigation program and FDOT will be responsible for purchasing mitigation bank credits. If mitigation is developed by the NFWFMD, approvals will be obtained from FDEP before proceeding. Additional information, as plans are developed and permitting proceeds, will be posted on the NFWFMD website (<https://nfwfwater.com/water-resources/regional-wetland-mitigation-program/regional-mitigation-plan/>).

**US 98 (from Portside Drive to Bergren Road); FPID 220426-3.** Located in the Pensacola Bay System watershed (Santa Rosa Sound basin) in Santa Rosa County, this project is anticipated to impact 2.51 acres of jurisdictional wetlands (at this time, estimates of functional loss have not been provided by FDOT). The impacts are partially within the service area of a mitigation bank. Options may include application of Proximity Factors to allow out-of-service-area use of a mitigation bank for portions of the impact outside of a bank service area, or possible NFWFMD-development of a permittee-responsible standalone project. If permittees determine that a mitigation bank can be used to fully offset this impact, in accordance with section 373.4137, F.S., this project will be withdrawn from the NFWFMD mitigation program and FDOT will be responsible for purchasing mitigation bank credits. If mitigation is developed by the NFWFMD, approvals will be obtained from FDEP before proceeding. Additional information, as plans are developed and permitting proceeds, will be posted on the NFWFMD website (<https://nfwfwater.com/water-resources/regional-wetland-mitigation-program/regional-mitigation-plan/>).

**US 98 (from Bergren Road to Ramble Bay Lane); FPID 220426-4.** Located in the Pensacola Bay System watershed (Santa Rosa Sound basin) in Santa Rosa County, this project is anticipated to impact 5.76 acres of jurisdictional wetlands (at this time, estimates of functional loss have not been provided by FDOT). The impacts are partially within the service area of a mitigation bank. Options may include application of Proximity Factors to allow out-of-service-area use of a mitigation bank for portions of the impact outside of a bank service area, or possible NFWMD-development of a permittee-responsible standalone project. If permittees determine that a mitigation bank can be used to fully offset this impact, in accordance with section 373.4137, F.S., this project will be withdrawn from the NFWMD mitigation program and FDOT will be responsible for purchasing mitigation bank credits. If mitigation is developed by the NFWMD, approvals will be obtained from FDEP before proceeding. Additional information, as plans are developed and permitting proceeds, will be posted on the NFWMD website (<https://nwfwater.com/water-resources/regional-wetland-mitigation-program/regional-mitigation-plan/>).

## Conclusion

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

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

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

  
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Lyle Seigler, Executive Director  
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2/11/2026  
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Date

## **For More Information**

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# Northwest Florida Water Management District

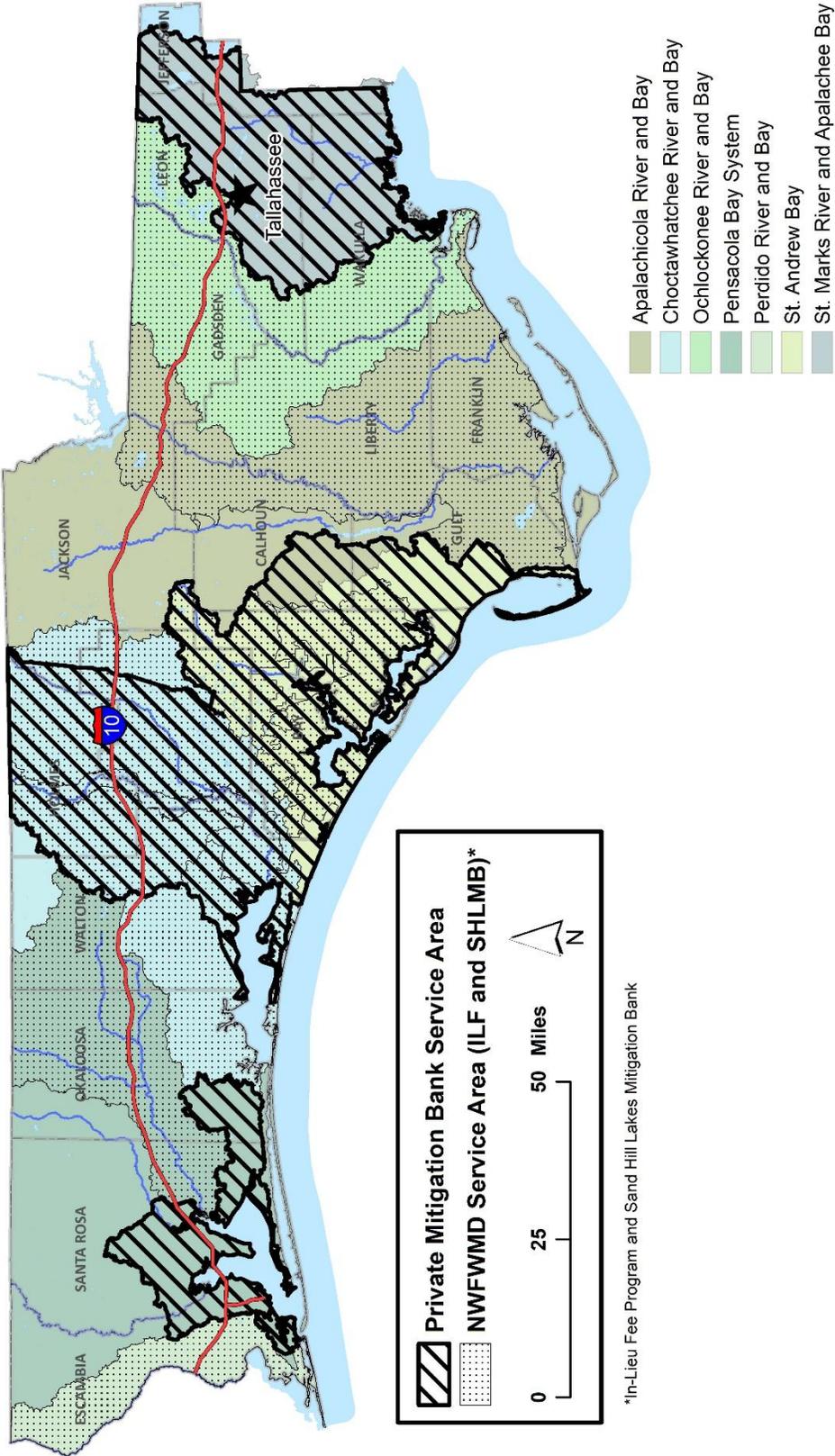


Figure 1. Mitigation Service Areas in Northwest Florida

# Northwest Florida Water Management District 2026 Regional Mitigation Plan Update FDOT Project and Proposed Mitigation

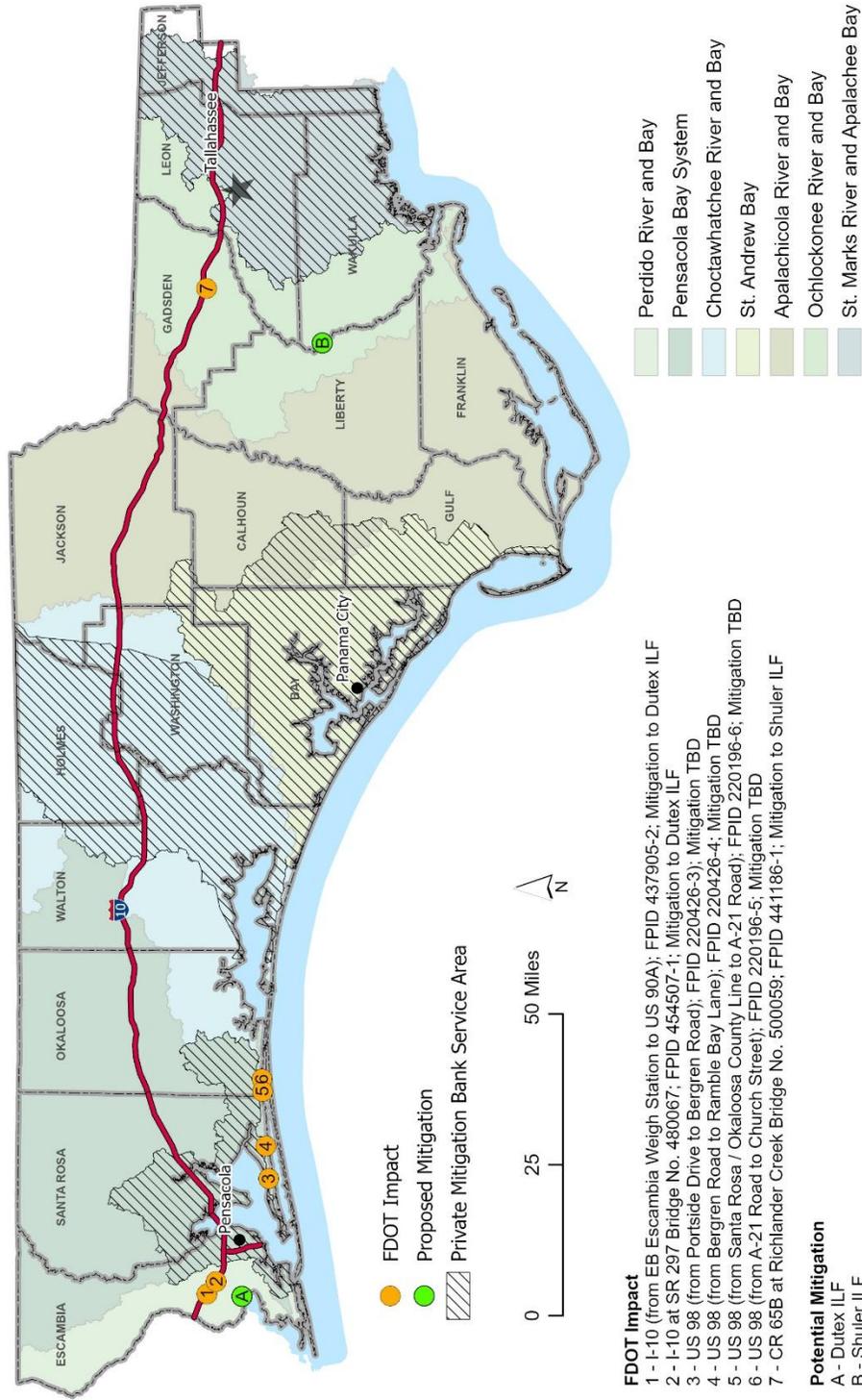


Figure 2. Location Map of FDOT Impacts

Table 1. Impact and Mitigation Overview

Impact and Mitigation Overview – February 2025 <sup>1</sup>						
Impact	Mitigation <sup>2</sup>	Impact Location		Habitat / Community Type Impact	Total Impact Acres	T/E Species Impact
		County	Drainage Basin			
I-10 (from EB Escambia County Weigh Station to east of US 90A / 9 Mile Road; FPID 437905-2)	Dutex In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area	Escambia	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
I-10 at SR 297 Pine Forest Road Bridge No. 480067; FPID 454507-1	Dutex In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area	Escambia	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
CR 65B Old Federal Road at Richlander Creek Bridge No. 500059; FPID 441186-1	Shuler In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area	Gadsden	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
US 98 (from A-21 Road to Church Street); FPID 220196-5	TBD	Okaloosa	TBD	TBD	5.10	TBD
US 98 (from Santa Rosa / Okaloosa County Line to A-21 Road); FPID 220196-6	TBD	Okaloosa	TBD	TBD	2.80	TBD
US 98 (from Portside Drive to Bergren Road); FPID 220426-3	TBD	Santa Rosa	TBD	TBD	2.51	TBD
US 98 (from Bergren Road to Ramble Bay Lane); FPID 220426-4	TBD	Santa Rosa	TBD	TBD	5.76	TBD
					16.17	(Total)

<sup>1</sup>Habitat/community type, estimated impact acreage, and threatened or endangered species impact is provided by FDOT District-3; subject to verification by permitting authorities.

<sup>2</sup>Where mitigation is TBD, the use of Proximity Factors to allow out-of-service-area use of mitigation banks may be pursued by FDOT (subject to approval by permitting authorities). Alternatively, NFWFMD may consider development of permittee-responsible standalone projects. Any mitigation developed by the NFWFMD shall be approved by FDEP prior to implementation.

Table 2. Mitigation Plan Overview

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

Table 3. Cost Estimates

Cost of Mitigation Plan – February 2025						
Mitigation Name	Planning / Design Cost	Construction Cost	Acquisition or Credit Purchase Cost	Management Cost	Total Cost <sup>1</sup>	Mitigation Cost per Acre of Impact
Dutex In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area	\$0	\$0	TBD	\$0	TBD	\$149,093
Shuler In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area	\$0	\$0	TBD	\$0	TBD	\$149,093
(Total)					TBD	

<sup>1</sup>For FDOT Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026), in accordance with section 373.41.37, F.S., mitigation, when conducted through a water management district, is funded at a rate of \$149,093 per acre of direct wetland impact. Mitigation funding is anticipated to increase to \$152,707 per acre in FDOT Fiscal Year 2027 (beginning July 1, 2026). Two impacts (FPID 437905-2; FPID 454507-1; total direct wetland impact acreage = TBD) are anticipated to be mitigated at the Dutex ILF site via debiting of credits. One impact (FPID 441186-1; direct wetland impact acreage = TBD) is anticipated to be mitigated at the Shuler ILF site via debiting of credits. Proposed mitigation for the other four impacts described in this report (FPID 220196-5; FPID 220196-6; FPID 220426-3; FPID 220426-4; total direct wetland impact = 16.17 acres; 16.17 acres x \$149,093/acre = \$2,410,833.81 in potential mitigation funding for these four impacts) is TBD.