

SAND HILL LAKES MITIGATION BANK
FDEP PERMIT NO. 0227351-001
SEMIANNUAL STATUS REPORT
PERIOD: JULY – DECEMBER 2024

For the period July – December 2024:

1. Efforts to limit damage to vegetation at SHLMB by feral hog and beaver are ongoing. Under Contract 24-060 with USDA APHIS-WS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Wildlife Services), 24 feral hogs were reported eliminated at SHLMB.
2. No prescribed fire was implemented.
3. Perimeter fencing was inspected; vegetation growing on perimeter fencing was controlled through use of herbicides.
4. Minor occurrences of cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) were observed and treated with herbicide during the first half of 2024. These areas continue to be monitored, and additional treatment will be conducted as needed.
5. Mowing of nuisance shrubs adjacent to management access roads was conducted.
6. Public fishing and hunting continued at the Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank (SHLMB) in accordance with permit conditions. Records are maintained by FWC.
7. Security and law enforcement patrols continued in accordance with permit conditions; no known violations were reported.
8. Water level gages were read monthly in accordance with permit conditions. Data is available upon request.
9. FDEP Mitigation Banking Team conducted an inspection of the Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank on 13 December 2024. An “adaptive management plan” will be developed in 2025 to address concerns raised.

Anticipated restoration and/or management anticipated for January – June 2025:

1. In 2025, the majority of the property will be burned during the growing season. This approach promotes the proliferation of native grasses and forbs, helps control encroaching woody vegetation, and improves habitat conditions for fire-adapted wildlife. The goal remains to maintain fire-dependent upland communities on two-year burn cycles. Historically, hydric pine flatwood/savanna communities have been burned annually. However, due to insufficient fuel accumulation and limited fire effectiveness, burning will be shifted to a two-year cycle to allow for greater fuel buildup and more impactful burns.
2. Sandhill (longleaf pine/wiregrass community) polygons where oak/shrub densities exceed desired conditions will be managed with fire, herbicide, and/or mowing.
3. An overabundance of *Andropogon* spp., exceeding the 25% graminoid threshold defined by the FDEP permit’s final success criteria, was observed in the hydric pine flatwoods during the annual inspection. Corrective measures are planned for 2025 to address this issue and ensure compliance with permit requirements.
4. Water level gages will continue to be read monthly in accordance with permit conditions.
5. Security and law enforcement patrols will continue in accordance with permit conditions.
6. Public fishing and hunting, overseen by FWC, will continue in accordance with permit conditions.

7. Inspections of perimeter fencing will continue with anticipated repairs made. Additional application of herbicide to vegetation growing on perimeter fencing is planned.
8. Exotic vegetation, if observed by NFWFMD or FWC staff, will be treated with herbicides.

Overall, the site is in excellent ecological condition. Management activities continue in accordance with permit conditions. Issues identified above (e.g., minor occurrence of exotic and/or nuisance vegetation; feral hog populations; perimeter fencing maintenance; shrub and *Andropogon* spp. densities in selected polygons) are being addressed.

Certification:

We certify, to the best of our knowledge, that this report represents a true and accurate description of the activities and site conditions at the time of this report. This semi-annual report was written in accordance with Specific Condition 27 of the permit.

Robert F. Lide

Robert F. Lide, Senior Environmental Scientist, QMS Team Member
31 January 2025

Philip Garrett

Philip Garrett, Senior Environmental Scientist, QMS Team Member
31 January 2025

Coakley Taylor

Coakley Taylor, Lands Manager, QMS Team Member
31 January 2025

Table 1. Representative Photos (JLY – DEC 2024)



12/26/2024



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