

NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board

THROUGH: Brett Cyphers, Executive Director
Guy Gowens, Assistant Executive Director
William O. Cleckley, Director, Division of Land Management and
Acquisition

FROM: Carol L. Bert, Lands Administrator III

DATE: February 14, 2017

SUBJECT: Consideration of Florida Forever 2017 Five-Year Work Plan for
Land Acquisition

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Governing Board approve the 2017 Florida Forever Five-Year Work Plan.

Background:

Section 373.139, Florida Statutes, requires the District to adopt, in a public hearing, a Five-Year Work Plan for land acquisition. The District's 2017 land acquisition program will focus on acquiring properties that improve the quality and/or quantity of water flowing from springs. The use of a Conservation Easement (CE) will be the preferred method of acquisition as it allows resource protection goals to be met while producing considerable savings to taxpayers, both at the time of purchase, and in long-term management and maintenance costs. The use of this less-than-fee acquisition method also allows the landowner to retain title to the property and the ability to operate the property, within the provisions of the CE, in an economically beneficial manner.

Additions and modifications to this year's plan include:

Jackson Blue Spring Groundwater Contribution Area and Chipola River (Jackson County) – add 24,370 acres to allow for potential fee or less than fee simple acquisitions in the groundwater contribution (or recharge) area and within areas along the Chipola River for current and future potential springs projects.

Wakulla Springs Groundwater Contribution Area (Wakulla County) – add 74,083 acres to include potential fee simple in the groundwater contribution (or recharge) area for current and future potential springs projects. The new area is located in Leon and Wakulla counties.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has issued Basin Action Management Plans (BMAP) for two first magnitude springs in northwest Florida: the Upper Wakulla River and Wakulla Springs basin in October 2015 and the Jackson Blue Spring and Merritts Mill Pond Basin in May 2016. The goal of both plans is to restore the springs and their biological communities by reducing nitrogen loading, the primary pollutant impacting the waterbodies. The Wakulla Springs BMAP delineates two Primary Focus Areas within the BMAP boundary located in southern Leon and northern Wakulla counties. The Jackson Blue Spring BMAP currently identifies the entire spring basin as the focus area. As land acquisition for water quality protection is a method of achieving management strategies identified in the BMAPs, the primary focus areas of both BMAPs were added to the District's Florida Forever Land Acquisition Work Plan.

Holmes Creek (Washington County) – add 855 acres along Holmes Creek as priority fee simple or less-than-fee simple acquisition for the current Cypress Spring or future potential springs projects. This new area is located in Washington County.

Econfina Creek (Bay County) – change 982 acres from greenways connection corridors to priority fee simple or less than fee simple acquisitions for current spring's project. This area is located in Bay County.

Greenways Connection Corridor (Walton County) – removal of over 19,000 acres of greenways connection corridor between Eglin Air Force Base and Choctawhatchee River in Walton County. This area is being removed because the majority of the greenways connection corridor is owned by Nokuse Plantation and the Board of Trustees holds a CE on this property. In addition, 1,260 acres was removed from Priority Fee Simple Acquisition, east of Lafayette Creek, because this acreage is also held as a CE by the Board of Trustees.

/cb

Northwest Florida Water Management District



Florida Forever Work Plan

February 22, 2017

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Introduction

Section 373.199(7), F.S. requires the Northwest Florida Water Management District (District) to annually update the Florida Forever Five-Year Work Plan. To date, this is the 16th annual update of the 2001 Florida Forever Five-Year Work Plan. Since 2006 this plan has been presented as a separate chapter in the Consolidated Annual Report as required by section 373.036(7), F.S. This 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, lands surplused or exchanged 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 (section 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.

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 and the table below illustrates actual expenditures for land acquisition using Florida Forever funding.

Water Management Area	Acres	Dollars Expended
Perdido River	6,044	\$13,535,865
Escambia River	697	\$ 1,231,692
Yellow River	205	\$ 630,046
Choctawhatchee River	4,269	\$ 6,162,350
Econfina Creek	3,663	\$ 7,977,220
Apalachicola River	1,912	\$ 3,981,132
Chipola River	2,440	\$ 5,922,785
St. Marks River	830	\$ 1,862,050
Ochlockonee River	1,529	\$ 1,951,197

Since the inception of the District's land acquisition program, the goal has been to protect the floodplain of our major rivers and creeks. To date, more than 223,555 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 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.

Subject to receiving funding, the District’s acquisition efforts this year will focus on the purchase of inholdings and additions to the existing water management areas (WMAs) as well as Conservation Easements in each of the existing WMA’s and projects that protect the quality and quantity of water that flows into and out of springs. Existing WMAs include the Perdido River, Escambia River, Blackwater River, Yellow River, Garcon Point, Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek, Econfina Creek, Chipola River, and Apalachicola River. All of these WMAs will be high priority areas for the acquisition of additions and inholdings. Acquisition efforts will be directed toward acquiring those properties which the District adjoins on one, two or three sides (additions) or those parcels which the District surrounds on all sides (inholdings). In addition, the District’s acquisition efforts will also focus on acquiring fee or less than fee simple interest in properties located within the Jackson Blue and Wakulla Springs Groundwater Contribution Areas.

In developing the annual update, District staff shall review projects proposed by DEP’s Division of State Lands in order 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 water bodies, it is desirable to acquire both the floodplain and a natural buffer zone to provide further water resource protection.

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 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	Gainer 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 will 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 under the Florida Forever program for other lands that qualify for acquisition under the program. 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 that there is no net loss of wetland protection and that 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 proximity to the original wetland impact is often paramount, the District will on occasion acquire or manage isolated tracts at times.

Surplus

Chapter 373.089, F.S., allows the Governing Board of the District to sell (surplus) lands or interest 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.

Surplus Lands

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 or connected only on a corner. The following tracts were declared surplus by the District's Governing Board.

WMA	Acres	County	Acquired Date	Status
Blackwater River	0.4	Santa Rosa	August 3, 2001	Sold on 12-13-13
Choctawhatchee River	38	Walton	July 31, 1992	Sold on 02-14-14
Choctawhatchee River	38	Walton	July 31, 1992	For Sale
Econfina Creek	8.39	Washington	December 19, 1997	For Sale
Econfina Creek	2.6	Bay	April 17, 2006	Sold on 06-12-15
Escambia River	115	Escambia	April 26, 1994	For Sale
Yellow River	1.5	Okaloosa	December 15, 1999	Sold on 12-13-13
Yellow River	61.1	Okaloosa	December 15, 1999	Exchanged 01-24-14

Note to Landowners

It is important to note 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 Land Management and Acquisition 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 <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/FFplan.htm>

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 Northwest Florida Water Management District.

Florida Forever Goals and Numeric Performance Measures

Reported as of October 1, 2016

Rule No. 18-24.0022

(2)(d)1. For proposed acquisitions, see section 5.1, (Florida Forever) Land Acquisition Five-Year Work Plan in the Consolidated Annual Report.

Acquisitions of lakes, wetlands, and floodplain areas to date = 187,112 Total acres
15,255 Florida Forever acres

(2)(d)2. Acquisitions for water resource development to date = 41,616 Total acres (incl. fee and l-t-f)
3,663 Florida Forever acres (incl. fee and l-t-f)

(3)(a)2. Refer to section 5.2, (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 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.

(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 = 12,707 acres
Undergoing restoration or enhancement = 652 acres
Restoration completed = 21,892 acres
Restoration maintenance = 21,892 acres

(4)(a)3. Refer to section 5.2, (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 section 4.1, Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program: FY 2016-2017 of the Consolidated Annual Report for quantity of new water made available through regional water supply plans.

(4)(c) See section 5.1, (Florida Forever) Land Acquisition Work Plan (Table 5.5) of the Consolidated Annual Report for resource-based recreation facilities by type.

Land Acquisition Projects

The Florida Forever Act, in particular 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. Specific land acquisition projects are individually identified and detailed information specific to the project is provided in the following pages.

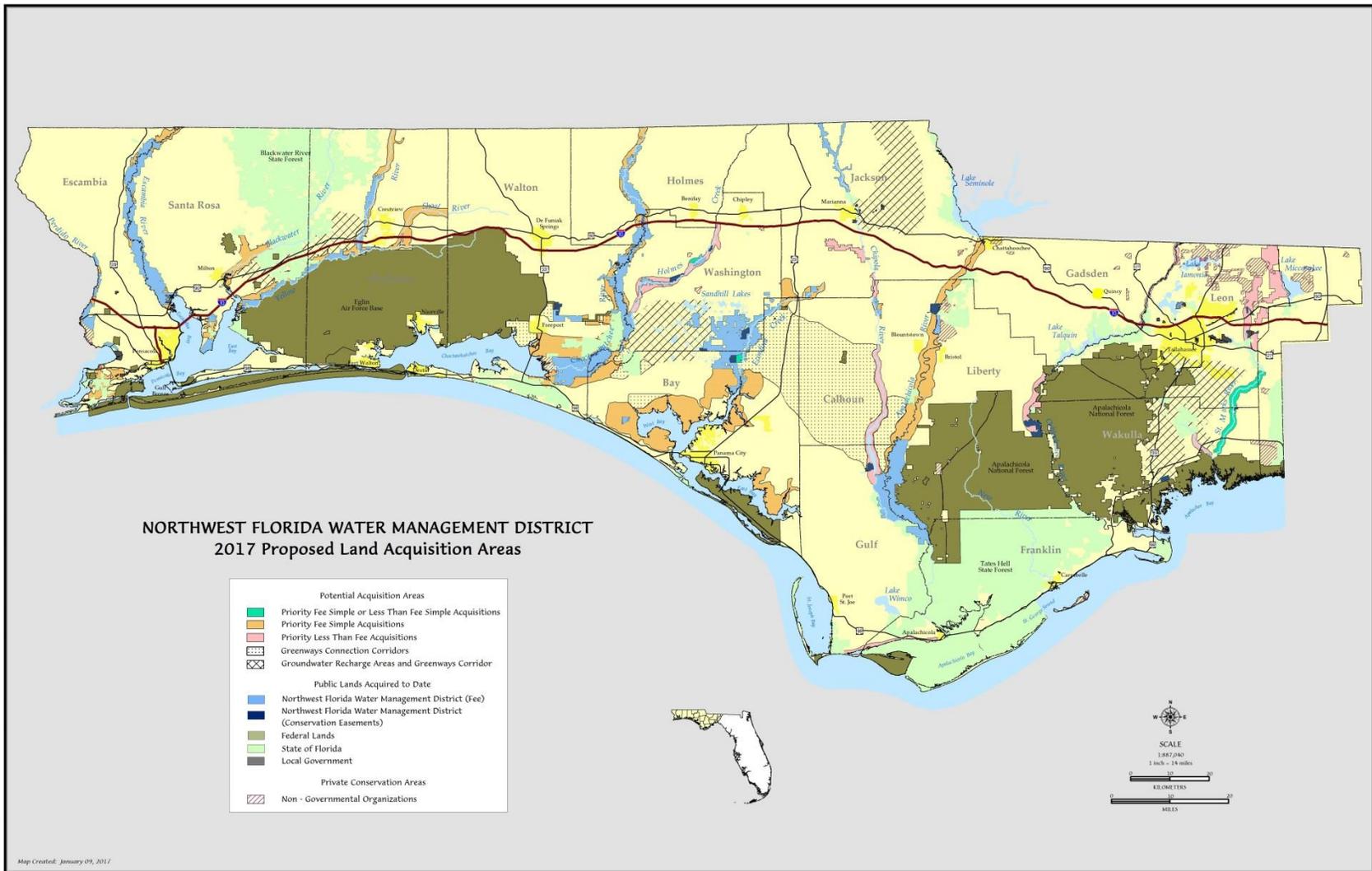


Figure 1

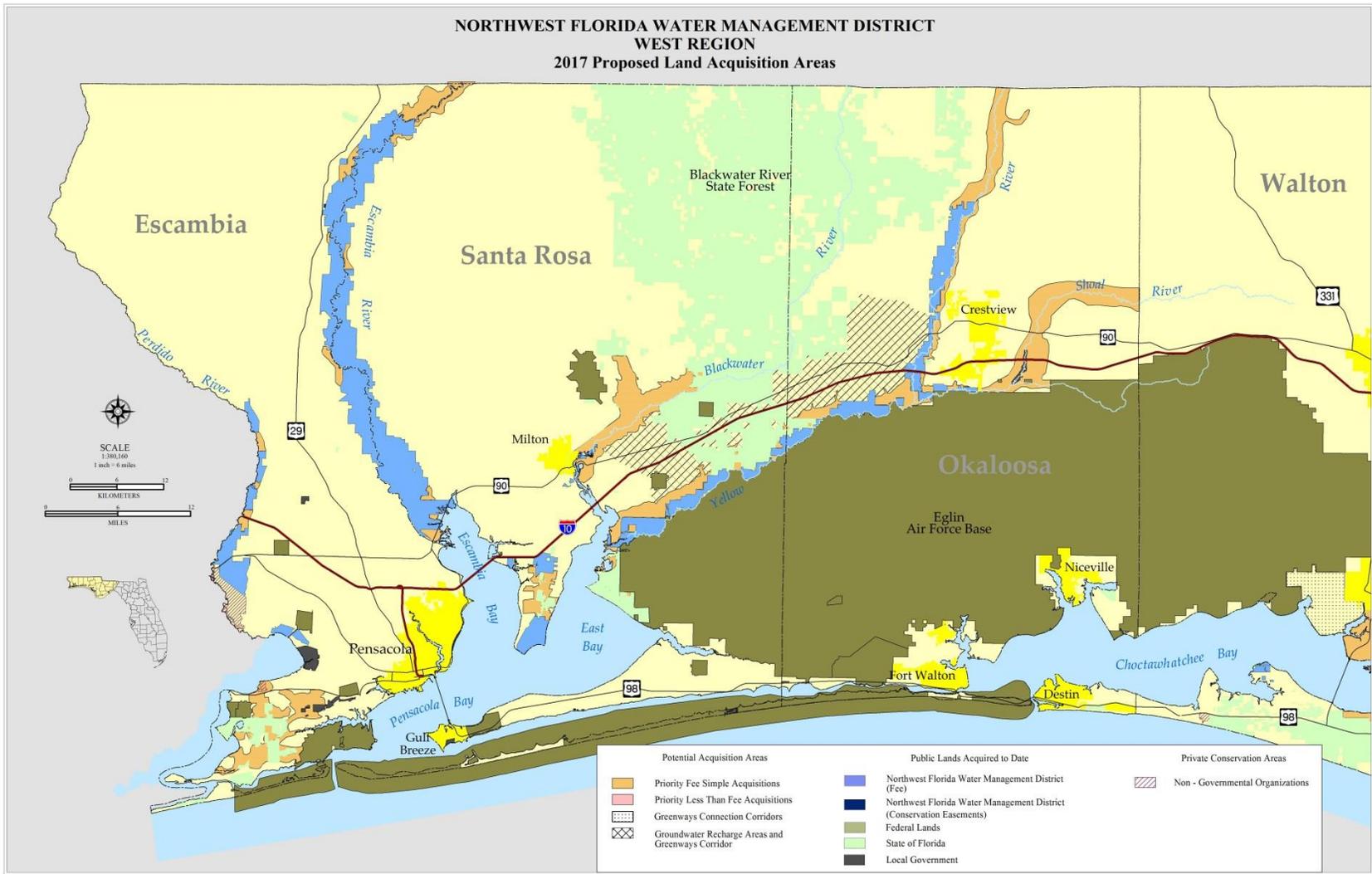


Figure 2

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Perdido River and Bay Basin (Figure 2)

The Perdido River serves as the state line, separating Florida from Alabama. 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 and 4 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 significantly protect the water resources of the area as well as enhance water quality protection efforts for the Perdido Bay system.

Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands 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, Tarkiln, and Arnica bays, 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.

Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to the bay which can enhance water quality protection and mitigate for wetland impacts associated with DOT highway construction in southern Escambia County.

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

Approximately 1,447 acres have been identified for possible 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Southwest Escambia County Ecosystem (Figure 2)

Several major estuarine drainages including Jones Swamp, Bayou Grande, Big Lagoon, and Tarkiln Bay, intersect in southwest Escambia County. These, in turn, comprise portions of the Pensacola and Perdido bay watersheds. The proposed acquisition borders a major urban area and is experiencing encroachment from residential and commercial development. The project area is characterized by an undulating topography where remnants of ancient dune lines alternate with lower intervening swales that drain east or west, parallel to the Gulf coast. The wet prairies in the area are some of the last examples of what may be one of the most diverse plant communities in the southeast, supporting large stands of white-topped pitcher plants and almost 100 other plant species.

Protecting the ecological integrity of this area is important to the quality of water resources in the Pensacola and Perdido bay systems. Acquisition will help limit nonpoint 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.

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

Approximately 11,000 acres have been identified for possible 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

Groundwater Recharge Area

Designated area has groundwater recharge potential.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Escambia River Basin (Figure 2)

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 contains a rich diversity of plant and animal species, as well as many rare fish and waterfowl. 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.

Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands 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 and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Approximately 6,644 acres have been identified for possible 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Garcon Point Ecosystem (Figure 2)

This proposed land acquisition project contains most of the Garcon Point Peninsula, which borders Pensacola, Escambia, East and Blackwater bays. 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 both 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.

Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands. 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 and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Approximately 3,200 acres have been identified for possible 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Blackwater River Basin (Figure 2)

Originating in the Conecuh National Forest in Alabama, the Blackwater River 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 river.

The acquisition area includes a large area of mature longleaf pine forest; considerable bottomland forest and marsh acreage; upland mixed forest; and blackwater stream and seepage slope communities. Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands. Approximately 380 acres have been acquired along the Blackwater River immediately south of Milton in Santa Rosa County.

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 prior to acceptance.

Land Acquisition

Approximately 11,449 acres have been identified for possible 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Yellow and Shoal River Basin (Figure 2)

The Yellow River has its headwaters in Conecuh National Forest in Alabama and forms the northern border of Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) across much of eastern Santa Rosa and western Okaloosa counties. The proposed acquisitions would bring much of the remainder of the Yellow River floodplain in Florida under public ownership. Included in the project is a segment of the lower Shoal River, the largest tributary to the Yellow River. Large private landowners own a majority of the floodplain in this project, but considerable areas of the bordering and buffer lands are being sought to ensure effective management and protection of water resources. Highest priority will be given to tracts in the western portion of the project within the 100-year floodplain. Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands. Currently the District owns 16,553 acres along the 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 proposed purchase area would provide water quality protection from the Alabama border and encompass approximately 39,140 acres. Purchase of lands 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 recommended by the District Regional Water Supply Plan for Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton counties to protect future supply sources.

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

Approximately 39,140 acres have been identified for possible 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

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 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.

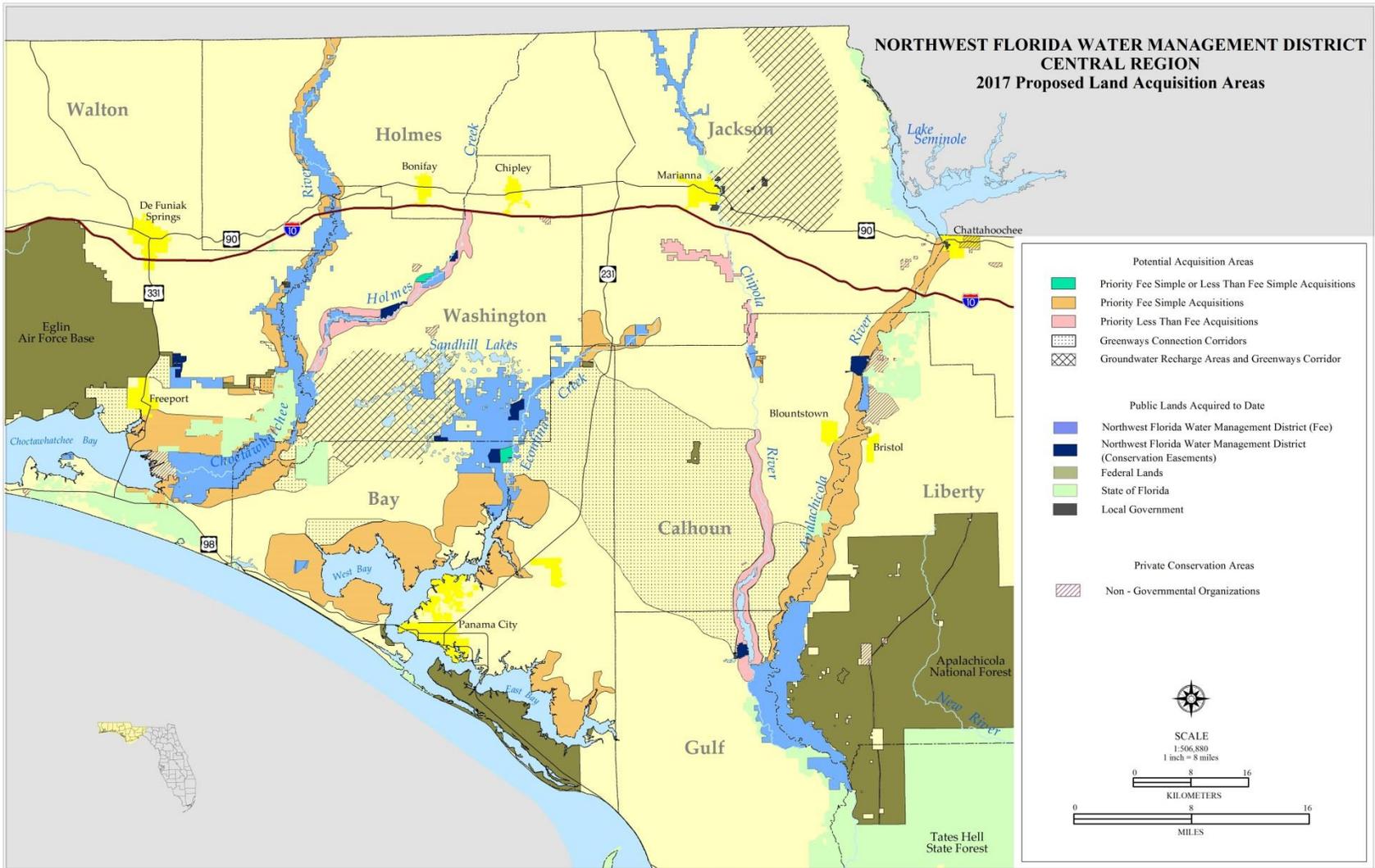


Figure 3

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Lafayette Creek (Figure 3)

Originating in south central Walton County, the Lafayette Creek drainage basin is located northeast of Freeport, Florida. 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. Any proposed acquisitions will protect a portion of Magnolia and Wolf creeks, both of which are significant tributaries to Lafayette Creek. Also, additional purchases along the creek will 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.

The area between the Choctawhatchee River and Eglin Air Force Base, which encompasses Lafayette Creek, is part of the Northwest Florida Greenway Corridor which serves to protect open space stretching from the Apalachicola National Forest to Eglin Air Force Base. It is intended to preserve environmentally sensitive areas, sustain existing military lands and airspace, maintain the economic viability of forest lands, and provide recreation. The District, in cooperation with Eglin Air Force Base, acquired a 1,095.3-acre conservation easement from Nokuse Plantation utilizing Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) funds. Acquisition of this Conservation Easement will ensure the protection of seepage streams within the Magnolia and Lafayette Creeks and buffer Eglin Air Force Base lands to the west.

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

Approximately 4,540 acres have been identified for possible 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Choctawhatchee River and Holmes Creek Basin (Figure 3)

Originating in Alabama and flowing into Choctawhatchee Bay, the Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek basin encompasses the second largest floodplain in the state. 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 63,348 acres along the river, creek and bay in fee and less than fee. Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands, around the river's mouth, designated tributaries such as Holmes Creek, and other projects that can mitigate for wetland impacts associated with DOT highway construction.

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

Approximately 55,064 acres have been identified for fee simple acquisition on the Choctawhatchee River and Holmes Creek, 7,000 acres have been identified for possible less than fee acquisition on Holmes Creek, and 855 acres have been identified for priority fee simple or less than fee simple 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

West Bay Buffer (Figure 3)

West Bay is the westernmost embayment of the St. Andrew Bay estuary. 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 nonpoint source pollution, as well as habitat loss and fragmentation. Acquisitions in this 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 would also protect water quality by providing a substantial riparian buffer and maintaining the natural hydrology in the vicinity of the bay. The District currently owns 719 acres in the West Bay Buffer.

In addition to providing for water resource protection and public use, this acquisition will be consistent with several ongoing initiatives, including the West Bay 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 and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Approximately 47,281 acres have been identified for possible 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Econfina Creek (Figure 3)

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. The proposed purchases along the creek contain several spring-run streams, which are imperiled biological communities. 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 more than 43,770 acres in fee and less than fee, including the 2,155-acre Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank. Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands and parcels with significant aquifer 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 and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Approximately 39,666 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Approximately 982 acres have been identified as priority fee simple or less than fee simple 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

The upper portion of the acquisition project is a significant recharge area of the Floridan Aquifer. The majority of the acreage purchased by the District and targeted for future purchase is one of the most important recharge 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.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Sandy Creek Basin (Figure 3)

Sandy Creek is a major tributary of East Bay, the easternmost embayment of the St. Andrew Bay estuary. The creek's basin is characterized by extensive wet pine flatwoods, as well as hardwood forests, saltmarshes, 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 so doing, it would preserve water quality and a mosaic of interconnected upland, wetland, stream, and estuarine habitats. The acquisition would also 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 and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Approximately 15,000 acres have been identified for 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

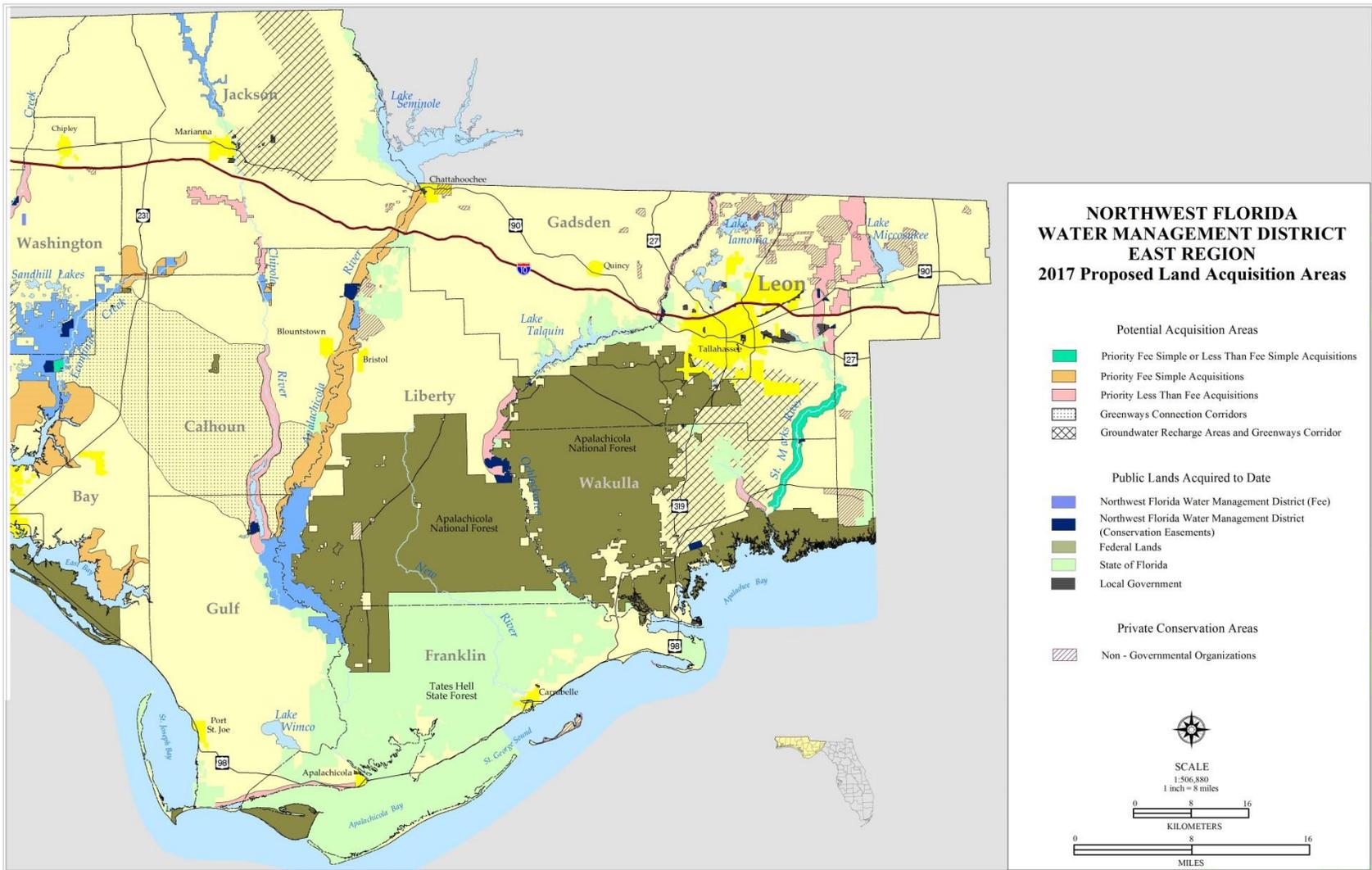


Figure 4

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Chipola River Basin (Figure 4)

A new area along the Middle Chipola River has been identified for less than fee acquisition. The area is comprised of approximately 2,400 acres in northern Calhoun and southern Jackson counties. Acquisition of this tract will help protect more than 3.4 miles of the west bank and 4.25 miles of the east bank of the Chipola River. 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 9,094 acres in fee simple and holds a conservation easement on 810 acres in the Chipola River Basin.

Two additional areas have been identified for less than fee acquisition along the Chipola River. The first is comprised of approximately 6,000 acres in the Spring Lake Spring Group area 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.

The second proposed less than fee acquisition contains a core tract of roughly 20,000 acres in the river basin in Calhoun and Gulf counties. The Chipola River is the largest tributary to the Apalachicola River and its mostly spring-fed waters make an important and consistent contribution of sediment-free water to the Apalachicola. The degree of biological diversity of the Chipola appears to be nearly as high as that of the Apalachicola. Priority purchases will be focused along the middle reaches of the Chipola River.

Jackson Blue Spring Groundwater Contribution Area

The Jackson Blue Spring Groundwater Contribution Area, east of the Chipola River, has been identified for fee simple or less than fee simple acquisition to provide protection to Blue Spring and the groundwater contribution area in Jackson County.

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

Approximately 1,025 acres has been identified for possible fee acquisition and 28,400 acres have been identified for possible less than fee acquisition on the Chipola River and approximately 96,711 acres have been identified for fee simple or less than fee simple acquisition in the Jackson Blue Spring Groundwater Contribution Area. 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Apalachicola Bay and St. Vincent Sound Buffer (Figure 4)

Apalachicola Bay 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. State and federal agencies, as well as the NFWMD, have made extensive investments in acquiring and protecting lands throughout the basin. This project would provide an important addition to these efforts.

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 land targeted through this project is immediately adjacent to some of the most productive oyster harvesting areas of the Apalachicola Bay system, including the Indian Lagoon, Scorpion, and Paradise bars.

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

Approximately 5,200 acres have been identified for less than fee 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Upper Apalachicola River Basin (Figure 4)

The Apalachicola River begins below Lake Seminole at the confluence of Chattahoochee and Flint rivers. 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, and more endangered plant species can be found along the river's upper stretches than in any comparably sized river in the state. The District owns 36,823 acres of river floodplain and holds a conservation easement on 1,550 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. Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands, other conservation lands 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 and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Approximately 50,132 acres have been identified for possible fee 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

Ochlockonee River Basin (Figure 4)

The Ochlockonee River originates in the coastal plain of Georgia and traverses parts of five Florida counties. 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 the likelihood of 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 and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Land Acquisition

Approximately 11,767 acres have been identified for less than fee 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers (Figure 4)

The Wakulla River originates at Wakulla Springs and flows south approximately 10 miles to join the St. Marks River at the town of St. Marks in Wakulla County. 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 Spring, it flows 11 miles to its confluence with the Wakulla River. While the lower reach of the river below the town of St. Marks is protected and preserved as part of the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, much of the remainder of the two river watersheds is threatened by active riverfront development and in the adjacent highlands. The St. Marks 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 1,376 acres under less than fee acquisition in the area.

BluePrint 2000

In December 2003, the District and the City of Tallahassee-Leon County BluePrint 2000 Intergovernmental Agency entered into a five-year Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to work cooperatively to acquire conservation easements to protect and preserve the water resources of the St. Marks River basin in Leon County. Although this MOA has now expired, the District and BluePrint 2000 successfully purchased conservation easements on a 132.62-acre tract and 194.5-acre tract, both located in Leon County.

Wakulla Springs Groundwater Contribution Area

The Wakulla Springs Groundwater Contribution 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 in Wakulla County.

Land Acquisition

Approximately 45,456 acres have been identified for fee or less than fee acquisition along the St. Marks and Wakulla rivers and approximately 90,666 acres have been identified for fee simple or less than fee simple acquisition in the Wakulla Springs Groundwater Contribution Area. 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: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

FLORIDA FOREVER RESTORATION PROJECTS

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, land acquisition lists and plans, 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 helped 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.

Significant appropriations of Florida Forever funds have not been made since FY 2008-2009. No new projects were undertaken in FY 2015-2016. The table below lists conceptual projects considered eligible for Florida Forever capital improvement funding.

Projects Currently Eligible for Florida Forever Funding

Project	Description	Status	Estimated Cost
Unpaved road sedimentation abatement	Unpaved road stabilization to reduce sedimentation and nonpoint 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 and increase public access to riparian and aquatic habitats and shorelines associated with northwest Florida springs; funding indicated represents estimated available Florida Forever contribution; total costs to be determined	Planning	\$372,480
Stormwater retrofit facilities	Construction of additional cooperative stormwater retrofit projects, providing water quality improvement and improved flood protection, in accordance with approved SWIM plans	Planning	TBD
Hydrologic and shoreline restoration	Water resource restoration of shoreline and riparian habitats, and flow regimes, consistent with SWIM plans	Planning	TBD

Project specifics, as noted in section 373.199(2), (3), (4) and (5), F.S., may 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 2015-2016 Work Plan

Land Acquisition

The District did not purchase or surplus any land during 2016.

Land Management

The District completed numerous land management activities during Fiscal Year 2015-2016. Management and restoration efforts including prescribed burns, native species planting, and timber harvesting continue across the District's 211,152 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 1** and **Table 2** provide additional information on specific land restoration activities completed during the year. The projected Fiscal Year 2016-2017 staffing and management budget by WMA can be found in **Table 3**.

To date, the District has conserved and protected 223,555 acres primarily through fee simple acquisition. These lands protect natural systems, wetland and floodplain functions, groundwater recharge, surface and groundwater quality, and fish and wildlife habitat. District-owned lands are all accessible to the public and are managed to protect water resources while providing 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, and Apalachicola 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 water contribution to Deer Point Lake Reservoir.

Land Management Accomplishments (FY 2015-2016)

- The District conducted prescribed burns on approximately 6,700 acres of District lands, as well as vegetation management (herbicide) and habitat enhancements on 2,169 acres.
- The District's new land management database was completed along with growth and yield modeling to evaluate future timber management scenarios and develop timber revenue projections for future years.
- 2,070 camping permits were issued at 88 reservation-only sites on District lands.
- 15 special resource area permits were issued for larger events on District property.
- Six timber harvests totaling 2,388 acres were active, removing offsite sand pine and thinning loblolly, longleaf, and slash pine.
- More than 8,898 acres of District-owned land were surveyed for invasive exotic plants, and control measures were implemented for all identified problem areas.

Restoration

The District accomplishes water resource restoration through several interrelated programs, primarily Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM), Land Management, and Mitigation.

Approved NFWFMD plans with substantial restoration components include the following:

- *Apalachicola River and Bay Management Plan* (1996)
- *Pensacola Bay System SWIM Plan* (1997)
- *Lake Jackson Management Plan* (1997)
- *St. Andrew Bay Watershed SWIM Plan* (2000)
- *Choctawhatchee River and Bay SWIM Plan* (2002)
- *St. Marks River Watershed SWIM Plan* (2009)
- *Tate's Hell State Forest Hydrologic Restoration Plan* (2010)
- *Florida Forever Capital Improvements Plan*

The District is currently updating SWIM plans for all seven watersheds within the district boundaries and this effort is scheduled to be completed in 2017. All plan updates are anticipated to include water restoration information and projects.

Restoration Accomplishments (FY 2015-2016)

- The Williford Spring restoration project that was completed in 2015 remained closed to the public until July 26, 2016, when the District held a grand opening celebration. Costing more than \$2.1 million, this project involved sediment removal, restoring spring shoreline areas, providing stabilized access to the spring, and recreation improvements including a new parking area, boardwalks, interpretive trails, pavilions, and a canoe tie-up dock that will help prevent future impacts by voluntarily asking the public to refrain from paddling canoes into the spring area. Public response to the project has been very positive.
- One of three cooperative projects to restore the eroding shorelines and address stormwater impacts along Holmes Creek was completed. The remaining two projects, i.e. Live Oak and Hightower Springs landings, are scheduled for completion by the end of FY 2016-2017. These projects are being constructed by Washington County with funding assistance from the District.
- After site stabilization and a landscape plant grow-in period, the Devil's Hole swallet in Washington County was opened to the public as a day use recreation area and reservable campsite within the Econfina Creek WMA.
- The streambank restoration project was completed at Walsingham Park in Washington County. This cooperative project, implemented by USFWS and District staff with funding from FFWCC, utilized geotextile bags to stabilize the eroding shoreline. The restored shoreline was landscaped with native vegetation and several tons of rip-rap rock was removed from the creek.
- Seed for District groundcover projects were collected from District land on the Econfina Creek WMA. The District continues to research, refine, and establish new habitat restoration techniques that increase species diversity and ecosystem health.

- The District completed hand planting of 1,198 acres of disturbed longleaf pine habitat. These habitat restoration activities enhance groundwater recharge, improve wetland functions, and offset wetland losses caused by FDOT projects. This project involved the planting of 830,598 longleaf pine tubelings within two WMAs.

Table 1: Restoration, Enhancement and Maintenance (2016)

Water Management Area	Acres Burned					Acres Planted					Acres Harvested			Acres Treated	
	Total	Fuel Reduction	Site Preparation	Growing Season	Wiregrass Propagation	Total	Upland/Wetland Wiregrass and Toothache Grass	Longleaf Pine	Slash Pine	Replanted	Total	Restoration	Thinning	Habitat Restoration	For Invasive, Non-native or Off-site Species
Escambia River	50	50				1				1					376
Garcon Point	53				53	2				2					20
Blackwater River															60
Yellow River	463	463													1668
Perdido River	825	825													1042
Choctawhatchee River	1,386	242		1,144							380	380			2,001
Econfina Creek	1,472	856	46	353	217	1116		1,116			574		574		5,602
St. Andrews	379	379													
Carter Restoration	835	55		780											
Ward Creek West															896
Devils Swamp Restoration															
Chipola River	661	661				82		82							896
Apalachicola River															448
Lake Jackson															34
Totals	6154	3531	46	2277	270	1,201		1,198		3	954		380	574	13,043

Table 2: Access and Recreation Management (2016)

Water Management Area	Number Maintained							Miles Maintained						Issued	Signs		Installed
	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	
Escambia River	6	11	12	28	11	10			1	2		27	388	45	4	2	
Garcon Point		2	2						3					5	2		
Blackwater River	1	3	3		2				1					5	1	1	
Yellow River		3	3		3			50				42		75			
Perdido River	3	3	4	1	4	10	6	15	6	1		32	101	35	13	1	
Choctawhatchee River	12	15	15	21	14	10		15	11			103	270	75	14	8	
Econfina Creek (incl. Carter Tract)	13	14	14	25	8	14	56	22	18	2		134	1180	160	84	15	
Chipola River	1	4	4	3	2	2	4	6	3			9	54	544	2	1	
Apalachicola River	1	2	2	10	2	1						9	77	420	2	2	
Lake Jackson	1	2	2			1	7		10		7	5		96	2	2	
Totals	38	59	61	88	46	48	73	108	48	6	7	361	2,070	1,460	124	30	

Table 3: Projected Funding, Staffing and Resource Management for FY 2016-2017

Region	Water Management Area	Acres	Assigned Staff	Total Funding	Funding for Resource Management
Western	Escambia	35,413		\$116,532	\$61,870
	Escambia Conservation Easements	19		\$824	\$500
	Garcon Point	3,245		\$74,530	\$28,250
	Yellow	16,553		\$72,265	\$30,000
	Blackwater	381		\$15,034	\$7,150
	Perdido	6,261		\$134,003	\$88,140
	Perdido Conservation Easements	4		\$824	\$500
	Western Region Total	61,876	3	\$414,012	\$216,410
Central	Choctawhatchee	60,810		\$480,732	\$332,030
	Choctawhatchee/Holmes Conservation Easements	2,537		\$15,715	\$13,000
	Econfina	39,182		\$999,589	\$751,660
	St. Andrew/Econfina Conservation Easements	2,433		\$3,737	\$500
	Ward Creek West	719		\$0	\$0
	Carter Restoration	2,155		\$61,000	\$61,000
	Central Region Total	107,836	5	\$1,560,773	\$1,158,190
Eastern	Chipola	9,094		\$125,764	\$60,838
	Apalachicola	36,823		\$65,818	\$20,873
	Apalachicola/Chipola Conservation Easements	2,359		\$2,946	\$500
	Lake Jackson	516		\$104,345	\$78,100
	St. Marks Conservation Easements	1,376		\$3,557	\$500
	Ochlockonee Conservation Easements	3,675		\$3,557	\$500
	Eastern Region Total	53,843	2	\$305,987	\$161,311
Regional Totals		223,555	10	\$2,280,772	\$1,535,911

Other Projects	Acres	Assigned Staff	Total Funding	Funding for Resource Management
Land Management Administration		4	\$913,504	\$330,260
IT Initiative			\$388,601	\$355,586
Land Management Database			\$68,610	\$54,200
Florida National Scenic Trail - Econfina Creek			\$10,000	\$10,000
Brunson Landing Tract	348		\$17,352	\$12,360
Devils Hole Spring Streambank Restoration			\$10,619	\$0
Cotton Landing Streambank Restoration			\$10,619	\$0
Seven Runs Streambank Restoration			\$7,801	\$0
Washington County School Board Donation			\$340	\$340
Grand Total	223,903	14	\$3,708,218	\$2,298,657

