



**NORTHWEST
FLORIDA WATER
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT**

2004 ANNUAL REPORT





Northwest Florida Water Management District

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A Forward Look

In past years, we have taken this opportunity to highlight and review our previous year's activities. This year, we would like to discuss some of our District's priorities for the 2004-2005 fiscal year. Many of these projects are multi-year projects and are expected to continue well beyond 2005.

We have allocated \$5 million for the second cycle of the Florida Forever local government capital improvements grant program for 2004-2005. We reviewed the criteria used to evaluate proposed projects and made modifications based on direction given by the Governing Board. One significant change was that funding was "set aside" for small, local governments that lack the financial resources to provide the same level of matching funds as do large cities and counties. We recommended six applicants for funding, out of 19, and in early 2005, additional grant awards may be considered. The first cycle of the grant program last year proved to be very successful with 11 applicants receiving grant funds totaling more than \$4 million.

Special appropriations were received from the 2004 Florida Legislature for all major Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) priority watersheds. With these funds, and funding provided through the Water Management Lands Trust Fund, the District anticipates having an active SWIM program for the 2004-2005 fiscal year. Restoration and preservation projects are expected to be undertaken for the Pensacola Bay System, Choctawhatchee River and Bay, St. Andrew Bay and the Apalachicola River and Bay.

A high level of activity is expected with the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Wetland Impact Mitigation program and the District's mitigation bank in Washington County. Funds for mitigation activities are made available when DOT

undertakes road improvements in northwest Florida that impact wetland areas. A goal of the District is to continue working to obtain needed permits for the mitigation bank in order to address impacts occurring in Washington and surrounding counties. Mitigation needs in other areas – Walton, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Escambia counties – will be met using property acquired and restored within each county.

During 2004, the District reached a significant milestone in land acquisitions when its total land ownership exceeded 200,000 acres. Potential land acquisitions from willing sellers, will continue to be emphasized in all major basins within the District during the upcoming year. These include Lafayette Creek in the Choctawhatchee River and Bay basin, Spring Lake and other springs in Jackson County, Econfina Creek basin and St. Andrew Bay watershed.

New sources of drinking water supply will continue to receive our attention. The District has begun and will continue to work toward identifying potential new sources of water supply for southern Franklin County. This area is experiencing a rapid rate of growth and it is anticipated that traditional sources will not be adequate to meet all of the proposed needs. The District has begun a test well drilling program in the inland areas of the county to identify where additional ground water supplies could be developed. Inland areas within the Tate's Hell State Forest are currently being assessed and may be potential future water supply sources. Additionally, we are assisting Okaloosa County in the identification of alternative water supplies for meeting the long-term needs of that county.

When negotiations ceased among Florida, Georgia and Alabama over the waters of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint river basin on August 31, 2003, several lawsuits that had been inactive resumed. The District's primary role in the litigation is to provide technical support and expertise needed by the Florida legal team. The Florida team includes attorneys with expertise in interstate water law, the Office of the Attorney General and the Governor's Office. It is likely that the litigation will ultimately lead to the U.S. Supreme Court.

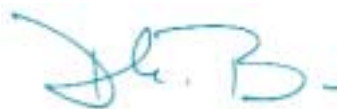
In September, the District's proposed budget for the 2004-2005 fiscal year was approved by the Governor. The Governor commended the Governing Board and the District in four specific areas: our commitment to the Florida Forever program; water supply efforts in the coastal areas, especially Franklin County; assistance to small communities; and implementation of the "service first" philosophy. Following the Governor's directive to reduce staff, the Northwest Florida Water Management has lowered its staff by about 12 percent. The ad valorem millage rate continues to remain at .05 mills (about five cents for every \$1,000 of property value).

The northwest was not spared this past year, which has been called the "year of the hurricanes." Recovery from the devastation of Hurricane Ivan that occurred in the Pensacola area in September is still underway. Recovery has been difficult but local, regional and state governmental entities moved quickly and collectively to assist the area with issues related to water supply. The District's Public Hearing on the Budget scheduled for Pensacola in September had to be convened via telephone conference call due to Hurricane Ivan.

Throughout the upcoming year, we will continue to serve the residents of northwest Florida by identifying future water supply sources, undertaking restoration activities for our environmentally significant watersheds and protecting these valuable water resources.



Joyce Estes
Chair, Governing Board



Douglas E. Barr
Executive Director

Governing Board



Joyce Estes
Chair
 Eastpoint
 Serves at Large
 Appointed: March 5, 1999
 Reappointed: March 2, 2003
 Term Expires: March 1, 2007



L. E. McMullian
Vice Chair
 Sneads
 Represents Basin IV
 Appointed: July 1987
 Reappointed: March 5, 1999
 Reappointed: March 2, 2003
 Term Expires: March 1, 2007



Stephanie Bloyd
Secretary/Treasurer
 Panama City Beach
 Serves at Large
 Appointed: March 2, 2001
 Reappointed: March 2, 2002
 Term Expires: March 1, 2006

2005 GOVERNING BOARD MEETINGS	January 27 February 24* March 24 April 28 May 26 June 23	July 28 August 25 September 15* September 22* October 27 November 30 December 1
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All meetings will be held at the District Headquarters except for those marked with an asterisk (*). The February 24 meeting will be held in Marianna, the September 15 (Public Hearing on the 2005-06 Fiscal Year Budget) in DeFuniak Springs and the September 22 meeting in Panama City. The schedule of meetings is tentative and subject to change.



Douglas E. Barr
Executive Director
 Northwest Florida
 Water Management District
 Appointed: February 1992

NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT



Lois Benson*
Pensacola
Represents Basin I
Appointed: March 17, 2004
Term Expires: March 1, 2005



Wayne Bodie
DeFuniak Springs
Represents Basin II
Appointed: March 5, 1999
Reappointed: March 2, 2003
Term Expires: March 1, 2007



Paul Bradshaw
Havana
Represents Basin V
Appointed: March 17, 2004
Term Expires: March 1, 2008



Hulan Carter
Chipley
Represents Basin III
Appointed: March 2, 2001
Reappointed: March 2, 2002
Term Expires: March 1, 2006



Sharon T. Gaskin
Wewahitchka
Serves at Large
Appointed: March 5, 1999
Reappointed: March 2, 2000
Reappointed: March 17, 2004
Term Expires: March 1, 2008



Richard P. Petermann
Fort Walton Beach
Serves at Large
Appointed: March 2, 2001
Term Expires: March 1, 2005

- Basin I:** Perdido and Escambia rivers
- Basin II:** Blackwater and Yellow rivers
- Basin III:** Choctawhatchee River and St. Andrew Bay Coast
- Basin IV:** Apalachicola and Chipola rivers
- Basin V:** Ochlockonee, Wakulla and St. Marks rivers

*Lois Benson, who represented Basin I, Perdido and Escambia rivers, resigned from the Governing Board in November of 2004.



Districtwide Activities

New and continuing projects and programs undertaken by the Northwest Florida Water Management District during 2004 are described on the following pages. Projects that encompass all or several of the District's 16 counties are discussed in the districtwide section. Other projects can be found in the county specific sections. Not all projects or programs are included in this Annual Report. The District engages in many others to protect and preserve the water resources of northwest Florida.

Florida Forever Grants Continue

The second cycle of the Florida Forever grant program was announced in the summer of 2004. For 2004-2005, up to \$5 million was made available for Florida Forever grants and at least 10 percent (\$500,000) was set aside specifically for small communities. Additionally, \$150,000 was allocated to assist small communities with planning efforts and document preparation needed for the Florida Forever grants. The District received 19 grant applications for the second cycle of grants. In November, the Governing Board selected six projects to recommend for approval: Bay County, \$500,000 for Deer Point Lake dirt road stabilization; Calhoun County, \$350,000 for county roadway stabilization that will reduce sedimentation to the Apalachicola River; Escambia County, \$500,000 to restore Ten Mile Creek; Gulf County, \$350,000 to the City of Port St. Joe for the St. Joseph Lake Regional Stormwater Treatment Facility; and Leon County, \$477,000 to the City of Tallahassee for the Boone Boulevard Stormwater Management Improvement Project to protect Lake Jackson and \$732,160 to Blueprint 2000 for the Gibby Pond Regional Stormwater Facility. The Governing Board will have a workshop in 2005 to determine whether additional grants can be recommended.

The first cycle of the grant program, in 2003, resulted in the approval of more than \$4 million. Eleven recipients were designated to receive grants. The District's Governing Board approved contracts for

these recipients during 2004: Bay County, \$500,000 for Deer Point Lake dirt road stabilization and \$120,000 to Port of Panama City for stormwater improvements; Escambia County, \$816,608 for Big Escambia Creek Restoration Project, \$250,000 for Carpenter Creek Basin Retrofit and \$375,000 for Little Sabine Bay Circulation Project; Holmes County, \$450,000 for unpaved roads pollution abatement; Leon County, \$300,000 for Caroline Courts stormwater improvement and \$500,000 for Harbinwood Estates drainage improvements; Santa Rosa County, \$100,000 for Clear Creek restoration project; Walton County, \$487,500 for Oyster Lake restoration project and \$259,032 for Hammock Point water quality improvements.

2005 Land Acquisition Work Plan Revised

In November, the Governing Board adopted the 2005 Florida Forever Land Acquisition Work Plan. The new plan was modified slightly to include additional proposed properties along the Perdido River, Lafayette Creek, Chipola River and Spring Lake/Spring Group/Dry Creek and the upper St. Marks River as identified by the Blueprint 2000 intergovernmental agency.

The plan also incorporates the memorandum of agreement executed in July 2004 by the Department of Defense, several state and federal agencies, The Nature Conservancy (Florida Chapter) and the

Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners to protect a natural greenway corridor stretching from the Apalachicola National Forest to Eglin Air Force Base. The intent of the greenway is to acquire and preserve environmentally sensitive lands, sustain existing military lands and airspace, maintain forest lands and provide recreation. The District will attempt to acquire lands within the greenway that will further its mission to protect water resources and habitats and provide resource-based recreation.

District Water Management Plan Updated

First adopted in 1994, the District Water Management Plan is updated every five years. The plan provides long-range guidance as well as state, regional and local coordination of water management activities. It identifies District goals, resource challenges and strategies for each of the District's areas of responsibility: water supply, flood protection, water quality and natural systems. In December, the District requested public input to prepare for a revision of the plan.

Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program Presented

An updated 2004-2005 Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program was presented to the Governing Board in November. The plan was submitted to over 45 governmental entities for review and comment, including the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Overall, 2004-2005 funding for water resource development projects in Region II (Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties) is \$937,840. This effort includes an evaluation of surface water supply alternatives within Okaloosa County, as well as the other activities outlined within the work program.

Floodplain Map Modernization Planned

An agreement to be a Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP) with the Federal Emergency Management

Agency (FEMA) was initially approved in 2002. Through the CTP agreement, the District has agreed to participate in the nationwide map modernization effort. The goal of this effort is to establish a website through which the digital flood insurance rate maps (DFIRM) can be viewed across the internet in a format that is easy to read and interpret. The program, expected to be ongoing through 2009, will result in floodplain delineation and will provide a number of significant benefits. The program is expected to provide a cost-effective nonstructural approach to flood management that complements the District's land acquisition approach to protecting floodplain areas.

In May of 2004, the original agreement was amended to include the District's Mapping Activity Statement. The Mapping Activity Statement was accepted by FEMA in September. Initial mapping work is scheduled to begin in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties and funding in the amount of \$910,000 was provided by FEMA for this work.

Bottled Water Rule Revised

Springs are one of Florida's most sensitive and significant water resources. They are transitional areas between ground water and surface water. There are about 136 springs in northwest Florida which range from first, second or third magnitude (based on flows).

In July, the District's Governing Board was presented an overview of springs in northwest Florida and the bottled water operations that currently exist, generally located in the area of springs. While the present number of bottled water operations in northwest Florida is only seven, the number of withdrawals for bottled water is increasing as is the public's desire for notification of such activities.

The District undertook rule revisions for the permitting of bottled water operations. Two public workshops were held in October and one public hearing was held in November prior to adoption. The rule revisions require that all bottled water operations obtain an Individual Water Use Permit,

rather than a General Water Use Permit. Three of the seven permitted facilities already have an Individual Water Use Permit. This type of permit will provide the public with timely, noticed opportunity to review and comment on every request to withdraw water for bottling purposes and will provide staff an opportunity to review each proposed withdrawal in greater detail. The Governing Board approved the rule changes on November 30. The rule changes were filed with the Bureau of Administrative Code and will become effective January 1, 2005.

Florida Springs Initiative Renewed

In July, the District and DEP renewed an agreement to study Florida springs for the fourth year. The agreement calls for an inventory of Floridan Aquifer springs located in the Choctawhatchee River basin and a delineation of Blue Spring (Jackson County) and Wakulla Springs ground water contribution basins. It also includes a study of the relationship between the elevation of the Floridan Aquifer potentiometric surface and discharge from Blue Spring. Monitoring discharge of the first magnitude springs in northwest Florida will continue as well.

Integrated Water Resources Monitoring

In June, an amendment to an agreement with DEP to continue the Integrated Water Resources Monitoring Program was approved. This marks the 21st year of participation in this program. This data collection program provides for the sampling of ground and surface waters at a network of sites within the District. Through this agreement, the District assists with collecting and interpreting water quality data from aquifers, rivers, streams, springs and lakes as part of a statewide integrated water resources monitoring network.

Monitoring of Surface Water Quality

For the past 13 years, the District has participated in an ambient surface water quality assessment program with DEP. This agreement was renewed in September to provide surface water quality data for the assessment of long-term water quality trends and

impacts from specific activities or land uses in watersheds. Data are used by the District and DEP to develop management strategies to improve surface water quality and minimize negative impacts on surface water resources. Water quality samples will be collected at 24 surface water sites on a monthly basis. Funding for the program is provided through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to DEP.

Independent Auditor's Report

The District's past fiscal year independent financial audit was presented to the Governing Board in February. Auditors did not find any instances of noncompliance and the District received an unqualified opinion – the highest level of assurance for an audit. Another "clean audit" was given to the District as has been given for the past several years.

Inspector General's Report

The Inspector General's Report for 2003-2004 was presented to the Governing Board in November. Undertaken was a review of controls over and testing of Sunshine Law compliance, contract compliance, travel costs, items subject to personal use and regulatory permitting. Plans for the 2004-05 report will include reviews of regulatory permitting, payroll procedures, acquisition/disposal of real property and equipment, procurement and other procedures.

Prescribed Fire

Natural habitat restoration and enhancement are occurring throughout the State of Florida. Habitats undergoing restoration include upland pine ecosystems, especially longleaf pine and wiregrass. Prescribed fire is a valuable land management tool for maintaining forest health, reducing fuel loads and lessening the impact of wildfires and their catastrophic effects.

During the past fiscal year, prescribed burns were conducted on more than 3,500 acres. Approximately, 50,000 acres of the more than 200,000 owned by the District require prescribed

burning. In January, an agreement was approved among the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, National Forests in Florida and the District to allow prescribed fire training to occur on District land.

Restoration and Reforestation Activities

Over 965 acres of disturbed longleaf pine, slash pine and wiregrass habitat were slated for restoration activities during 2004 and 2005. These areas are in Bay, Leon, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Washington counties within the Econfina Creek, Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek and Yellow River water management areas (WMAs), Phipps Park and the Sand Hill Lakes mitigation bank

It is estimated that 506,875 longleaf pine tubelings were planted districtwide with most longleaf pine restoration work occurring in the Econfina Creek WMA. Longleaf pine restoration activities scheduled for the Sand Hill Lakes mitigation bank are subject to approval by regulatory agencies. About 100,000 wiregrass plugs were planted in the Econfina Creek WMA. Nearly 57,000 bareroot slash pine seedlings will be planted on the Grassy Point area of the Yellow River WMA.

Payments in Lieu of Taxes

Eight counties qualified for payments in lieu of taxes in 2003. The Governing Board, in January, approved payments totaling \$76,943.01. Payments are made to qualifying counties for actual ad valorem tax losses incurred as a result of lands being purchased by the District under the Florida Forever, Preservation 2000 or Save Our Rivers land acquisition programs. These payments are about the same as those made for the previous year except for Washington County which was reduced because some lands have now reached the 10-year limit on payments.

Counties receiving payments included: Bay, \$4,453.76; Holmes, \$1,997.13; Jackson, \$8,373.69; Liberty, \$53.00; Okaloosa, \$916.80; Santa Rosa, \$15,421.81; Walton, \$15,560.60; and Washington \$30,166.22.

Archaeological and Historical Surveys

District lands contain many archaeological and historical sites. Since 1998, several grants from the Division of Historical Resources have been awarded to private contractors, on the District's behalf, to undertake such reviews. Archaeological and historical resource surveys have been conducted for the lower Yellow River, Econfina Creek and Choctawhatchee River water management areas.

In October, the District requested proposals from professional firms (or individuals) to conduct additional archaeological and historical resource surveys. It is hoped that, in the near future, this work would continue for Phase II of the Econfina Creek WMA. These assessments enable the District to protect and preserve such sites from impacts associated with proposed hydrologic/habitat restoration, land management, recreational activities and other projects.

Attending to District Lands

Once acquired, the more than 200,000 acres owned by the District must then be maintained. An agreement with Orange Hill Soil and Water Conservation District was approved in September to provide land management construction, maintenance, installation and repair services within the Econfina Creek and Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek water management areas. The agreement also provides special projects for other WMAs – upper Chipola River, Apalachicola River and Phipps Park in Leon County.

One project included a pavilion and boat launch facility at Lost Lake in Walton County. Other projects undertaken in 2004 called for a picnic pavilion and camping area at Walsingham Park, access road at Tilley Landing/Lost Lake and a campground at Christoff Landing.

The District also entered into an agreement with a private contractor to provide public recreation site cleanup and maintenance for specific areas of District lands, such as the Econfina Creek and the

Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek WMAs. Activities will be focused on public recreational spots such as Pitt Spring, Blue Spring, Williford Spring, Sparkleberry Pond, Rattlesnake Lake North, Rattlesnake Lake South, Walsingham Park and others. Another agreement involved the Escambia River, Garcon Point, Blackwater River and Yellow River WMAs. In these areas, 12 recreational sites will be cleaned up and maintained.

In addition, to provide the public with safe recreational experiences on District lands, the District entered into agreements for security/law enforcement services with the Bay and Washington county sheriffs' departments for the Econfina Creek and Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek WMAs.

Mobile Irrigation Lab Approved

In September, a multi-agency agreement to establish a mobile irrigation lab was approved for northwest Florida. The agreement involves the District, Florida Department of Agriculture and Community Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the West Florida Resource Conservation and Development Council. The council will administer its day-to-day operation. Each year for three years, the District will contribute \$50,000 for operation of the lab.

The mobile irrigation lab will help evaluate irrigation systems to increase water use efficiency. Benefits are expected to include improvements in surface and

PERMITS ISSUED BY COUNTY (OCTOBER 2003 TO SEPTEMBER 2004)

County	Well Construction Repair and Abandonment	Consumptive Use (new/renewal/modifications)	Surface Water Management (standard/general)	Agricultural and Forestry Surface Water Management (standard/general)
Bay	1,382	16	-	2
Calhoun	173	-	-	-
Escambia	1,058	7	-	-
Franklin	116	4	-	-
Gadsden	257	11	-	5
Gulf	170	5	-	-
Holmes	214	4	-	2
Jackson	647	15	-	1
Jefferson	158	1	-	-
Leon	818	7	3	1
Liberty	48	3	-	1
Okaloosa	1,112	7	4	5
Santa Rosa	1,088	8	-	-
Wakulla	295	-	-	-
Walton	973	8	3	14
Washington	427	4	-	5
Total	8,936	100	10	36

ground water quality and decreases in the cost of crop production. A number of evaluations and follow-up inspections will be performed as well as public outreach to introduce the no-cost, voluntary service to the agricultural community. Jackson, Calhoun and Gadsden county agricultural operations using piped irrigation systems, located in delineated spring recharge basins or Water Resource Caution Areas, will be given priority.

Special Well Permitting Requirements

DEP and the District have maintained an agreement since 1991 to implement the well permitting requirements of Chapter 62-524, Florida Administrative Code (FAC). Addressed through the program is potable well construction in areas delineated under this section of the FAC as having ground water contamination. These areas include portions of Escambia, Jackson, Leon and Santa Rosa counties. This agreement was approved for continuation in June.

Water Conservation Materials Available

During 2004, the District made a concerted effort to provide its water conservation materials to utilities in Region II (Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties). About 50,000 brochures were distributed to these utilities. Region II was identified as an area that was not anticipated to have sufficient water resources available to meet increasing demand for the next 20 years.

Water conservation materials are available to all counties within the District. Five brochures have been developed: 50 Ways to Save Water, Watering Wisely (outdoor watering), Retro Fit It, An Indoor Water Audit and Xeriscape. Printed brochures may be requested from the District's Public Information Office and are available on the District's web site: www.state.fl.us/nwfwmd

Water Resources Educational Materials

Two educational posters featuring Econfina Creek, the source of Bay County's water supply, were

printed in 2004. A third poster is planned for 2005. An informational/technical poster on the Lake Jackson restoration project and satellite image posters of the Pensacola Bay and Choctawhatchee Bay are among those that may be requested. The District's "Looking at the Big Picture" brochure series continues to be available as is the WaterWays educational program for public middle schools within the District's 16-county area.

Employee Service Awards and Recognitions

Recognized by the Governing Board each year are employees who have achieved 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 years of service. Employees receiving awards included:

For 25 years of service: Gladys Maria Culbertson, Administrative Assistant.

For 20 years of service: Ronald L. Bartel, Director, Division of Resource Management; Stanley Tucker, Field Representative Specialist.

For 15 years of service: Tyler Macmillan, Director, Lands Management Operations Section; Elijah Simmons, Automotive Technician; Daniel L. Tonsmeire, Associate Water Resource Planner; Thelma S. Whitfield, Staff Assistant I.

For 10 years of service: Steve L. Brown, Associate Lands Manager; Angela R. Chelette, Chief, Bureau of Ground Water Regulation; Paul J. Thorpe, Director of the Resource Planning Section.

For 5 years of service: Allen R. Culpepper, Associate Field Representative; Anne Lester, Clerk; Betty Martin, Fiscal Assistant; Sonja K. Skipper, Receptionist; Eric Toole, Assistant Lands Manager; Carolyn L. Wise, Executive Assistant.

Additionally, three employees retired during 2004: George R. Fisher, Senior Planner in the Division of Land Management and Acquisition; Richard B. Morgan, Senior Regulatory Administrator; and Fernando E. Recio, Director of the Division of Resource Regulation.

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

Long-term monitoring programs, often considered routine, provide the building blocks or ground work for some of the District's larger, more visible programs and projects. Monitoring programs enable the District to assess the health of ground water and surface water resources in the northwest area. Some cooperative water quality monitoring programs are conducted through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to help maintain the water quality of surface and ground waters statewide. Several other monitoring programs are undertaken in conjunction with local governments to protect water resources.

Data obtained through various monitoring programs lay the ground work upon which various projects and programs are developed. Data must be accurate and reliable if monitoring is to be used as an assessment tool. Monitoring helps evaluate water quality and provides valuable information that enables the District to undertake restoration programs when needed. An example of a monitoring activity would include: (1) the initial collection of environmental data, (2) assessment and analysis, (3) identification of impacts or problems with the resource and (4) development of recommendations for restoration efforts.

Several District programs draw on data obtained through monitoring. Land management uses this information to implement best management practices for lands owned by the District. Most of the District's lands border major rivers, creeks, streams, springs or lakes throughout the northwest area. Priorities established for acquiring lands are based on data. Various permitting programs such as consumptive use (drinking water) use these data. Restoration projects are initiated based on data and then data are used to evaluate the success of the restoration effort.

Simply put, monitoring is the way to determine what needs to be done and how well it is being done. The District is participating in a number of monitoring programs. For example, the District is:

- in the 21st year of a ground water monitoring program that was integrated with the surface water monitoring program five years ago
- in the 14th year of the ambient monitoring of surface water quality program to assess long-term water quality trends and impacts
- in the 15th year of a stormwater flow monitoring program with the City of Tallahassee and Leon County
- in the 7th year of a streamflow and rainfall monitoring program for Deer Point Lake watershed in Bay County
- in the 5th year of a stormwater monitoring program with Bay County Engineering Department
- in the 4th year of monitoring and cataloging springs in northwest Florida
- in the 1st year of assisting Leon County with a flood warning network that identifies developing flood conditions and notifies emergency managers of imminent conditions



JEFFERSON, LEON AND WAKULLA

Leon County Receives Florida Forever Grants

In November, two Florida Forever Capital Improvement grants were recommended for approval by the Governing Board. The City of Tallahassee was recommended for \$477,000 for the Boone Boulevard Stormwater Management Improvement Project to protect Lake Jackson. Two existing stormwater ponds, located behind the Northwood Mall, will be expanded to provide additional stormwater treatment. Blueprint 2000 was recommended for a \$732,160 grant for the Gibby Pond Regional Stormwater Facility. Blueprint 2000 will construct a 15.3-acre regional stormwater facility, which will provide water storage and treatment for the entire 326.4-acre West Tharpe watershed and help improve the water quality of Lake Munson and Gum Swamp.



Stormwater management improvement projects help protect Lake Jackson.

Caroline Courts Stormwater Improvements

The City of Tallahassee was one of the local governments recommended to receive a Florida Forever Capital Improvement grant late in 2003. In 2004, the District and the City of Tallahassee entered into a contractual agreement to implement the project. This stormwater improvement project involves the Caroline Courts subdivision, which is in the St. Marks River watershed. Leon County will construct a multipurpose stormwater management facility to provide flood relief and improve the quality of water flowing into Munson Slough. The District provided \$300,000 to be used for construction costs. The St. Marks River is one of the District's Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) priority water bodies.

Stormwater Flow Monitoring and Flood Warning Network

In September, the City of Tallahassee and the District agreed to continue a stormwater flow monitoring program for the 15th year. The program includes 31 surface water and rainfall data collection stations in Tallahassee and Leon County. Included are 14 stream and rainfall stations for the county. The monitoring program provides storm event and baseflow discharge data for the major drainage basins. The data provide continuous records of precipitation and surface water discharges that are used to design and implement improvements in the stormwater drainage system. Improvements to the drainage system help reduce flooding and improve water quality.

The District also is assisting the county with the installation of a radio telemetry flood warning

network. Included in the network are 14 stream and rainfall stations that will establish the basic infrastructure for real-time rainfall data collection to facilitate identification of developing flood conditions, notification of emergency managers and initiation of the appropriate emergency management response. The network will eventually support expansion to a broader gauging network for real-time stream and ground water conditions to improve the flood prediction capabilities of local, state and federal emergency staff.

Cooperative Land Acquisitions

Since entering into an agreement with the Blueprint 2000 intergovernmental agency to cooperate in land acquisitions to protect and preserve the water resources of the St. Marks River basin in Leon County, the District has explored opportunities to purchase lands in the county. Under the agreement, the District will dedicate \$500,000 per year for five years for a total of \$2,500,000 and Blueprint 2000 is



Area students learn about stormwater through a hands-on model.

to contribute the same amount. To date, the District has pursued several acquisition possibilities and in 2005, hopes to acquire the first conservation easement property.

Lake Jackson Stormwater Education

The District offered several Lake Jackson Stormwater Treatment Facility field trips to local schools and interested groups during 2004. These hands-on educational field trips acquaint participants with the benefits of stormwater treatment. The District's stormwater model is a focal point of these field trips. Additionally, several teachers in Leon County (and surrounding counties) borrow the stormwater model to use in their classrooms, especially for environmental science instruction. The stormwater model is available from the Public Information Office.

Lake Jackson Restoration Poster

A 36- by 27-inch, full-color poster addressing the restoration of Lake Jackson continued to be distributed to schools and at environmental exhibits and events. The poster depicts the large-scale lake restoration project that was undertaken after the lake's natural dewatering. About two million cubic yards of sediment were removed. Low lake levels, due to drought and sinkhole activity, provided the District, Leon County and other cooperating entities with an opportunity to remove years of accumulated sediment. Posters may be obtained from the District's Public Information Office.



Water Management Areas: Places to Treasure

The Northwest Florida Water Management District's total land holdings surpassed the 200,000-acre mark during 2004. Lands acquired for water resource protection now number 202,565 acres (including conservation easements) throughout northwest Florida. The District's land acquisition program began in 1984 with the Save Our Rivers program, was continued through the Preservation 2000 program and is currently funded through Florida Forever and wetland mitigation programs.

Land acquisitions throughout northwest Florida are largely clustered along major rivers and creeks and are identified as Water Management Areas (WMAs). Over 85 percent of the river frontage and floodplains of the Escambia and Choctawhatchee rivers and Econfina Creek are protected by District ownership. Acquisitions along major river and creek systems were made to protect and preserve the water quality of these natural resources and their associated ecosystems. Econfina Creek acquisitions were made to protect Bay County's drinking water supply. Other acquisitions have been undertaken to protect lakes, bays, ground water, recharge areas and springs.

While these lands were purchased to protect and preserve northwest Florida's water resources, the District makes all lands available to the public (except for conservation easements) for recreational and educational activities as long as these uses do not threaten or harm the resource.

Escambia River WMA

Located in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, the Escambia River WMA comprises 34,575 acres. It is a one to two-and-a-half mile-wide corridor that runs some 30 miles along the floodplain corridor of the Escambia River. This area contains diverse habitats, including large acreages of mature bottomland hardwood forests, pine uplands and estuarine marsh.

Popular recreational activities include hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, picnicking, boating, canoeing and bird-watching. Several boat ramps, landings and primitive campsites are available. The Mystic Springs "Group Use" Campsite is open on weekends for groups of 25 or fewer. The group campsite can be reserved on weekends by submitting

a permit application and a nominal \$20 fee. The group campsite includes picnic tables, fire rings, trails, charcoal grills and a pavilion. Primitive campsites also are available at other locations without a permit on a first come, first served basis. A Mystic Springs Group Use Campsite brochure, which includes a camping permit application, and a hunting brochure are available upon request.

Garcon Point WMA

The Garcon Point WMA consists of three tracts totaling 3,245 acres. All three tracts lie south of Interstate-10 and the two largest parcels can be accessed from Routes 281 and 191. This WMA is bordered by Escambia and East bays. Garcon Point

naturally filters stormwater runoff from adjacent lands which helps protect the water quality of surrounding estuarine and marine ecosystems. Within this tract, estuarine tidal marsh, wet prairie and wet flatwoods harbor rare and endangered species. During the spring and summer months, visitors might see carnivorous pitcher plants, sundews, butterworts and bladderworts; orchids; panhandle lilies; and spectacular displays of wild flowers.

Recreational activities often pursued include bird-watching, hiking, picnicking, beach walking and nature study. A Garcon Point Hiking Trail has been developed and is about 2.7 miles long. Because of the varied natural habitats, bird life is abundant, especially during the morning hours. The rare and elusive LeConte's and Henslow sparrows have been spotted here. Bluebirds, pine warblers, ospreys, harriers and red-tailed hawks are more common. Garcon Point is a designated Great Birding Trail. A Garcon Point Hiking Trail Guide is available upon request.

Blackwater River WMA

The Blackwater River WMA in Santa Rosa County is the District's smallest area and includes 268 acres along the Blackwater River and Pond Creek near Milton. Although a large percentage of the lands along the Blackwater River are already preserved by the Blackwater River State Forest, the District has identified potential future acquisitions north of Milton that will protect most of the remaining river floodplain.

Recreational activities often undertaken by the public include fishing, hiking, boating, picnicking and other recreational or educational activities. The Blackwater River is a state-designated canoe trail.

Yellow River WMA

About 17,446 acres in Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties make up the Yellow River WMA. The District owns land along approximately 19 miles of



Holmes Creek offers fishing and other recreational opportunities.

the river. These acquisitions help protect water quality of the river and its ecosystems. Upland areas acquired also help protect the Sand and Gravel Aquifer. In this area, the Sand and Gravel Aquifer, used for the region's water supply, lies close to the surface and is susceptible to contaminants used on the surface of the land. The area contains habitat for several significant plant and animal species such as mountain laurel, spider lilies, Florida black bear, sturgeon, Okaloosa darter and endemic mayflies.

Recreational opportunities include hunting, fishing, hiking, picnicking, boating, canoeing, camping and bird-watching. The Yellow River is a state-designated canoe trail. There are several public boat landings: Faulks Ferry, Parkerville, Fisher Old Mill and Guest Lake. Several boat landings on Eglin Air Force Base reservation may be used but a permit is required. A hunting brochure, with a map and regulations for the area, is available upon request.

Choctawhatchee River/ Holmes Creek WMA

The Choctawhatchee River and the Holmes Creek WMA located in Bay, Holmes, Walton and Washington counties totals 57,428 acres. Lands owned by the District border about 42 miles of the Choctawhatchee River and nine miles of Holmes Creek.

Acquisition of the Choctawhatchee River and Holmes Creek floodplains helps protect numerous springs in this system as well as the water quality of the Choctawhatchee River and Bay. The area provides habitat for numerous native species of plants and animals and serves as a breeding and migratory area for alligator gar and Gulf sturgeon. It contains several unique relic dune formations that have evolved into xeric (dry) hammock habitat. Additionally, the area is archaeologically significant.

Recreational opportunities include hunting, fishing, boating, canoeing, camping, picnicking, hiking, horseback riding, bird-watching and ecological study.



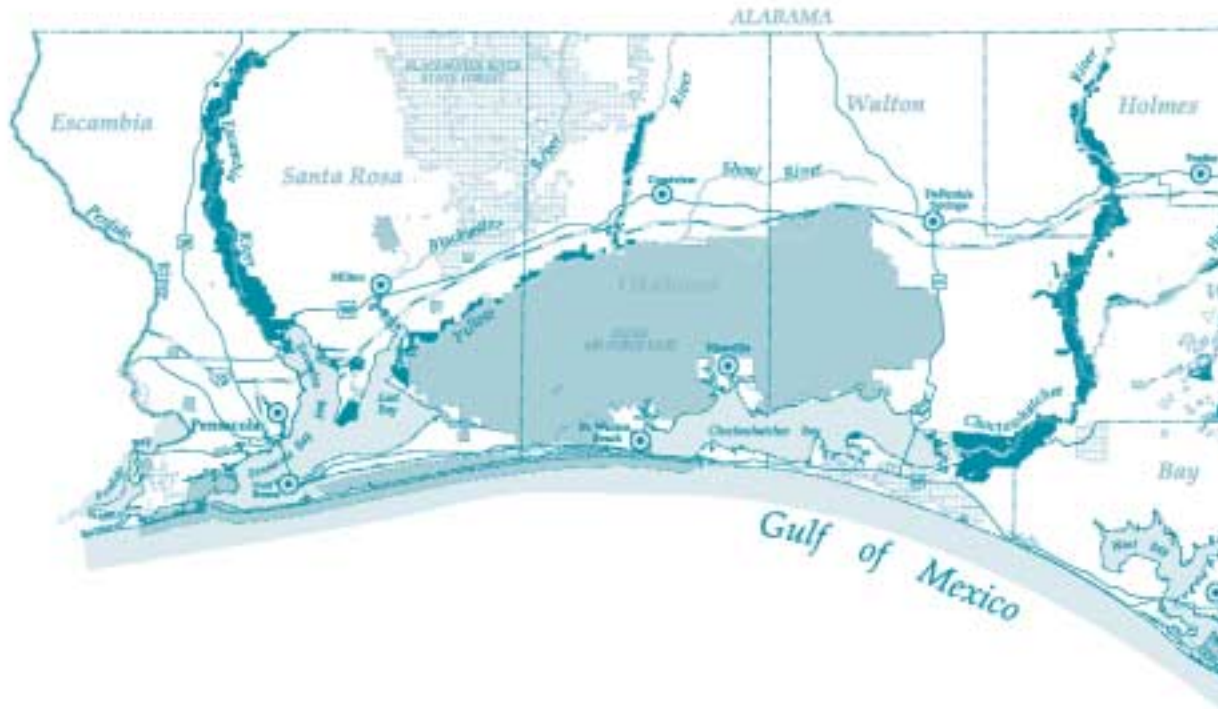
Holmes Creek

Holmes Creek is a state-designated canoe trail. There are several public boat landings along this WMA. Cotton Landing on Holmes Creek was recently improved with a canoe launch, pavilion and picnic area. In the Choctawhatchee WMA, the new Tilley Landing recreational area at Lost Lake, can be found off Highway 81, south of Redbay. This site has a covered picnic pavilion with tables and grills, parking and a stabilized, small boat ramp. A hunting brochure, with a map and regulations, is available upon request.

Econfina Creek WMA

The District currently owns 40,706 acres along Econfina Creek and in the upland Sand Hill Lakes area to the west of the creek, known as the Econfina Recharge Area. Econfina Creek begins in Jackson County, flows through portions of Calhoun and Washington counties and then into the Deer Point Lake Reservoir which provides Bay County with its

NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER



-  *NFWMD Water Management Areas (WMAs)*
-  *NFWMD Conservation Easements*
-  *Federal Lands*
-  *State of Florida Lands*
-  *Private Conservation Lands*

Map Created



White Oak Landing at Porter Lake

drinking water supply. As a potable water supply, it is designated a Class I water body by the State of Florida.

Protecting this critical water supply source became one of the District's goals in the early 1990s. The District identified areas in need of protection and began acquiring the land to preserve this environmentally and geologically sensitive area, which includes springs, spring-run streams, solution holes, sinkhole lakes, bluffs and steephead ravines.

Recreational opportunities along this system include hunting, fishing, swimming, canoeing, horseback riding (on designated trails), hiking, picnicking, camping and bird-watching. Econfina Creek is well known for its state-designated, 22-mile long canoe trail and for a stunning 14-mile segment of the Florida National Scenic Trail.

Several recreational sites have recently been improved. A canoe launch, boardwalk and parking area were opened at Highway 20. Croom's Branch,

on Highway 388, was made available as a group campsite for mobility impaired hunters. Rattlesnake Lake South is now available as a group campsite (permit required). Bank stabilization activities and an improved canoe launch, along with a pavilion, primitive camping and picnic area, were recently completed at Walsingham Park. The Pine Ridge Equestrian Camp near Hammock Lake was opened for horseback riders (group campsite).

Brochures available include the Pine Ridge Equestrian Trail, Econfina Creek Canoe Trail, A Birding Guide to Econfina Creek and Sandhill Lakes and Econfina Creek Water Management Area/Group Campsite Permit. A hunting brochure, with a map and regulations for the area, also is available upon request.

Apalachicola River WMA

District-owned land borders the Apalachicola River for about 19 miles in Gulf and Liberty counties. The 36,315 acres acquired by the District consist primarily of bottomland hardwood forests and other wetlands bordering the river. In terms of flow, the Apalachicola River is Florida's largest. The river plays an important role in transporting fresh water and nutrients to Apalachicola Bay, one of the most productive estuarine systems in the United States.



Apalachicola River provides freshwater flows to the Bay, a productive estuarine system.

Swallow-tail and Mississippi kites, as well as many different kinds of hawks can be found here. Many rare, threatened and endangered species, along with species of special concern, also can be seen.

Recreational activities popular with the public include hunting, fishing, boating, canoeing, hiking, camping, picnicking and bird-watching. Florida River Island, located at the northeastern end of the District's property in Liberty County, contains a 2.6-mile Florida River Interpretive Trail around Elsie Lake. An *Exploring the Florida River Trail* brochure and a hunting brochure, with a map and regulations for the area, may be requested.

Upper Chipola River WMA

The 7,377-acre Upper Chipola WMA borders some 18 miles along the upper Chipola River and its tributaries within Jackson County. District lands

include the floodplains of Marshall and Cowarts creeks, which form the Chipola at their confluence. The Chipola flows south to Florida Caverns State Park, just north of Marianna. Preservation of these lands helps protect the water quality of the Apalachicola River as well as the Chipola and its ecosystems. The Chipola River is the largest tributary to the Apalachicola River in Florida and is a state-designated canoe trail.

Recreational activities include hunting, fishing, boating, canoeing, hiking, camping, horseback riding and bird-watching. The Florida Caverns State Park borders this WMA and offers additional activities. Numerous multi-use trails within the Florida Caverns State Park include River, Sink, Service, Management, Fence, Terra and Floodplain trails. The Management Trail continues on District lands. The District and Jackson County cooperatively developed a boat ramp and recreational area at Christoff Landing. Primitive camping is only available at



Christoff Landing was a cooperative project of the District and Jackson County.

Christoff. An Upper Chipola Multi-Use Trails brochure and a hunting brochure, with a map and regulations for the area, are available upon request.

Phipps WMA

The Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park is located off Miller Landing Road, in north Tallahassee. A portion of



Gopher tortoises are found on District lands.

this tract is owned by the District (516 acres), while the City of Tallahassee owns another 162 acres. The City and the District cooperate on managing the

park. The District's portion was purchased to preserve and protect Lake Jackson. These two tracts, combined with the State of Florida owned Lake Overstreet property and the Maclay Gardens, form a greenway corridor that stretches more than four miles across Leon County. Various ecological and habitat restoration projects have been undertaken for this property.

Recreational activities for the District-owned 516-acre tract include horseback riding, wildlife viewing, nature study, bicycling, walking, picnicking, jogging, orienteering, cross-country running and bird-watching. Over 10 miles of multi-use trails and 7 miles of hiking trails are available. On the city-owned portion, active recreational opportunities such as soccer, baseball and off-road bicycling are available. Trail maps, permits and other information can be obtained from the City of Tallahassee Parks and Recreation Office.

To request brochures or to obtain more specific information, please contact the Division of Land Management and Acquisition at the District; (850) 539-5999.



Bikers enjoy riding trails at Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park in Leon County.



CALHOUN, FRANKLIN, GADSDEN, GULF, JACKSON AND LIBERTY

COUNTIES

Franklin County Water Supply

An overview of Franklin County's ground water conditions was presented to the Governing Board in May. The locations of three principal hydrogeologic units and public supply wells were identified. Currently, the total permitted public supply from the Floridan Aquifer in Franklin County is approximately 2.7 million gallons per day. The demand projections for the county also were reviewed. Over the past five years, the District has developed a more technical approach and utilities have been required to undergo extensive evaluations to guard against the potential threat of upconing. Upconing is the physical process by which saline water underlying fresh water in an aquifer rises upward into the freshwater zone as a result of pumping. Upconing is a principal concern of the District when issuing consumptive use permits for coastal areas. The District is analyzing water availability in inland areas of the county in order to meet future public water supply needs.

Ground Water Testing in Franklin County

In May, the District's Governing Board approved an agreement with a private contractor to supervise drilling and testing in Franklin County. Phase I of the program consists of drilling and aquifer testing activities at Gully Branch Road within Tate's Hell State Forest. The actual drilling will be conducted by a well drilling company.

In October, an additional test site was approved. This site also is located in Tate's Hell State Forest. Test wells will help locate the freshwater/saltwater interface. Aquifer pump testing is being conducted to determine the hydraulic properties. This evaluation of the Floridan Aquifer is being

undertaken to determine where ground water is available and where it may be safely withdrawn to meet future public water supply needs of the county.

Agreement with Eastpoint Water and Sewer District

In July, the District entered into a cooperative agreement with Eastpoint Water and Sewer District in Franklin County to install test wells, to conduct aquifer performance testing and to analyze data. The agreement will help fund these activities for the Eastpoint Water and Sewer District's service area. Technical assistance, made available through this agreement, will provide the needed analysis to support current and anticipated potable water needs within the Eastpoint area. Upon completion of the drilling program, the District will consider undertaking modeling for further analysis.

Florida Forever Grants

In November, the Governing Board recommended a \$350,000 Florida Forever Capital Improvement grant to Calhoun County for a road stabilization project that will help protect the Apalachicola River. Through the project, Lands Store Road will be stabilized to reduce sedimentation now affecting the adjoining Apalachicola River. The City of Port St. Joe in Gulf County also was recommended for a \$350,000 grant for the St. Joseph Lake Regional Stormwater Treatment Facility, which will treat stormwater before it enters the St. Joseph Bay, an Outstanding Florida Water and Aquatic Preserve. The project will involve the retrofit of a mosquito control/stormwater area into a stormwater management facility that will provide treatment for one of the largest stormwater outfalls discharging into the bay.

Spring Lake/Spring Group Assessed

Ground Water Bureau staff conducted an investigation into the ground water connections of the Spring Lake/Spring Group or Dry Creek floodplain corridor in central Jackson County. The Spring Lake spring-run flows into Dry Creek which is a significant tributary stream to the Chipola River. A one-time measurement of the flow of Dry Creek was approximately 70 cubic feet per second (cfs) which is equivalent to the flow of a second magnitude spring. Based on this assessment, the District identified parcels along the Dry Creek floodplain corridor that might be acquired in fee simple (full ownership) or via a conservation easement (ownership of specified rights) to provide a high level of protection for these water resources. If the potential areas identified were purchased, over 75 percent of the Dry Creek floodplain corridor could be protected. The District will only acquire tracts from willing sellers.

Chipola River Springs Inventory

In 2004, the District published its inventory of Floridan Aquifer springs located within the Chipola River basin. A total of 63 springs and spring groups were documented. The total discharge from springs measured during the inventory was approximately 350 cfs. Findings demonstrated the importance of ground water quality to the Chipola River ecosystem.

Ecological Flow Requirements

The need to define the ecological flow requirements of the Apalachicola River and Bay has become more urgent as increasing pressures from water consumption and land use changes threaten the water resources of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) river basin. Developing an understanding of the ecosystem flow needs is essential to a wide variety of basin management activities. A critical scientific component of the process is determining flows needed to maintain the biological communities in highly diverse habitats of the nontidal reaches of the Apalachicola River floodplain. The floodplain is the largest contiguous

riverine stand of swamps and bottomland hardwoods in the State of Florida.

In August, the District and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) entered into a 25-month cooperative agreement to study and describe the hydrologic needs of Apalachicola River floodplain vegetation. This would allow resource managers to balance ecological flow needs of the floodplain forest with other demands on the system. The study will include the response of floodplain vegetation communities to past hydrologic alterations and estimates of potential impacts to a range of future hydrologic scenarios. The District will provide \$80,000 for the study and USGS, \$50,000.

Hydrologic Restoration of Tate's Hell Swamp

As part of the ongoing hydrologic restoration of Tate's Hell Swamp within the Tate's Hell State Forest, the District has initiated a restoration project that includes installing railcar bridges at two sites – Gator Creek and Gully Branch. The purchase and



Gator Creek in Tate's Hell Swamp

restoration of the railcars had been previously approved by the Governing Board. In October, the Governing Board approved the contractor to install the bridges, which are required before other restoration projects can ensue.

Tate's Hell Swamp has been extensively logged. Silvicultural activities, such as logging access roads and drainage ditches have blocked natural drainages and altered the hydrologic regime over much of the



Low water crossings are completed for Gator Creek in Tate's Hell Swamp.

swamp. The goal of the project is to enhance the natural flow hydrology of wetlands that have been impacted. Hydrologic restoration is to be accomplished by the installation of bridges, low water crossings, culverts, flashboard risers, road cuts, road restoration and ditch plugs.

Apalachicola Oral History

In 2004, the District completed its collection of stories from several families who have spent their lives on the Apalachicola River and Bay. These personal accounts detail how the river and bay and living in the area have changed over time. The stories cover the basin's last sharecroppers, the last turpentine still operators, the last steamboat pilot to navigate the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint rivers, a Creek chief descended from a 200-year unbroken line in Blountstown and tupelo honey collectors. Also accounts of transportation by steamboats to trains to cars and trucks and more are included in the collection. The District is planning to convert these oral histories to an edited, printed version.





Bay, Holmes, Okaloosa, Walton and Washington

COUNTIES

Florida Forever Grant

In November, the Governing Board recommended Bay County for a \$500,000 Florida Forever Capital Improvement grant to stabilize 6.9 miles of county dirt roads to reduce sedimentation and erosion reaching Deer Point Lake. This project will help reduce nonpoint source pollution flows into Deer Point Lake, a primary drinking water supply source for Bay County. It will use porous pavement systems for the roads and plants/mulch for the roadside shoulders and drainage systems.

City of Freeport Receives Assistance

In August, the District entered into an agreement with the City of Freeport to provide \$500,000 to help fund sewer system improvements in the vicinity of Choctawhatchee Bay. Funding for the project was made available through a special legislative appropriation.

Choctawhatchee Bay is a priority water body of the Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program. It has been adversely impacted by activities within its watershed, including both point (direct discharges) and nonpoint source (indirect discharges such as stormwater) pollution.

Funding Provided to CBA

The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA) received \$250,000 through an agreement approved by the District's Governing Board in August. CBA will use the funds to complete a stormwater retrofit and habitat enhancement project at Cessna Park, located on Hogtown Bayou on the Choctawhatchee Bay. Funding is being made available through a special

legislative appropriation for Choctawhatchee River and Bay SWIM projects.

CBA has developed strategies for the Choctawhatchee River and Bay that include reducing watershed pollution from nonpoint and point sources and restoring and enhancing seagrass and wetland habitats.

St. Andrew Bay Environmental Study Team (BEST)

In July, the District and the St. Andrew Bay Environmental Study Team (BEST) entered into an agreement to provide funds for administrative support for BEST. This organization has been working with the District, other agencies and local governments for over 13 years to achieve cooperative protection and restoration of the St. Andrew Bay watershed. Goals of BEST include improving coordination and communication, providing information to decision makers and promoting public education. It is anticipated that this agreement will help the District implement the St. Andrew Bay Watershed SWIM plan. The \$200,000 in funding for BEST was provided through a special legislative appropriation for St. Andrew Bay watershed SWIM projects.

Monitoring for Deer Point Lake

In September, the District agreed to continue a streamflow and rainfall monitoring program for the Deer Point Lake watershed in Bay County. The District has operated and maintained this monitoring network since 1998. A permanent monitoring network, it includes six discharge stations and three rainfall stations. These monitoring stations measure continuous discharge,

rainfall and stage levels. Data quantify the major stream flows into Deer Point Lake and are used to manage water resources and identify areas that may require acquisition or additional protection.

Deer Point Lake is the primary drinking water supply source for Panama City and surrounding areas. Preservation and management of this vital resource is a priority for the county and the District. The District has actively participated in the protection of this resource through land acquisition and protection activities along Econfina Creek and in the adjacent upland recharge area.

Stormwater Flow Monitoring

The District and Bay County agreed to continue a stormwater monitoring study for the fifth year. Two stormwater monitoring stations and two rainfall monitoring stations will continue to be operated. Located near the City of Lynn Haven, the stormwater monitoring stations are on drainage channels that flow into North Bay. Continuous stage, discharge and precipitation records that assist the county with stormwater runoff improvements to the conveyances into North Bay are provided through this project.

Econfina Creek Springs Inventory

In 2004, the District published its inventory of Floridan Aquifer springs located within the Econfina Creek basin. A total of 36 springs or spring groups were identified by District staff during the inventory. Total spring discharge measured was approximately 320 cfs, accounting for the majority of the creek's flow.

Econfina Creek Poster Series

Two full-color posters of Econfina Creek were printed during 2004 to increase public awareness of the need to protect this crucial drinking water supply source. Econfina Creek flows into the Deer Point Lake Reservoir, Bay County's water supply source. The first poster, Nature's Finest, printed in February features a photograph of the upper portion of Econfina Creek, an area popular among experienced

canoeists. The second poster, Cool Springs Rising, printed in November, is of the middle part of the creek adjacent to McCormick and Gainer springs. This area is directly connected to the Floridan Aquifer. Clear blue and blue-green spring flows mix with the tannin colored upstream water in this photograph. A third and final poster of the planned series of three will be printed in 2005 and will highlight ground water recharge and habitat restoration. Posters are available from the Office of Public Information.

Deadfall Creek Bridge

In June, the District received approval to construct a bridge on Deadfall Creek in Okaloosa County within the Yellow River Water Management Area (WMA). The bridge was completed during this past fiscal year. Additionally, the District has undertaken road improvements for the southern approach to the bridge. Currently there is only one public/land management access road which is on the west side of the middle Yellow River WMA. Construction of the Deadfall Creek Bridge is vital for providing critical access to over 3,500 acres of District property for many purposes, including public safety, law enforcement, prescribed burning, habitat restoration, timber management and public recreation. Also completed this past year were three other bridges within the Econfina Creek WMA.

Horseback Trails for Econfina Creek

The Econfina Creek WMA is popular for equestrian activities and the District has worked to encourage responsible equestrian use in the area over the years. Many nearby residents own horses and ride into the area directly from their own property while others trailer their horses to the Pine Ridge Equestrian Trailhead and campground.

A 10-person local advisory committee was established to address specific issues or future plans related to equestrian use. Among the items slated for discussion were establishing additional equestrian trails, trailheads, designated access points and

linkages between the trails. Access will be limited to designated trails in the future.

Muscogee Nation Receives Lands

During 2004, the District received approval to transfer .83 acres of District land to the Muscogee Nation of Florida to increase the size of their cemetery. This brings the total amount donated to the Muscogee Nation to 3.12 acres. In 2003, 2.29 acres were donated for this purpose. The Muscogee Nation of Florida is a small tribe of Eastern Creek Indians living near the community of Bruce in southern Walton County.

Mitigation Donation

A 60-acre parcel in Walton County was donated to the District in late 2004 for wetland impacts resulting from the construction of Sacred Heart Hospital Sandestin. The 60-acre parcel is an inholding in the Devil's Swamp tract that the District purchased earlier. Both are within the Choctawhatchee River WMA.

The parcel's habitat restoration needs have been evaluated so that plans can be made to restore the property to its natural state and condition. Sacred Heart also has agreed to pay for the cost of restoring and maintaining the property and the District will undertake wetland habitat restoration and prescribed fire management and maintenance activities. At one time, the property may have consisted of a mosaic of streams/bay gall, wet prairie, wet pine flatwoods and mixed wet prairie/cypress habitat types.

Land Acquisitions

In October, approval to purchase 3,160 acres along Lafayette Creek near Freeport in south Walton County was given by the District's Governing Board. Over 40 percent of the water resources of Lafayette Creek will be protected by this acquisition which includes a corridor one mile wide by four miles long. The majority of the tract is located along the main stem of Lafayette Creek.

A portion of the property, about 400 acres, will be purchased with Department of Transportation (DOT) mitigation funds to offset wetland impacts resulting from the proposed Highway 331 Bypass.

The Lafayette Creek drainage basin originates east/north of Freeport and ultimately empties into LaGrange Bayou and the upper Choctawhatchee Bay. This purchase will help protect Magnolia and Wolf creeks, which are significant tributaries to Lafayette Creek. The property contains many diverse natural communities or habitat types, including several steephead stream systems that are considered globally imperiled by many environmental experts. Steepheads also are ranked as imperiled in the State of Florida. Other habitat types found on the property include xeric hammock/sandhill, slope forest, upland mixed forest, wet flatwoods, seepage slope and seepage stream. Xeric sandhill types, occur primarily north and south of the creek corridor. The Lafayette Creek property contains significant public recreational potential as well.



An example of a steephead stream system, found in the Econfina Creek Water Management Area.



Escambia and Santa Rosa

Florida Forever Grant for Escambia

In November, the Governing Board approved a \$500,000 Florida Forever Capital Improvement grant for Escambia County to provide for stream restoration of Ten Mile Creek that also will help protect Perdido Bay. The creek has experienced severe erosion, bank destabilization, flooding and water quality problems. The project will involve stabilizing the stream banks and installing in-stream natural structures to restore a naturally-functioning stream channel.

Big Escambia Creek Project

The Big Escambia Creek restoration project was one of 11 projects awarded Florida Forever capital improvement grants late in 2003. By mid-2004, the construction phase of the project was well underway and \$816,608 in Florida Forever funding were made available. In September, another \$800,000 were made available for the project through a special legislative appropriation. When completed, the Big Escambia Creek, an important tributary of the Escambia River, as well as about 1,000 acres of wetland will be restored. A considerable amount of sediment presently being deposited into the Escambia River will be reduced.

The Big Escambia Creek restoration project is a major intergovernmental effort involving the Three Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Council, Northwest Florida Water Management District, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the State of Alabama and the Alabama Rural Development Council. The total project cost is expected to be \$7,776,915.

ECUA New Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Emerald Coast Utilities Authority (ECUA) moved forward with plans to replace its Main Street

Wastewater Treatment Plant. ECUA, City of Pensacola and Escambia County initiated a study to identify and evaluate options available for relocating the plant. In early 2004, the location for the new plant was selected. Through a special legislative appropriation, the District made \$4.9 million available for the project. The plant, to be located north of the current site, will use modern technology for advanced wastewater treatment along with alternatives for industrial use of reclaimed water. It also will entail designing and constructing interceptor sewer lines to convey raw wastewater to the new plant. The project will reduce the current 20 million gallon per day discharge to the Pensacola Bay.

Among the expected benefits of replacing the existing Main Street facility are a more efficient wastewater treatment process, opportunities for using reclaimed water; elimination of operation and maintenance problems at the existing plant, reduced compliance problems, elimination of odors from the downtown Pensacola plant, ease of expanding wastewater service into the developing central county area to avoid septic tank use and off-line effluent storage, which is not presently available.

Model Development

A three-dimensional ground water model will be revised for Escambia County through a cooperative agreement between the District and ECUA. The agreement calls for the District to assist ECUA with a revision of an existing flow and transport model of the Sand and Gravel Aquifer in southern Escambia County. Between 1990 and 1993, the District developed a three-dimensional ground water model for the county and it was decided that an update would be beneficial. Data collection and numerical model development are essential for understanding

and managing ground water resources. The District has agreed to provide \$40,000 of an estimated \$165,000 project cost.

19th Street Stormwater Retrofit

A stormwater retrofit project within the Bayou Texar basin of the Pensacola Bay System will be undertaken through an agreement between the District and the City of Pensacola. This project will complete a long-standing effort to provide stormwater retrofit facilities within the highly urban Bayview Park area of the basin.

Through the agreement, the District will provide \$175,000 of the \$900,000 project, which will help restore both the water quality and habitat within Bayou Texar that have been significantly degraded by urban stormwater runoff. Funding was made available through a special legislative appropriation for Pensacola Bay System Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) projects.

17th Avenue Stormwater Pond

A 17th Avenue stormwater pond and community park at the CSX trestle, will treat runoff from some of Pensacola's main arteries before it reaches Bayou Texar outflows near the CSX Bridge. The system is anticipated to reduce annual pollutant loading to Bayou Texar, and subsequently to the Pensacola Bay, by 930 pounds of BOD5, 3,752 pounds of solids, 93 pounds of nitrogen and 20 pounds of phosphorus. Particulates will be captured in a subterranean stormwater vault and dissolved nutrients will be taken up in a "polishing pond" by parrot feather and pickerel weed transplanted from Maggie's Ditch. Construction is expected to be completed in 2005.

Spillway at Clark Sand Pits Replaced

The area known as the Clark Sand Pits, located in Pensacola, was purchased for Escambia County through a special legislative appropriation and the Pensacola Bay System SWIM program. This is part of



The District purchased Clark Sand Pits for Escambia County for a stormwater treatment facility and a 62-acre park.



This blue heron became a permanent resident of the natural, meandering stormwater park.

an ongoing cooperative effort to increase treatment of stormwater entering Bayou Chico. Fifty years of sand mining at the site resulted in three large pits with the north pit having a makeshift emergency spillway. To avoid overflows, which could lead to the collapse of the bank, the spillway was replaced with a more stable structure. This project was completed in March.

Century, District Provide Public Access

The Town of Century and the District signed a cooperative agreement in January that will reopen public access to about 1,700 acres of District land. A recent realignment of Highway 4 and the replacement of a bridge eliminated a boat ramp and public access to Fischer Landing on the Escambia River. Century obtained grant funding to purchase a five-acre boat landing site, construct a boat ramp and access road as well as provide handicapped access, a hiking and nature trail and a fishing pier. The

District provided \$103,000 to construct a new entrance road from State Road 4 to the project area.

Perdido River Easement Approved

In January and February, the Governing Board approved an agreement which will enable the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Conservation Fund and the District to pursue acquisition of a 1,853-acre conservation easement along the Perdido River from the International Paper Company. The parties have been working on this agreement for over two years and this was an excellent opportunity to cooperate. If the property is acquired, over eight-and-a-half miles of the Florida side of the Perdido river will be protected. These kinds of agreements help stretch scarce land acquisition dollars and the land management responsibilities are shared among the involved entities. A nine-acre, fee simple public access parcel also is included in the acquisition project.

Lands Acquired in Jones Swamp

In September, an agreement with Escambia County to acquire additional lands within the Jones Swamp watershed for regional wetland mitigation purposes was approved by the District's Governing Board. An earlier agreement helped the county acquire land and established long-term ownership responsibilities within the Jones Swamp preservation area. The Jones Swamp preservation area is an important component of the SWIM program and this acquisition will help the county protect significant wetland areas that discharge into Bayou Chico.

This agreement will expand the area for which the county can accept preservation lands from the District for a proposed greenway corridor. Also, the corridor covers other lands of significant value to the water resources and natural systems in southern Escambia County. Additionally, the corridor covers land areas that are considered essential acquisitions to fulfill Department of Transportation (DOT) wetland mitigation permitting requirements by the state and federal regulatory agencies.



Blackwater River

Land Acquisitions

In October, the District's Governing Board approved the purchase of the 320.5-acre Bluff Springs parcel in the Escambia River Water Management Area. The parcel consists of upland pine and upland/bottomland hardwood forest and old sand and gravel pits. The southeast portion of the property borders Escambia River and is surrounded on three sides by existing District lands. The purchase will be funded with both Florida Forever and DOT mitigation funds. Part of this acquisition will mitigate wetland impacts from DOT bridge construction across the Escambia River at Highway 90. The Bluff Springs area is a popular site for fishing and swimming.

The purchase of 29.71 acres on a peninsula that borders about one-half mile of the Blackwater River in Santa Rosa County was approved in September. The upland part of the tract features a high natural levee that is typical of shifting sand river systems.

These natural levees are usually dominated by mesic tree species, such as Atlantic white cedar (juniper), magnolia, live oak and slash/loblolly pines. The levees are inundated for very short periods during extreme flood periods. The parcel also contains about five acres of floodplain wetlands. Additional water resource protection for the Blackwater River will be provided with the acquisition and it will satisfy DOT mitigation to offset wetland impacts to four-lane State Road 87.

In October, a 59-acre tract on the Escambia River was approved in exchange for 15 acres of District property. The 15-acre District property will be encumbered by a conservation easement. The 59-acre tract consists of bottomland hardwood forest. The 15-acre tract consists of cutover upland pine/hardwood forest. This exchange solidifies District ownership east of the CSX Railroad and enhances water resource protection for the Escambia River floodplain.

Combined Balance Sheet

SEPTEMBER 30, 2004

ASSETS	
Current Assets:	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 264,196
Cash With Fiscal Agent	2,582,163
Investments	37,293,473
Accounts Receivable	464
Due From Other Governments	2,309,039
Due From Other Funds	2,546,525
Deposits	205
Prepaid Items	6,212
Total Current Assets	\$ 45,002,277
General Capital Assets (Net of Applicable Depreciation):	
Land and Improvements	\$ 120,380,239
Buildings and Improvements	580,173
Machinery and Equipment	866,353
Total General Fixed Assets	\$ 121,826,765
Other Debits:	
Amount Available in Debt Service Fund	\$ 2,510,000
Amount to be Provided for Retirement of General Long-Term Debt	457,178
Total Other Debits	\$ 2,967,178
Total Assets and Other Debits	\$ 169,796,220
LIABILITIES AND FUND EQUITY	
Liabilities:	
Refundable Deposits	\$ 109,600
Accounts Payable and Accruals	493,498
Deferred Revenue	11,801,366
Deposits	50,435
Due to Other Funds	2,546,525
Revenue Bonds Payable	2,510,000
Liability for Compensated Absences	457,178
Total Liabilities	\$ 17,968,602
Fund Equity:	
Investment in General Capital Assets	\$ 121,826,765
Fund Balances:	
Reserved:	
Prepaid Items	6,212
Debt Service	2,582,163
Land Acquisition	1,126,158
Land Management/Acquisition	6,734,222
Mitigation	492,511
Total Reserved	\$ 10,941,266
Unreserved:	
Undesignated	372,928
Designated	18,686,659
Total Unreserved	\$ 19,059,587
Total Liabilities and Fund Equity	\$ 169,796,220

Financial Statement

FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2004

REVENUE AND OTHER RECEIPTS

Federal Sources:

US DOT/FDOT - Efficient Transportation Decision Making	79,152
US Dept of Interior/Fish & Wildlife	20,000
DEP/EPA-Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant-"L" Street Pond	(57,279)
DEP/EPA Surface Water Sampling Grant Awards	90,488
DEP-Ambient Monitoring	239,634
EPA-Choctawhatchee Watershed Mitigation	18,766
FEMA - Map Modernization	62,916

Total Federal Sources	\$ 453,677
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State and Local Government Sources:

DEP-Statewide Surface Water Restoration Projects	937,660
DEP-Chapter 62-524 F.A.C. Program Implementation	60,000
DEP-General Appropriations	1,044,926
DEP-Florida Forever Trust Fund	818,390
DEP-Preservation 2000 Trust Fund	95,135
DEP-Water Management Lands Trust Fund	7,068,029
DEP-Surface Water Management Permitting Program (Wetlands)	300,000
DEP-Florida Springs Initiative	115,202
DOT-Mitigation Plan and Restoration Projects	1,072,300
FWC-Apalachicola Bay Salt Marsh	48,552
Walton/Okaloosa/Santa Rosa Regional Utility Authority	24,178
Leon County Stormwater Monitoring	80,724
Bay County Stormwater Monitoring	9,700
Bay County Deer Point Watershed Monitoring	29,617
Other Funding	1,829

Total State and Local Government Sources	\$ 11,706,242
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Agency Sources:

Ad Valorem Taxes (.05 mill)	2,686,317
Permit and Inspection Fees	428,155
Regulatory Penalties	4,480
Interest	290,011
Timber Sales	91,597
Miscellaneous	46,764

Total Agency Sources \$ **3,547,324**

Total Revenues \$ **15,707,243**

Other Sources:

Sale of General Fixed Assets	6,318
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Total Other Sources \$ **6,318**

Balance Brought Forward from Prior Fiscal Year \$ **27,609,644**

Total Revenue, Other Sources and Cash Balance \$ **43,323,205**

EXPENDITURES

Salaries and Benefits	5,341,206
Contractual Services - Consultants	1,594,160
Operating Expenses	1,574,976
Grant and Aids	1,397,108
Operating Capital Outlay	828,780
Debt Service	2,586,122

Total Expenditures \$ **13,322,352**

Fund Balance

Reserved:

Prepaid Items	6,212
Debt Service	2,582,163
Land Acquisition	1,126,158
Land Management/Acquisition	6,734,222
Mitigation	492,511

Total Reserved \$ **10,941,266**

Unreserved:

Undesignated	372,928
Designated	18,686,659

Total Unreserved \$ **19,059,587**

Total Expenditures and Fund Balance \$ **43,323,205**

Northwest Florida Water Management District



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ANNUAL REPORT 2004

Concept and Text: Georgann Penson

Graphic Design: Rising Sun Design

Editing and Other Contributions:

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Cover Photograph:

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Photography/Maps:

James Valentine, Milo Stewart, Lee Marchman, John Crowe, Georgann Penson, Faith Eidse, District file photos, Danny Layfield (map)

This document was produced by the Northwest Florida Water Management District Office of Public Information to inform the public of the District's activities and was printed at a cost of \$1.53 per copy. Printed on recycled paper. Annual Report 2005-1