

Northwest Florida Water Management District

2005 Annual Report

Northwest Florida Water Management District

2005 ANNUAL REPORT

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EFFECTIVE PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

As 2005 drew to a close, the Northwest Florida Water Management District had purchased more than 200,000 acres to protect and preserve water resources throughout northwest Florida. For the past several years, the northwest area and the entire State of Florida have seen land values soar. Increasing prices reduce the amount of acreage that can be purchased for preservation since land acquisition funding is finite. Fortunately, the District had land acquisition programs in place early and purchased the majority of its lands during the 1990s – a time when land values were much lower. Extensive tracts along the rivers and creeks of northwest Florida are now being protected. Many of these acquisitions would not have been possible at today's costs.

All of these land areas are open to the public to enjoy for natural, resource-based recreational activities. Unfortunately some of the more popular recreational areas, such as springs, have been negatively impacted by extensive recreational use. The District became aware that a concerted effort needed to be made to blend and balance the public's recreational use with the District's charge to protect these environmentally sensitive areas. In 2005, proposals were solicited that would address such concerns and needs. Recommendations made for resolving these issues are expected to be implemented in 2006. The public – the user – also was recruited to help resolve some of the impacts to District-owned lands through cooperative recreational projects that benefit the user and help protect sensitive environmental areas at the same time.

The Florida Forever capital improvement grant program entered its third year in 2005, with grants being awarded to local governments totaling more than \$14.5 million over the three-year period. For the first year of this program, more than \$4.5 million in grants were awarded to local governments for capital improvement stormwater and water resource restoration projects. In the second year, \$5 million in grants were made available and in the third year, \$7.2 million. Also, in the second and third years of the program, funding was set aside each year to assist small communities prepare the necessary documentation to apply for the grants. These small, rural communities, abundant in our region of the state, had a great need but had to overcome a great disadvantage. Many did not have staff to prepare the grant materials. Additionally, for the third year of the grant program, the completion time for projects was extended from one year to two years. Many capital improvement projects are extensive, requiring more time to complete. This change allowed more projects to be considered for grant funding.

The 2005 Legislature enacted Senate Bills 444 and 360, which together strengthened linkages between regional water supply plans and local comprehensive plans. Significant funding (nonrecurring and recurring) will be provided for water supply (including alternative water supply development), water quality and reuse projects. For the first year, this District will receive \$10 million for cooperative water supply and reuse projects within our 16-county area.

Additionally, the District will continue its work to identify new water supply sources

for southern Franklin County, which is experiencing a rapid rate of growth. The District has constructed several test well sites. During the 2005-2006 fiscal year, additional test well drilling will be completed, results analyzed and alternative sources evaluated.

For 2005-2006, the District expects to have a very active Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program. Especially noteworthy, is a \$3.2 million legislative appropriation that will be used primarily for projects in the St. Andrew Bay watershed. The District also is planning to begin work on the first major restoration project for the Apalachicola River. That restoration work will focus on restoring an abandoned dredged material disposal site that is on District land.

New permitting requirements for bottled water operations went into effect January 1, 2005. All such facilities are now required to obtain an Individual Water Use Permit rather than a General Use Permit. This new procedure provides the public with timely, noticed opportunity to review and comment on every request to withdraw water for bottling purposes and provides staff an opportunity to review each proposed withdrawal in greater detail. During 2005, the District began exploring steps to implement e-permitting – the processing of permits via the internet. When implemented, this new approach is expected to shorten the time needed for obtaining a permit and make the process a simpler, more efficient one. E-permitting is expected to take about two years to develop.

Again, in 2005 as in 2004, the District had to respond to impacts associated with several hurricanes. Throughout 2005, the District focused on the removal of hurricane-related debris from about 9,000 acres of District-owned land and Pensacola Bay, primarily as the result of Hurricane Ivan in 2004. While Hurricane Dennis, in 2005, made landfall about 100 miles from Apalachicola, coastal Franklin County experienced an 8 to 12 foot storm surge that

destroyed several oyster processing facilities, restaurants and other businesses that lined U.S. Highway 98, profoundly impacting the small communities of Apalachicola, Eastpoint and Carrabelle.

With the termination of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint Compact Agreement on August 31, 2003, all inactive litigation was then reopened. There are currently several cases before Federal District and Appeals courts. The District's continuing role in the litigation is to provide technical support and expertise as needed by the legal team.

Each year, the cost of protecting our water resources increases but the Northwest Florida Water Management District continues to fulfill its obligations at the same ad valorem tax rate that has existed since the District was created in 1972 (.05 mills). For the 2005-2006 fiscal year budget, it is anticipated that ad valorem taxes will account for slightly less than six percent of total anticipated revenues. The District continues to rely on nontraditional sources of funding for operations and for performance of water resource management and protection programs as well as cooperative partnerships with local governments.

The Florida Forever capital improvement grant program entered its third year in 2005, with grants being awarded to local governments totaling more than \$14.5 million over the three-year period.



Wayne Bodie
Chair, Governing Board



Douglas E. Barr
Executive Director

Governing Board



Wayne Bodie

Chair

DeFuniak Springs

Represents Basin II

Appointed: March 5, 1999

Reappointed: March 2, 2003

Term Expires: March 1, 2007



Joyce Estes

Vice Chair

Eastpoint

Serves at Large

Appointed: March 5, 1999

Reappointed: March 2, 2003

Term Expires: March 1, 2007



Paul Bradshaw

Secretary/Treasurer

Havana

Represents Basin V

Appointed: March 17, 2004

Term Expires: March 1, 2008

2006 GOVERNING BOARD MEETINGS

January 26
February 23
March 23
April 27
May 25*
June 22
July 27
August 24
September 14*
September 28*
October 26
November 30
December 1

Governing Board meetings are held at the District's Headquarters office on U.S. Highway 90 except for those marked with an asterisk (). The May meeting will be held in Crestview, the September 14 meeting is a public hearing on the proposed 2006-2007 fiscal year budget and will be held in DeFuniak Springs, and the September 28 Governing Board meeting will be held in Panama City with a public hearing on the budget to follow. The schedule of meetings is tentative and subject to change.*

IN MEMORIAM OF L. E. MCMULLIAN



On December 8, 2005, Mr. McMullian passed away and the District lost one of its dedicated Governing Board members. He had served on the Governing Board from 1987 to 1991 and was reappointed in 1999 and again in 2003. His tenure spanned more than 10 years. Mr. McMullian was a lifelong resident of Jackson County, a veteran of the U.S. Navy, a retired farmer and manager of Dellwood Wildlife Farms. He was an active member of the Florida Farm Bureau for nearly 50 years and a member of their board for more than 25 years. Those of us in water management will miss Mr. McMullian's dedication, concern and support for our water resources.



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



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



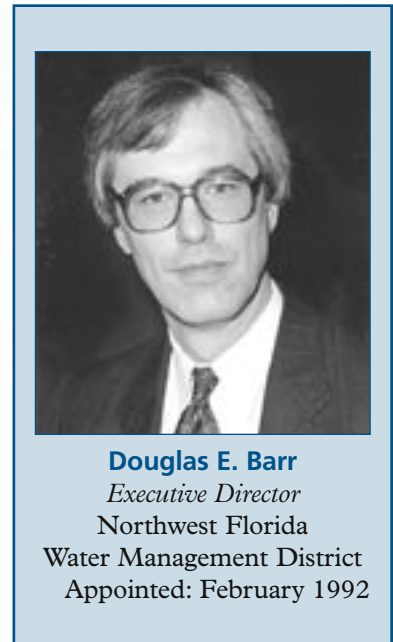
Sharon T. Gaskin
Wewahitchka
Serves at Large
Appointed: March 5, 1999
Reappointed: March 2, 2000
Reappointed: March 17, 2004
Term Expires: March 1, 2008



Michael A. Joyner
Tallahassee
Serves at Large
Appointed: March 15, 2005
Term Expires: March 1, 2009



Sharon Pinkerton
Pensacola
Represents Basin I
Appointed: March 15, 2005
Term Expires: March 1, 2009



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

- 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

Florida Forever – An Environmental Legacy

Land acquisition programs have been characterized as the most effective and best method of investing in Florida’s future. They have been invaluable in northwest Florida. The Northwest Florida Water Management District has focused its land acquisitions almost exclusively on floodplains along the major rivers, springs and ground and surface water areas such as Econfina Creek. Econfina Creek flows into the Deer Point Lake Reservoir which is used for Panama City and the surrounding area’s drinking water supply. The extensive floodplain forests that have been acquired in northwest Florida are known to be among the most diverse and biologically rich habitats found anywhere along the Gulf Coast of the U.S. Since the first day of ownership, the District has made acquired lands available for a variety of natural, resource-based recreational activities. To date, the District’s land acquisitions total 206,759 acres (both fee simple and less than fee purchases).

In 1999, the Florida Legislature adopted the Florida Forever program. The program was enacted to ensure that a part of Florida would be preserved and appreciated by future generations of Floridians. Creation of Florida Forever called for the authorization of bond issues of \$3 billion over 10 years to be used for the acquisition of land and water resources. This program was enacted to protect environmentally sensitive land areas, significant water resources such as springs and, at the same time, make available thousands of acres for natural, resource-based recreational activities for the state’s residents.

Florida Forever is the successor to Preservation 2000, which was the state’s conservation land acquisition funding source from 1990 to 2000. Preservation 2000 was preceded by other land acquisition programs such as Save Our Rivers, Save Our Coast, Conservation and Recreational Lands (CARL) and similar conservation acts that may date back as far as the early 1960s.

When the Florida Legislature followed Preservation 2000 with Florida Forever, it gave the water management districts more discretion with how to utilize these funds. There was a growing awareness of escalating land values and the increasing difficulty of continuing to acquire large tracts of land with the available funding. There also was a recognition that preservation of Florida’s environmental areas did not end with their acquisition. These areas need to be maintained and, in some cases, restored to their natural state. Water resources also need to be protected and shielded from further degradation.

Under the Florida Forever program, water management

districts are allowed to use up to 50 percent of available funds for capital improvement projects that assist in meeting the goals of Florida Forever. Examples of capital improvement projects include habitat restoration, stormwater treatment and sedimentation abatement projects and water resource development projects that promote reclamation, storage or recovery of water. A minimum of 50 percent of the available funding must continue to be used for land acquisition. Under Preservation 2000, all of the funds had to be used for land acquisition.

The District’s Governing Board has chosen to apply the full 50 percent of funds allowed for capital improvement projects. A portion of these funds are made available to local governments through a competitive grant program. Other Florida Forever capital improvement funds also are applied to District priorities for restoration, stormwater retrofit and qualified water resource development projects.

To qualify for funding, proposed local government grant projects have to be consistent with objectives of the Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program or an approved regional water supply plan. The goal of the grant program is to support management efforts that improve water quality, in particular, but also facilitate proj-

First Year – Florida Forever Grants

County	Grant	Project
Bay	\$500,000	Deer Point Lake dirt road stabilization
	\$ 60,000	Port of Panama City stormwater improvements
Escambia	\$816,608	Big Escambia Creek restoration
	\$250,000	Carpenter Creek basin retrofit
	\$375,000	Little Sabine Bay circulation project
Holmes	\$450,000	Unpaved roads pollution abatement
Leon	\$300,000	Caroline Courts stormwater improvements
Santa Rosa	\$100,000	Clear Creek restoration project
Walton	\$487,500	Oyster Lake restoration project
	\$259,032	Hammock Point water quality improvements
	\$3,598,140	Total Grant Funds Awarded in 2003

ects that demonstrate Best Management Practices (BMPs), implement stormwater plans or water reuse or restore natural systems with water resources value. Grant recipients are expected to have additional matching funds or in-kind services from other sources.

Florida Forever grant applications were made available for the first time in 2003. In November of 2003, the District's Governing Board approved more than \$3.5 million in grants. In the second year, the District awarded more than \$3.6 million in Florida Forever grants to local governments. Also in the second year, \$150,000 was set aside to provide technical assistance to small communities that wished to apply for the Florida Forever grants. In the first year of the grant program, it was discovered that the many small communities found throughout Northwest Florida did not have the funding to even prepare the documentation necessary to apply for the grants. The District's goal was to eliminate a hardship for these smaller local governments and to distribute the available funding more evenly over its 16-county area.

In 2005, another \$7,277,698 in grants were awarded. Again, \$150,000 was set aside to help small communities prepare the documentation necessary to apply for these grants. Additionally, grant recipients now have up to two years to complete an approved project, rather than one year as required previously. It was expected that the extension of time to two years could increase the number of eligible applicants as well as the scope and depth of projects. District staff evaluate grant proposals based on a set of criteria that take

into account how well proposed projects support the District's mission, the extent of existing problems, potential improvements to the surface water ecosystem, potential improvements for water supply, the applicant's ability to implement and maintain the project and financial need.

At the end of the three grant cycles, 32 grants totaling \$14,546,998 have been made available to local governments to help with water resource protection and restoration efforts. Water quality protection projects have been undertaken in eight counties and in seven watersheds: Perdido Bay, Pensacola Bay, Choctawhatchee Bay, St. Andrew/St. Joseph Bay, Apalachicola River and Bay, St. Marks River and Lake Jackson. It is important to note that the grant funds represent only a portion of the total project cost. It is estimated that the actual cost of all of these projects is well over \$51,000,000 once matching funds and in-kind services are incorporated.

Second Year — Florida Forever Grants		
County	Grant	Project
Bay	\$500,000	Deer Point Lake dirt road stabilization
Calhoun	\$350,000	Roadway stabilization to reduce sedimentation to the Apalachicola River
Escambia	\$500,000	Ten Mile Creek restoration
Gulf	\$350,000	St. Joseph Lake regional stormwater treatment facility
Leon	\$477,000	Boone Boulevard stormwater management improvement project for Lake Jackson
	\$732,160	Gibby Pond regional stormwater facility
	\$430,000	Campus Circle stormwater improvement project
	\$332,000	Killearn Lakes Plantation restoration project
	\$3,671,160	Total Grant Funds Awarded in 2004

Third Year — Florida Forever Grants		
County	Grant	Project
Bay	\$500,000	Deer Point Lake dirt road stabilization
	\$100,000	Port of Panama City stormwater improvements
Calhoun	\$451,198	Lamb Eddy Road stormwater improvements
Escambia	\$600,000	Long Hollow stormwater retrofit
	\$500,000	East Ten Mile Creek stream restoration
	\$500,000	Blue Pit wetland stormwater retention
Franklin	\$366,000	Sawyer Lane stormwater improvements
Leon	\$500,000	Call and Cadiz streets stormwater improvements
	\$1,000,000	Harbinwood Estates drainage improvements
	\$500,000	Okeeheepkee basin retrofit
Santa Rosa	\$1,000,000	Gulf Breeze stormwater drainage improvements
Walton	\$500,000	Choctawhatchee Bay stormwater improvements (Phase I)
	\$440,500	Rolling Pines Road stormwater improvements
	\$320,000	Abatement of nonpoint source pollution from unpaved roads (project involves Holmes, Jackson and Washington counties)
	\$7,277,698	Total Grant Funds Awarded in 2005



Big Escambia Creek

Completed in the summer of 2005, the Big Escambia Creek restoration project was a \$7.7 million intergovernmental effort involving Florida, Alabama, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Three Rivers/Gulf Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council. The objective of this project was to return Big Escambia Creek to its original channel which would then rehydrate approximately 1,000 acres of adjacent wetlands. The District provided more than \$1.6 million toward this restoration effort, half of which were Florida Forever funds. Big Escambia Creek is a major tributary of the Escambia River.

Bay, Calhoun, Holmes, Jackson and Washington county local governments have been awarded Florida Forever grant funds for dirt road stabilization and nonpoint source pollution abatement. Shown here is a dirt road in Holmes County. Stream sedimentation reduces the quality and availability of aquatic habitats, impairs water quality, increases flooding and reduces recreational opportunities.



Dirt Road Stabilization

Florida Forever funding has helped reduce sedimentation and erosion affecting Deer Point Lake Reservoir, which provides drinking water for the Bay County area, and the Apalachicola and Choctawhatchee rivers.



In Walton County, Oyster Lake and Hammock Point will benefit from Florida Forever grants. The Oyster Lake restoration project calls for the restoration of natural flows and circulation for this coastal dune lake. About 17 acres of wetlands are expected to be reconnected to the lake, and the lake's natural outfall will be restored to a more natural function. The Hammock Point water quality improvement project provides for retrofitting an existing stormwater drainage system by stabilizing unpaved roads and installing sediment removal units to reduce impacts to the Choctawhatchee Bay.

Clear Creek in Santa Rosa was restored through a Florida Forever grant to the Blackwater Soil and Water Conservation District. The project provided for the stabilization of 45 acres of an eroding gully to restore a stream system and eliminate significant sedimentation from downstream waters.





Caroline Courts

Boone Boulevard

Several stormwater treatment facilities in Leon County have been constructed or retrofitted as a result of Florida Forever grants. Shown here are the Boone Boulevard stormwater improvement project to treat stormwater in the Lake Jackson basin and the Caroline Courts and Campus Circle projects, which provide stormwater retrofits to

improve water quality in the Lake Munson basin and the St. Marks watershed. In November of 2005, a ground breaking ceremony was held to mark the beginning of corridor improvements along northwest Capital Circle that include the construction of Gibby Pond Regional Stormwater Facility.



Campus Circle

DISTRICTWIDE ACTIVITIES

Districtwide and multi-county projects and programs undertaken by the Northwest Florida Water Management District during 2005 are reviewed in this section. Projects and programs specific to various county groupings are discussed in the county sections. The District engages in many projects and not all are covered in this Annual Report. Many programs are continuing or on-going from year to year.

Florida Forever Grants

In January, the District's Governing Board conducted a workshop to consider awarding additional Florida Forever capital improvement grants. Six grant awards had been recommended for approval in November with the understanding that additional awards could be considered at a later date. Two additional projects were recommended for funding: \$430,000 to the City of Tallahassee for its Campus Circle stormwater improvement project and \$332,000 for a Leon County Killearn Lakes Plantation restoration project. These two additional grants brought the total funding awarded to about \$3.7 million.

In April, six Florida Forever funding agreement contracts were approved by the Governing Board: City of Tallahassee, \$477,000 for Boone Boulevard stormwater management improvement and \$430,000 for Campus Circle stormwater retrofit; City of Port St. Joe, \$350,000 for St. Joseph Lake stormwater treatment; Bay County, \$500,000 for Deer Point Lake dirt road stabilization; Escambia County, \$500,000 for Ten Mile Creek stream restoration; and Calhoun County, \$350,000 for Lands Store Road stormwater improvement. In August, the contractual agreement for \$732,160 for the Gibby Pond Stormwater Treatment Facility in Leon County was approved.

In November, 14 new local government projects were recommended to receive Florida Forever capital improvement grants totaling, \$7,277,698. These grants are listed in the special feature section of this annual report. The November grants constitute the third year of funding for Florida Forever projects.

Funding allocated to local governments for these significant water quality and resource projects over the three-year period totaled \$14,546,998.

District Water Management Plan Revised

First adopted in 1994, the District Water Management Plan is updated every five years. In 2005, the plan underwent such a revision. Public workshops gave area residents an opportunity to comment on the proposed revisions. The plan offers long range guidance while allowing for 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 and floodplain management, water quality and natural systems. The plan is based on a 20-year planning period.

A draft of this plan was presented to the Governing Board in March. In April, it received final approval by the Board and was forwarded to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for review. In September, the Governing Board approved the District's response to DEP's comments and final changes to the plan.

Saltwater Intrusion Model

The District released the final report for the Water Supply Planning Region II western domain saltwater intrusion model. This report documents results obtained from a ground water flow and solute transport model of the Floridan Aquifer in coastal Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties. It documents predicted rates of saltwater intrusion presently occurring

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in the Floridan Aquifer along the coastline. As described in the report, saltwater is moving slowly to the north, in the direction of coastal wells. However, rates of intrusion are sufficiently slow that adequate time will be available to adapt to future water quality changes. Model results are applicable to nine of 13 major public supply systems located along the coastal areas of Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties.

Legislative Appropriations Released to District

A resolution was prepared and approved by the Governing Board in July that provided for the transfer of a State of Florida \$3.7 million general appropriation to the District to perform surface water construction, restoration and associated assessment activities. Appropriations included Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) project funding for the Apalachicola River and Bay (\$500,000) and the St. Andrew Bay (\$3,200,000) watersheds.

FEMA Map Modernization

In March, the District's Cooperating Technical Partner agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for map modernization was amended. Funding in the amount of \$1,645,000 is to be provided to modernize floodplain maps in Bay, Gulf and Walton counties. The objective of this project is to develop a Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) and Flood Insurance Study (FIS) report, both of which will be produced in the FEMA county-wide format. In 2004, \$1 million were provided for modernizing floodplain maps for Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. The agreement with FEMA requires a 20 percent match, which may be in the form of data, in-kind services or related expenses.

In August, the agreement was amended once again to add \$144,000 in funding to the District, bringing the total amount received from FEMA to \$2,949,000. If the U.S. Congress continues to fund the program as currently planned, it is anticipated that the District will receive \$1,450,000 to \$1,900,000 in federal funding annually through 2008.

Planning Requirements Revised

Beginning March 1, 2006, a consolidated report will be required of all the water management districts annually. The consolidated annual report will include: a district water management plan report or a work plan report on strategic plan implementation; DEP approved minimum flows and levels priority list; five-year capital improvement plan; alternative water supplies report; five-year water resource development work program; Florida Forever water management district work plan report; and mitigation donation report.

The report is to be submitted to DEP, the Governor, the Senate President and the House Speaker with copies provided to chairs of all legislative committees having substantive or fiscal jurisdiction over water management districts. Local governments also will receive the report.

Florida Springs Initiative

In June, DEP and the District amended an existing agreement to fund additional work on the Florida Springs Initiative. This will be the fifth year that the District has participated in this effort. Work will include a springs inventory in the Wakulla/St. Marks river basin and springshed delineations for St. Marks Rise (Leon County) and Morrison Spring (Walton County). Already completed are basin delineations for Jackson Blue Spring (Jackson County) and Wakulla Springs. Spring inventories have been conducted in the Choctawhatchee and Chipola river basins and Holmes and Econfina creek basins. The work slated for 2005-2006 will complete the Floridan Aquifer spring inventory activities in northwest Florida.

In November, the agreement was amended again to enable the District to prepare a restoration plan for privately-owned uplands and sovereign-submerged lands in and around the Gainer Springs complex in Bay County. Springs border the creek on both the east and west sides. Lands on the east side are owned by the District. The plan will address three primary objectives: (1) stormwater runoff control, erosion control and revegetation of uplands adjacent to

spring number three, (2) removal and disposal of eroded sediments for sovereign-submerged lands and (3) restoration of the eroded shoreline around spring number two.

Efficient Transportation Decision Making Process

In June, the Governing Board approved the renewal of an agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) and the U.S. Department of Transportation to continue participation in the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process. This process facilitates better interagency coordination with the District's early involvement in the planning and permitting of transportation projects. Included are an evaluation of Florida DOT projects with regard to potential water resource and wetland impacts and the development of related data and information. Involvement in this process also helps the District improve its regional wetland mitigation planning. This three-year agreement allows funding to be distributed up front.

Independent Auditor's Report

Another "clean audit" was given to the District, as has been for the past 11 years, by an independent auditing firm. No issues of noncompliance in the past fiscal year's audit were found. The District received an unqualified opinion which is the highest level of assurance for an audit.

Inspector General's Report

In October, the Inspector General presented the Governing Board with his findings. Areas reviewed by the Inspector General include controls over and testing of transactions pertaining to regulatory permitting, acquisition and disposal of real property, payroll, procurement, fringe benefits and overhead allocation, fuel usage, information technology procedures, banking and investments, general journal entries and contract compliance.

Counties Reimbursed for Taxes Lost

As it has for several years, in January, the District once again reimbursed qualifying counties for ad valorem taxes lost as a result of District land acquisitions, subject to a 10-year limitation on such payments. Eight counties qualified for reimbursements totaling \$73,434.14.

Payments were made to counties as follows: Bay \$4,453.76; Holmes \$1,997.13; Jackson \$8,373.69; Liberty \$53.00; Okaloosa \$916.80; Santa Rosa \$15,421.81; Walton \$15,558.51; and Washington \$26,659.44.

Lands to Be Restored

During fiscal year 2005 and continuing through 2006, the District plans to restore (reforest) 886 acres of cutover and/or disturbed longleaf pine, slash pine and wiregrass habitat within the Escambia River, Econfinia Creek, Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek and Yellow River water management areas (WMAs). These plans call for planting an estimated 547,264 longleaf pine tubelings and 10,896 slash pine seedlings. Additionally, 139,500 wiregrass plugs will be planted. The reforestation plan was tentatively approved by the Governing Board in March which allowed the District to place its order so the nursery could grow tubelings to maturity in time for winter planting. The restoration plan received final approval in November.

Security/Maintenance Services for Lands

In order to provide safe recreational experiences for the public, the District contracts for law enforcement/security services and recreational site cleanup and maintenance. For a number of years, the District has contracted with the Washington and Bay counties sheriffs' offices to provide law enforcement/security services. Bay County covers the District's Pitt Spring "Day Use" recreational areas, the Econfinia Creek Land Management Field Office and the Econfinia Creek canoe launch. Because these areas receive the heaviest use during swimming/

During fiscal year 2005 and continuing through 2006, the District plans to restore (reforest) 886 acres of cutover and/or disturbed longleaf pine, slash pine and wiregrass habitat within the Escambia River, Econfinia Creek, Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek and Yellow River water management areas.

canoeing season, security services are only required for April through the end of September. The agreement for 2005 was approved in March. In September, the District entered into a year-round agreement with the Washington County Sheriff's Department for lands in Washington County. During this 12-month period, officers will cover a number of acres.

Additionally, in August, the District renewed its agreement with the Orange Hill Soil and Water Conservation District for land management construction, maintenance, installation and repair services for the Econfina Creek and Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek WMAs. Also, in August, the District renewed an agreement with private contractors for public recreation site cleanup and maintenance services within the western land management region, which includes the Escambia River, Garcon Point, Blackwater River and Yellow River WMAs as well as for the Econfina Creek and Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek WMAs.

Integrated Water Resource Monitoring

In June, the District and DEP extended an agreement to continue the Integrated Water Resource Monitoring program. This agreement provides for ground and surface water sampling at a network of sites within the District for an additional twelve months.

Monitoring Surface Water Quality

For the past 14 years, the District has participated in an ambient surface water quality assessment program with DEP. That agreement was renewed in September. The program is structured to provide surface water quality data for the assessment of long-term water quality trends for major streams and rivers. These data are used to develop management strategies that will improve surface water quality and minimize negative impacts on surface water resources. Water quality samples are collected at 24 surface water sites monthly. Funds for the program are provided through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to DEP.

Cooperative Water Resource Investigation Program

In September, the Governing Board approved the District's continued participation in a cooperative water resource investigation program with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) that has been ongoing for 30 years. The current agreement provides funding for the operation of continuous discharge and stage stations on Telogia Creek near Bristol, the Apalachicola River at Chattahoochee and the Apalachicola River at Sumatra. These three stations are all long term and are a high priority for the District for regulating water consumption, flood management and resource management. These stations will be operated by the USGS, and the data will be available on its web site.

Water Conservation Activities

During 2005, the District completed its sixth water conservation brochure, *3 R's of Water: Reuse, Recycle and Reclaim*. The brochure, available in printed form and also on the District's web site, explores practices that help extend our limited, finite water resources. Five other water conservation brochures are also available: *50 Ways to Save Water*, *Watering Wisely*, *Retro Fit It*, *Xeriscape* and an *Indoor Water Audit*. Printed copies of all brochures can be requested from the Public Information Office or accessed via the District's web site (www.nwfwmd.state.fl.us). Additionally, in 2005, the District began a new water conservation program, Water C.H.A.M.P. (Conservation Hotel and Motel Program). This program promotes the reuse of towels and linens in hotels to save water and reduce operating costs.

Public Assistance and Compliance Tracking Program

In 2004, the District performed a comprehensive review of its regulatory enforcement program. By January 2005, revisions to the program had been materially implemented and were formally titled, "PACT," an acronym for Public Assistance and Compliance Tracking. The comprehensive

public assistance component of the PACT program ensures that water use permit holders are provided with at least one, and often more than one, notification prior to permit expiration or passage of due dates affecting permit compliance. During 2005, staff sent out approximately 1,300 public assistance notices and performed approximately 600 public assistance contacts by phone or in person. PACT also provides prompt notification of any potential noncompliance issues so that they can be resolved quickly. In 2005, 1,060 enforcement notices were sent with a notable improvement in permit compliance.

Water Well Contractors Obtain Education Credits

A new statewide Continuing Education Unit (CEU) program for water well contractor licensing was completed in 2005 to comply with a 2001 statutory change. All water well

contractors had to meet the requirement of obtaining 12 continuing education units by July 31, 2005, to have a two-year license renewed or issued. Between December 2003 and July 2005, about 460 workshops covering more than 78 topics were offered statewide with 135 workshops on 27 topics being held in the District. District staff facilitated several workshops that enabled water well contractors to obtain all 12 credits at one time.

Staff also inaugurated a newsletter in 2005 to inform the drillers of continuing education opportunities. The newsletter continues to increase contractor awareness of permitting issues; changes to relevant rules effecting well construction, repair and abandonment; and other items of interest to the industry. It also provides a valuable rapport with the contractors licensed in the District.

Access to the District's well data was greatly improved by the 2005 unveiling of an internet portal that is cooperatively supported by all the

Permits Issued by County (October 2004 to September 2005)

County	Well Construction Repair and Abandonment	Consumptive Use (new/renewal/modifications)	Surface Water Management (general/individual)	Agricultural and Forestry Surface Water Management (general/individual)
Bay	1,540	18	-	-
Calhoun	251	2	-	-
Escambia	1,165	7	-	5
Franklin	142	8	-	-
Gadsden	224	15	1	6
Gulf	139	4	-	-
Holmes	447	5	-	1
Jackson	768	30	-	-
Jefferson	194	2	-	-
Leon	803	7	4	-
Liberty	104	3	-	-
Okaloosa	1,138	17	2	5
Santa Rosa	1,073	8	-	5
Wakulla	288	3	-	-
Walton	1,050	15	2	15
Washington	445	5	-	-
Total	9,771	149	9	37

Districts. Site users can look up information based on the water use permit number, well permit number, or by using an electronic map. This public assistance utility allows environmental consultants, utility operators, students and private homeowners access to water well data at their convenience.

Potable Well Construction

The District has maintained an agreement with DEP since 1991 to implement well permitting requirements of Chapter 62-52A, Florida Administrative Code. The program addresses potable well construction in areas delineated as having ground water contamination and includes portions of Escambia, Jackson, Leon and Santa Rosa counties. That agreement was continued for another year in June.

Each year, the District's outdoor educational exhibit can be found at many environmental events such as Bay Days in Pensacola and Navarre, Earth Day events at the Capitol and Wakulla Springs, Nature's Gallery at St. Andrew Bay, Apalachicola Seafood Festival, Humanatee Day at St. Marks and many school water awareness events. Shown here are (left) Lucinda Scott, Public Information Specialist; (center) Wayne Bodie, Chair, Governing Board; and (right) Guy Gowens, Director, Division of Resource Regulation.



Employee Service Awards and Recognitions

Each year, employees who have achieved 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 years of service are recognized by the Governing Board. Those receiving awards during 2005 included:

For 25 years of service: Robert L. Echols, Assistant Field Representative.

For 20 years of service: Duncan J. Cairns, Chief, Bureau of Environmental and Resource Planning; Jerry L. Sheppard, Associate Field Representative.

For 15 years of service: Carol L. Bert, Land Acquisition and Management Associate; Georgann E. Penson, Director, Public Information Section.

For 10 years of service: Thomas W. Shepard, Field Representative Specialist; Gale Y. Thompson, Fiscal Assistant.

For 5 years of service: Kristi Caligiure, Hydrogeology Specialist; Faith Eidse, Public Information Specialist; Francis Flores, Associate Hydrogeologist; Yamila Posey, Database Programmer; Lucinda B. Scott, Public Information Specialist; Shawn Wilson, Computer Support Specialist.



Barges on the Bay

In September, the cleanup of debris along five, one-square mile stretches of the Pensacola Bay began where concerns about public safety and the environmental quality of the bay were paramount. Initially impacted by hurricanes Frances and Ivan in September of 2004, the area subsequently was affected by hurricanes Dennis in July 2005, Katrina in August 2005 and Rita in September 2005. Divers removed a propane tank, a barrel of hydraulic fluid, refrigerators, air conditioners, 12 dumpsters, tires, signs, plastic pipes and other debris. In an initial one-square-mile test area, divers retrieved enough debris to fill 18 commercial dumpsters. Mini constructed barges were towed or pushed along by hand and filled with debris. These mini barges could be picked up by a forklift and emptied into waiting dumpsters.



ESCAMBIA AND SANTA ROSA COUNTIES

Debris Removal

Agreements to remove debris from the bays and estuaries of Escambia and Santa Rosa counties and District lands resulting from several hurricanes in 2004 and in 2005 were initiated this past year. The combined effects of wind and storm surge deposited extensive amounts of debris into the bays and estuaries posing a threat to public safety. The District's western land management region (Escambia, Blackwater and Yellow rivers and Garcon Point/Grassy Point water management areas) also was impacted, involving about 9,000 acres. The District contracted to remove debris from two priority areas on Garcon Point. Approximately 290 cubic yards were removed from the 93-acre Avalon tract and 210 cubic yards from the 360-acre Garcon Point south tract.

In August, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) agreed to reimburse the District for removal of debris that posed an immediate threat to public health or safety or contained pollutants. In response, Florida agencies, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Department of Community Affairs, are cooperating to remove debris from sovereign submerged lands within Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. The estimated total cost is expected to be \$8 million.

Restoring Big Escambia Creek

Funds provided by the District helped restore about 1,000 acres of wetlands and eliminate about 10,000 tons of sediment washing into the Escambia River and Bay annually. The District provided more than \$1.6 million toward the project, awarding \$816,608 through a Florida Forever capital improvement grant and another \$816,608 through a special Florida Legislative appropriation. The Big Escambia Creek

restoration project, completed in the summer of 2005, was a \$7.7 million intergovernmental effort involving Alabama, Florida and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Another partner in the restoration effort was the Three Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Council. The goal of the interstate initiative was to return Big Escambia Creek to its original channel, which would then rehydrate wetlands.

Elevation Imagery for Santa Rosa

A cooperative agreement between the District and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was approved in September to acquire detailed elevation data for Santa Rosa County. NOAA is using this area as a test bed for storm surge modeling research. Having partners on this research effort will provide NOAA more detailed coverage. Some of the water resources involved include the Escambia, Yellow and Blackwater rivers, District-owned conservation lands, related floodplains and wetlands, Garcon Point preservation area and all of the coastal and estuarine shoreline areas of the Pensacola Bay System in Santa Rosa County.

Mystic Springs Campsite Reopens

The Mystic Springs Group Use Campsite was closed temporarily for repairs due to Hurricane Dennis and reopened in August after the District repaired damage and cleaned up debris. Located north of Pensacola near McDavid, the campsite overlooks the Escambia River. As part of the Mystic Springs Recreation Area, it offers foot paths, primitive campsites, picnic tables and a boat ramp.

Perdido River Acquisition Planned

For several years, the District had been working with the Conservation Fund, DEP and International Paper Company to acquire acreage in the Perdido River watershed as a conservation easement. Due to a change in company direction, up to 5,553 acres may be acquired under a fee simple agreement involving the Conservation Fund and District working cooperatively to acquire the parcels. The Governing Board, in October, approved an agreement between the District and the Conservation Fund that allows the negotiations to continue. If agreement is reached, this acquisition will protect a significant portion of the floodplain of the Perdido River in Florida.

Jones Swamp Preserve to Increase

The District is working to acquire up to 820 acres of environmentally sensitive lands that would ultimately be transferred to Escambia County for long-term ownership and maintenance as part of the Jones Swamp Preserve. These lands consist primarily of wetlands within the Jones Swamp/Bayou Chico watershed. Funding for 330 acres will be provided by the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT). Transfer of these properties will offset wetland impacts caused by the widening of U.S. Highway 98 and a landowner's development plans.

Acquisition of this property will help preserve a major intact wetland system within a fast growing area of Escambia County. It also will help protect water quality within Bayou Chico and the Pensacola Bay, floodplain functions and sensitive habitat areas.

River Corridor Purchases Finalized

During 2005, the District closed on several river corridor purchases. One was the 311.3-acre Bluff Springs parcel, which borders the Escambia River and which is surrounded by District-owned lands on three sides. Initial land management activities planned include restoration and enhancement of bottomland hardwood habitat and restoration of the pine plantation to old growth forest habitat. A second closure consisted of an island and peninsula point at the mouth of the Blackwater River. This 72.75-acre purchase involved two landowners. The parcels border about one mile of the river and feature high, natural levees dominated by white Atlantic cedar (locally known as juniper), pine, magnolia and live oak trees. These tracts are accessible only by boat. A third closure involved a 29.71-acre property on another peninsular tract. The parcel contains about five acres of floodplain wetlands along the Blackwater River.

Mitigation Lands Acquired Along Yellow River

In September, the purchase of 278.9 acres in Santa Rosa County for DOT mitigation purposes was approved by the Governing Board. Approximately 138.5 acres of the property consist of floodplain habitat, 121.5 acres are improved pasture and 15 acres are wetland hardwood forest habitat. The entire property is frequently inundated during heavy rains and flood events. Acquisition of this parcel is critical for satisfying permit conditions for DOT to mitigate for wetland impacts from the nearby road improvements to State Road 87.

If agreement is reached, this acquisition will protect a significant portion of the floodplain of the Perdido River in Florida.

BAY, HOLMES, OKALOOSA, WALTON AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES



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Econfina Springs/Gainer Springs Complex: Restoration and Protection

Spring systems located in the Econfina Creek Water Management Area (WMA) contribute large amounts of Floridan Aquifer water to Econfina Creek, which in turn supplies the Deer Point Lake Reservoir. Deer Point Lake is the source of Panama City and the surrounding area's drinking water supply. These springs also are popular recreational sites and more and more users are frequenting the area. Spring areas are unique, contain globally imperiled habitats and are extremely sensitive to disturbance.

A comprehensive spring restoration and protection project for five District-owned springs located along Econfina Creek (Pitt, Sylvan, Williford, McCormick and Blue) has been proposed. The project is envisioned as a multi-step process. Eventually, this process is expected to lead to spring management, maintenance and



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monitoring recommendations that will ensure that these springs are protected in perpetuity while allowing for compatible, resource-based public recreational opportunities.

Additionally, the District entered into an agreement with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) under the state's Springs Initiative. Through this agreement, the District will prepare a restoration plan for the Gainer Springs complex, privately-owned uplands and sovereign-submerged lands (owned by the state) in and around this 1st magnitude spring. This plan will have three primary objectives: (1) stormwater runoff control, erosion control and revegetation of uplands adjacent to spring number three, (2) removal and disposal of eroded sediments from sovereign-submerged lands and (3) restoration of the eroded shoreline around spring number two.

Choctawhatchee River Springs Inventory

Through this inventory, a total of 13 springs were identified/verified in the Choctawhatchee River basin with seven being classified as 2nd magnitude. These 13 springs included:

Morrison Spring (2nd)
Natural Bridge Rise (2nd)
Potter Spring (2nd)
Vortex Spring (2nd)
Pate Spring
Washington Blue Spring (2nd)
Ponce de Leon Springs (2nd)
Holmes Blue Spring (2nd)
Blue Run Spring
Jackson Spring
Wrights Blue Spring
Thundering Spring
Hidden Spring

Three sites (Weaver, Ray Hill and Pleasant Ridge) that had previously been classified as springs were identified as actually being surficial aquifer seeps. These three have diffuse percolation discharges rather than the normal fissure-type vents generally characteristic of springs. Another purpose of this study was to provide accurate position data so springs can be

relocated at a later time, even under unfavorable conditions. The study results can be obtained from the July 2005 printed report and can be accessed via the District's web site (www.nwfwmd.state.fl.us).

Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank

The District's Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank, to be used to generate mitigation credits to offset wetland impacts for public and private entities, is located in the southern portion of Washington County. It consists of 2,155 acres that eventually will be restored through the mitigation process. Required permit documents for its establishment have been completed and submitted to state and federal permitting agencies for review. The Department of Environmental Protection has issued its permit. As part of the standard permitting process, the District is required to place the area under a conservation easement with DEP. The Governing Board approved this step in April. Mitigation credits will be released following the completion of preservation and restoration activities.

Cooperative Management of Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank

A three-year cooperative management plan with the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) will assist the District in restoring, protecting and managing the Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank. Under the agreement, FWC will be responsible for providing comprehensive assessments of the area's fish and wildlife resources as they relate to managing the property's resource-based public recreational opportunities, maintaining a check station to regulate public access and use and providing a significant level of law enforcement protection for the property. FWC's efforts also will focus on managing fishing and hunting opportunities. Ultimately, the goal is to develop the property into a low impact public recreational area for residents of northwest Florida.

Ultimately, the goal is to develop the property into a low impact public recreational area for residents of northwest Florida.

Stormwater Retrofits for Bay County

Stormwater retrofits between 11th and 13th streets in Panama City will be undertaken through an agreement between Bay County and the District, approved in September. The stormwater retrofits will provide treatment and flood attenuation for 86 acres of an urban watershed area that currently discharges untreated stormwater into Watson Bayou, part of the St. Andrew Bay system. The District will provide up to \$1,055,625 for construction costs for stormwater treatment, as well as technical assistance for hydraulic modeling and design.

In November, a cooperative agreement with Bay County to provide stormwater retrofits near Lake Powell was approved. Retrofits will be undertaken for a three-acre parking lot that discharges untreated stormwater into Lake Powell, part of the St. Andrew Bay system. The District will provide \$250,000 from a special legislative appropriation toward construction costs for the stormwater treatment facility. Lake Powell is an Outstanding Florida Water and the largest coastal dune lake in Florida.

Henry Davis Park Retrofits

A grant agreement between the District and Panama City will provide up to \$850,000 for construction of the Henry Davis Park stormwater retrofit project within the 2.5-acre park. Through this project, the city will develop a stormwater detention basin and convert an open ditch conveyance into a 60-inch pipe network covered by a grassy swale. This retrofit will help alleviate flooding and improve water quality in the area. The area is within the St. Andrew Bay watershed which is a priority water body for the Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program.

Unique Stormwater Treatment Filter in Operation

In March, the District received approval to proceed with a project that uses an existing ball field in Lynn Haven to treat stormwater. The

project, located at the 5th Street Park, diverts runoff from two ditches emptying directly to North Bay and sends stormwater across existing playing fields to seep into the ground. The large multipurpose ball field, used infrequently, is built on a fill of coarse sand, making it an ideal filter. This stormwater retrofit will help keep North Bay clean, preserve aquatic habitat and protect St. Andrew Bay.

Salt Marsh Rejuvenated

A degraded salt marsh and rubble strewn shoreline at Lynn Haven's 5th Street Park was rejuvenated during 2005. To ensure success of the marsh replanting, 180 cubic yards of white beach sand were added. This enhanced the aesthetic quality of the area and allowed the creation of a lower marsh with smooth and salt meadow cordgrass and an upper marsh with yaupon and marsh elder shrubs, dahoon holly, and slash pine trees. A 950-foot breakwater, constructed earlier in the spring, will protect seedlings and estuarine rookeries and reduce shoreline erosion and sedimentation of North Bay. The 5th Street Park ball field stormwater retrofit project is located behind the marsh.

Restoring Devil's Swamp

Stream flows have been restored to Devil's Swamp, in Walton County, with the recent removal of a dozen road segments. Nine low water crossings and a bridge on Bunker Road were installed to improve surface water connections and flows. Segments of old logging roads that had blocked streams were removed and the restored streambeds were lined with crushed rock so vehicles could cross them during low water periods. Funding to purchase and restore the 2,649-acre swamp was provided to the District by the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) as mitigation for wetland impacts resulting from widening U.S. Highway 98 in southern Walton County.

Monitoring the Deer Point Lake Watershed

In September, the District renewed an agreement with Bay County to continue operating a monitoring network that includes six discharge stations and three rainfall stations in the Deer Point Lake watershed. These stations measure continuous discharge, rainfall and stage levels. Because the Deer Point Lake Reservoir serves as the primary drinking water supply for Panama City and Bay County, preservation and management of this resource is a priority for both the county and the District. The District has operated and maintained this monitoring network since 1998.

BEST Receives Grant

In 2005, a \$250,000 grant was awarded to the St. Andrew Bay Environmental Study Team (BEST). It followed a \$200,000 grant award in 2004. Both grants were for administrative support and allow BEST to work cooperatively with the District and other agencies, local governments and citizens to evaluate the bay's ecosystem, identify problems and initiate corrective actions. BEST relies on volunteer participation to accomplish its ambitious projects. One of BEST's largest undertakings is a project to restore seagrass that has disappeared in West Bay.

CBA Receives Program Support

Through an agreement with the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA), approved in November, the District will provide CBA with \$50,000 to offset expenses incurred with community outreach and awareness activities and coordination of restoration and retrofit projects. Outreach and awareness is mainly accomplished through a volunteer water quality monitoring program for the Choctawhatchee Bay and the coastal dune lakes. The Choctawhatchee Bay is a priority water body of the District's Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program. The bay has been adversely impacted

by activities within its watershed from both point and nonpoint sources of pollution.

Third Econfina Creek Poster

The last in a series of three posters of Econfina Creek was printed in the spring of 2005. The third poster, Sand Hill Treasure, features an uplands area of the creek that has been identified as a significant recharge area (water seeping through the soil to replenish an aquifer). Recharge rates have been estimated to range between 30 and 40 inches a year in this area. Ground water provides flows to the springs which discharge into the Econfina Creek in its middle reaches. Posters printed earlier include, Nature's Finest, featuring the upper portion of the creek popular with canoeists, and Cool Springs Rising, featuring the middle reaches of the creek, an area adjacent to McCormick and Gainer springs.

New Equestrian Trails

A new rule to allow horseback riding only on designated trails in the Econfina Creek Water Management Area took effect in July of 2005. To accommodate the growing popularity of riding in the Econfina Creek WMA, the District is cooperating with area equestrians to designate and mark half a dozen new trails. Currently available are Pine Ridge Equestrian Trail, located off Greenhead Road about four miles north of State Road 20, and Wolf Pond Trail, a 14-mile loop with cutbacks, located south of State Road 20 in Bay County. Wolf Pond Trail was completed in October.

Exchanging Properties

In July, the Governing Board approved the exchange of approximately one acre of District-owned property (with deed restrictions/conservation easement) for 12 acres (three separate parcels) adjacent to District lands on the Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek. The 12 acres consist of bottomland hardwood

It is envisioned that the Northwest Florida Greenway, a public/private nonprofit effort, will provide a continuous ecosystem across the Panhandle that will prevent encroachment on military operations, protect biodiversity, provide recreation and enhance the local economy.

forest associated with the floodplains of the Choctawhatchee River and Holmes Creek. This purchase will enhance water resource protection of the lower Holmes Creek floodplain and the Choctawhatchee River.

In October, approval was given to exchange 22 acres of District land along the lower Choctawhatchee River for 60 acres adjacent to District lands along Bruce Creek that will enhance water resource protection for the creek and the Choctawhatchee River. The Governing Board approved the exchange recognizing that the 22-acre parcel was isolated from remaining District lands.

Lafayette Creek Purchase Final

In April, the District closed on a \$4.5 million, 3,160-acre purchase along Lafayette Creek. The creek originates near Freeport and empties into LaGrange Bayou and the upper Choctawhatchee Bay. The purchase will help protect portions of Magnolia and Wolf creeks, tributaries to Lafayette Creek. While protecting valuable water resources, the acquisition preserves several imperiled steepheads. This purchase is within the Northwest Florida Greenway, a proposed continuous corridor stretching from the Apalachicola National Forest west to Eglin Air Force Base. It is envisioned that the Greenway, a public/private nonprofit effort, will provide a continuous ecosystem across the Panhandle that will prevent encroachment on military operations, protect biodiversity, provide recreation and enhance the local economy.

District Acquires 949.2 Acres

The purchase of 949.2 acres in Bay and Washington counties will enhance protection of Econfina Creek. In October, four parcels that contain significant portions of two tributaries to Econfina Creek, Goshum and Branning branches, were approved for acquisition. The District closed on the parcels in December. All have high recharge rates to the Floridan Aquifer through the porous sand hills, providing 20 to 25 inches per year. The creek provides fresh water to Deer Point Lake Reservoir, Bay County's water supply.

Washington County Acquisitions

In November, the Governing Board approved a 335-acre conservation easement purchase within the Holmes Creek basin. The easement includes reserving from harvest 169 acres of bottomland hardwood swamp. Acquisition of this conservation easement will provide additional water resource protection for Holmes Creek and the Choctawhatchee River by limiting development and land use conversion of the parcel.

Also approved for purchase in November was a 77.6-acre parcel off Porter Pond Road. The property consists of longleaf pine/wiregrass habitat and includes a globally imperiled steephead stream. It also has frontage on Whitewater Pond in the northwest corner. This acquisition will enhance protection of the Econfina Creek Recharge Area, protect the steephead stream system and eliminate an inholding in the Econfina Creek Water Management Area.

CALHOUN, FRANKLIN, GADSDEN, GULF, JACKSON AND LIBERTY COUNTIES

Wetlands Protected in Franklin County

A unique, cooperative agreement to protect wetlands and provide acreage for a public library in Franklin County was approved by the District's Governing Board in May. Under the agreement, Eastpoint Water and Sewer District received \$100,000 to purchase approximately 13 acres of wetlands bordering Indian Creek and an upland area. The asking price for the property was under the value of similar parcels in the area. The owner made the property available to protect the wetlands and to meet a need of the community. The proposed library will be constructed in the upland area and it is envisioned that the facility will have nature walks, picnic areas and walkovers to protect the wetlands. Indian Creek is a short distance from East Bay.

Tate's Hell Test Sites

Drilling at a second Tate's Hell aquifer test site had begun when site conditions necessitated that the drilling program be modified. Wells needed to be deeper than anticipated and required more casing and cement grout. Funds to cover the cost of these activities were allocated in May. The agreement with Eastpoint Water and Sewer District was amended in September to allow additional, contingency expenses as the drilling takes place. In October, plans to extend well construction and aquifer testing to third and fourth sites, four miles east of the original two Tate's Hell Forest sites, were made. These test sites will complete the assessment of the Floridan Aquifer as a water resource alternative and will help determine whether viable ground water sources exist inland that can be used for Franklin County's water supply.

Assessing Ecological Conditions

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the District will continue a cooperative agreement to develop a scientific foundation for the ecological flow requirements of the Apalachicola River floodplain forest. This work helps support litigation underway involving the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint river system. Costs for the second year of the project, originally begun in 2004, will be shared between the agencies with \$160,000 provided by the District and \$100,000 by USGS.

Sod Based Crop Rotation Researched

Through an agreement with the University of Florida, the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) will research best management practices for row crops using a sod-based crop rotation system. Data from a multi-year regional study conducted by a team of scientists from the University of Florida, Auburn University and the University of Georgia, indicated that sod rotations have positive environmental impacts by improving water conservation and reducing runoff and nitrate leaching. This sod-based rotation project is designed to decrease irrigation demands, mitigate nitrate losses from fertilizer inputs, reduce the incidence of plant disease, improve soil and water quality, diversify farm income and result in economic risk aversion benefits. The research will be coordinated by the North Florida Research and Education Center of IFAS and will take place in Quincy and Marianna. Developing best management practices in this region not only will help protect the Floridan Aquifer but protect area surface waters as well.



Apalachicola River Documentary Begun

In September, the Governing Board approved the District's participation and support for a documentary, *Apalachicola River: An American Treasure*, to be filmed by Live Oak Production Group (Elam Stoltzfus, cinematographer/director). It will encompass the historical aspects of the region, ecological treasures found along the river and the diversity of lifestyles along its banks. The nature film documentary is being produced in collaboration with noted landscape photographer Clyde Butcher, photojournalist Richard Bickel and musician Sammy Tedder. The documentary and exhibit are expected to be shown in the spring of 2006 at the Mary Brogan Museum of Art and Science in Tallahassee. The showing will include 70 to 100 images by Clyde Butcher and Richard Bickel. Plans to have the documentary aired by national Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) also are underway. The District plans to distribute DVD copies of the documentary to schools and libraries within the basin to increase awareness of the need to protect this water resource.

Voices of the Apalachicola

The University Press of Florida entered into an agreement with the District to publish the District's collection of transcribed, edited oral



histories of several families who have spent their lives on or along the Apalachicola River and Bay. Edited interviews detail how the area and living in the area have changed over time. Stories include those of sharecroppers, turpentine still operators, a steamboat pilot, tupelo honey collectors, as well as those whose professions included timbering, fishing and transportation. The book is expected to be in print by the spring of 2006 and interested individuals will be able to access the book on the District's web site or order the book from the University Press of Florida.

Apalachicola River and Bay Poster Reprinted

The third printing of the Apalachicola River and Bay poster, consisting of a satellite image of the watershed, is available from both the District's Public Information Office and from the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve Office in Apalachicola. First printed in 1996, the poster has been extremely popular and demand for copies continues. Approximately 40,000 copies have been printed for distribution to the public free of charge to increase awareness about the need to protect this significant water resource.

JEFFERSON, LEON AND WAKULLA COUNTIES

Okeehoopkee Stormwater Facility to Be Built

In July, the District agreed to partner with Leon County to build another stormwater treatment facility on Lake Jackson's Meginniss Arm, this one in the Okeehoopkee basin. The District-designed \$1.3 million facility is expected to treat runoff from the Fuller Road and Monroe street areas, north of Interstate 10. The Okeehoopkee project will mitigate shoreline development (retrofit older development) and provide a greenway to the Lake Jackson Mounds Archaeological State Park. It will include an attractive lakefront waterfall. The District has agreed to provide \$600,000 in Florida Forever funds for the project. The county will fund the remaining \$700,000 plus manage and maintain the facility.



Gibby Pond Facility Funded

A \$732,160 contribution toward the construction of Gibby Pond Regional Stormwater Facility was made by the District in August. Funding for the facility was provided to the Blueprint 2000 intergovernmental agency through the Florida Forever capital improvement grant program. Construction of the 15.3-acre regional stormwater facility is part of a larger corridor improvement along northwest Capital Circle in Leon County and will treat stormwater and abate nonpoint source pollution for a 311-acre watershed. Both the Lake Munson basin and the St. Marks River watershed will receive improved water quality protection as a result. A ground breaking for the project was held on November 21 by Blueprint 2000.

First Magnitude Springs Monitored

Two first magnitude springs were monitored as part of the Florida Springs Initiative. The study included a ground water chemical characterization of Wakulla Springs and Jackson Blue Spring (in Jackson County) to aid in the delineation of spring basins. Two primary goals of the study were: (1) to characterize spring basin water quality in comparison to springs elsewhere in the state and (2) to determine whether the same statistical methods could be used to assist in the delineation of the spring basin boundary and/or the identification of the principal contribution area. Conclusions of the study can be found in the July 2005 printed report or accessed via the District's web site (www.nwfwmd.state.fl.us).

Stormwater Flow Monitoring

At the request of the City of Tallahassee and Leon County, the Governing Board approved the continuation of a stormwater flow monitoring program that includes 31 surface water and rainfall data collection stations. The agreement also continues the operation of 14 real-time stream and rainfall flood warning stations for the county. The District has operated this stormwater monitoring network for the last 15 years.

The District will continue to operate a radio telemetry flood warning network for Leon County in conjunction with the National Weather Service. The network includes 14 stream and rainfall stations that provide real-time rainfall and water level data to help identify developing flood conditions so emergency management staff can respond appropriately. The network will eventually support expansion to a broader gauging network to improve the flood prediction capabilities of the local, state and federal emergency staff.

District and Blueprint 2000 Acquire Easement

In October, the District and Blueprint 2000 joined together to acquire a 132.6-acre conservation easement in Leon County. The \$214,000 purchase price was divided equally between the two entities. This acquisition will enhance water resource protection efforts within the St. Marks River watershed. A significant portion of this conservation easement will protect surface water and will preserve other valuable natural resources.

COMBINED BALANCE SHEET

SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

Assets

Current Assets:

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 4,030,306
Investments	31,184,752
Accounts Receivable	1,271
Due From Other Governments	7,052,240
Due From Other Funds	7,202,019
Deposits	205
Prepaid Items	2,219

Total Current Assets **\$ 49,473,012**

General Capital Assets (Net of Applicable Depreciation):

Land and Improvements	\$125,454,676
Buildings and Improvements	556,041
Machinery and Equipment	879,911

Total General Fixed Assets **\$126,890,628**

Other Debits:

Amount to be Provided for Retirement of General Long-Term Debt	434,819
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Total Other Debits **\$ 434,819**

Total Assets and Other Debits **\$176,798,459**

Liabilities and Fund Equity

Liabilities:

Refundable Deposits	\$ 240,045
Accounts Payable and Accruals	750,419
Deferred Revenue	10,552,738
Deposits	75,435
Due to Other Funds	7,202,019
Liability for Compensated Absences	434,819

Total Liabilities **\$ 19,255,475**

Fund Equity:

Investment in General Capital Assets	\$126,890,628
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Fund Balances:

Reserved:

Prepaid Items	2,219
Land Acquisition	3,620,017
Land Management/Acquisition	4,951,591
Mitigation	381,878

Total Reserved **\$ 8,955,705**

Unreserved:

Undesignated	373,259
Designated	21,323,392

Total Unreserved **\$ 21,696,651**

Total Liabilities and Fund Equity **\$176,798,459**

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

Revenue and Other Receipts

Federal Sources:

US DOT/FDOT-Efficient Transportation Decision Making	\$ 60,393
US Dept of Interior/Fish & Wildlife	5,000
DEP/EPA-Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant-“L” Street Pond	6,020
DEP/EPA Surface Water Sampling Grant Awards	108,609
DEP-Ambient Monitoring	238,588
EPA-Fairpoint Utilities	248,854
FEMA-Map Modernization	806,819
FEMA-Disaster Relief	361,836
Total Federal Sources	\$ 1,836,119

State and Local Government Sources:

DEP-Statewide Surface Water Restoration Projects	\$ 7,767,579
DEP-Chapter 62-524 F.A.C. Program Implementation	60,000
DEP-General Appropriations	1,044,926
DEP-Florida Forever Trust Fund	4,619,064
DEP-Water Management Lands Trust Fund	4,875,107
DEP-Payment in Lieu of Taxes (WMLTF)	73,435
DEP-Surface Water Management Permitting Program (Wetlands)	300,000
DEP-Florida Springs Initiative	108,937
DOT-Mitigation Plan and Restoration Projects	1,415,929
Walton/Okaloosa/Santa Rosa Regional Utility Authority	3,067
Leon County Stormwater Monitoring	98,319
Bay County Stormwater Monitoring	9,700
Bay County Deer Point Watershed Monitoring	29,617
County Tax Collectors-Excess Fees	14,734
Other Funding	58
Total State and Local Government Sources	\$20,420,472

Agency Sources:

Ad Valorem Taxes (.05 mill)	\$ 3,067,307
Permit and Inspection Fees	468,720
Regulatory Penalties	6,300
Interest	726,282
Timber Sales	463,704
Miscellaneous	18,914
Total Agency Sources	\$ 4,751,227
Total Revenues	\$27,007,818

Other Sources:

Sale of General Fixed Assets	-
Total Other Sources	\$ -
Balance Brought Forward from Prior Fiscal Year	\$30,000,853
Total Revenue, Other Sources and Cash Balance	\$57,008,671

Expenditures

Salaries and Benefits	\$ 5,677,317
Contractual Services-Consultants	3,496,922
Operating Expenses	1,448,888
Grant and Aids	7,765,443
Operating Capital Outlay	5,313,420
Debt Service	2,654,325
Total Expenditures	\$26,356,315

Fund Balance

Reserved:

Prepaid Items	\$ 2,219
Land Acquisition	3,620,017
Land Management/Acquisition	4,951,591
Mitigation	381,878
Total Reserved	\$ 8,955,705

Unreserved:

Undesignated	373,259
Designated	21,323,392
Total Unreserved	\$21,696,651

Total Expenditures and Fund Balance	\$57,008,671
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Northwest Florida Water Management District



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