

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

Approval of Regional Mitigation Plan Modifications

February 28, 2014

Pursuant to section 373.4137, Florida Statutes (F.S.), the Northwest Florida Water Management District (District) hereby approves modifications to the Northwest Florida Umbrella, Watershed-based, Regional Mitigation Plan (Umbrella Plan) for Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) impacts identified in the FDOT District-3 Environmental Impact Inventory (Inventory) and submitted to the District since January, 2013 (i.e., road projects added by FDOT to the Inventory since the last District approval of modifications to the Umbrella Plan).

Section 373.4137, F.S., requires the District, in consultation with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), FDOT, other appropriate federal, state, and local governments, and other interested parties, to develop and approve an annual regional mitigation plan prior to March 1st of each year for the mitigation needs of FDOT that are submitted to the District (FDOT is not required to participate in the section 373.4137, F.S. process and may opt to implement mitigation for any or all of its projects independent of the District). The District-approved regional mitigation plan may not be implemented before approval by FDEP. Through consultation with the aforementioned entities, the District's Umbrella Plan was designed and evaluated to meet state and federal mitigation requirements (section 373.4137, F.S., and 33 United State Code §1344), however, it is the responsibility of FDOT to propose offsetting mitigation to state and federal permittees. The District is committed to using private mitigation banks when possible, dependent upon approval by state and federal permitting authorities, as offsetting mitigation for FDOT impacts.

Since the last District approval of modifications to the Umbrella Plan, FDOT has added three projects with impacts to the Inventory for a total estimated wetland impact of 2.99 acres (the actual wetland acreage impact may be modified as permitting proceeds). Additionally, FDOT has indicated that a fourth impact (US 331 Choctawhatchee Bay Bridge) will also be added to the Inventory in the near future. These impacts and suggested mitigation are summarized below. One new mitigation site is being created on existing NFWWMD lands to compensate for these impacts. Additional information is posted at www.NFWWMDwetlands.com.

FDOT Transportation Projects Submitted to NFWWMD since January, 2013

- **US 98 / US 319 (from Carrabelle Beach Park to CR 379 / River Road)**. Impact is to an estimated 2.00 acres (estimated Unified Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM) functional loss has not been provided at this time). This impact is not within the service area of any private mitigation bank. Potential mitigation is use of credits from the NFWWMD Tates Hell In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area (either Tates Hell—Whiskey George

/ Sumatra Unit or Tates Hell—Pine Log Creek Unit). At this time state and federal permitting authorities have not reviewed the proposed mitigation. Additional information on this impact and proposed mitigation is posted at http://nwfwmdwetlands.com/Site.php?site_id=233.

- **CR 489 / Stefani Road Bridge at Unnamed Creek.** Impact is to an estimated 0.49 acres (estimated functional loss has not been provided at this time). This impact is not within the service area of any private mitigation bank. Potential mitigation is use of credits from the NFWMD Dutex In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Area. At this time state and federal permitting authorities have not reviewed the proposed mitigation. Additional information on this impact and proposed mitigation is posted at http://nwfwmdwetlands.com/Site.php?site_id=227.
- **Brickyard Road Bridge at Molino.** Impact is to 0.50 acres of wetlands. Required mitigation, per USACE permit, will consist of hydrologic enhancement on NFWMD lands on the Escambia River floodplain via installation of one low-water-crossing at Cotton Creek Road (no mitigation required by state permits). Functional assessments were not used by permitting authorities, however, District staff estimate the functional gain of the mitigation at 0.45 UMAM. This impact is not within the service area of any private mitigation bank. Additional information on this impact is posted at http://nwfwmdwetlands.com/Site.php?site_id=228.
- **US 331 Choctawhatchee Bay Bridge.** Amount of impact has not yet been determined, although FDOT has indicated that impacts will be to estuarine wetlands. Per FDOT, mitigation may consist of onsite mitigation (FDOT responsibility), plus purchase of the remaining 0.07 estuarine credit at the NFWMD Live Oak Peninsula Mitigation Site. Although this impact is within the service area of two private mitigation banks, no private estuarine mitigation credits are available. Additional information on this impact is posted at http://nwfwmdwetlands.com/Site.php?site_id=234.

A copy of the Umbrella Plan may be accessed online at <http://nwfwmdwetlands.com> (or any successor website) or may be obtained from the Resource Management Division, Northwest Florida Water Management District, 81 Water Management Drive, Havana, FL 32333-4712.

The District concludes, as of the date of this approval, that the Umbrella Plan complies with the mitigation requirements of section 373.4137, F.S., and 33 USC §344, subject to approval by FDEP.

In accordance with section 373.4137(7), F.S., upon approval by the governing board of the water management district or its designee and FDEP, the mitigation plan shall be deemed to satisfy the mitigation requirements of section 373.4137, F.S., for impacts specifically identified in the FDOT environmental impact inventory and any other mitigation requirements imposed by local, regional, and state agencies for these same impacts. The approval of the governing board of the water management district or its designee shall authorize the activities proposed in the mitigation plan, and no other state, regional or local permit or approval shall be necessary. Per section 373.4137(8), F.S., approval of the plan and any amendment does not eliminate the need

for FDOT to meet the permitting requirement to reduce or eliminate impacts of the transportation projects, nor does it change any other permitting criteria for those transportation projects. This approval only addresses mitigation requirements for the specified road projects. It does not grant or imply that the specified projects satisfy any other permitting requirements under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., or rules adopted there under.

APPROVED this 28th day of February, 2014



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STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF GADSDEN

Date

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