

## BLACKWATER RIVER STATE FOREST (Okaloosa/Santa Rosa Counties)

**Initial State Acquisition:** *November, 1955*

**Area:** *206,351 Acres*

**Primary Drainage Basin(s):** *Blackwater; Lower Conecuh; Yellow; Escambia*

**Current Number of DEP FERI Project Listings:** *5 Projects*

### **Previous Restoration Activities -**

The Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) has implemented a number of restoration/enhancement projects since the 1990s, many funded through EPA 319 Grants administered by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to protect water quality. Project work has involved road rehabilitation, stabilization; installation of access and water control structures, and replacing non-native vegetation with native wetland and upland species. All projects, currently monitored in-house, exhibit varying degrees of success and include the following: **Blackwater North River Road 319 Restoration Project**; **Blackwater River Restoration Project** (including **Sweetwater Gully** and **Riley's Bluff** rehabilitation and stabilization projects); and **Comprehensive Blackwater Road Improvement Project** (including **Red Rock** and **Indian Ford** canoe launch area improvements).



**BRSF Figure 1:** Pilings under the Peaden Bridge on the Blackwater River, can be weakened by debris at flood stage (L); clean-up operations like the one pictured here (R), in the spring of 2007, can prevent structural bridge problems from developing.

### **Current/Planned/Proposed Restoration Activities –**

The **Blackwater River TMDL Sediment Reduction Project** (including the **Rock Creek Unit Road, Peaden Bridge Road, and Kennedy Bridge** canoe launch area improvement projects) is a continuation of the **Comprehensive Blackwater Forest Road Improvement Project** initiated in 2003 and is being funded through EPA/DEP's 319 Grant Program, and is scheduled to be completed in 2008.

In 2007 the state forest management team began restoration activities on the **River Road** which involved a deeply incised service road that had been channeling surface flow and discharging into nearby wetlands. The work is being done in-house and will involve a series of rock and earthen “plug” installations and native plant establishment. Ultimately the road will be closed permanently to public access to encourage natural stabilization of the site.

### **Wetland Restoration Needs Assessment –**

No restoration needs assessment work has been conducted on Blackwater River State Forest as of this writing.