

CARY STATE FOREST (Duval/Nassau Counties)

Initial State Acquisition: *November, 1968*

Area: *11,911 Acres*

Primary Drainage Basin(s): *St. Mary's, Lower St. Johns*

Current Number of DEP *FERI* Project Listings: *0 Projects*

Previous Restoration Activities –

No formal wetland restoration activities have been planned or implemented on this forest to date.

Current/Planned/Proposed Restoration Activities –

Although there are no formally developed active projects on the forest, the Cary State Forest management team is installing two (2) 24-inch plastic culverts on the road across “No Catch Swamp” on the Monticello Tract. These culverts, replacing 1 undersized collapsed culvert, should greatly equalize drainage flow within the swamp. Also related to the “No Catch Swamp”, discussions have occurred pertaining to the restoration of the No Catch Swamp fireline that was constructed over 20 years ago (see **Figure 1**). However, as of this writing, no formal restoration plan has been developed.

Wetland Restoration Needs Assessment -

An assessment of the **Monticello Tract** (3,942 ac.) was completed in July, 2007. The following observations made during the assessment are among the assessment findings. Additional information about the assessment is available upon request from the Division of Forestry.

A total of **41** assessment points were established, encompassing approximately **90%** of the tract; including **20 miles** of roads, approximately **3 miles** of firelines, and roughly **1 mile** of remnant skid trails from wildfire salvage timber harvests conducted within wetlands on the forest prior to state acquisition of the tract in 2005.

Seventeen culverts of various sizes/materials and **8** low water hard-surface crossings were evaluated. Finally, wetland functions were evaluated on at least **4** different types of wetland systems adjacent to service roads on the forest to determine the general impact, if any, of the roads and forest management activities on the wetland conditions.



CSF Figure 1: “No Catch Swamp” fireline, 20 years later, showing herbaceous vegetation recovery; shrub and trees on berm on left.

A major restoration project would be the 30-ft wide “No Catch Swamp Fire” fireline located south of the swamp. The fireline, constructed in the 1980s, still scars the bay swamp and has only slowly recovered with wetland herbaceous vegetation in that period of time. The southern berm of the fireline, while stabilized by wetland hardwoods that have become re-established, inhibits natural (sheetflow) drainage to some extent and may need to be modified in some way to restore site hydrology.

In addition to the “No Catch Swamp” fireline site, **six** other sites met the criteria as “highly priority” potential restoration project sites (**see Executive Summary, page iii**), including several deep road ditches that appear to be interfering and re-directing natural surface drainage off the forest.