

LAKE TALQUIN STATE FOREST (Gadsden/Leon/Liberty/Wakulla Counties)

Initial State Acquisition: *June, 1993*

Area: *19,384 Acres*

Primary Watershed(s): *Ochlocknee River*

Current Number of DEP *FERI* Database Listings: *1 Project*

Previous Restoration Activities -

Lake Talquin State Forest (LTSF) consists of 7 tracts along the Ochlocknee River and Lake Talquin waterbodies in Leon and surrounding counties. The tracts, all topographically and ecologically varied, have been heavily impacted by previous land use management practices. Other than implementing BMPs at road and trail wetland crossings, very little wetland restoration or enhancement work has been done on any of the tracts.

A quarter-mile section of **North Ochlocknee Road** was permanently closed in 2003 to prevent excessive soil displacement and sedimentation into a nearby cypress pond. Additionally, an earthen berm was placed between the breaking points of the elevation to divert runoff into the woods. Guard rails were placed on both sides of the road to permanently close service roads to access and to seed old service road beds with native vegetation. Also in 2003, several miles of horseback trails in the **Fort Braden Trail System**, one of the most popular equestrian trail networks in the State Forest system, were re-routed to reduce the number of stream crossings by half, and to avoid steep and boggy areas. The eight (8) trail water crossings that remained were hardened by filling the *GeoWeb* cells with limerock to improve access and protect water quality.



LTSF Figure 1: Rip-Rap “Apron” placed beside a dip in a service road at the top of a ravine on Rocky Comfort Tract. These structures are placed to protect against erosion and sedimentation into bottomland wetlands.

More recently low-water crossings and rip-rap aprons have been installed on some service roads on the Rocky Comfort Tract by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC), which is co-manager of the tract with DOF (**see Figure 1**).

Current/Planned/Proposed Restoration Activities -

Since their installation some of the **Fort Braden Trail** drain crossings have deteriorated and maintained by the state forest management team, repairing crossings as needed. Other than the routine maintenance of these crossings and the service roads in each of the several tracts of the forest there are no wetland restoration activities being conducted or planned on the forest at this time.

Wetland Restoration Needs Assessment –

Assessment work has been conducted on three of the LTSF tracts: the Searcy, Lines, and Rocky Comfort Tracts. However, the 596-acre Searcy Tract, lies in Wakulla County, adjacent to the Ochlockonee River, is the only one that has been completed to date. **Twenty-three** site points were established and **85** % of the roads, trails and firelines were evaluated during the assessment. Additional information about the assessment of this tract is available upon request from the Hydrology Section of the Division of Forestry; assessment information pertaining to the other LTSF tracts will be made available as they are completed. The following observations are among the assessment findings.



LTSF Figure 2: Above-grade woods road divides a natural drainage on the Searcy Tract. Installation of a culvert or low-water

1. Land features include terraces that were constructed prior to state ownership to prevent soil erosion and sediment discharge into drainages.
2. Much of the eastern tract is comprised of cut-over upland and flatwoods that had been used for pastureland and left open. The western side of the tract is predominantly cypress-hardwood floodplain associated with the Ochlockonee River. The intermittent tributaries which drain the eastern part of the tract appear to be intact and functional.
3. There are at least two places on the tract where surface flow is impeded or re-directed from its natural pattern where low water crossings would enhance the wetland function (**see Figure 2**).