



Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project

Month 5 Maintenance Report

FDEP PERMIT NUMBER: 27-0192455-004-EI

USACE PERMIT NUMBER: SAJ-2019-01203

Prepared On:
November 6th, 2025

Prepared For:
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Date of Work Accomplished

The fifth monthly maintenance event for the Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project was performed on October 24th, 2025.

Tasks Accomplished

1. Monitored Plant Growth and Survival
2. Removed biofouling from the GrowSAV™ Herbivory Exclusion Devices

Task Description

1. **Monitored Plant Growth and Survival** – A team of Sea & Shoreline biologists monitored planting units. Plant growth and survival were noted, and any displaced planting units were carefully replanted by hand. Monitoring was performed in water using a mask and snorkel.
2. **Removed biofouling from the GrowSAV™ Herbivory Exclusion Devices** – Biofouling that had accumulated on the top and side mesh of the GrowSAV Herbivory Exclusion Devices was removed by a team of Sea & Shoreline biologists using stiff-bristled scrub brushes. All biofouling removal was performed in water using a mask and snorkel.

Notes and Event Summary

Month 5 Maintenance and Monitoring Event

The fifth monthly maintenance event for the Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project occurred on October 24th, 2025. The GrowSAV™ Herbivory Exclusion Devices exhibited light to moderate levels of biofouling, consisting mainly of settled sediments and attached filamentous algae. Sea & Shoreline biologists removed biofouling from the top and side mesh on mask and snorkel using stiff-bristled scrub brushes.

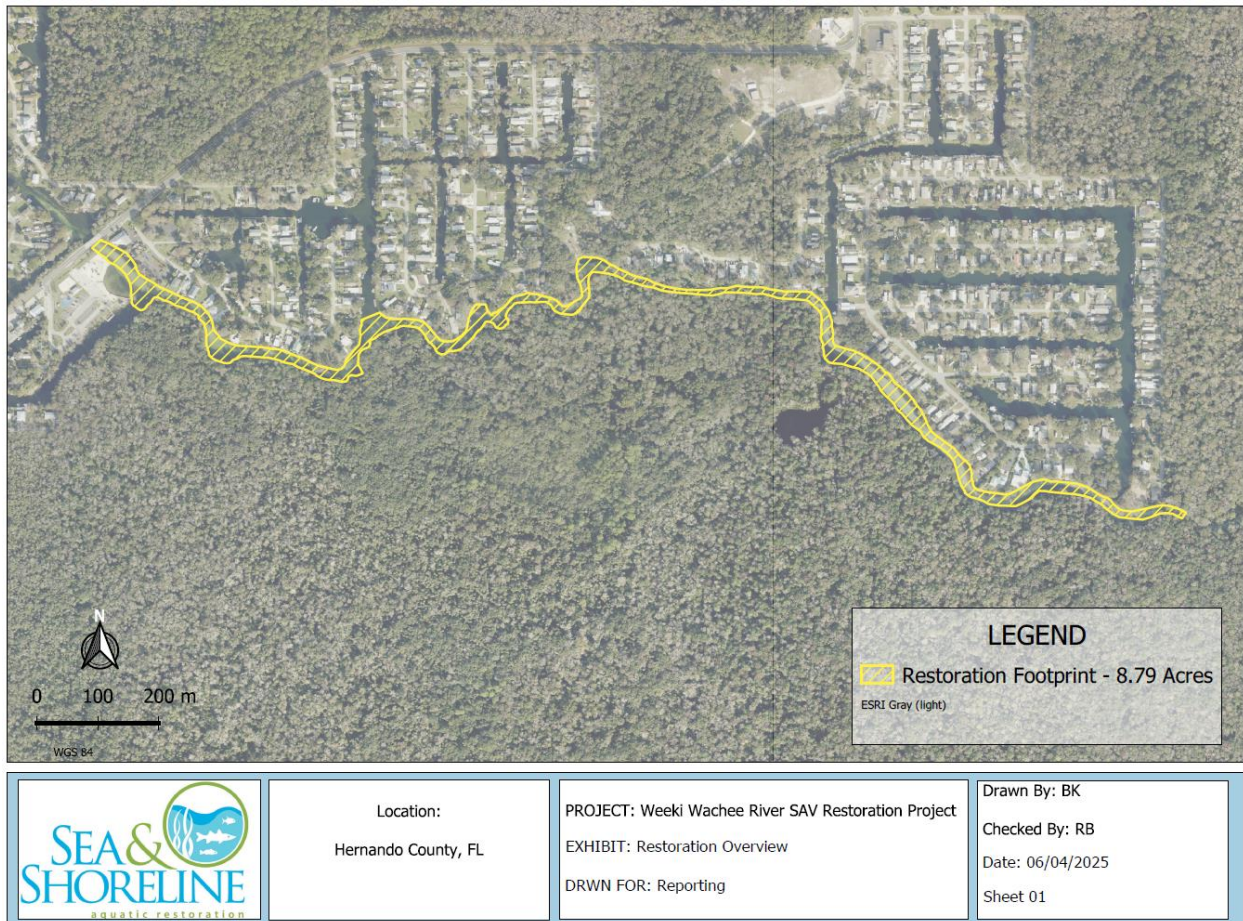
Five months after installation, both unprotected and protected planting units are showing very encouraging signs of growth and expansion throughout the river. It is estimated that *V. neotropialis* is present in 110/132 (83%) of the GrowSAV™ Herbivory Exclusion Devices, with coverages ranging from 2 to 4 on the Braun-Blanquet coverage scale. The overall survival rate of protected units has decreased since the last maintenance event. After the recent King Tide event, it is evident that protected units located at the most downstream site (site 5) suffered from the saltwater intrusion. Blade tissue of protected units at site 5 was completely gone, and the only plant material was found underneath the top layer of sediment (**Figure 8**). These planting units will be monitored for any signs of regrowth.

The blade height of protected units varies from 40 cm to 90 cm, with most units extending well beyond the top of their associated device. Signs of lateral expansion beyond protective devices were also observed throughout approximately 80% of devices, with some units expanding up to 4 feet from their device (**Figure 6**). Visible signs of lateral expansion were observed in unprotected planting units and new growth was observed in certain areas throughout the restoration footprint (**Figures 4 & 5**). New growth of unprotected units has taken off throughout the middle, deeper portions of the river, where recreational activity poses less of a threat to establishment.

Recommendations and Rectifications

It is recommended that supplemental planting take place at site 5 to help jumpstart the recovery of planting units in this area. Planting units used at site 5 will be comprised of a more salt tolerant variety of *Vallisneria* which will be able to withstand the salinity fluctuations that this area experiences. Maintenance will continue for the next seven months, with the sixth event taking place in November 2025.

Maps.



Map 1 – Overview of Restoration Area.



Map 2 – Overview of GrowSAV™ Herbivory Exclusion Device Installation Locations.

Figures.



Figure 1. Example of biofouling prior to removal.

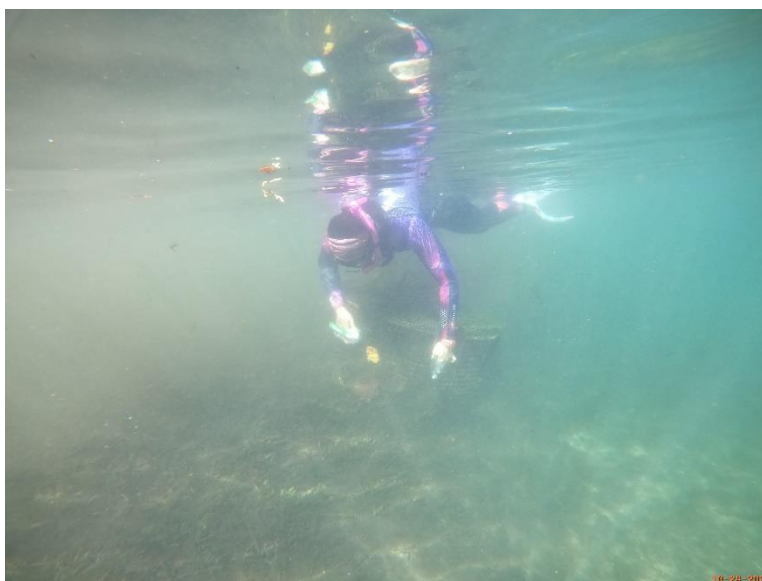


Figure 2. Example of Sea & Shoreline biologist removing biofouling.

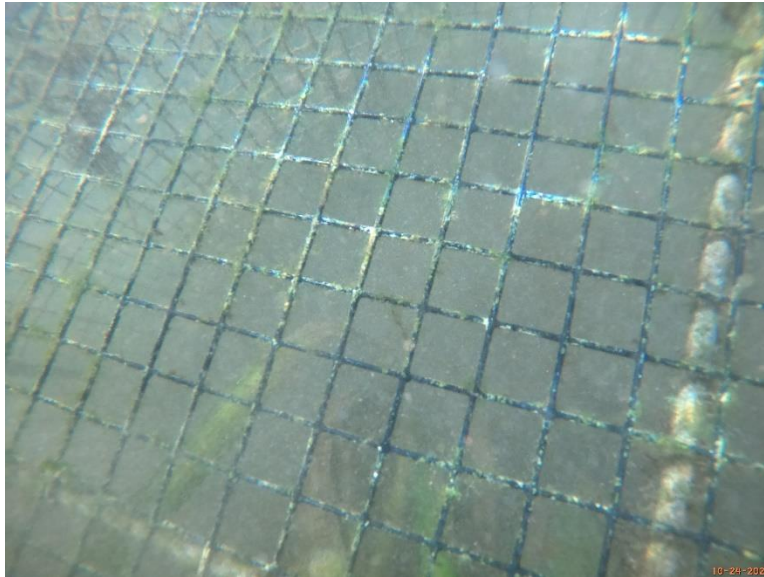


Figure 3. Example of GrowSAV Device after biofouling removal.



Figure 4. Example of unprotected units showing signs of lateral expansion.

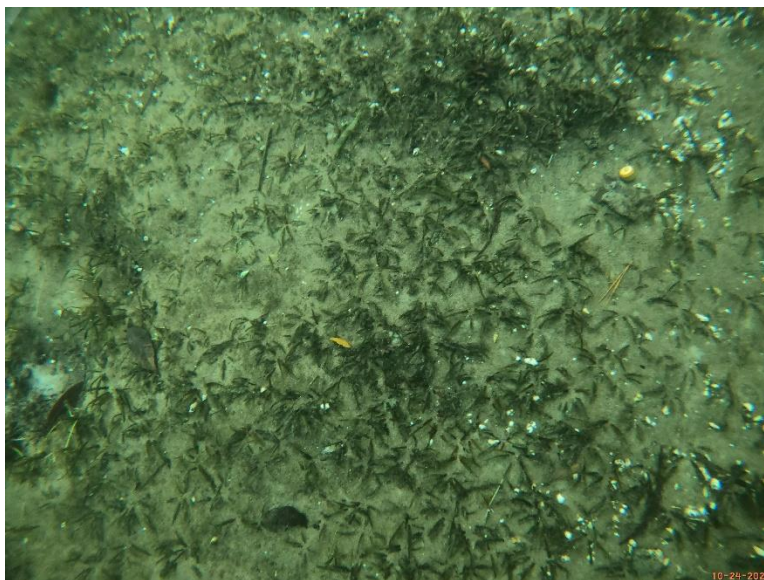


Figure 5. Example of unprotected planting units.



Figure 6. Example of protected units expanding beyond their associated device.



Figure 7. Example of protected planting units.



Figure 8. Example of protected planting units found at site 5.