



## Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project

### Month 6 Maintenance & Supplemental Planting Report

FDEP PERMIT NUMBER: 27-0192455-004-EI

USACE PERMIT NUMBER: SAJ-2019-01203

**Prepared On:**  
December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Prepared For:**  
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## Date of Work Accomplished

The sixth monthly maintenance event for the Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project was performed on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

## Tasks Accomplished

1. Monitored Plant Growth and Survival
2. Removed biofouling from the GrowSAV™ Herbivory Exclusion Devices
3. Installed Supplemental Planting Units

## 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.
3. **Installed Supplemental Planting Units** – *Vallisneria neotropicalis* four-inch peat pot planting units were installed within GrowSAV™ Devices at Site 5.

## Notes and Event Summary

### **Month 6 Maintenance and Monitoring Event**

The sixth monthly maintenance event for the Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project occurred on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The GrowSAV™ Herbivory Exclusion Devices exhibited light levels of biofouling, consisting mainly of settled sediments, filamentous algae and entrapped leaf litter. Sea & Shoreline biologists removed biofouling from the top and side mesh on mask and snorkel using stiff-bristled scrub brushes.

Both unprotected and protected planting units are showing very encouraging signs of growth and expansion throughout the river six months post-installation. It is estimated that *V. neotropicalis* is present in 108/132 (81%) of the GrowSAV™ Herbivory Exclusion Devices, with coverages ranging from 1 to 4 on the Braun-Blanquet coverage scale (<5% - 75%). After the recent King Tide event, the overall survival rate of protected units has decreased since the last maintenance event due to the influx of saltwater at Site 5.

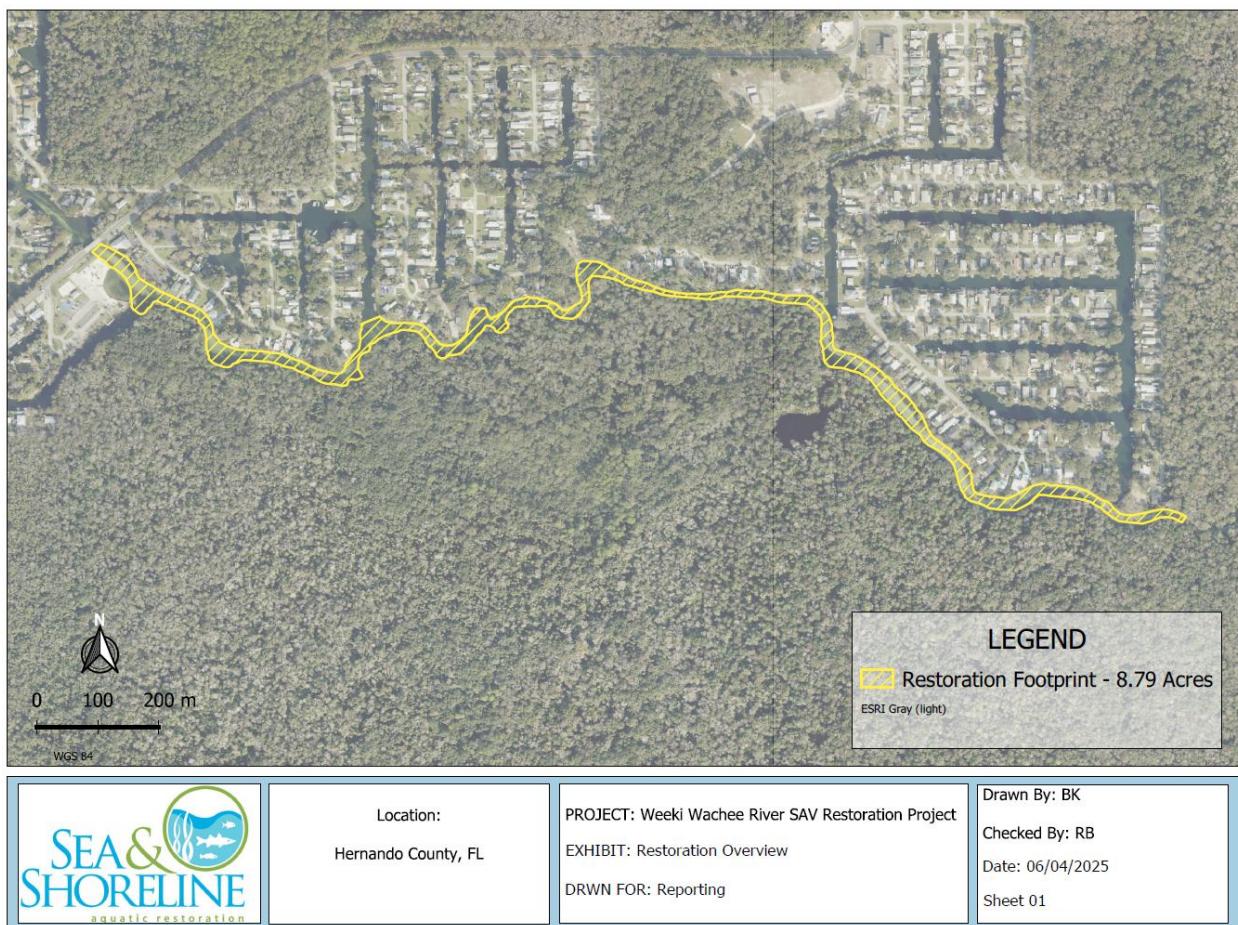
Supplemental planting took place at Site 5 during the sixth maintenance event to jumpstart the recovery of planting units in this area. Planting units were comprised of a more salt tolerant variety of *Vallisneria* which will be able to withstand the salinity fluctuations that this area experiences. A total of 75 *V. neotropicalis* peat pot planting units were installed under GrowSAV™ Devices at Site 5 (**Figures 7-10**).

The blade height of protected units varies from 30 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 90% of devices, with some units expanding up to 5 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 deeper, more protected areas, however; no significant increases in canopy height have been noted. Canopy height of unprotected units ranged from 2-15 cm.

### **Recommendations and Rectifications**

There are no recommendations or rectifications at this time, the supplemental planting units will continue to be monitored. Maintenance will continue for the next six months, with the seventh event taking place in December 2025.

Maps.



Map 1 – Overview of Restoration Area.



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

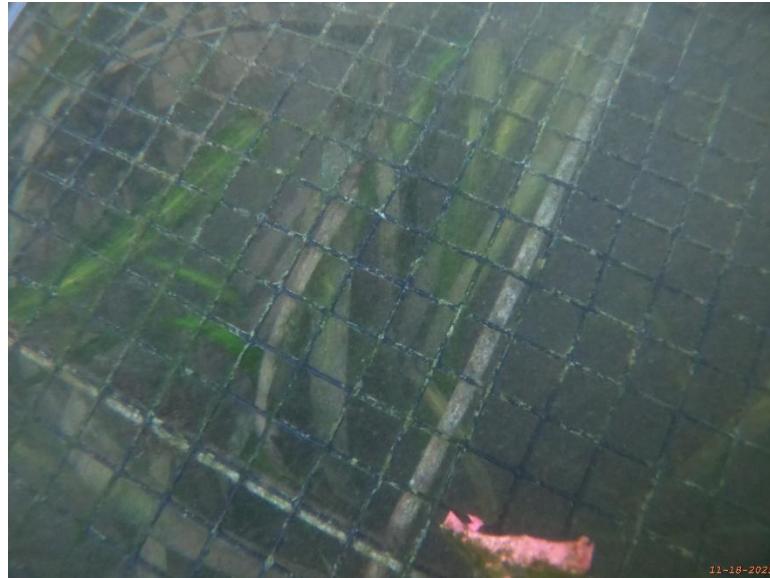
**Figures.**



**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.



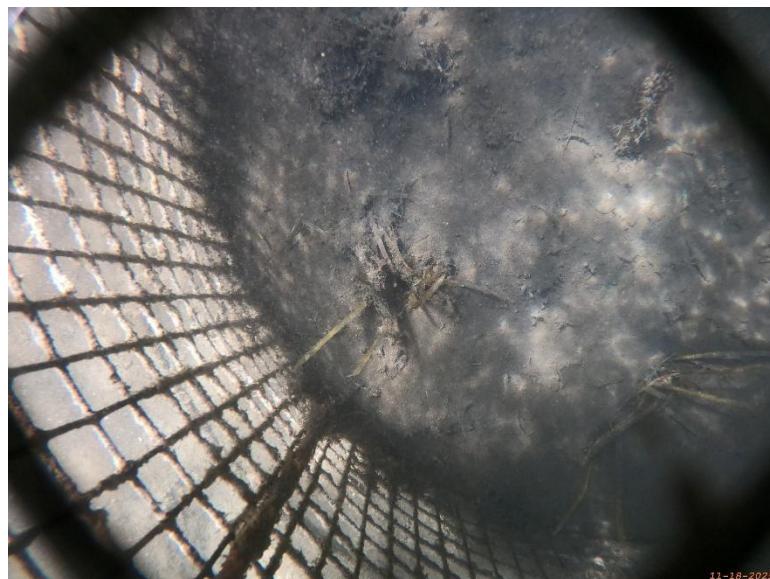
**Figure 5.** Example of unprotected planting units.



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



**Figure 7.** Example of supplemental planting units.



**Figure 8.** Example of supplemental planting units.



**Figure 9.** Example of supplemental planting units.



**Figure 10.** Example of supplemental planting units.