



Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project

Month 7 Maintenance Report

FDEP PERMIT NUMBER: 27-0192455-004-EI

USACE PERMIT NUMBER: SAJ-2019-01203

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Prepared For:
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Date of Work Accomplished

The seventh monthly maintenance event for the Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project was performed on December 17th, 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 7 Maintenance and Monitoring Event

The seventh monthly maintenance event for the Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project occurred on December 17th, 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.

It is estimated that *V. neotropicalis* is now present in 118/132 (89%) of the GrowSAV™ Herbivory Exclusion Devices, with coverages ranging from 0.5 to 4 on the Braun-Blanquet coverage scale (<5% - 75%). The blade height of protected units varies from 10 cm to 80 cm, with most units extending well beyond the top of their associated device. Slight decreases in canopy height were noted during this event, which is expected during the winter season with lower water levels and shorter days. 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**). Supplemental planting units installed the previous month at site 5 were observed in approximately 50% of the GrowSAV™ Devices. Protected units were covered by approximately 5-7 cm of settled sediment and were only revealed once this sediment was gently brushed away (**Figure 7**).


Unprotected planting units remain short but are continuing to laterally expand throughout the deeper portions of the river (**Figures 4 & 5**). The canopy height of unprotected units remains unchanged, ranging from 2-15 cm. Unprotected units were observed at coverages of 0.5 to 3 on the Braun-Blanquet coverage scale (<5% - 50%). It was also noted that unprotected units are becoming uprooted in certain areas, likely due to the strong currents and sediment transport that the Weeki Wachee River experiences. Specifically, **Figures 9 and 10** show the formation of two steep slopes observed during the seventh maintenance event, where the roots of planting units have become exposed. These figures demonstrate the loss of plant life that the steady erosion has caused.

Recommendations and Rectifications

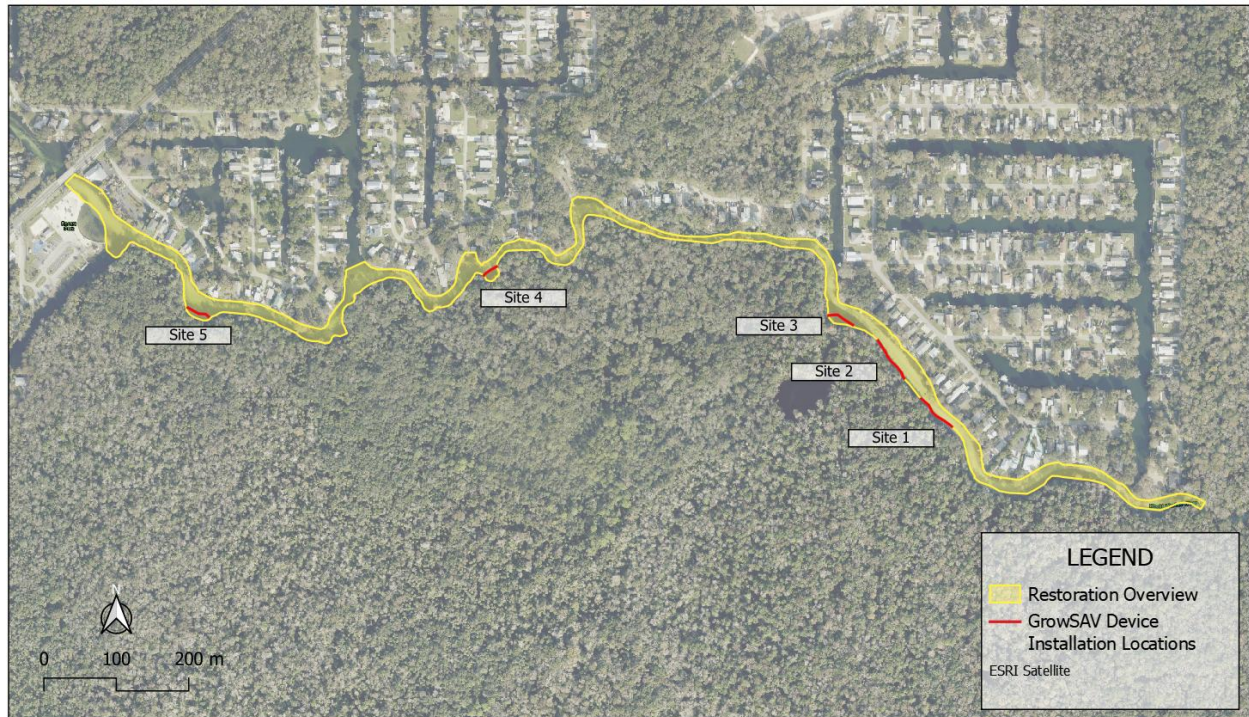
As of December 2025, the sediment transportation issue was only observed at a select few spots. If the erosion continues to worsen, supplemental planting in areas that experience less water flow may be recommended. The supplemental planting units at site 5 will continue to be monitored and sediment inside devices will continue to be removed as necessary. Maintenance will continue for the next five months, with the eighth event taking place in January 2026.

Maps.



	<p>Location: Hernando County, FL</p>	<p>PROJECT: Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project EXHIBIT: Restoration Overview DRWN FOR: Reporting</p>	<p>Drawn By: BK Checked By: RB Date: 06/04/2025 Sheet 01</p>
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Map 1 – Overview of Restoration Area.



	<p>Location: Hernando County, FL</p>	<p>PROJECT: Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project EXHIBIT: GrowSAV Device Installation Locations DRWN FOR: Reporting</p>	<p>Drawn By: BK Checked By: RB Date: 06/04/2025 Sheet 02</p>
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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 protected planting units.



Figure 9. Example of sediment transport exposing roots and rhizomes of unprotected units.



Figure 10. Example of sediment transport exposing roots and rhizomes of unprotected units.