



Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project

Month 8 Maintenance Report

FDEP PERMIT NUMBER: 27-0192455-004-EI

USACE PERMIT NUMBER: SAJ-2019-01203

Prepared On:

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Prepared For:

Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida

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Date of Work Accomplished

The eighth monthly maintenance event for the Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project was performed on January 8th, 2026.

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 8 Maintenance and Monitoring Event

The eighth monthly maintenance event for the Weeki Wachee River SAV Restoration Project occurred on January 8th, 2026. 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 112/132 (84%) 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 70 cm, with most units extending beyond the top of their associated device. Signs of lateral expansion beyond protective devices were also observed throughout approximately 85% of devices, with some units expanding up to 5 feet from their device (**Figure 6**). Slight decreases in canopy height were noted during this event, which is expected during the winter season with lower water levels and shorter days. As we progress further into winter months, and herbivores move into warmer waters, planting units throughout the footprint are beginning to show signs of increased grazing pressure. At this time, this is not posing a major threat to the survival of planting units, but it will continue to be monitored.

Supplemental planting units installed the previous month at site 5 were observed in approximately 40% of the GrowSAV™ Devices. Protected units continue to be covered by settled sediments 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 has decreased slightly, ranging from 2-10 cm. Unprotected units were observed at coverages of 0.5 to 3 on the Braun-Blanquet coverage scale (<5% - 50%). Sediment transport is still evident in certain areas throughout the river, but no active signs of uprooting were noted during the eighth maintenance event.

Recommendations and Rectifications

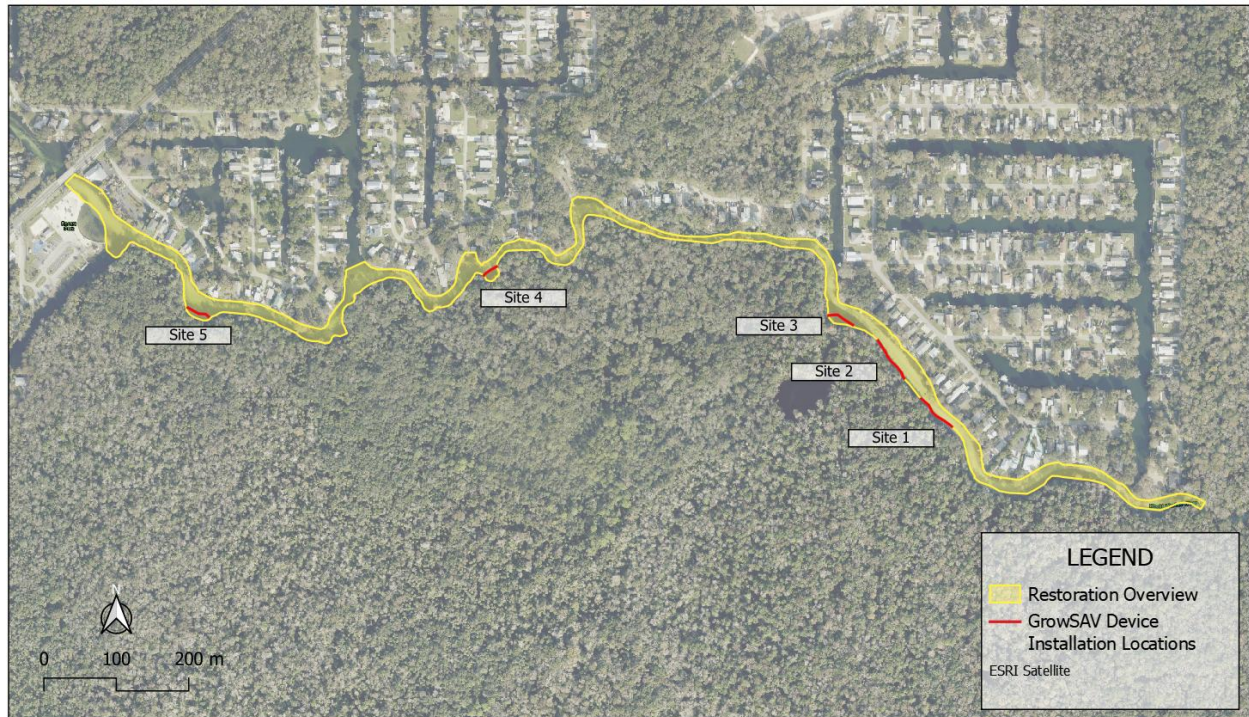
The supplemental planting units at site 5 will continue to be monitored and sediment inside devices will continue to be removed as necessary. Maintenance will continue for the next four months, with the ninth event taking place in February 2026.

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.

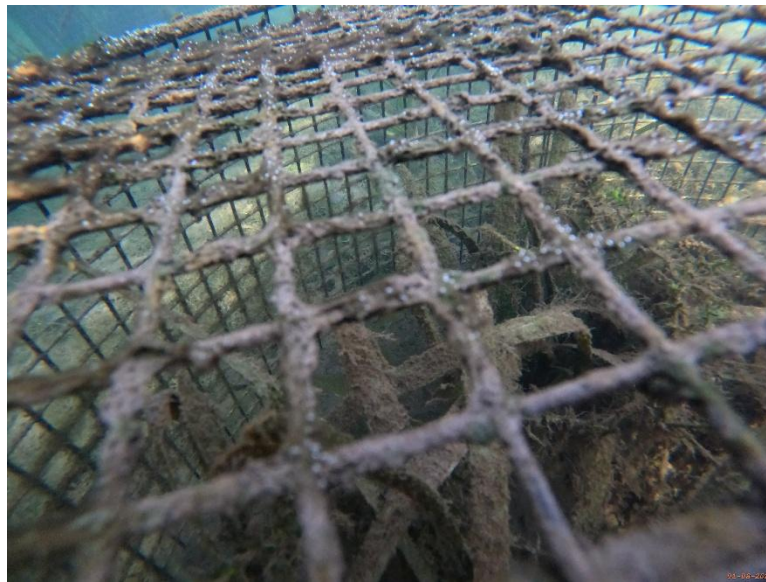


Figure 1. Example of biofouling prior to removal.



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 at site 5.



Figure 8. Example of protected planting units.