

**SECTION 2
PLANNING PROCESS**

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Santa Rosa County Local Mitigation Strategy

This section of the Plan describes and documents the process used to review and update the 2016 Santa Rosa County Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS.) The 2011 plan will expire on June 9, 2016. The final draft of the 2016 updated plan will be submitted to the State of Florida by January 31, 2016 for review and approval. The Local Mitigation Strategy initiated the 2016 LMS 5-year update process by tasking Santa Rosa County staff including representatives from Public Works, Engineering, Planning & Zoning, Emergency Management and Grants to facilitate the update process, and to update the risk and vulnerability portion of the plan. The LMS working group engaged local agencies, community members, neighboring communities, regional agencies and the public to be involved in the planning process, beginning with two public meetings held April 28 and April 30, 2015. (See LMS working group meetings listed below and meeting minutes in Appendix D.)

PLANNING AREA AND PARTICIPATION

Santa Rosa County, Florida is located along the Gulf of Mexico in the panhandle of Northwest Florida. It covers a total of 1,174 square miles; approximately 1,017 square miles of land and 157 square miles of water. The three incorporated communities in Santa Rosa County are Milton, which is the county seat, Gulf Breeze and Jay. Unincorporated communities in the County include Chumuckla, Midway, Navarre, Navarre Beach, Oriole Beach, Bagdad and Pace. The County shares its western border with Escambia County, Florida across the Escambia River. Escambia County, Alabama borders on the north while Okaloosa County, Florida borders on the east. The southern border is the shoreline of the Gulf of Mexico. Santa Rosa County was established in 1842. There have been neither new municipalities created nor any dissolved since the last plan approval date. The planning area continues to include the Cities of Milton and Gulf Breeze, Town of Jay, and the unincorporated areas of Santa Rosa County. For information about population and growth statistics, please see Section 3.

The Local Mitigation Strategy Steering Committee

Membership in the Local Mitigation Strategy is open to all jurisdictions, organizations and individuals supporting its purposes. The Local Mitigation Strategy consists of three components, the Steering Committee, the Working Committee (Advisory) and support staff. The current Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) steering committee member list is shown below. Members of this planning group have typically been involved from the time of the original plan and throughout all succeeding updates. Membership consists of at least one appointed representative and one designated alternate from the government of Santa Rosa County and each participating incorporated municipality; at least one representative from voluntary participating organizations and associations representing key business, industry, and community interest groups; and other individuals and their designated volunteer alternates as deemed appropriate by the Steering committee to ensure well-balance representation. The Steering Committee is

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the central core decision-making and voting component for the Local Mitigation Strategy. All members of the steering committee participated in various aspects of the update process whether through technical assistance, data input, local knowledge or plan element review.

Table 2.1 2016 LMS Steering Committee

Santa Rosa County LMS Steering Committee January 2016

	Organization/Department	Primary Representative	Designated Alternate(optional)
1	Santa Rosa County Special Projects/Grants Office	Sheila Fitzgerald, Director (Task Force Support Staff)	Erica Grancagnolo, Grants Manager
2	Santa Rosa County Emergency Management Plans Chief	Daniel Hahn, Co-Coordinator (Task Force support staff)	Brad Baker, Director
3	City of Gulf Breeze	Curt Carver, Assistant City Manager	Shane Carmichael
4	Resident	Lou Greene, Navarre Resident	
5	Town of Jay	Linda Carden, Town Clerk	Donna Bullock
6	City of Milton	Brian Watkins, City Manager (current Task Force Chair)	Randy Jorgenson
7	Santa Rosa County Building Permits Department	Karen Thornhill, Flood Plain Manager (Community Rating System (CRS) Coordinator)	Rhonda Royals, Building Official
8	Santa Rosa County Planning and Zoning Department	Shawn Ward, Transportation Planner	Beckie Cato, Director
9	American Red Cross	Amy Eden	Doug Watson
10	Board of County Commissioners	Rob Williamson, Commissioner District IV	
11	Santa Rosa County BOCC Administration	Tony Gomillion, County Administrator (current Vice-Chair)	Vacant
12	Holley-by-the-Sea Homeowner's Association	Yvonne Harper, President	Rod Danner, Vice-President

The Local Mitigation Strategy Working Committee

Membership of the Working Committee includes representatives from departments of local governments and other entities including county emergency management, planning and zoning, engineering, public works, grants and transportation departments; non-governmental entities, small business; and private citizens. Members of this planning group have typically been involved from the time of the original plan and throughout all succeeding updates. All members of the Working Committee participated in various aspects of the update process whether through technical assistance, data input, local knowledge or plan element review.

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Public Participation

The general public is invited to all Local Mitigation Strategy meetings and workshops through newspaper advertisements, website notification and frequently, by word of mouth. Local Mitigation Strategy meeting notices are published in each of Santa Rosa County newspaper publications and on the Santa Rosa County Local Mitigation Strategy website. An electronic copy of the current LMS plan is available to the public on the Local Mitigation Strategy website and hard copies can also be reviewed in the Planning and Zoning Department. (Please see meeting rosters from the 2016 update meetings in Appendix D.)

Comments and other input were accepted during the drafting stage and prior to plan submission. The public was invited to participate in all Local Mitigation Strategy meetings throughout the 5-year planning cycle through public notice in local newspapers and via the Santa Rosa County website. Two public meetings were held at the beginning of the planning process and a public meeting was held on January 4, 2016 to solicit public comments on the draft plan.

Neighboring communities and regional agencies were also invited to attend and participate in the planning process through the review of the draft plan in December.

External agencies and groups included:

- Santa Rosa County Chamber of Commerce
- American Red Cross
- Santa Rosa County School District
- West Florida Regional Planning Council
- Pace Chamber of Commerce
- Rebuild Northwest Florida
- Northwest Florida Water Management District

Local Mitigation Strategy Meetings

The Santa Rosa County Grants Department is the support staff for the Local Mitigation Strategy responsible for scheduling, advertising and conducting the Local Mitigation Strategy meeting efforts as well as the annual review. The 5-year update efforts are led by the Development Services Department. During the 2015 update process, Mr. Hunter Walker, County Administrator, presided as the LMS working group chairperson.

The Santa Rosa County LMS working group is composed of local private citizens, members of the business community, and county, city and town government personnel. Meeting agendas and minutes for the 2015 update are included in Appendices C and D.

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Annual Meetings

Since the 2011 update, the Local Mitigation Strategy has met annually to review the local mitigation strategy to ensure it is current and reflects changing conditions within the community. The annual update was presented to the BOCC on the following dates:

- September 20, 2012
- September 12, 2013
- October 6, 2014
- July 20, 2015

The 2015 Update Planning Process

March 26, 2015 Update Kick-off Meeting

The Local Mitigation Strategy Steering Committee held the kick-off meeting for the 2015 plan update. An overview of the update process was presented including value of participant input, a review of each element of the update, review of the current project list, next steps and expected timeline. The update will be conducted concurrently with the Flood Mitigation Plan Update. The group reviewed the hazards section of the current plan and identified those hazards that do not pertain to Santa Rosa County. By unanimous vote, the Local Mitigation Strategy Steering Committee agreed to remove those hazards from the plan update.

April 23, 2015 Regular Meeting

Review of bylaws and confirmation of Local Mitigation Strategy members and alternates. (See meeting materials in Appendix D.)

April 28 & 30, 2015 Public Input Meetings

Public Input Meetings were held both in the north end and the south end of the County to provide information on the LMS plan and to encourage feedback from the community.

June 25, 2015 Special Meeting

Discussion of revised hazard list, updated plan goals, updated scoring, nomination form.

August 27, 2015 Regular Meeting

Discussion of combined hazard and vulnerability assessment, updated scoring/nomination form

September 24, 2015 Special Meeting

LMS Goals and Objectives, Flood Mitigation Plan Update sections 5 and 6, updated scoring/nomination form.

November 19, 2015

Insert text after meeting

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December 17, 2015

Insert text after meeting

REVIEW AND INTEGRATION WITH EXISTING PLANS

To ensure implementation of mitigation goals, it is important that this plan be integrated with the other plans of the county and municipalities. A review of existing plans was conducted by the LMS Committee during development of the previous LMS. A similar review by the Flood Mitigation Task Force took place for the Flood Mitigation Plan. That work was reviewed by staff and is updated here to reflect currently adopted plan documents.

Santa Rosa County 2008-2025 Comprehensive Plan

The 2008-2025 Santa Rosa County Comprehensive Plan continues to implement the LMS and the FMP through policies such as:

Policy 3.1.A.15 - At least 45 % of the developable land within the Navarre Beach Zoning Overlay District shall remain within the Low Density Residential and Conservation/Recreation Future Land Use Map Designations.

Policy 3.1.E.4 - Consistent with Policy 8.1.A.1, buffers will be created between development and Escambia Bay, Blackwater Bay, East Bay and the basins and bayous of these water bodies. The purpose of the buffer is to protect natural resources from the activities and impacts of development.

Policy 3.1.E.6 - The County shall use the latest version of the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance promulgated by the FEMA to determine the location of the 100-year floodplain and flood prone areas and development shall be limited in those areas, consistent with FEMA requirements.

Policy 6.WW.1.D.4 - The County shall continue to apply the F.D.E.H established minimum setback for septic tank drain fields in areas adjacent to any stream, creek, pond or other open water body.

Policy 6.SM.1.A.1 - The County shall continue its practice of not issuing development permits for projects not meeting the design criteria for correcting existing deficiencies or meeting future drainage requirements.

Policy 6.SM.1.A.2 - The County shall continue its practice of correcting localized drainage problems so that LOS standards are maintained.

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Policy 6.SM.1.A.3 - The County shall continue its periodic inspection program of storm water control structures to ensure the proper functioning of such structures.

Policy 6.SM.1.B.1- Installation of storm water management facilities made necessary by new development shall be the responsibility of the developer.

Policy 6.SM.1.B.3 - The LOS standards for drainage and water quality shall be:

- (a) Retain the first inch of run-off; and
- (b) Post development run-off shall not exceed the pre-development run-off rate for all storm events, up to and including an event with a 24-hour duration, 100 year return frequency.
- (c) Post development run-off in constrained basins shall not exceed the pre-development run-off rate for a 10-year storm event during all storm events, up to and including an event with a 24-hour duration, 100 year return frequency.
- (d) Post development run-off in closed basins shall be retained on-site for all storm events, up to and including the 24 hour duration, 100 year return frequency storm event.

Policy 6.SM.1.B.4 - There shall be no reduction in the flood storage capacity or the other natural functions and values of the floodplain in Santa Rosa County in areas designated as regulatory floodway by FEMA Flood Insurance studies in Santa Rosa County. Encroachments shall be prohibited within designated regulatory floodway including, but not limited to, fill and new construction and development improvements that would result in any increase in flood levels.

Policy 6.SM.1.B.5 - The County shall regulate development within the flood prone areas to minimize flood storage capacity reduction so that post development equals pre-development standards, which will afford protection to life and property within the floodplain.

Policy 7.1.A.4 - Within the CHHA, the following provisions apply:

- A) New development of adult congregate living facilities, nursing homes for the aged, total care facilities, hospitals, correctional facilities and similar developments shall be prohibited;
- B) Except as provided in (A) above, there is no prohibition on development or redevelopment seaward of the Coastal Construction Control Line provided that the applicant for such development or redevelopment has obtained all necessary State and/or Federal permits;
- C) Within the CHHA, structures damaged more than 50% by coastal storms may be rebuilt provided that the redevelopment meets current building code and Land Development Code requirements.
- D) Densities and intensities of use to guide development and post-disaster redevelopment within the CHHA are as established in this Plan.
- E) Sizing of infrastructure shall be consistent with that needed to support the densities and intensities established by this Plan for those areas within the CHHA.

Policy 7.1.A.5 - New development and redevelopment shall comply with current FEMA and Florida Building Code construction standards

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Policy 7.1.A.6. - The County shall consider the relocation, mitigation or replacement of infrastructure currently present within the CHHA where state funding is anticipated to be needed. As identified in the Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) Priority List. An analysis of this need will be included annually in the evaluation of this Plan.

Policy 7.1.A.8 - Reduce the exposure of human life and public and private property to natural hazards through implementation of the Santa Rosa County 2005-2010 Local Hazard Mitigation Strategy.

Policy 7.1.B.1 - The County shall limit the densities and intensities of land use as defined within this Plan. Such limitations will assure generalized low density use of land within the majority of the Coastal High Hazard Areas of Santa Rosa County.

Policy 7.1.C.3 - The shorelines of the Gulf of Mexico, Santa Rosa Sound, Escambia Bay, Blackwater Bay, East Bay and the basins and bayous will be protected from the negative impacts of development by limiting development within 50 feet of the shoreline, requiring a minimum 15 foot vegetated buffer between development activity and the shoreline, and by limiting the maximum amount of impervious cover allowed to 75 percent.

Policy 7.1.E.1 - Santa Rosa County shall limit new development along the shoreline of the Garcon Point Peninsula to low density residential uses, conservation uses, recreation uses, or to water related or water dependent uses.

Policy 7.1.E.2 - Santa Rosa County shall limit new land use designations along Escambia Bay to low density residential, conservation uses, recreation uses, water related or water dependent uses.

Policy 7.1.E.3 - When considering new land use designations along shorelines other than the Garcon Point Peninsula or Escambia Bay, priority will be given to low density residential, conservation uses, recreation uses, water related or water dependent uses. In Navarre, higher density residential and tourist related uses will be allowed consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

Policy 7.1.F.2 - The County shall continue to support critical roadway segment improvements through participation with the Florida-Alabama TPO and interaction with the Florida DOT to further reduce and improve hurricane evacuation times.

Policy 7.1.F.5 - Santa Rosa County shall limit the density in the Coastal High Hazard Area as allowed by law. The intent of this Policy is not to nullify any existing leases on Navarre Beach that specify density.

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Policy 7.1.F.7 - Santa Rosa County will coordinate with the School Board to make sure that future school facilities are located outside areas susceptible to hurricane and/or storm damage and/or areas prone to flooding, or as consistent with Chapter 1013.37, F.S. and Rule 6A-2, F.A.C., regarding floodplain and school building requirements.

Policy 7.1.G.5 - The County shall maintain an inventory of areas within the County that have experienced repeated damage from coastal storms and shall seek grant funding to limit redevelopment within these areas.

Policy 8.1.C.3 - Environmentally sensitive lands are defined as wetlands under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; floodplains as identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency; free-flowing streams, rivers, lakes, bays, basins, and bayous; and wildlife habitat within publicly-owned lands managed for conservation use.

Santa Rosa County Land Development Code

The Santa Rosa County Land Development Code (LDC) implements the Comprehensive Plan by detailing specific land use and infrastructure standards for all development. In addition, Article 10 of the LDC is the Flood Plain Management section and includes those standards required for participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.

City of Gulf Breeze Comprehensive Plan

The 2035 City of Gulf Breeze Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2014 continues to implement the LMS and the FMP through policies such as:

Policy 1.6.4: Require development in identified flood prone areas to be in accordance with the City's Floodplain Management Ordinance. The LDC will continue to implement the FEMA floodplain restrictions by adhering to the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), as updated. To prevent duplication of agency requirements for floodplain management, the LDC will be revised, and new definitions included that are consistent with the State and FEMA language.

Policy 1.1.2: Implement the City's Stormwater Utility Master Plan, and update the plan every five years (beginning in March 2016) at a minimum to include a drainage facility capacity analysis, flood control performance assessment, and assessment of ground and surface water quality impacts. Develop a Master Infrastructure Plan that identifies all sewer, drainage, potable water and road construction needs in order to coordinate

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the construction of the facilities in a cost – effective manner and included in the Five-year Schedule of Capital Facilities as updated every year.

Policy 1.2.1: Correcting existing infrastructure deficiencies will take priority over construction of new facilities to meet future needs. The City establishes the following prioritization in the maintenance of existing infrastructure facilities and construction of new ones:

- Sanitary Sewer Facilities

Instances where the health and safety of users are compromised.
Reduction of effluent loss due to repetitive leakages and breaks.

- Stormwater Management

Reduction of pollutants in impaired water bodies.
Reduction of flooding in buildings and structures.
Reduction of flooding of highways.
Reduction of pollutants where studies show a statistically significant increase in pollutants.
Reduction of other types of flooding.

- Potable Water

Instances where the health and safety of water users are compromised.
Reduction of water loss from repetitive leakages and breaks.
Reduction of repetitive issues of quality including color, clarity and taste that do not pose a health risk.

Policy 1.3.2: Development within coastal floodplains shall be in accordance with Federal Emergency Management Agency requirements for participation in the Flood Insurance Program, in addition to the requirements contained in the City's Flood Hazard Reduction and Stormwater Management Ordinances which exceed federal and state requirements.

Policy 1.3.3: Beaches shall be preserved and adequate mitigation measures required according to the provisions of the City's Shoreline Protection Ordinance, which requires shoreline protection structure and setback requirements in excess of FDEP and ACOE requirements.

Policy 1.3.6: Maintain a partnership with local governments by:

- Actively participating in the monthly meetings conducted by the Santa Rosa County Fire Association for all fire and emergency services within the county.

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- Actively communicate on a regular basis with the Midway Fire District to prevent duplication of efforts whenever possible for efficiency and cost savings.

Policy 1.4.4: Mitigation measures and best management practices relating to drainage shall be taken during construction activities to ensure that water quality is not degraded during the land clearing and construction or development. No cutting, clearing, grading, or filling shall be accomplished on any site under development unless appropriate devices have been installed to minimize pollution from objectionable materials, to control erosion, and to remove sediment from surface water runoff. Appropriate techniques shall also be used to stabilize and revegetate disturbed land upon completion of the project.

Policy 1.4.9: Maintain an Environmentally Sensitive Lands Inventory which shall include wetlands under the jurisdiction of the FDEP and/or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and all flood prone land areas classified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as “A” Zones and “V” Zones on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps, and require that the location of these wetlands be identified on proposed site plans along with measures that will be taken to protect these wetlands.

Policy 1.5.1: Require that an erosion and sediment control plan be submitted prior to commencement of any development activities where necessary; that erosion and sedimentation control devices shall be properly installed and maintained throughout all development activities; and that all disturbed soil areas shall be permanently stabilized upon completion of development activities to reduce soil erosion.

Policy 1.5.2: Whenever possible, native trees, shrubs and ground cover will be maintained on development sites to prevent soil erosion.

Policy 1.9.1: Coastal area population densities shall be coordinated with the West Florida Regional Evacuation Study 2010, as updated.

Policy 1.9.2: The City shall implement the applicable recommendations of the Santa Rosa County Local Mitigation Strategy.

Policy 2.1.2: Prohibit high density/intensity development within the CHHA.

Policy 2.2.1: Infrastructure improvements in the CHHA will be limited to those necessary to protect human health or safety or those necessary to protect environmental quality.

Policy 2.3.1: In the event of a hurricane emergency the City will respond to the direction of the Santa Rosa County Office of Emergency Management in the implementation of

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emergency plans. Coordinated emergency activities will include warnings, public information, communications, evacuation, public shelters and related services.

Policy 2.3.4: Prohibit the siting of group homes, nursing homes, and mobile homes within the Coastal High Hazard Area.

Policy 2.4.7: Maintain an inventory of areas that have experienced repetitive storm damage in coastal storms.

Policy 2.4.8: Annually review and revise policies that address the removal, relocation or structural modification of damaged infrastructure and unsafe structures and that consider alternatives to redevelopment in areas of repetitive storm damage, consistent with federal and state funding provisions and regulations.

Policy 2.4.9: Continue to prohibit public expenditures in areas that have received repetitive damage in coastal storms except for those expenditures necessary to protect human health and safety or to protect natural resources.

City of Milton Comprehensive Plan

The City of Milton Comprehensive Plan Update adopted in 2014 continues to implement the LMS and the FMP through policies such as:

Policy 1.1.3: The City shall continue its periodic inspection program of stormwater control structures to ensure the proper functioning of such structures.

Policy 1.2.1: Installation of stormwater management facilities made necessary by new development shall be the responsibility of the developer.

Policy 1.1: The following level of service standards are hereby adopted, and shall be used as the basis for determining the availability of facility capacity and the demand generated for all new development and redevelopment activity:

Stormwater Management Facilities - Treatment of the first inch of runoff is required for sites less than 100 acres in size and treatment of the first one and one-half inches of runoff is required for sites greater than 100 acres in size, given a 100-year frequency, 24-hour duration design storm event.

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Policy 1.2.4: There shall be no reduction in the flood storage capacity or the other natural functions and values of the floodplain in the City of Milton in areas designated as regulatory floodway by FEMA Flood Insurance studies in the City of Milton. Encroachments shall be prohibited within designated regulatory floodway including, but not limited to, fill and new construction and development improvements that would result in any increase in flood levels.

Policy 1.2.5: The City shall regulate development within the flood prone areas to minimize flood storage capacity reduction so that post development equals pre-development standards, which will afford protection to life and property within the floodplain.

Policy 1.3.12: In order to prevent sedimentation of surface water bodies and protect sensitive soils from erosion, the City will continue to control erosion, sedimentation and run-off in compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permitting program implemented by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Policy 1.3.7: Environmentally sensitive lands within the City of Milton are hereby designated as those flood prone areas identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency on its Flood Insurance Rate Maps as “A” Zones and any wetlands under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and/or the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Policy 1.3.8: In order to protect environmentally sensitive lands, the City will continue to implement the adopted Flood Protection Ordinance which requires the use of FEMA approved construction techniques.

Policy 1.5.3: Development in identified flood prone areas must be in accordance with Articles IV-3 (Flood Damage Protection) and V-6 (Stormwater Management) of the Land Development Regulations.

Policy 1.3.9 and 1.8.9: The City shall protect floodplains, at a minimum, by implementing the following provisions:

1. Uses which are dangerous to health, safety and property due to water or erosion hazards, or which result in damaging increases in erosion or in flood heights or velocities will be restricted or prohibited.
2. Uses vulnerable to floods, including facilities, which serve such uses, must be protected against flood damage at the time of initial construction.

3. The alteration of natural floodplains, stream channels and natural protective barriers, which are involved in the accommodation of floodwaters, will be controlled.
4. Filling, grading, dredging and other development, which may increase erosion or flood damage, will be controlled.
5. The construction of flood barriers which will unnaturally divert floodwaters or which may increase flood hazards to other lands will be prevented or regulated.
6. Public expenditures within the Category 1 evacuation zones as delineated on the Santa Rosa Hurricane Storm Tide Map contained in the Northwest Florida Hurricane Study (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, May 1998) will be limited to the provision, or support of recreation uses such as parks, walkways and boat ramps; erosion control devices; increased public access and the correction of deficiencies; and to support infrastructure provided, however, that infrastructure sizing is consistent with that needed to support the densities and intensities established by this Plan for those areas within the Category 1 evacuation zones.

Policy 1.8.10: The location of parcels subject to FEMA construction standards (reference Policy 11.A.4.1) shall be determined through use of the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (panels) which are incorporated herein by reference.

Town of Jay Comprehensive Plan

The 2009 Town of Jay Comprehensive Plan continues to implement the LMS and the FMP through policies such as:

Policy 3.1.3: Coordinate with the Soil Conservation Service to consider soil and topographic suitability of land when developing land use ordinances and when reviewing request for variances of adopted land use ordinance.

Policy 1.1.1: The Town shall undertake a stormwater and drainage control management system.

Policy 1.1.2: The following level of service standard shall be adopted and be used as the basis for determining the availability of facility capacity and demand generated by development:

Drainage System – ½ inch of runoff from twenty-five year twenty-four hour storm.

Policy 1.3.1: Land development regulations adopted by the Town shall include requirements for erosion control during construction of dwellings, other buildings and associated driveways and parking areas to reduce loss of topsoil and sedimentation.

Northwest Florida Water Management District Land Acquisition Work Plan

Since the inception of the District's land acquisition program, the goal has been to bring as much floodplain as possible of our major rivers and creeks under public ownership and protection. The Florida Forever Land Acquisition Program has increased the acres of wetland, floodplain and aquifer recharge areas acquired by the District. Following are the areas identified for possible acquisition affecting Santa Rosa County.

Escambia River Basin

Beginning at the confluence of the Conecuh River and Escambia Creek above the Florida-Alabama border and discharging into Escambia Bay, the Escambia River corridor contains a rich diversity of plant and animal species, as well as many rare fish and waterfowl. The Escambia River basin is broad and well drained in the upper reaches, and swampy below Molino, Florida. While the overall water quality is considered good, many point and non-point pollution sources empty into the river. Currently, the District owns 35,413 acres in fee and 19 acres in less than fee along the river.

Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands around the river mouth and designated tributaries.

Approximately 6,644 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

Garcon Point Ecosystem

This proposed land acquisition project contains most of the Garcon Point Peninsula, which borders Pensacola, Escambia, East and Blackwater bays. The project area is largely undeveloped and includes a variety of natural communities that are in good to excellent condition. The entire tract provides considerable protection to the water quality of the surrounding estuary, as well as harboring a number of rare and endangered species.

The emergent estuarine marsh that borders several miles of shoreline within the project is an important source of organic detritus and nutrients and serves as a nursery for many of the species found in Pensacola Bay. These wetlands function as both stormwater filtration and a storm buffer area, as well as providing erosion controls to the neighboring uplands. A minimum of 13 endangered or threatened species are known to live in the region including the recently listed federally endangered reticulated flatwoods salamander. The northern wet prairie portion is known to be an outstanding pitcher plant habitat.

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Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands. Currently the District owns 3,245 acres on Garcon Point.

Approximately 3,200 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

Blackwater River Basin

Originating in the Conecuh National Forest in Alabama, the Blackwater River has a large portion of its Florida watershed further protected by the Blackwater River State Forest. In all, nearly 50 miles of the river corridor is remote and undeveloped. As a result, the Blackwater River is considered one of Florida's best preserved waterways. Currently the District owns 381 acres along the river.

The acquisition area includes a large area of mature longleaf pine forest; considerable bottomland forest and marsh acreage; upland mixed forest; and blackwater stream and seepage slope communities. Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands. Approximately 380 acres have been acquired along the Blackwater River immediately south of Milton in Santa Rosa County.

Approximately 11,449 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over the next five years or more. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds

Yellow and Shoal River Basin

The Yellow River has its headwaters in Conecuh National Forest in Alabama and forms the northern border of Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) across much of eastern Santa Rosa and western Okaloosa counties. The proposed acquisitions would bring much of the remainder of the Yellow River floodplain in Florida under public ownership. Included in the project is a segment of the lower Shoal River, the largest tributary to the Yellow River. Large private landowners own a majority of the floodplain in this project, but considerable areas of the bordering and buffer lands are being sought to ensure effective management and protection of water resources. Highest priority will be given to tracts in the western portion of the project within the 100-year floodplain. Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands. Currently the District owns 16,553 acres along the river.

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Although the Yellow and Shoal rivers exhibit good overall water quality, both are fed largely by rainwater runoff and are thus susceptible to pollution from land use activities. The proposed purchase area would provide water quality protection from the Alabama border and encompass roughly 39,000 acres. Purchase of lands northwest of Eglin AFB, along the I-10 corridor, would provide approximately 52,000 acres of land that has the potential for future water resource development to supplement the strained potable water sources in southern Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties. Acquisitions in this area are recommended by the District Regional Water Supply Plan for Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties to protect future supply sources.

Approximately 39,140 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: Governing Board policy; threats to the resource; availability of willing sellers; tract size; general market conditions; available staff resources, and availability of funds.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

In Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, the Sand-and-Gravel Aquifer is the principal source of potable water for public supply. The Sand-and-Gravel Aquifer is unconfined or poorly confined, making it particularly susceptible to contamination by land uses. Land acquisition along the I-10 corridor between the Yellow and Blackwater rivers in Santa Rosa County would protect recharge areas that are important for future water supply sources.

Florida Building Code

Santa Rosa County administers the Florida Building Code for the entire county, including the municipalities. The FBC includes structural regulations for flood and fire safety.

Santa Rosa County Emergency Management Division 2015 Disaster Preparedness Guide

This annual guide identifies preparedness and response procedures that are consistent with and implement LMS and FMP goals.