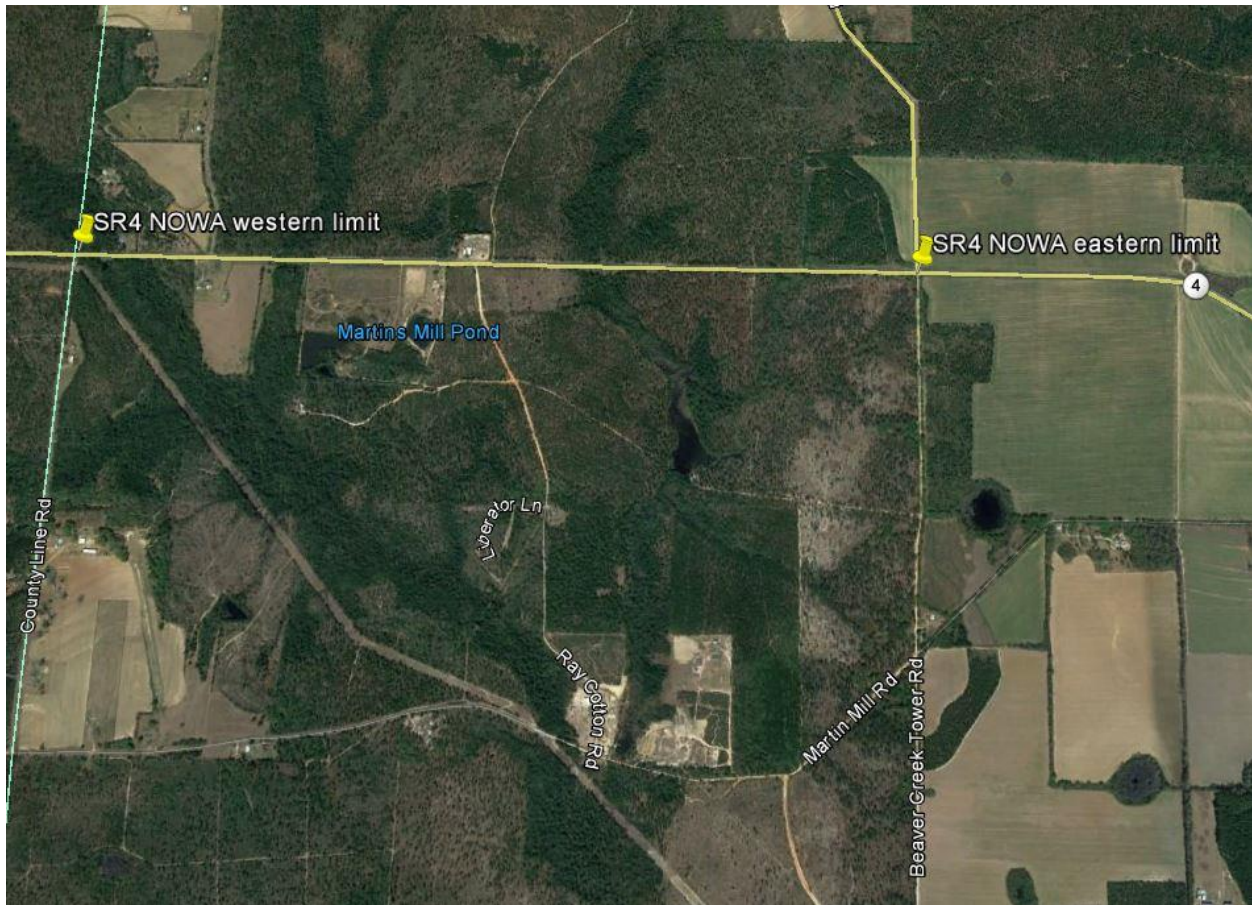


State Road 4, Okaloosa County
Naturally Occurring Wildflower Area
2016 Vegetation Management Plan and Maintenance Requirements.

On SR4 west of Baker in Okaloosa County is a naturally occurring wildflower area that, by request of the County Commission, shall be managed for native wildflowers along both east and westbound sides of the right of way for approximately 1.75 miles. Bordered by a mix of natural forest, agricultural fields, and pine plantation, the back slopes are historically vegetated by upland clay hill communities of Logleaf Pine woodlands.



The portion of the right of way bordered by natural forest managed by the Florida Forest Service as the Blackwater State Forest is populated by a rich and varied upland understory plant community which, in time, will migrate into the right of way. Much of the right of way is currently severely degraded from repeated disturbance by heavy equipment and is in some locations reduced to bare dirt.

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Patience will be a necessary component in the restoration of this back slope to native groundcover.



However, seed dispersal from many of the species in the adjacent forest is by wind, aiding in migration.



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Some evidence of migration is already occurring.



It is the intent of the following management plan to provide a baseline for development of a program of adaptive management. Through careful monitoring and periodic analysis, this plan is expected to undergo modifications as conditions change. This plan will balance the need for roadside safety and the ecological needs of the plant communities by defining and scheduling the maintenance activities of regular roadside vegetation management.

A. General Criteria Continually Applicable

1. Fertilizers shall not be applied to the right of way. No application of materials including soil, seed, mulch, sod, hay or other organic substances is permitted on the right of way without prior written consent of the District Three Vegetation Management Specialist (D3 VMS). Any and all sod, mulch, hay and straw used during maintenance activities must be certified free of noxious weeds and their propagules.
2. Prior to mowing activities, all equipment must be cleaned and free of soil, seeds, vegetative matter or other debris that could contain or hold noxious weed propagules.
3. All mowing must be performed when the ditch is dry enough to prevent rutting. Alternative use of a mower equipped with a hydraulic boom is permitted. At no time shall the height of mowing be less than six inches.

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B. Management Summary

1. Semi-annual surveys will be performed by the D3 VMS to locate and record the occurrence of invasive plant species, the occurrence of species of concern including federally and/or state listed endangered or threatened species, and the occurrence of plant species that present a roadside safety hazard. Special management practices that may include spot treatment of herbicides or hand clearing will be performed by the Asset Maintenance Contractor (AMC) to remove problem species and protect species of concern.
2. T-1 routine roadside mowing shall be scheduled by binding language of the current contract of the AMC. In the absence of such language, mowing shall be as described in the *FDOT Guide for Roadside Vegetation Management* and shall occur during the months of April, May, June, July, August and September on a thirty day mowing cycle as weather conditions permit.
3. T-2 full right of way mowing may occur during lightning season (May 15 to July 15) and during dormant season (December 15 to February 15) according to need as authorized in writing by the D3 VMS.
4. Roadside mowing heights shall be according to the guidelines of the *FDOT Guide for Roadside Vegetation Management* and the *FDOT Maintenance Rating Program Handbook* or as authorized in writing by the D3 VMS.
5. Full right of way (T-2) mowing shall occur from the edge of pavement to the limit of the right of way line or wood line, whichever is less.
6. Routine roadside mowing (T-1) shall occur in the 15 feet adjacent to the edge of pavement or to the toe of the front slope, whichever is less.
7. Any use of prescribed fire for management purposes must be at the direction of the Florida Forest Service.

Notable wildflower species surveyed in 2016 included:

Chrysopsis spp.

Liatris spp.

Licania michauxii

Lupinus villosus

Pityopsis graminifolia

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