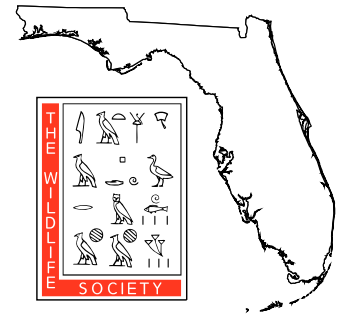


Florida Chapter  
**THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**  
www.fltws.org



24 November 2009

Mr. James Burnett  
Project Leader North Florida Refuges  
P.O. Box 68  
St. Marks, FL 32355

Dear Mr. Burnett,

The Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society (hereafter Chapter) is an organization of over 300 wildlife professionals. Founded in 1968, the Chapter consists of members who are dedicated to sustainable management of wildlife resources and their habitats in Florida. The Chapter is involved with many of the environmental issues facing Florida, and is recognized as a proactive group that develops its positions based on sound scientific principles.

The Chapter supports the proposed alternative (Alternative 2) as detailed in the Draft Environmental Assessment and Land Protection Plan for the Proposed Expansion of St. Marks *National Wildlife Refuge*. This alternative protects the largest amount of land and makes provisions for corridors and buffers around the core of the existing refuge. It also presents the best opportunities for enhanced management by extending federal property boundaries closer to existing roads and other right-of ways that can serve as firebreaks and access points. The addition of all 11 parcels will greatly improve the ecological integrity of the Refuge and maximize the recreational opportunities for the benefit of the public.

Alternative 3, which does not include acquisition of six parcels that are included in Alternative 2, falls short in two major areas. It does not provide the vital connection between St. Marks NWR and the Apalachicola National Forest. It also does not shield the Refuge from the perturbations associated with the Tallahassee-area development to the north. The No Action alternative is also not supported by the Chapter.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft EA, and we look forward to seeing the final. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,

Arnold Brunell  
President  
Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society