

OKALOOSA COUNTY STORMWATER PROJECTS IN THE CINCO BAYOU WATERSHED/GAP CREEK AREA

Gap Creek is located in the Fort Walton area and consists of a main channel with one significant tributary that joins the main channel near the Overbrook subdivision. Gap Creek has a drainage basin of approximately 2.9 square miles and discharges to Cinco Bayou. Beal Parkway to the east, a runway at Hurlburt Field to the west, Lovejoy Road and Hollywood Boulevard to the south, Mary Esther Cutoff to the southeast, and Carmel Drive to the north roughly bound the basin. Martin Luther King Boulevard represents the only road that crosses Gap Creek and features two separate culvert crossings that serve both the main channel and the tributary.

The basin can be divided into two regions with distinctly different land uses. The upper basin (Upper Basin), located west of Martin Luther King Boulevard, is mostly undeveloped and consists of a mixture of privately held and government property. Much of the vacant land in the upper basin contains jurisdictional wetlands that provide quality and rate control benefits to Gap Creek. The lower basin (Lower Basin), located east of Martin Luther King Boulevard, has been developed to near saturation. The development consists mostly of single-family residential homes, with commercial uses along the basin's collectors and arterial roadways. Due to the high density of development already present in the Lower Basin, all significant future development involving changes to the impervious area will likely occur in the Upper Basin. In this regard, based on future land use maps, it is anticipated that all non-jurisdictional land in the Upper Basin that is privately owned will be developed with a commercial land use.

To protect Gap Creek from increases in stage, the following activities have been implemented:

- For future development, limit post-development runoff to the pre-development rate for all storms through the 100-year storm design per section 6.06.05 when the County determines there is no capacity for additional flow.
- When reviewing site plans for the Upper Basin, ensure that pre-development discharge computations are calculated for a 100-year storm event.
- The County coordinates with the Air Force on many projects regarding capacity restrictions on Gap Creek, and requests adequate rate controls in connection with any future Air Force development discharging to the basin.

- The County coordinates with the City for regional or joint-use stormwater management facility west of Martin Luther King Boulevard to reduce the rate of discharge, compensate for lost storage, and improve water quality in the basin

- Lloyd Street/Mayflower Avenue Area Stormwater Improvements:

The Lloyd Street area has experienced poor drainage due to the aged stormwater infrastructure and an ineffective outfall. The project includes stormwater modeling, pipe inspection, design and construction of stormwater infrastructure in the drainage basin that includes Lloyd Street and Mayflower Avenue, and outfalls to Cinco Bayou. A hydrodynamic separator is designed within the new system to minimize the amount of contamination and sediment entering the bayou. A Notice to Proceed for project design was issued to the design consultant in May 2023 and was funded by a RESTORE Act Direct Component grant from the US Department of Treasury. The project required application for permit from both the NFWFMD and USACE, and at 60% design 2 additional surveys were required. Right-of-way for two (2) utility easements was necessary, and the County has acquired both. The project is now at 90%-100% construction plans and are currently under review by a third-party engineering firm for constructability. A RESTORE Act grant is paying for project design. Construction will be paid for by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) State Appropriations grant in the amount of \$1,500,000 and approximately \$4,000,000 in Surtax funds. The County anticipates advertising to bid for construction contract early in 2027.

- Overbrook Drainage Improvements:

Extensive street and yard flooding continue in the Overbrook Subdivision, as demonstrated by a June 1, 2024, rainstorm. The six (6) inches of rain that fell in less than eight (8) hours caused flooding throughout the Subdivision. During Hurricane Isaias (October 9 & 10, 2026) the Overbrook Subdivision experienced more flood-ing and residents experienced water in their houses. On June 12, 2024, County staff and the project design consultants met with Eglin AFB for final review to begin cul-tural and environmental assessments, and to also review new requirements from Hurlburt Field's new Environmental Office Supervisor. As part of this process, a new project access road was routed to minimize wetland impacts and reduce permitting requirements. Additional project drawings and surveys were necessary for the amended easement and construction access. The project was then put on hold as the USAF determined the required surveys and NEPA determination before proceed-ing any further with design. As of March 12, 2026, Eglin AFB, Hurlburt Field, and AFMC Environmental staff were reviewing the Overbrook project. The Department of Air Force determined that the project qualified for a level of NEPA review and the

design firm and County staff met again with Eglin and Hurlburt representatives on April 29, 2026, to discuss design. At that meeting another design revision was requested by the USAF to delete the retention pond and re-routed access road and design the stormwater project along a desired fire break on USAF property. The most recent meeting with the USAF on September 29, 2026, was to review and finalize the conceptual redesign to establish a road, berm and ditch along the newly cleared fire break on Air Force property north of the Overbrook Subdivision. The County has received \$1,000,000 in State Appropriation funding from FDEP; \$250,000 for Design and \$750,000 for construction. An additional \$2,000,000 in surtax funding is anticipated to fully fund construction.

- **Sylvania Heights/Echo Circle Area Stormwater Park:**
The Sylvania Heights/Echo Circle Area is located in the unincorporated area of Fort Walton Beach, and experiences flooding during heavy rain events. The County owns parcels adjacent to the Sylvania Heights and Echo Circle neighborhoods which currently include low-quality wetlands. On March 26, 2024, the Board of County Commissioners approved the purchase of an additional 2.67-acre property adjacent to County owned property, paid for with Surtax funding. The intent of the project is to utilize the County owned property for a stormwater park to help restore the wetlands and create additional green space for the adjacent neighborhoods. A concept level park master plan was created and introduced to residents in the project area at a Public Meeting held on February 24, 2026. Public comments were collected and considered for incorporation into the design of the stormwater park. The County has received 30% design plans which are currently under engineering review. RESTORE Act grant funding is being utilized for design of the project. Construction cost of the stormwater park is preliminary estimated at \$4,000,000. At the October 6, 2026 Board meeting, County Commissioners approved a legislative priority funding request of \$2,000,000 with a county match from surtax of \$2,000,000.
- **Gap Creek Channel Inventory and Planning Study:**
The Gap Creek watershed is a 2.9 square mile-sized basin located in the Fort Walton Beach area. There are several opportunities to achieve pollutant loading reduction within the watershed, improve water quality and reduce flood risk in localized areas within the watershed. The planning project will analyze areas within the watershed to restore critical habitat and strengthen coastal resilience in the face of natural and manmade hazards. The project will consist of a physical assessment of the Gap Creek watershed, between Jonquil Avenue and Beal Parkway, analyze the hydrologic characteristics and physical conditions, document the existing stormwater infrastructure, and identify the potential stormwater improvement projects. Focus will include both nature-based solutions such as stormwater wetlands as well as more traditional measures such as hydrodynamic separators and creek channel restoration practices. Outcomes will include a watershed restoration plan identifying restoration activities and infrastructure needed to enhance community resilience, restore

water quality, provide adequate stormwater management, and improve the hydrologic characteristics of Gap Creek. The County has been awarded a Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) grant in the amount of \$250,000 and the County is providing a 50/50 match with Surtax funding. The County has recently requested a Task Order proposal from a design firm under a Master Service Agreement with the County. Construction funding for improvements identified in the study would come from surtax and has been included on the needs list should the voters choose to extend the infrastructure surtax in November of 2026.

- **Coastal Stormwater Retrofit Project:**
Much of southern Okaloosa County, especially around the Cinco Bayou watershed, was developed before modern stormwater regulations. As a result, its systems were built mainly for conveyance and limited runoff control, with little attention to water quality. Recent infill and redevelopment have added improvements required by current laws but by and large, the existing systems are legacy and lack features necessary to improve water quality. A stormwater retrofit project is a means to improve water quality by implementing stormwater best management practices to existing developed sites where none previously existed and where location, available area, existing utilities, or other constraints exist to fully implement measures that meet current stormwater regulations. Nine (9) legacy stormwater system locations within the Gap Creek/Cinco Bayou watershed have been identified as potential locations for stormwater retrofit:

(MAP BELOW)

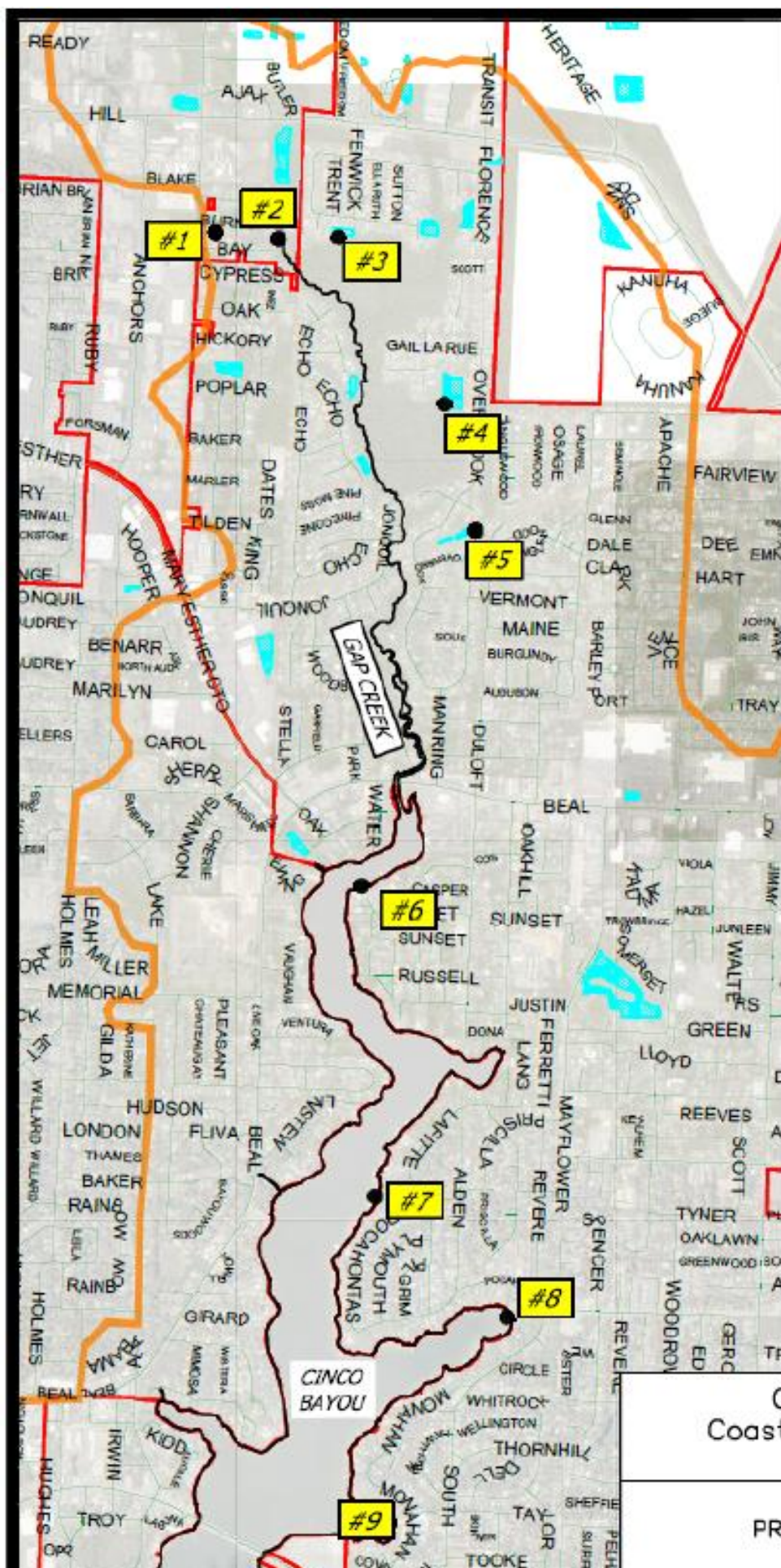
1. Burnette Pond
2. Gap Creek Culvert
3. Emerald Village Pond South
4. Stormwater Channel from Overbrook to Gap Creek
5. Tanglewood (North Pond)
6. Sunset Boulevard
7. Lafitte Crescent
8. Pocahontas
9. Monahan

Each location, see location map on next page, will be evaluated for possible retrofits to help address and improve water quality and/or improvements that will mitigate flooding. Potential retrofit measures include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Streambank and channel stabilization including erosion control
- b. Utilization of hydrodynamic separation for removal of settleable solids
- c. Outfall stabilization

- d. Implementation of weir walls or riprap check dams to create opportunities for ponding and infiltration
- e. Addition of grassy swales

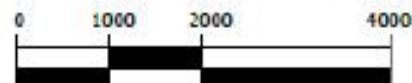
The County has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$1,460,000 through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for the Coastal Stormwater Retrofit Program. This amount will be supplemented by \$5,000,000 in Restore Act funding for a total project budget of \$6,460,000. The County has recently requested a Task Order proposal from a design firm under a Master Service Agreement with the County.



NORTH



GRAPHIC SCALE



(IN FEET)

1 inch = 2000 feet

LOCATIONS

1. BURNETTE POND
2. GAP CREEK CULVERT
3. EMERALD VILLAGE POND SOUTH
4. CHANNEL FROM OVERBROOK TO GAP CREEK
5. TANGLEWOOD (NORTH POND)
6. SUNSET BOULEVARD
7. LAFFITE
8. POCAHONTAS
9. MCNAHAN

LEGEND:

- WATERSHED
- JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARY
- WATER BODY

OKALOOSA COUNTY
Coastal Stormwater Retrofit
Program

PROPOSED LOCATIONS MAP