

2) Wetland Exclusions Without Basis

FDOT's **WOTUS form (11/29/23)** classified Wetlands **23–46** as “isolated non-jurisdictional depressional wetlands” (40 C.F.R. §120.2). Yet, **FDEP field reviews in 2024** verified multiple systems (e.g., **WL-24, WL-25, WL-39**) with standing water, hydric soils, and groundwater discharge in the **PFA**. These wetlands were nevertheless excluded via the NPR mechanism subsequently misrepresented as a permit in the SEIR.

V. New Incident Near Southworth Site: Excavator Submersion and Aquifer Exposure

A) Background and Photographic Record

Residents and nearby observers reported that a large excavator became submerged during excavation activity near the planned FDOT right-of-way and the proposed Southworth Borrow Pit. Photographs and accounts show the equipment resting in a flooded pit, the operator swimming out, and a large crane brought in to remove the machine days later.

An elected official relayed that FDOT, the Turnpike Authority, and SWFWMD described the work as “**stormwater pond construction**” and claimed there was “**no breach of the aquifer,**” asserting the excavator simply “**slid in.**” Based on physical evidence and known site hydrogeology, that explanation does not align with what is shown.