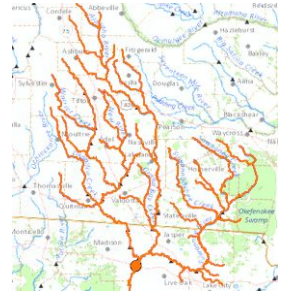


**WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc.**  
the WATERKEEPER® Alliance Affiliate for the upper  
Suwannee, Withlacoochee, and Alapaha Rivers  
a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity  
PO Box 88, Hahira, GA 31632  
850-290-2350  
wwalswatershed@gmail.com  
www.wwals.net



August 2, 2016

To: Mike Fuller  
Resource Management  
Title: Environmental Scientist II  
MJF@srwmd.org

Re: Lake City Sabal Trail pipe yard in cleared wetlands

FERC Docket: CP15-17

USACE Application Numbers: SAS-2013-00942 (GA), SAJ-2013-03030 (FL),  
SAM-2014-00655-JSC (AL)

Dear Mr. Fuller,

The pipe yard north of Lake City has been confirmed as in use by Sabal Trail. It appears to be partly on cleared wetlands. Some of those wetlands may have been cleared before that usage. In addition, some of the wetlands appear to have been filled for deposition of Sabal Trail's pipe. This is a request by WWALS for SRWMD to investigate these apparent wetlands violations.

As mentioned in the letter from WWALS to USACE of July 5th 2016,<sup>1</sup> the pipe yard is at 30.256148, -82.639781, in Columbia County, Florida, north of Lake City. It is on two parcels listed by the Columbia County Property Appraiser as 05-3S-17-04849-000 and 06-3S-17-04859-000 owned by ESTRADA EFRAIM & INDIANA, 8612 ROCKLAND DR, JACKSONVILLE, FL 32221-1617. The sign at the highway indicates A-A Auto Parts, 4700 US-441, Lake City, FL 32055. See also Figures 9 and 12 below.

The pipe yard is confirmed to be in use by Sabal Trail; see the correspondence between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Sabal Trail in the letter from WWALS to USACE and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) of July 29th 2016<sup>2</sup> in which USACE

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<sup>1</sup> "Re: Lake City Pipe Yard in jurisdictional wetlands," WWALS to USACE, July 5th 2016, <http://www.wwals.net/?p=21093>, FERC accession number 20160708-5088, [http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/file\\_list.asp?document\\_id=14476441](http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/file_list.asp?document_id=14476441)

<sup>2</sup> "Evidence of unregistered Sabal Trail Lake City Pipe Yard and Request of WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. for rescission of FERC approval of pre-construction activities under CP15-17-000." July 29th 2016, <http://www.wwals.net/?p=21326>, FERC Accession Number 20160729-5198, [http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/file\\_list.asp?document\\_id=14481507](http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/file_list.asp?document_id=14481507)

appears to need clarification of the extent of the wetlands on the site. In particular please note the email of July 19th 2016 from Brooke Hall of USACE, which says in part:

*The wetlands on-site do not appear to be Jurisdictional and have not had any fill placed in them as of yet. Please refrain from placing any fill in the wetland area. If you are planning on placing fill back there, then an Approved JD would have to be requested and coordinated with EPA and USACE HQ. As is right now there is no violation therefore Enforcement will have no further action.*

Note “do not appear” and “As is right now” which indicate USACE has not definitely determined the wetlands are not jurisdictional, nor that Sabal Trail pipes and other materials in that pipe yard are not sitting on already-filled wetlands. Also note the acknowledgement that there are wetlands on the site: “Please refrain from placing any fill in the wetland area.”

According to “Environmental Resource Permit Applicant’s Handbook Volume I (General and Environmental)” 7.2.2(e)1. there should be a “certified surveyed delineation of the extent of wetlands and other surface waters” for this site. If there is such a delineation, why is USACE having any difficulty determining where the wetlands on the site are?

According to maps visible through google earth and the Columbia County property appraiser’s office, there were wetlands on the pipe yard site, and they appear to have been cleared, grubbed, and filled. Some of this construction may have happened years ago, and some may have occurred this year.

Please see Figures 2,3,4, and 5 for maps found in google earth for 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2005, which all clearly show a dense clump of trees on the western Columbia County parcel 06-3S-17-04859-000 with some on the eastern parcel 05-3S-17-04849-000. Those trees match the wetlands shown on the LiDAR map in the WWALS letter of July 5th 2016, also included in the present letter as Figure 1. Yet in the 2006 map in Figure 6 most of the trees are gone and there appears to be a wet depression in their place. This would appear to fit the definition in 2.0(a)18:

*““Construction” means the creation, alteration, or abandonment of any project, including placement of fill, land clearing, earthwork, or the placement or removal of structures. Cutting of trees or removal of vegetation is not considered land clearing, except where it involves stump removal, root raking, or grubbing.”*

There is no sign of stumps, so there appears to have been stump removal, root raking, or grubbing.

Yet the trees in the earlier maps appear to be oaks or other wetlands species that fit the definition in 2.0(a)45:

*““Forested wetlands” means those wetlands where the canopy coverage by trees with a diameter at breast height of greater than 4 inches is greater than 10 percent, as well as those areas required to be planted with tree species to establish or reestablish forested wetlands pursuant to a permit issued, or enforcement action taken, under rules adopted under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., or Sections 403.91 through 403.929, F.S. (1984 Supp.), as amended, and those areas where the canopy has been temporarily removed but are expected to revegetate to a forested wetland if use of the area would remain unchanged.”*

Oaks are among the species in F.A.C. 62-340.450 Vegetative Index. Where is the determination of what species and how big were the trees on that wetland?

Where are the replanted trees? The center of the wetland appears to be standing water in the 2007 map in Figure 7, with no replanting, and still no replanting in the 2014 map in Figure 8.

The Columbia County Property Appraiser aerial map in Figure 9 is dated 2016, which makes it newer than any of the google earth maps. 2016 is also the same year, this year, in which the pipes were discovered on that property. Yet the Property Appraiser maps do not show the apparent fill on the wetlands on top of which much of the pipe is sitting; see July 5th letter and Figures 12 and 13 below. Did Sabal Trail or the owner of the property fill the wetlands to receive the pipe? If so, according to the correspondence from USACE and the ERP Handbook, there should have been a permit first.

In Figure 10 the Property Appraiser shows flood zone exactly where the wetlands used to be.

The wider view of the flood zone in Figure 11 shows the flood zone connects all the way to Falling Creek, which would seem to make it USACE jurisdictional wetlands.

Figure 12 is an aerial photograph taken June 21st 2016 showing Sabal Trail pipe on what appears to be leveled fill on the location of the former forested wetlands, in the area Columbia County marks as flood zone.

Figure 13 is an aerial photograph taken June 21st 2016 showing hardwoods still on the nearby connected wetlands in flood zones.

Historical aerial photography shows forested wetlands on the pipe yard site. They appear to have been cleared, de-stumped, and not replanted. Earlier this year there was no fill, but in aerial photographs taken June 21st 2016 it appears that the site of some of the former forested wetlands was filled and now the fill holds Sabal Trail pipe, still in what Columbia County marks as a flood

zone. According to the Handbook, apparently that clearing and that filling should each have had a permit. According to the Handbook and USACE, the recent filling should have had a permit. And if the flood zone is correct that the wetlands on the pipe yard site connect all the way to Falling Creek, those would all appear to be jurisdictional wetlands.

Thank you in advance for investigating these questions. I would appreciate a prompt response.

For the rivers and the aquifer,

[/s]

John S. Quarterman, President

Appended: Map and aerial photograph figures

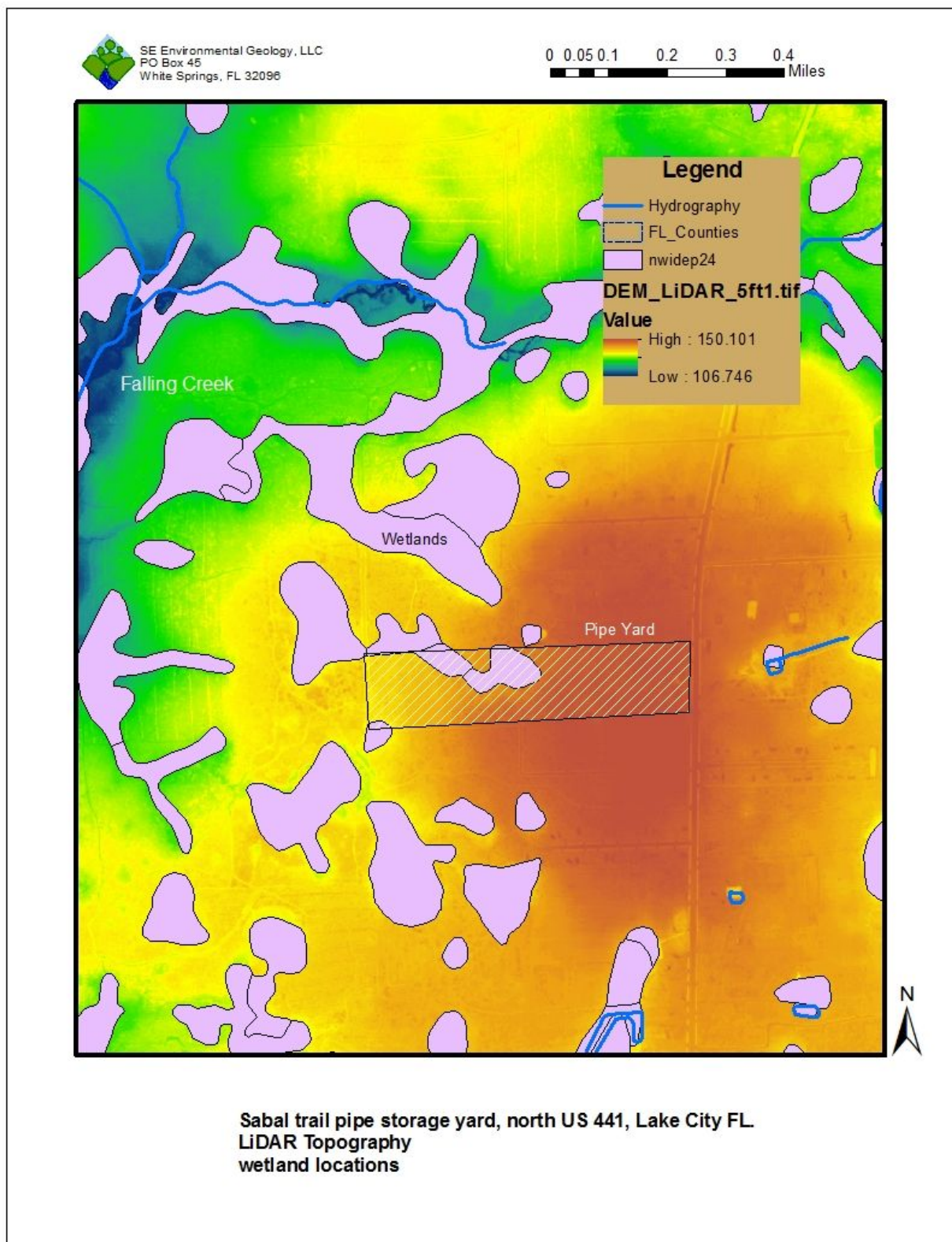
Attachments: "Re: Lake City Pipe Yard in jurisdictional wetlands," WWALS to USACE, July 5th 2016, <http://www.wwals.net/?p=21093>, FERC accession number 20160708-5088, [http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/file\\_list.asp?document\\_id=14476441](http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/file_list.asp?document_id=14476441)

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WWALS Watershed Coalition advocates for conservation and stewardship  
of the Withlacoochee, Willacoochee, Alapaha, Little, and Upper Suwannee River watersheds  
in south Georgia and north Florida  
through awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities



**Figure 1: LiDAR Topography, wetland locations, Sabal Trail pipe yard north of Lake City**





**Figure 2: 1994-02-13 Hardwoods in wetlands**



*Map: Google Earth*

**Figure 3: 1999-02-10 Still forested wetlands**



*Map: Google Earth*

**Figure 4: 2004-12-30 Still forested wetlands**



*Map: Google Earth*

**Figure 5: 2005-10-26 Still forested wetlands**



*Map: Google Earth*



**Figure 6: 2006-08-30 Cleared and grubbed**



*Map: Google Earth*

**Figure 7: 2007-11-30 Standing water, no replanting**



*Map: Google Earth*



**Figure 8: 2014-05-05 Still no replanting**



*Map: Google Earth*

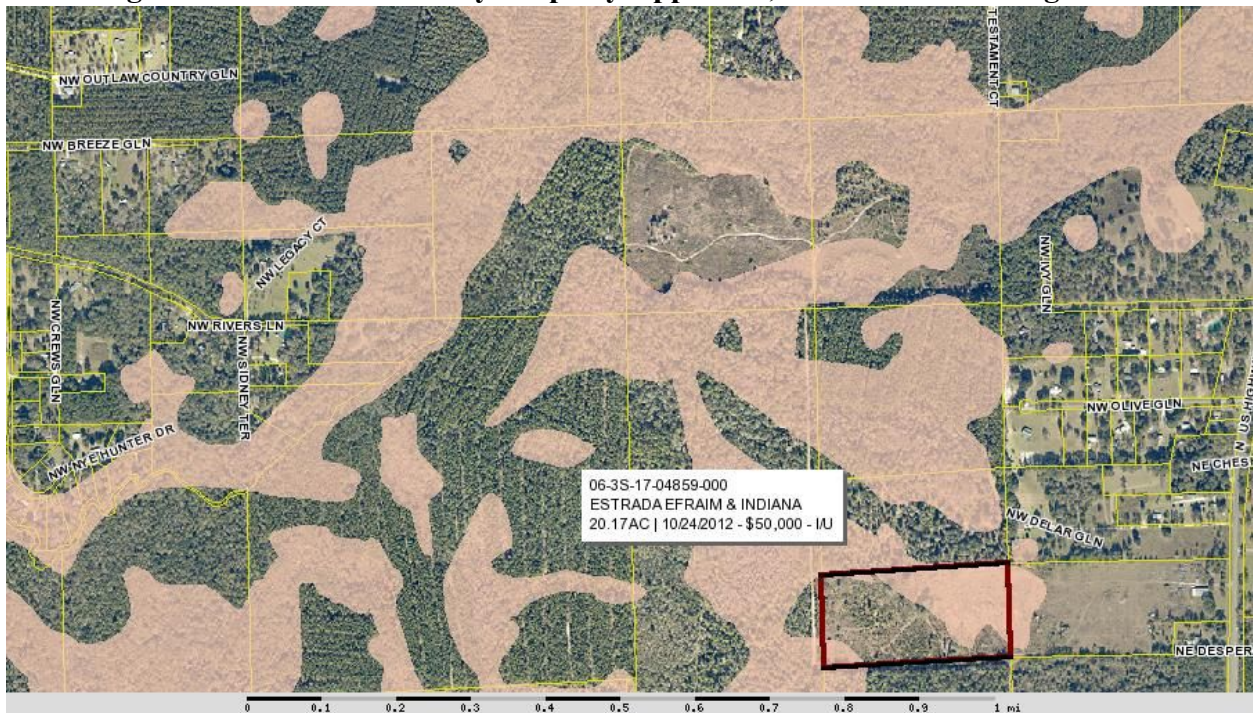
**Figure 9: 2016 Base map and Columbia County Property Appraiser parcels**



*Map: Columbia County property appraiser, parcels 06-3S-17-04859-000 and 05-3S-17-04849-000*



**Figure 11: Columbia County Property Appraiser, connected to Falling Creek**



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**Figure 12: Pipe Yard on top of former forested wetlands**



*Photo: John S. Quarterman for WWALS June 21st 2016, flight courtesy Southwings*

**Figure 13: Pipe Yard and hardwoods on connected flood zone**



*Photo: John S. Quarterman for WWALS June 21st 2016, flight courtesy Southwings*