



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL RECEIVES GRANT TO RESTORE HISTORIC WALTON COUNTY LAKE

PENSACOLA, Fla. (Oct. 10, 2008) – Partnership for Community Programs, Inc., the nonprofit organization of the West Florida Regional Planning Council has received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for the removal of invasive and exotic species and the re-vegetation of wetland species surrounding Oyster Lake in South Walton County.

The \$17,100 grant will be used to restore the area and reestablish the historical native ecosystem, which supports many plants, invertebrates and vertebrates and reduces upstream flooding in the area.

“An exotic plant is one that is not native to our area, but which may survive and reproduce here, displacing native species and altering natural systems,” said Project Manager Mary Gutierrez. “An invasive plant can cause extreme damage, by choking out native plants, reducing the variety of wildlife and depleting water supplies. This grant will be a tremendous help in allowing us to restore Oyster Lake and reestablish the historical native ecosystem.”

Mary Gutierrez of the Bay Area Resource Council and WFRPC will serve as project coordinator. Partners include the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance, University of Florida Sea Grant Extension-Walton County, Bay Area Resource Council, Coastal Dune Lake Advisory Board, South Walton Community Council and the Northwest Florida Water Management District.

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For more information, call WFRPC at (850) 332-7976 or visit www.wfrpc.org.

The West Florida Regional Planning Council is a not-for-profit agency that provides professional planning, coordinating and advisory services to local governments, state and federal agencies and the public in order to preserve and enhance quality of life in northwest Florida.