



Douglas E. Barr  
Executive Director

## Northwest Florida Water Management District

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81 Water Management Drive, Havana, Florida 32333-4712

(U.S. Highway 90, 10 miles west of Tallahassee)

(850) 539-5999 • (Fax) 539-2777

FOR RELEASE: June 28, 2010

FOR INFORMATION: Ron Bartel, Director Resource Management

William O. Cleckley, Director Lands Division

Faith Eidse, Public Information Specialist

### *District to Protect Coastal Land and Water in Wake of Oil Spill*

*Havana, Florida* –The Northwest Florida Water Management District Governing Board on Thursday authorized Executive Director Douglas Barr and his staff to do whatever is necessary to protect District lands and other water resources from impacts of the British Petroleum oil spill. Board members asked to be kept informed as the District acts to protect water and property as oil reaches the Perdido, Pensacola and Choctawhatchee bays

Barr and District staff are planning to prevent oil from entering sensitive coastal wetlands, estuarine tidal creeks and bayous in the event oil breaches deployed boom lines in the bays. Additional measures are also being considered to protect water resources of bay systems that the wetlands feed into.

A priority concern is Garcon Point peninsula, which is in the direct path of oil that escapes booms and skimming efforts after entering Pensacola Bay. The District purchased a majority of the Garcon Point peninsula to protect water resources, especially its estuarine salt marsh and

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wet prairie ecosystems, which in turn protects water quality of the bay. Estuarine salt marsh habitat provides critical nurseries for juvenile finfish, shrimp and crabs that can be killed by petroleum pollution.

“We don’t know how this will affect District lands but we soon will,” said Barr. “We have submitted our protection requests through the Deepwater Horizon Response Unified Command but we are preparing to respond in the meantime. We would rather try and fail than do nothing at all.”

Barr added, “We’re required to follow BP procedures to get reimbursed, but the District is not necessarily waiting for BP to take action. We are going to do our utmost to protect these vital public coastal wetlands.”

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*Carnivorous white-topped pitcher plants are among endangered species protected on District lands at Garcon Point. (David Clayton photo)*