

# **THE ST. MARKS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE NEEDS YOUR HELP!**

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge currently covers approximately 70,000 acres. To fulfill their Comprehensive Conservation Plan, the refuge has recently received approval to add additional acres. The refuge already manages 940 acres of state land and 612 acres of USDA Forest Service land within the approved area.

The expansion encompasses about 35,295 acres in Wakulla, Jefferson, Franklin, and Taylor Counties. Except for Lanark Reef, it generally includes lands adjacent to and between the Ochlocknee and Aucilla Rivers. Acquisition of this area would extend about one third of the refuge's northern boundary to U. S. Highway 98. The additional land would enable the Service to protect up to 109,764 acres of upland pine forest, wetland hardwood forest, pines, shrub and brush land, and freshwater marsh.

The first phase of this expansion includes about 25,000 acres between the current boundary of the St. Marks Unit and U.S. Highway 98 between State Road 59 (Lighthouse Road) and the Aucilla River. This important area provides:

- Suitable black bear habitat, including corridors and links to the major population centers of the Apalachicola National Forest/Tate's Hell State Forest, and the Aucilla/Wacissa River areas
- Important foraging habitat for migratory birds
- More habitats for resident wildlife especially endangered and threatened species
- More opportunities for recreational use such as photography, hiking, biking, wildlife observation, fishing and hunting
- Aquifer recharge area for clean drinking water
- More forests for protection from water runoff, clean air, and storm damage

St. Marks Refuge Association, Inc. (SMRA) supports acquiring these critical lands from willing sellers. Donations of desired lands or interests are encouraged. All lands and waters will be managed by the Service as St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. The President's 2011 budget currently includes \$2M for land acquisition for St. Marks. SMRA asks you to join us in requesting Congress for additional money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The LWCF is funded by money obtained from off shore oil and gas drilling fees.

*SMRA is an all volunteer association so every dollar you give is fully tax-deductible.*

**There has never been a better time to help our refuge grow and  
protect our natural and historical resources.**

*St. Marks Refuge Association, Inc.  
<http://www.stmarksrefuge.org>  
Visit St. Marks Refuge Association on Facebook*