



Project Background

When International Paper (IP) acquired the Pensacola Mill from Champion International in 2000, it pledged to safeguard water quality in Elevenmile Creek and Perdido Bay and obtain a standard operating permit for the mill.

To achieve these goals, IP assembled a team of scientific and technical experts to evaluate partnership opportunities and explore all feasible options. The option that emerged as the most promising was designed, engineered, and submitted for approval to the state in 2002.

After review by state and federal agencies, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) noticed its intent to issue the permit in 2005. However, the permit application was challenged by a third party, and the application entered the administrative process.

In the final order issued by the secretary in September 2007, he acknowledged that the project will improve the Perdido Bay ecosystem, will meet applicable water quality standards for the creek, Perdido Bay and Perdido River, and will restore wetlands. However, the secretary also stated that before the permit could be issued, more information was required to show that there would be no significant adverse impact to the wetlands biological community.

As of March 2008, IP has gathered the information necessary to meet the department's request for additional information, has revised its permit application accordingly, and currently awaits the issuance of a new draft permit from the FDEP.

