

Hixtown Swamp

Critical Natural Lands

Madison County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	1993
<i>Project Acres</i>	24,479
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	2,514
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$200,331
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	21,965
<i>2023 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$39,062,685

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Hixtown Swamp project consists of a complex of cypress swamps, marshes and ponds that were spared the intensive silvicultural practices of the surrounding uplands and serves as an important over-wintering and nesting site for rare and imperiled wading birds. By conserving these wetlands, the project will protect wildlife habitat and cultural resources, while providing the public with opportunities to hunt, hike and observe wildlife.

General Description

Hixtown Swamp is one of the largest cypress-dominated basin swamps in northern Florida. The moderately-disturbed core swamp is a mixture of cypress swamp, freshwater marsh, open marsh ponds, shrub swamp and disturbed uplands used for silviculture and agriculture. There are no well-defined channels or streams associated with the swamp. However, the waters of Hixtown Swamp flow slowly southward, and the swamp is functionally a part of the much larger San Pedro Bay ecosystem.

Hixtown Swamp is regionally significant as habitat for both game and non-game wildlife. It is particularly important as an over-wintering area for waterfowl and supports large numbers of sandhill cranes. The project has high cultural-resource value, and 21 archaeological or historical sites are recorded within the project boundary. The site continues to be threatened by timber harvest.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
Bird Rookery	G5/SNRB
<i>incised groove-bur</i>	G3/S2
Eastern diamondback rattlesnake	G3/S3
Little blue heron	G5/S4
White ibis	G5/S4



Public Use

The project is designated as a wildlife management area, with uses such as hiking, picnicking, camping and wildlife observation.

Acquisition Planning

1993

Phase I (essential): Mitchell (aka Musselwhite), G and G, Miller, Collins, Genecer, Muggee and Gillman (contingent upon 50 percent donation). In 1993, the project had a tax assessed value of \$9,542,800.

2011

On December 9, 2011, the project was placed in the Critical Natural Lands category.

2020

On November 23, 2020, Tall Timbers acquired a 211.7-acre conservation easement (Fritz Tract) in the project boundary.

Coordination

The Suwannee River Water Management District is an acquisition partner.

Management Policy Statement

The primary goals of management of the Hixtown Swamp project are to conserve and protect significant habitat for native species or endangered and threatened species; to conserve, protect, manage or restore important ecosystems, landscapes and forests, in order to enhance or protect significant surface water, coastal, recreational, timber, fish or wildlife resources which local or state regulatory programs cannot adequately protect; and to preserve significant archaeological or historical sites.

Manager(s)

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is the designated manager.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for State Designation

The size of the project and its importance to wildlife, particularly its value as an over-wintering area for waterfowl, qualify it as a wildlife management area.

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

The natural wetland system currently requires basic resource management and protection. However, it is in danger of being hydrologically modified to drain the area for timber and agricultural production. Pine plantations and agricultural areas on the uplands will require restoration. There may be additional management needs for public-use facilities.

Management Implementation, Public Access, Site Security and Protection of Infrastructure

Within the first year after acquisition, management activities will concentrate on site security, natural resource management and conceptual planning. Public-use facilities will be developed in subsequent years.





Revenue-generating Potential

No significant revenue is expected to be generated initially. As public use increases, modest revenue may be generated.

Cooperators in Management Activities

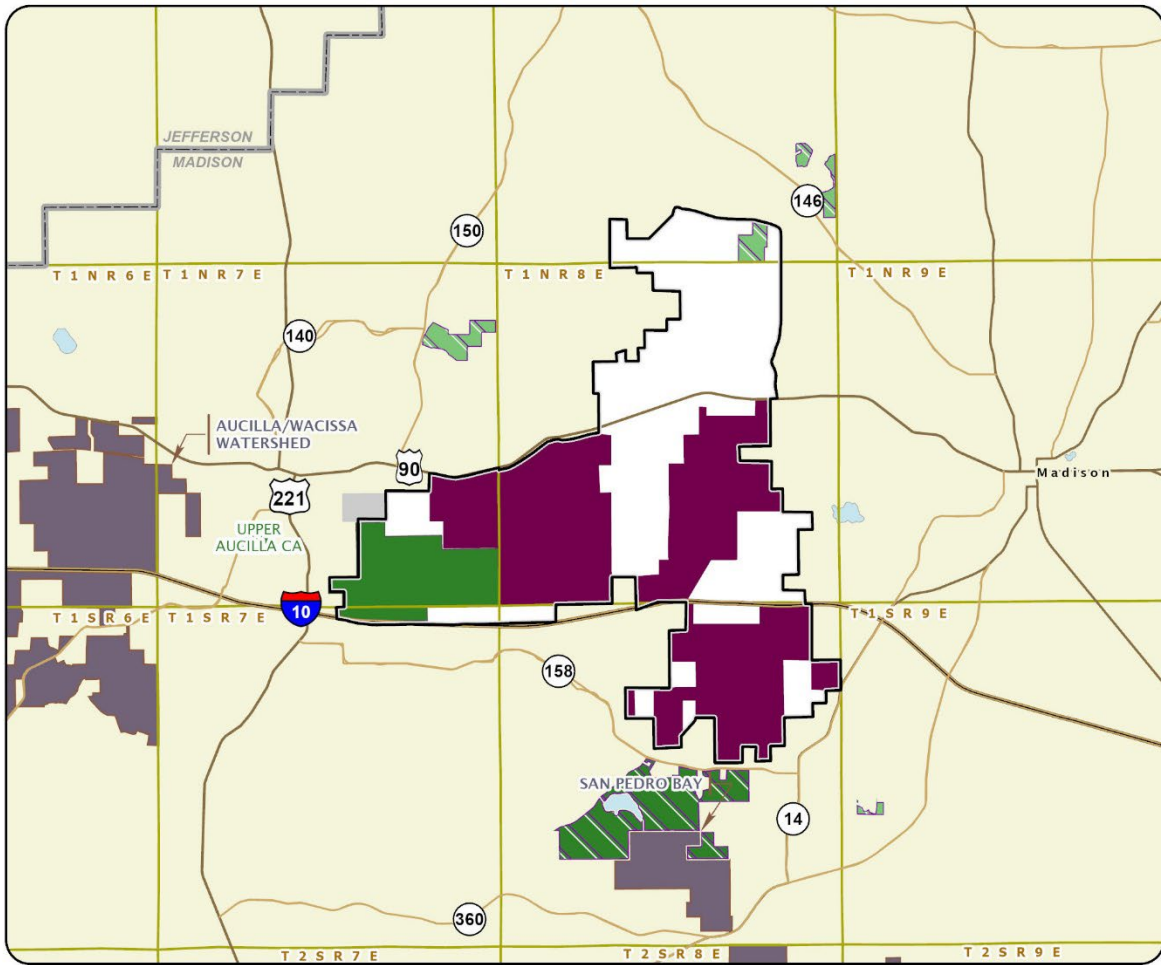
The Florida Forest Service is recommended as a cooperator to assist in the reforestation of upland areas.

Management Cost Summary

<u>FWC</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	CARL or successor	CARL or successor
Salary	\$180,000	\$180,000
OPS	\$5,500	\$5,500
Expense	\$45,500	\$40,000
OCO	\$124,800	\$10,000
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$355,800	\$235,500

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





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MADISON COUNTY

