

Bar-B Ranch

Critical Natural Lands

Martin County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	<i>2022</i>
<i>Project Acres</i>	<i>1,910</i>
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	<i>1,910</i>
<i>2024 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	<i>\$11,274,404</i>

Purpose for State Acquisition

The goal of the Bar-B Ranch project is to protect the hydrologic connection between the St. Johns River and Everglades watershed, provide valuable wildlife habitat and preserve wildlife corridors extending from South Florida to Central Florida. The project also provides an opportunity for the restoration of naturally occurring water storage that would benefit the water quality of the St. Lucie River Estuary, Indian River Lagoon, Lake Okeechobee and the Florida Everglades.

General Description

Bar-B Ranch is in central Martin County within the Allapattah Flats, adjacent to the C-44 Stormwater Treatment Area. The site is currently utilized as an active cattle ranch, characterized by improved and semi-improved pasture with some mesic and hydric pine flatwoods, wet prairies, and depression marshes.

Bar-B Ranch is within Priority 2 of the Florida Ecological Greenways Network and is part of a greenway corridor extending from Palm Beach County north to Central Florida. Rare species documented or reported within the proposed project area include common wild-pine (*Tillandsia fasciculata*), wood stork (*Mycteria americana*), little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*), tricolored heron (*Egretta tricolor*) and roseate spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*). No archaeological or historical resources have been identified at Bar-B Ranch.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements

Wood stork

Score

G4/S2

Public Use

Bar-B Ranch is proposed for fee-simple acquisition and would provide public outdoor recreation opportunities. The South Florida Water Management District's (SFWMD) main objective is to manage and protect the property's resources while still allowing public use. Activities consistent with these goals include hiking, biking, camping, fishing, equestrian use and environmental education programs.



Acquisition Planning

2022

On April 8, 2022, the Acquisition and Restoration Council voted to add the Bar-B Ranch project to the 2023 Florida Forever Priority List.

Coordination

SFWMD will coordinate with Martin County and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to manage the property. If acquired, the federal government will be required to match what is spent on the property for utilization on other Everglades restoration efforts.

Management Policy Statement

Management will focus on the preservation and restoration of the resources on-site with an emphasis on the water resources. Where compatible with the site's resources, passive resource-based recreation will be provided to the public.

The following management goals and objectives were identified:

- To preserve, maintain, enhance, and restore natural communities and wildlife habitat.
- To allow restoration of the wetland systems.
- To provide connectivity to adjacent conservation lands.
- To provide appropriate nature-based recreation that offers public enjoyment of the site without damaging the unique natural habitats.

Manager(s)

The recommended manager is SFWMD.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for State Designation

This project is critical to the water quality and quantity of the Everglades and related waterbodies. The project also helps to create a wildlife corridor between the St. Johns River and the Everglades.

Acquisition would increase the state's contribution to the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

SFWMD plans to restore the Bar-B Ranch property through various management methods. Ditches and drainage features are scattered across the property and have impacted the property's wetlands.

SFWMD plans to selectively fill or plug the drainage ditches to restore a natural hydrologic regime to the area. They also plan to reintroduce fire to the wet prairie and pine flatwoods plant communities by utilizing prescribed burns. Prior to initial burning activities, mechanical vegetation control will be used to address high fuel load conditions.



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

SFWMD will provide site security and resource protection measures by utilizing existing infrastructure, posting signage and having law enforcement patrols. Public access to the property can be found through a gated secondary road (owned by SFWMD) connecting to Southwest Citrus Boulevard.

Revenue-generating Potential

Bar-B Ranch expects to generate approximately \$12,500 annually due to the ongoing cow and calf operation on the property. Because SFWMD does not charge user fees to recreationally utilize public lands, no other sources of revenue are expected.

Cooperators in Management Activities

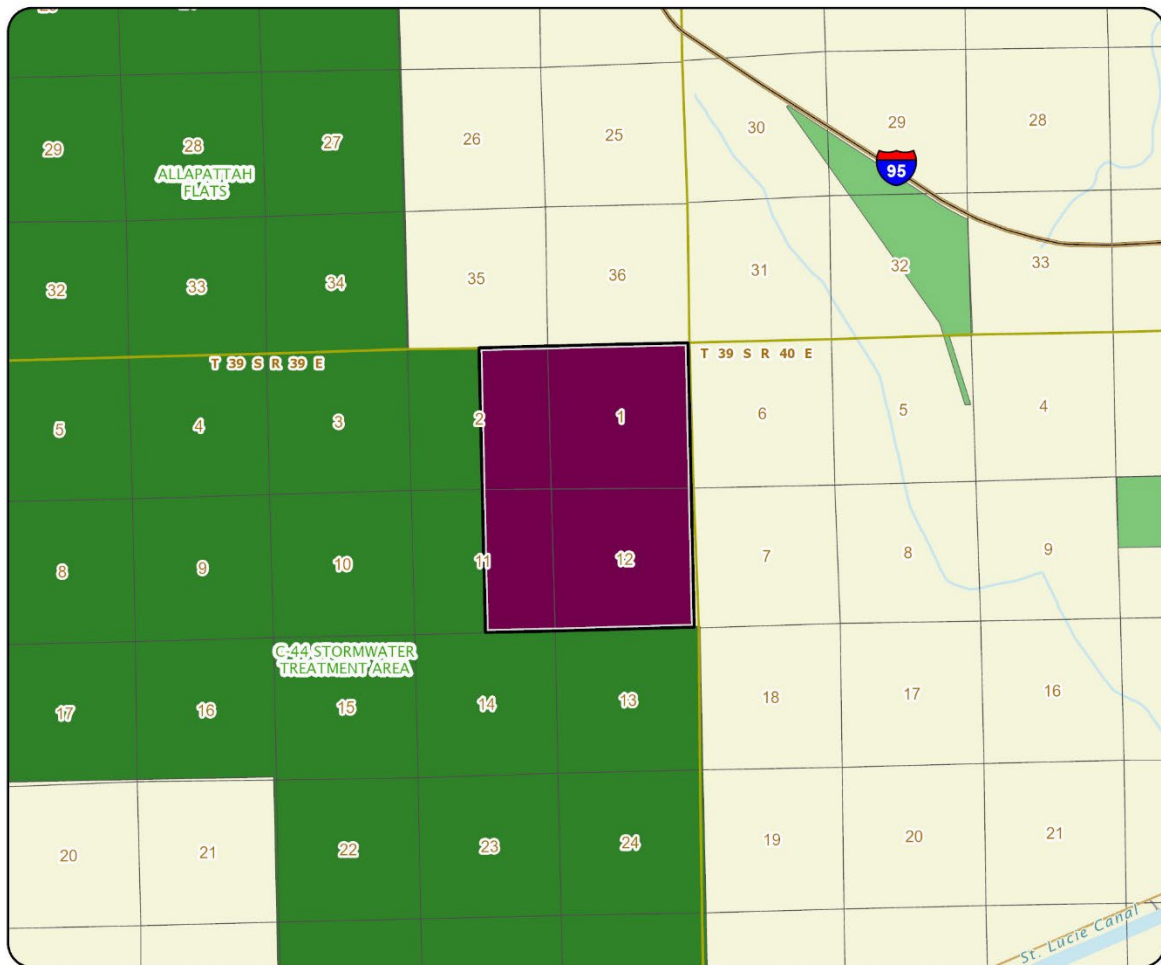
SFWMD will partner with Martin County and FWC to develop and operate public use and land management programs, allowing the property to be managed for the benefit of the resource and the public.

Management Cost Summary

<u>SFWMD</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Salary	\$61,689	\$61,689
OPS	\$0	\$0
Expense	\$75,000	\$75,000
OCO	\$42,020	\$0
Other	\$125,000	\$125,000
TOTAL	\$303,709	\$261,689

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





BAR-B RANCH

MARTIN COUNTY

