

Battle of Wahoo Swamp

Critical Historical Resources

Sumter County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	<i>2002</i>
<i>Project Acres</i>	<i>1,623</i>
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	<i>469</i>
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	<i>1,154</i>
<i>2024 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	<i>\$4,153,425</i>

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Battle of Wahoo Swamp project will preserve a Second Seminole War battle site and protect habitat for several rare plant species. This battlefield may represent the best-preserved site of its kind and would offer opportunities to increase public awareness of Florida's history during the Second Seminole War (1835-1842). The battle that occurred here on November 21, 1836, was in response to the 1835 ambush and annihilation by Seminole warriors of 100 men under the command of Major Francis Dade, now memorialized at the Dade Battlefield, which is about 10 miles from Wahoo Swamp. This site is one of the few remaining in Florida that support the suite of rare ferns and orchids associated with limestone outcrops and grottoes.

General Description

The Battle of Wahoo Swamp site is in eastern Sumter County east of the Withlacoochee River and west of I-75 and Bushnell. The northeast corner of the site that extends across County Road 48 lies only 0.2 miles from the extreme southwest corner of the Jumper Creek Tract of Withlacoochee State Forest. Dade Battlefield, a historical site managed by the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP), lies about five miles southeast of Wahoo Swamp.

Although proposed originally for its archaeological values, the project also supports many rare plant and animal species. The natural communities on the Wahoo site largely include "islands" of hardwood hammock, or upland mixed forest, scattered throughout an extensive wetland matrix of freshwater marsh and cypress swamp. High quality hardwood hammocks support a high concentration of rare plant species. Low limestone outcroppings and boulders, scattered throughout the hammock, are densely clothed with mosses, liverworts, ferns, vines and other herbaceous plants, including numerous populations of some of Florida's rarest ferns: cutleaf spleenwort (*Asplenium abscissum*), modest spleenwort (*Asplenium verecundum*), Curtiss' spleenwort (*Asplenium curtissii*), ruffled spleenwort (*Asplenium plenum*), swamp plume polypody (*Pecluma ptilodon*) and Peters' filmy fern (*Trichomanes petersii*). A high diversity of orchid species also occurs in the hammocks, including large and healthy populations of two of the rarest plants in Florida, Rickett's nodding-caps (*Triphora rickettii*) and



Craighead's noddling-caps (*Triphora craigheadii*). Approximately 73% of the original project consists of basin marsh and basin swamp, collectively known as Battle Slough, which flows southwest to the Withlacoochee River. The project consists of a fee-simple acquisition of the battlefield area and a less-than-fee acquisition over the remainder of the project.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
<i>Craighead's noddling-caps</i>	G1/S1
<i>modest spleenwort</i>	G1/S1
<i>Curtiss' spleenwort</i>	G1/S1
<i>Rickett's noddling-caps</i>	G1/S1
<i>ruffled spleenwort</i>	G1Q/S1
<i>Florida spiny-pod</i>	G2/S2
<i>Peters' bristle fern</i>	G4/S1S2
<i>comb polypody</i>	G5?TNR/S2
<i>plume polypody</i>	G5/S2
Eastern diamondback rattlesnake	G3/S3

Public Use

The property has diversity for limited quantities of resource-based recreational pursuits. The project's most important resource is cultural as a Seminole war battle site. Primary emphasis will be on the interpretation of the historic elements of this site to the public. Varied public recreational uses could include camping, picnicking, nature appreciation, hiking and battle re-enactments. The project also provides opportunities for wildlife viewing and nature study.

Acquisition Planning

2002

On December 5, 2002, the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) added the Battle of Wahoo Swamp project to the 2003 Florida Forever Priority List. The essential parcel is identified as the Hamilton ownership. The fee-simple portion of the project should be mapped and appraised before proceeding with the less-than-fee portion of the project.

2010

On December 10, 2010, ARC voted to move this project from the Critical Natural Lands category to a new category, Critical Historical Resources.

2022

On October 14, 2022, ARC added the 763-acre Double G Legacy project to the project boundary.

Coordination

Sumter County Historical Society is considered an acquisition partner. No partnership funding sources were known at the time this project was added to the priority list.





Management Policy Statement

Although originally proposed for its archaeological values, the Battle of Wahoo Swamp site also supports many rare plant and animal species and examples of intact natural communities. The rocky hardwood hammocks and surrounding wetlands on this project represent high-quality examples of a landscape that has been heavily altered throughout central Florida by conversion to pasture and residential development.

Manager(s)

DEP's Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) proposes to manage the property.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for State Designation

Although the project shows evidence of past uses, its present condition is good quality hardwood hammock, freshwater slough and marsh. The greater significance of the site is in the location of a battle between forces and Seminole Indians during the Second Seminole War. The battle was fought within the project and complements the history of two nearby state parks, Dade Battlefield Historic State Park and Fort Cooper Historic State Park. It is the complementary aspect of this property that makes the project desirable as a unit of the state park system. Management of the project as a unit of the state park system is based on acquiring fee title.

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

Management is generally expected to entail basic resource management, such as securing and protecting the property, until a management plan is completed. As the project is in a relatively natural state, there will not be a need for any high-level resource restoration as can be the case with many projects. Prudent control of public access will be needed to protect and preserve any historic elements of the site.

Management should provide for uses and recreational activities that are compatible with the protection of rare and sensitive resources.

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

Once the project is acquired and assigned to DRP, the acquired lands will be secured and management planning implemented. There is no infrastructure on the site. Access for low-intensity, resource-based recreation will be initially accommodated and may include the installation of a starter kit at an appropriate time and location. At some future date, a historic reenactment of the battle may be included in the interpretive element of the site.

Revenue-generating Potential

No significant revenue is expected to be generated initially. As public use is increased and interpretive programs, particularly reenactment programs, are implemented, revenue is expected to be generated.





The degree of any future revenue generated would depend on the nature and extent of public use and facilities placed on the land.

Cooperators in Management Activities

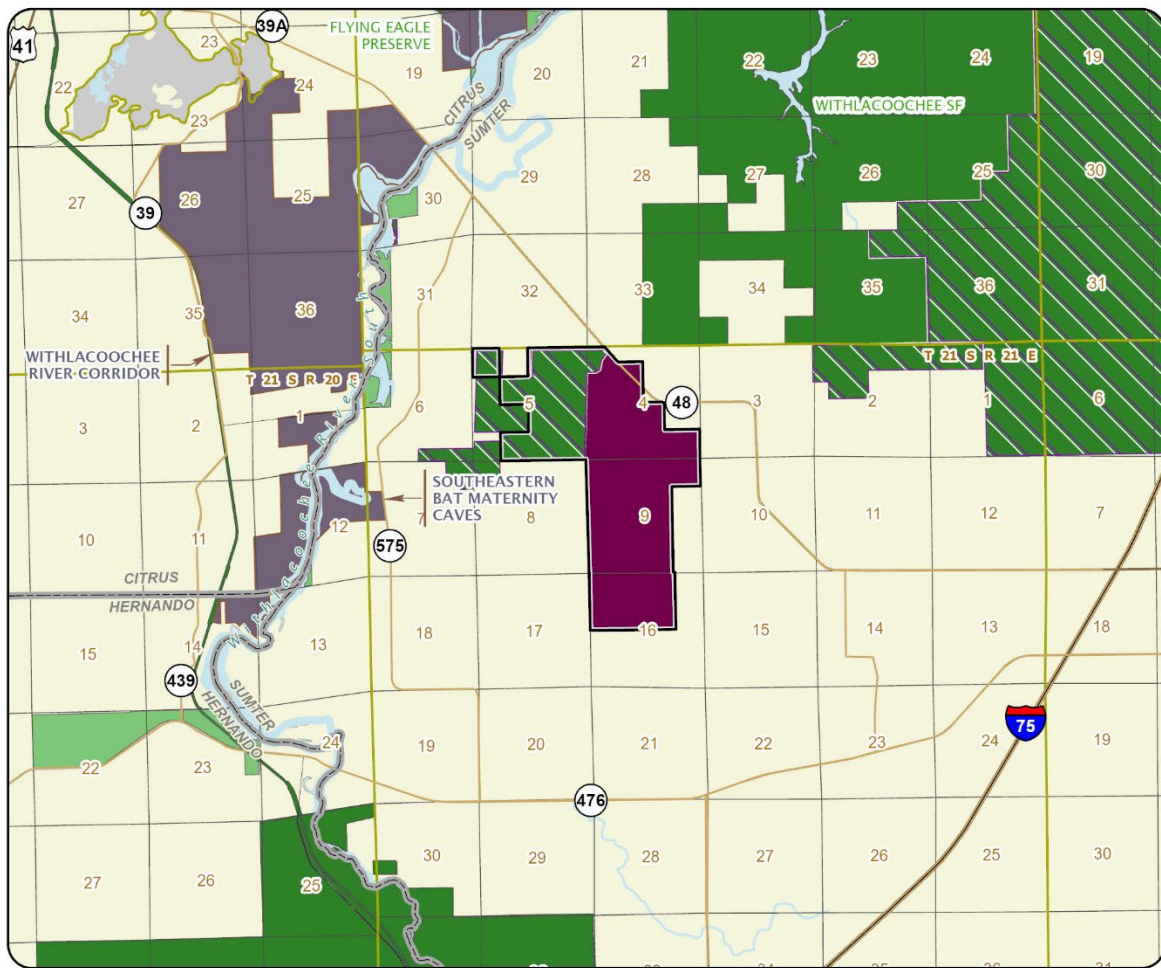
No local government or others are recommended for management of this project. DRP will cooperate with and seek the advice of other state agencies, local government entities and interested parties as appropriate.

Management Cost Summary

<u>DRP</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	CARL Trust Fund	not provided
Salary (1 FTE)	\$28,000	not provided
OPS	\$0	not provided
Expense	\$30,000	not provided
OCO	\$60,000	not provided
FCO	\$350,000	not provided
TOTAL	\$468,000	not provided

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





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