

Larkin Ranch

Less-Than-Fee

Pasco County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	<i>2024</i>
<i>Project Acres</i>	<i>1,075</i>
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	<i>1,075</i>
<i>2024 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	<i>\$3,512,268</i>

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Larkin Ranch project provides habitat for species of conservation concern including gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*), southern fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger niger*) and southeastern American kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus*). Additionally, the project protects groundwater recharge areas and a working landscape that provides a strategic buffer to nearby conservation areas in a rapidly growing area of Pasco County.

General Description

The Larkin Ranch project is a single tract held by a single owner, totaling 1,067 acres one mile west of Dade City. The property is a few miles west of a complex of managed areas including Withlacoochee State Forest, Green Swamp, Colt Creek State Park and Little Gator Creek Wildlife and Environmental Area.

Approximately 38% of the project is in natural or semi-natural condition, the primary natural feature being a complex of marshes and open water that includes Sandbar Lake and Knee Deep Lake. There are a few isolated areas of xeric hammock and mesic flatwoods, the latter of which shows former evidence of fire.

As a working cattle ranch, the largest landcover type on the property (47%) is improved pasture, surrounding the Sandbar Lake/marsh complex on virtually all sides. A few upland areas not in pasture are successional hardwood forest, likely former pine savannas historically cleared. Small, developed areas are found in several parts of the property including a complex of farm buildings, residence, dining/common building and associated bunk house, and ranch headquarters building. Invasive plants are widespread over much of the property, although pastures are relatively free of invasive plants.

Evidence of imperiled and rare species observed on site include southern fox squirrel, gopher tortoise burrows and southeastern pocket gopher (*Geomys pinetis pinetis*) mounds.



FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Bald eagle	G5/S3
Southeastern fox squirrel	G5T5/S3

Public Use

The Larkin Ranch project is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition with no public access.

Acquisition Planning**2024**

On April 12, 2024, the Acquisition and Restoration Council voted to add the Larkin Ranch project to the 2025 Florida Forever Priority List.

Management Policy Statement

As a less-than-fee acquisition, the Larkin Ranch project would be managed by the landowner as outlined in the conservation easement.

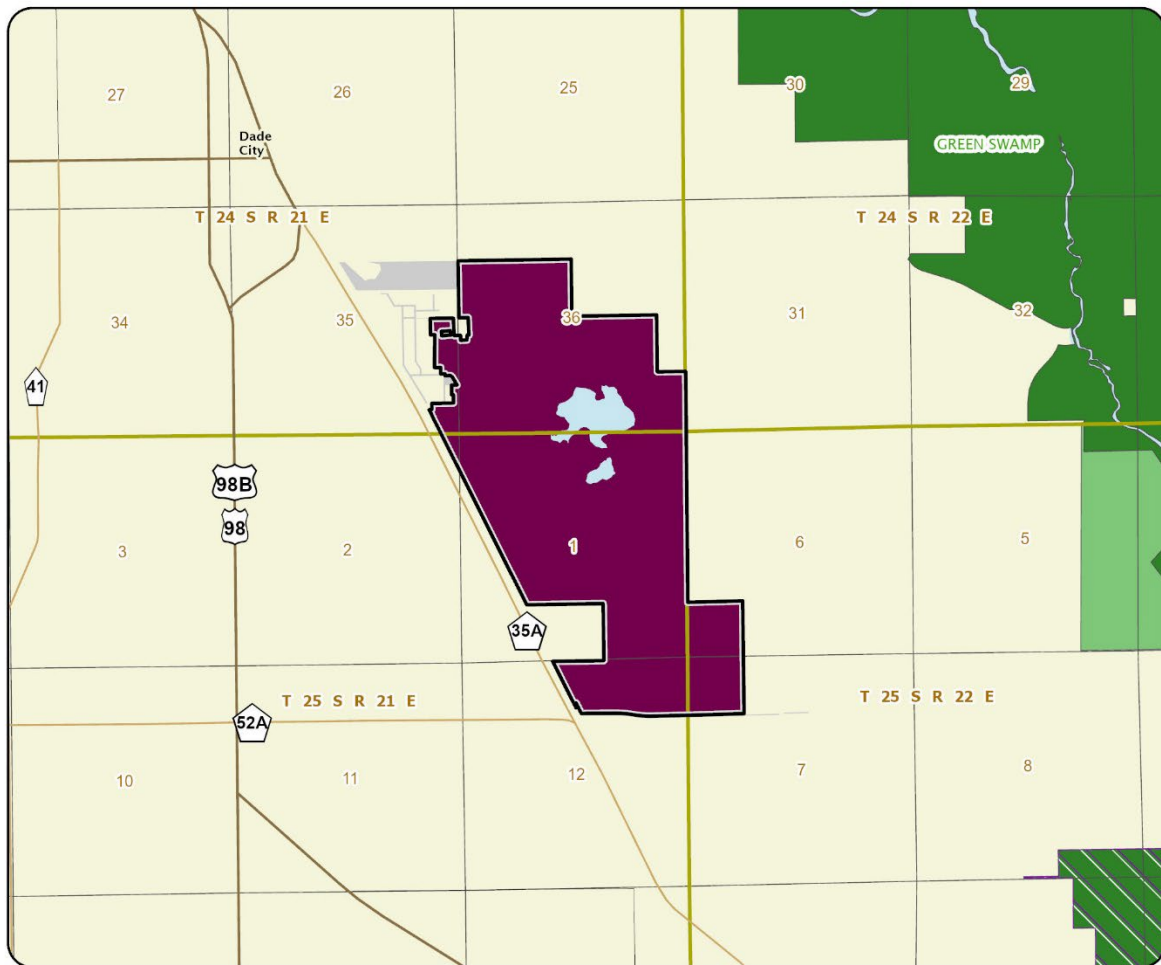
Manager(s)

If acquired as less-than-fee, management responsibility of the Larkin Ranch project would remain with the landowner. Periodic monitoring of the site's management to confirm continued conservation easement compliance would be coordinated by the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Division of State Lands.

Management Prospectus

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LARKIN RANCH

PASCO COUNTY

