

# Adams Ranch

Less-Than-Fee

Osceola and St. Lucie Counties

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	<i>2007</i>
<i>Project Acres</i>	<i>34,540</i>
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	<i>10,472</i>
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	<i>24,068</i>
<i>2025 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	<i>\$101,975,611</i>

## Purpose for State Acquisition

The goal of the Adams Ranch Florida Forever project is to protect the site's open rangeland, native prairie and portions of working ranchland managed to allow for the continued protection of rare and imperiled species. The project will also buffer the Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area from development and landscape fragmentation and facilitate resource management practices.

## General Description

The Adams Ranch project is comprised of two disjunct parcels in southern Osceola County and northern St. Lucie County. Adams Ranch is a working ranch with large areas of improved pasture used for beef cattle and sod production.

The northwestern boundary fronts Lake Marian for 1.3 miles. The project stretches east through the center of the entire Adams Ranch holding, which is bracketed to the north and south with Adams Ranch, Inc. property and bounded on the east by Peavine Road. Avon Park Air Force Range and the Bombing Range Ridge Florida Forever project is no more than 10 miles to the west of the project. The Mills Ranch and Escape Ranch conservation easements (St. Johns River Water Management District) lie approximately 3.5 miles to the east. Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park is approximately 8.5 miles to the south.

The natural communities present within the matrix of improved pasture include basin marsh, depression marsh, dome swamp, dry prairie, mesic flatwoods, prairie hammock and scrubby flatwoods. Many of these are in good condition, even though they are impacted by cattle and a network of roads and drainage ditches that have altered the hydrology.





Nearly 60 percent of the area is designated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as a Strategic Habitat Conservation Area for listed species. Adams Ranch also provides habitat for many neotropical migrant bird species and game species like wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) and northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*).

Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) Element Occurrence Summary

<b><u>FNAI Elements</u></b>	<b><u>Score</u></b>
Eastern indigo snake	G2G3/S2?
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Swallow-tailed kite	G5/S2
Bald eagle	G5/S3
Wood stork	G4/S2
Florida burrowing owl	G4T3/S3
Bachman's sparrow	G3/S3
Crested caracara	G5/S2
Snowy egret	G5/S3
Southeastern fox squirrel	G5T5/S3
Osprey	G5/S3S4
Little blue heron	G5/S4

**Public Use**

Adams Ranch is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide public access. Due to the lack of public access, there will not be any public resource-based outdoor recreation potential for the project.

**Acquisition Planning**

Adams Ranch was originally part of a larger proposal (55,000 acres) submitted to the Conservation and Recreational Lands program in 1986 by FNAI. A portion of the original proposal is now part of Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area, but the majority remains in private ownership.

**2007**

On June 15, 2007, the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) added Adams Ranch to the Florida Forever Priority List. This less-than-fee project was sponsored by The Nature Conservancy in a proposal submitted on December 29, 2006, with 11,023 acres. After a request from landowners to remove the 4-H Ranch, the project had about 7,159 acres and a tax assessed value of \$10,638,040.





## **2010**

In 2010, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) closed on a 795-acre easement owned by the Adams family for \$1,603,510. A portion of this Rural and Family Lands Protection Program easement acquisition (698 acres) was within the boundary of this Florida Forever project.

## **2011**

On December 9, 2011, ARC placed this project into the Less-than-Fee category.

## **2015**

In 2015, FDACS' Rural and Family Lands Protection Program closed on an additional 1,536 acres, 154 of which were within the project boundary.

On October 9, 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established the Adams Ranch conservation easement (662.73 acres).

## **2017**

On December 15, 2017, ARC approved reduction of the project boundary by 3,898 acres. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) received a request from the new owners of what had been the 4-H Ranch, the Bexley Ranch Land Trust, to remove the land they had purchased from the project boundary. This change eliminates a potential connection to the Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area. The project still connects the existing DACS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Adams Ranch conservation easements to the southeast.

## **2021**

On October 8, 2021, ARC members approved the Adams Ranch II proposal and voted to add 27,342 acres in Osceola and St. Lucie counties to the boundary of the Adams Ranch project.

### Coordination

The Nature Conservancy and Osceola County are partners in this project.

### Management Policy Statement

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





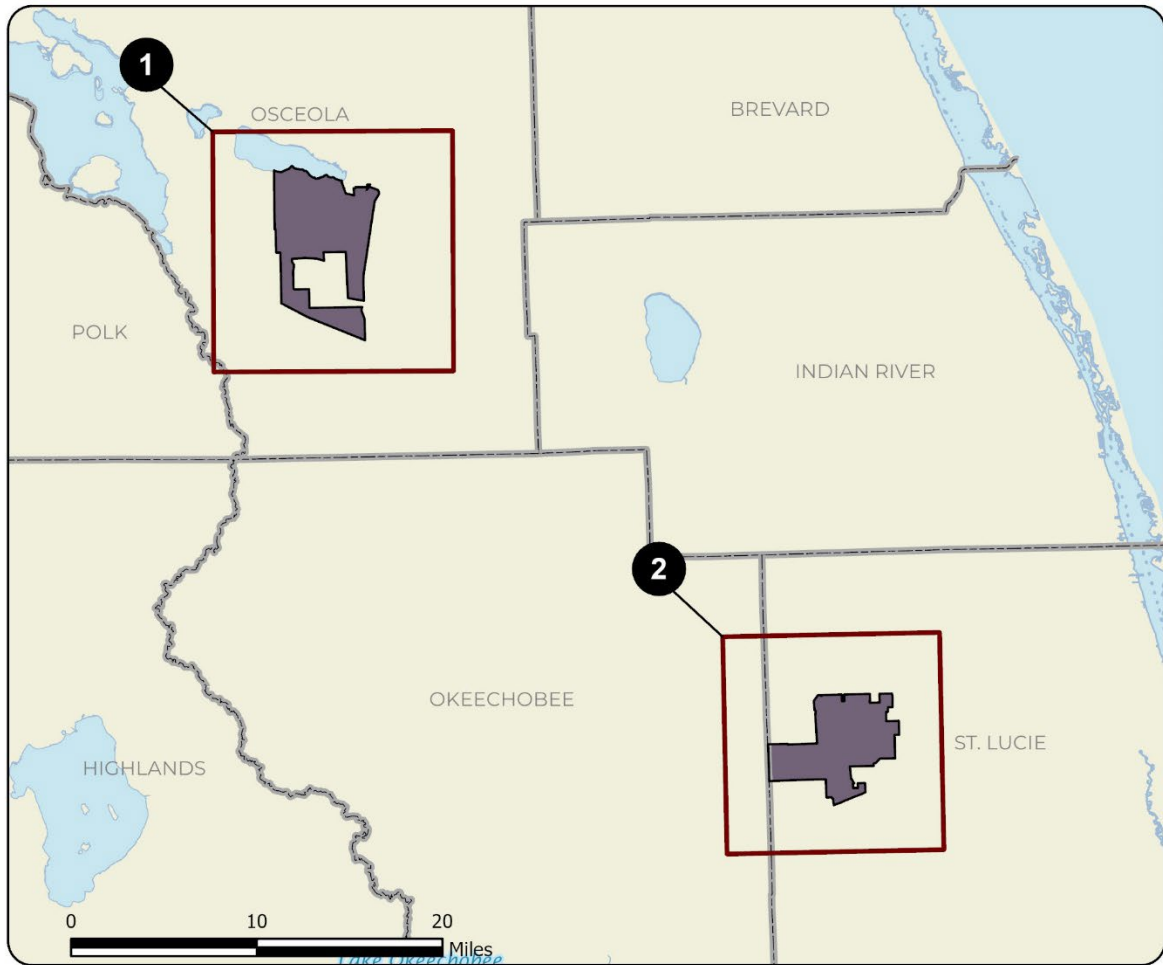
### Manager(s)

If acquired as less-than-fee, management of Adams Ranch would remain with the landowner. Periodic monitoring of the site's management to confirm continued compliance with the conditions of the conservation easement would be coordinated by DEP's Division of State Lands.

### Management Prospectus

DEP's Division of State Lands will periodically monitor the conservation easement, while the management will be conducted by the property owner.

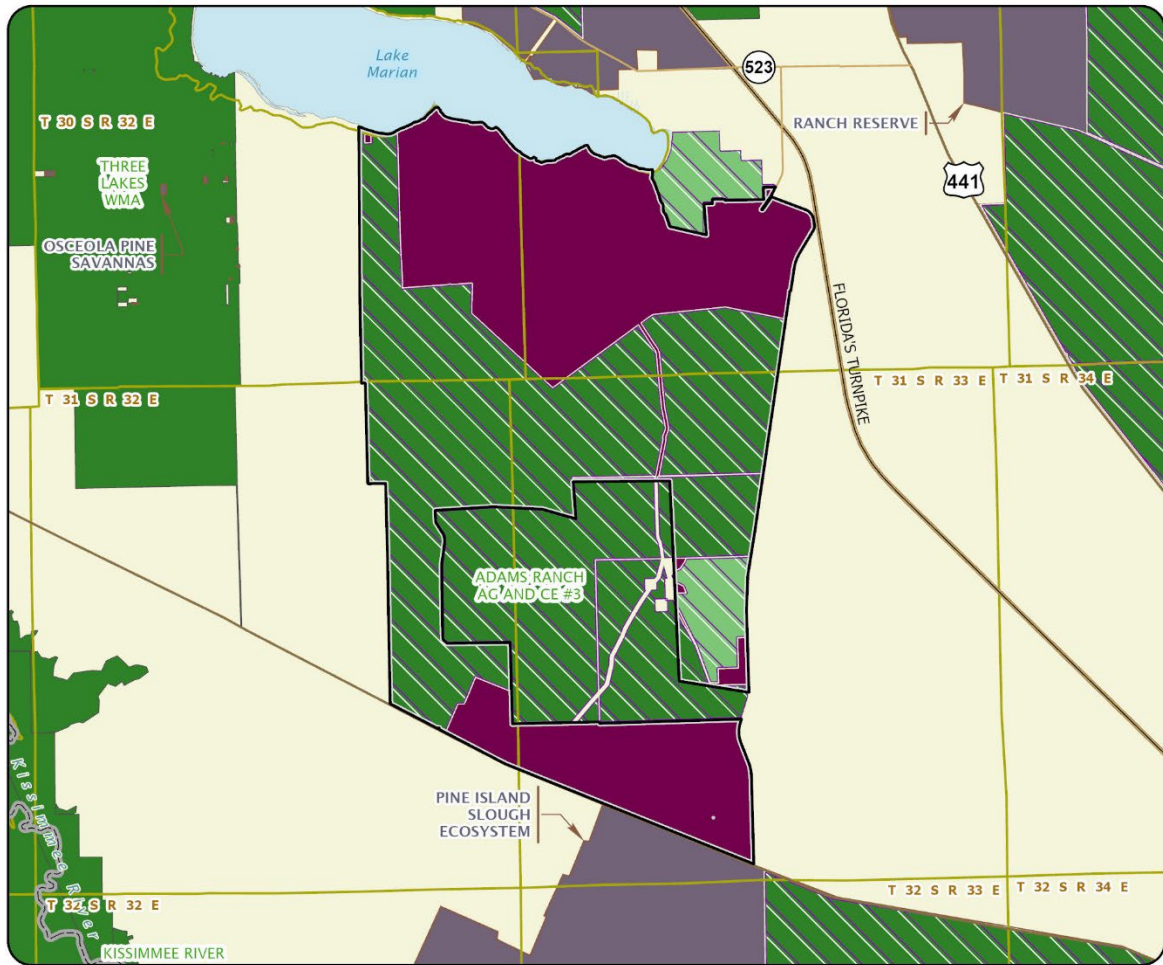




**ADAMS RANCH: OVERVIEW**

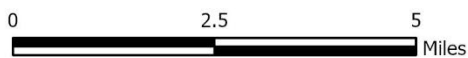
**OSCEOLA AND ST. LUCIE COUNTIES**

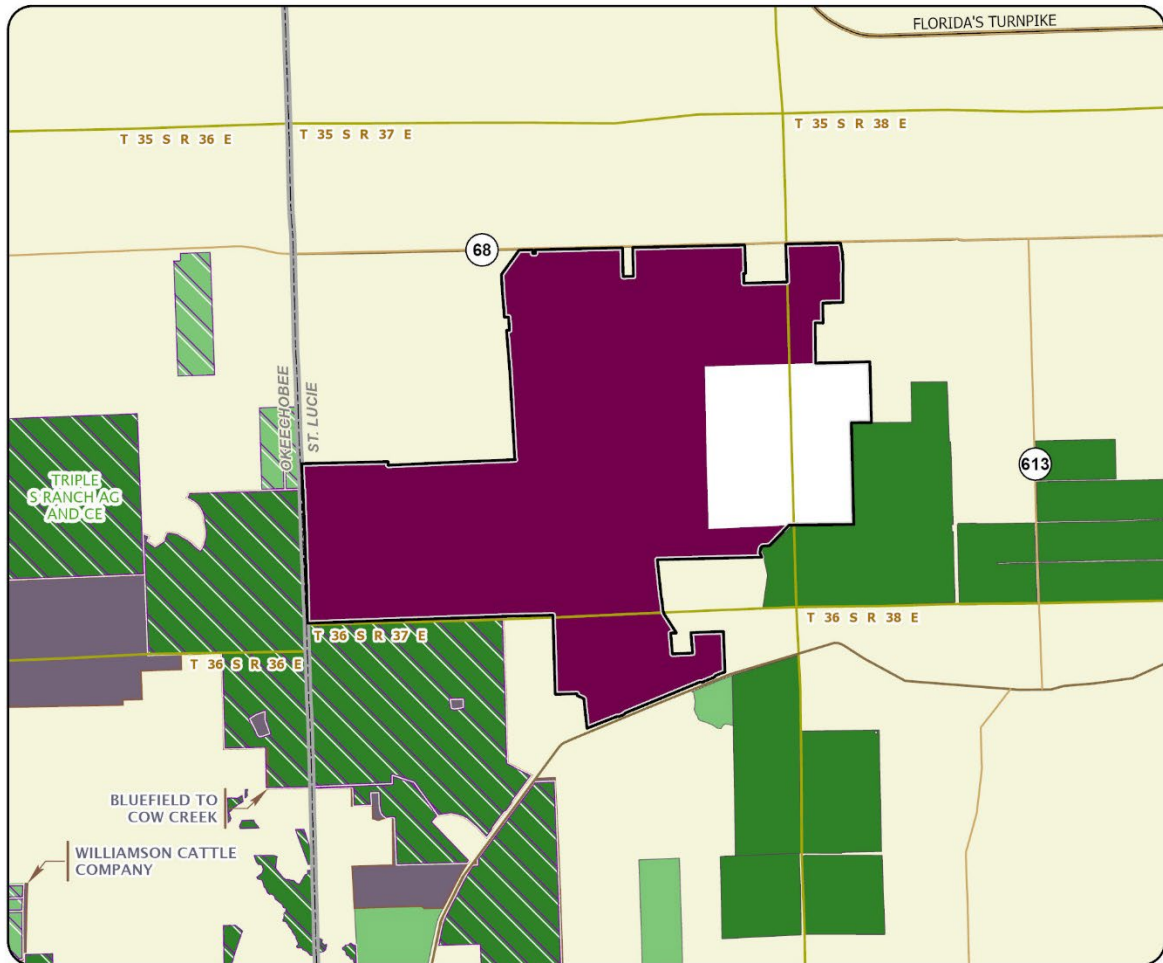




ADAMS RANCH: MAP 1

OSCEOLA COUNTY





ADAMS RANCH: MAP 2

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

-  Florida Forever Project Boundary
-  Essential Parcels Remaining
-  Other Florida Forever Projects
-  State Conservation Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands
-  Other Public Lands
-  Less-Than-Fee Acquisition

