

Pinhook Swamp

Critical Natural Lands

Baker, Columbia and Hamilton Counties

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	<i>1992</i>
<i>Project Acres</i>	<i>189,631</i>
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	<i>150,979</i>
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	<i>38,652</i>
<i>2025 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	<i>\$69,898,247</i>

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Pinhook Swamp project will protect and restore a natural area of pine flatwoods and swamps linking the Osceola National Forest, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and the Suwannee River. The project will conserve a huge unpopulated tract of land for wildlife including the Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*). The project will help to maintain the water flows to the Okefenokee Swamp, Suwannee River and St. Marys River and provide the public with a large, near-wilderness tract to enjoy recreational activities such as hunting and fishing.

General Description

The Pinhook Swamp project consists of a large tract of mostly wet flatwoods, floodplain swamp and floodplain forest between Osceola National Forest and Okefenokee Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. It provides a landscape linkage between these managed areas, increases protection for wetlands and flatwoods and preserves and provides habitat for numerous rare and imperiled species. The project is connected to the Suwannee River, St. Marys River and Okefenokee Swamp. The archaeological and historic value of the project is low to moderate. The greatest threats to the area are intensive silviculture and mining. The Deep Creek Drainage Tract protects buffer areas of four tributaries of the Suwannee River and much of the watershed of Deep Creek; it also serves as a corridor between the Osceola National Forest, Big Shoals State Park and Suwannee River Water Management District lands along the river.





Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
Florida sandhill crane	G5T2/S2
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Swallow-tailed kite	G5/S2
Suwannee alligator snapping turtle	G2/S2
Carpenter frog	G4/S1
<i>Large rosebud orchid*</i>	G4/S1
<i>Pondspice*</i>	G3/S2
Many-lined salamander	G5/S1
Blackbanded sunfish	G3/S1S3
Gopher frog	G2G3/S3
Suwannee cooter	G5T3/S3

**Plant species are in italics*

Public Use

The Pinhook Swamp project is designated as a forest with such uses as fishing, hunting, canoeing, camping and hiking. The Deep Creek site will be designated for use as a state park and a state forest with uses like fishing, boating, hunting, camping, hiking and environmental education. Acquisition would also help complete the Florida National Scenic Trail, a statewide non-motorized trail that crosses several Florida Forever project sites. The trail is a congressionally designated national scenic trail.

Acquisition Planning

The large Rayonier tract connecting the Osceola National Forest to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge has been acquired by the state. It will be used as the basis for a land-and-minerals exchange with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Pinhook Swamp: Phase I (essential) consists of large tracts adjacent to Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and Osceola National Forest — J.W. Langdale Woodlands, Inc. and Jefferson Smurfit Corp./Carnegie U.S. Steel Pension Funds. Phase II is the “Impassable Bay” tract — ITT Rayonier/Sam Summers [acquired by USFS through The Nature Conservancy (TNC)] and all remaining owners.

1996

On July 16, 1996, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council added 18,100 acres to the project boundary. Additionally, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council approved the addition of federal mineral rights under state-owned lands to the Pinhook Swamp project for exchange purposes.





2000

On August 22, 2000, the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) added 25,000 acres to the Pinhook Swamp project boundary.

2001

At the April 6, 2001, ARC meeting, the Suwannee Buffers, Deep Creek Site was combined with the Pinhook Swamp project boundary.

On August 30, 2001, Suwannee River Water Management District established the Deep Creek Plantation conservation easement (1,192 acres), of which approximately 667 acres are within the project boundary.

2002

On October 24, 2002, ARC added 4,585 acres to the project boundary.

2004

On June 4, 2004, ARC added 31,225 acres in Baker County, previously assumed to be included as part of a 2000 boundary amendment, to the project boundary.

The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund acquired 8,311 acres in August 2005 through five conservation easements.

2011

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

2020

On December 11, 2020, ARC approved the addition of 147.5 acres in Hamilton County to the project boundary.

2022

On October 14, 2002, ARC approved the addition of three parcels totaling approximately 950.5 acres in Columbia County with a tax assessed market value of \$889,668 (Greene Addition).

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) acquired in fee 141.96 acres in Hamilton County that will be managed as part of Big Shoals State Forest.

2023





In October 2023, ARC approved two boundary amendments to the project boundary. The first boundary amendment added six parcels with approximately 523 acres in Columbia County and the second amendment added four parcels with 456 acres also in Columbia County.

In December 2023, ARC approved the addition of three parcels totaling approximately 996.5 acres in Columbia County.

2024

In February 2024, ARC approved the addition of five parcels totaling approximately 978 acres in Columbia County.

In June 2024, ARC approved the addition of 10 parcels totaling approximately 637.47 acres in Hamilton County.

On August 26, 2024, DEP acquired a 1,474.47-acre conservation easement in Columbia County from Audrey Ann Greene and Mary Ann Greene.

In September 2024, ARC approved the addition of three parcels totaling approximately 372.79 acres in Columbia County.

2025

In February 2025, ARC approved the addition of seven parcels totaling approximately 731 acres in Columbia County and one parcel totaling approximately 41 acres in Hamilton County to the project boundary.

On February 6, 2025, DEP acquired, in fee, 1,620.5 acres in Columbia County from Sidney Lord Jackson Jr.

Coordination

Pinhook Swamp is a shared acquisition with USFS. TNC is an intermediary in the purchase of some tracts for the federal government. The Deep Creek site is on Suwannee River Water Management District's five-year plan for land acquisition. The St. Johns River Water Management District is also considered a partner.

Management Policy Statement

Pinhook Swamp: The primary goals of management of the Pinhook 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 to enhance or protect significant surface water, coastal, recreational, timber, fish or wildlife resources; and to provide areas for nature-based recreation.





Suwannee Buffers (Deep Creek): The primary goals of management of this part of the project are: to conserve and protect lands that contain native, relatively unaltered flora and fauna representing a natural area unique to, or scarce within, a region of this state or a larger geographic area; to conserve, protect, manage or restore important ecosystems, landscapes and forests 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 provide areas for nature-based recreation.

Manager(s)

The Florida Forest Service (FFS), DEP's Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) and USFS are the recommended managers.

Management Prospectus: Pinhook Swamp

Qualifications for State Designation

Pinhook Swamp is a large area of timbered flatwoods and swamps between the Osceola National Forest and Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Its large size, strategic location and natural resources qualify it as a state forest, state park and state wildlife management area.

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

Pinhook Swamp is a low-to-moderate-need tract.

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

A portion of the site would be managed under National Forests in Florida's Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) and a portion would be managed by the state. Management activities will focus on site security, resource inventory and management and prescribed fire.

Revenue-generating Potential

In cooperation with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), this area may provide revenues from quota hunts. FFS will be working with FWC to obtain a projected revenue. State and national forest user fees are other sources of revenue.

Cooperators in Management Activities

FWC and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be cooperators in managing the area.





Management Prospectus: Suwannee Buffers

Qualifications for State Designation

The southern part of the Deep Creek Drainage tract has unique resources that qualify it as a unit of the state park system. The project's size and diversity make it highly desirable for use and management as a state forest.

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

The southern portion of the Deep Creek Drainage tract is a high-need management area including public recreational use and development compatible with resource management. Areas to be managed by FFS have no known major disturbances. The management intensity is expected to be typical for a state forest.

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

Within the first year after acquisition of the areas to be managed by DRP, management activities will concentrate on site security, natural and cultural resource protection and efforts toward the development of a plan for long-term public use and resource management. FFS will provide public access for low-intensity, non-facilities-related outdoor recreation. Initial activities will include securing the site, providing public and fire management access, inventorying resources and removing trash. FFS will provide access to the public while protecting sensitive resources. The project's natural resources and threatened and endangered species will be inventoried to provide the basis for a management plan.

Long-range plans of FFS will generally be directed toward restoring disturbed areas to their original conditions as well as protecting threatened and endangered species. An all-season burning program will use existing roads, black lines, foam lines and natural breaks to contain fires when possible. Timber management will include improvement thinning and regeneration harvests. Plantations will be thinned and reforested with appropriate species. Stands will not have a targeted rotation age. Infrastructure will primarily be in disturbed areas and will be the minimum required for management and public access. FFS will promote environmental education.

Revenue-generating Potential

DRP expects no significant revenue to be generated initially. After acquisition, it will be several years before any significant public facilities are developed. The amount of any future revenue generated would depend on the nature and extent of public use and facilities. FFS will sell timber as needed to improve or maintain desirable ecosystem conditions. These sales will





provide a variable source of revenue, but the revenue-generating potential for this project is expected to be low.

Management Cost Summary

<u>DRP</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF)	LATF
Salary	\$22,167	\$22,167
OPS	\$14,560	\$14,560
Expense	\$11,400	\$11,400
OCO	\$55,000	\$1,000
FCO	\$85,000	\$0
TOTAL	\$188,127	\$49,127

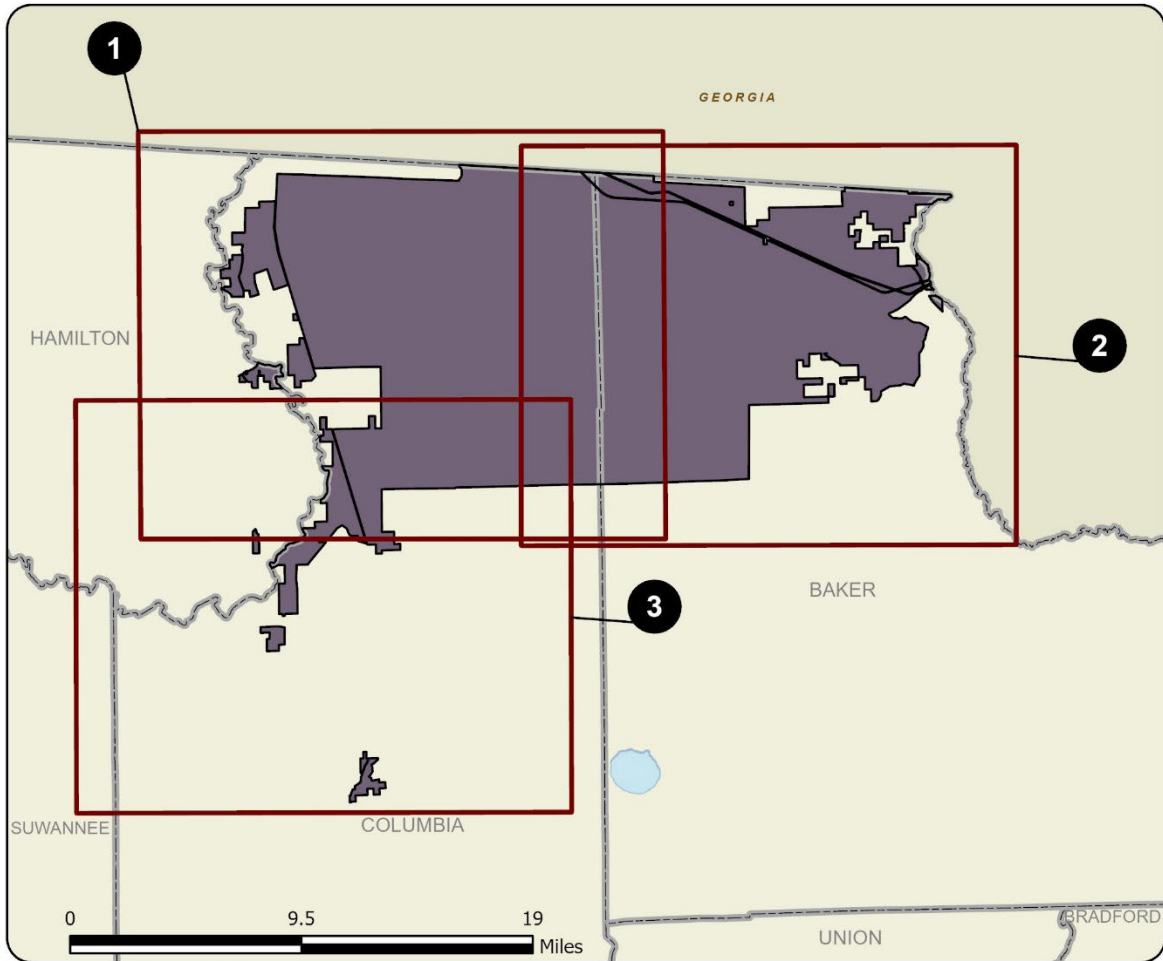
Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted

Management Cost Summary

<u>FFS</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	LATF	LATF
Salary	\$28,140	\$28,140
OPS	\$0	\$0
Expense	\$13,000	\$5,000
OCO	\$81,100	\$2,000
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$122,140	\$35,140

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted



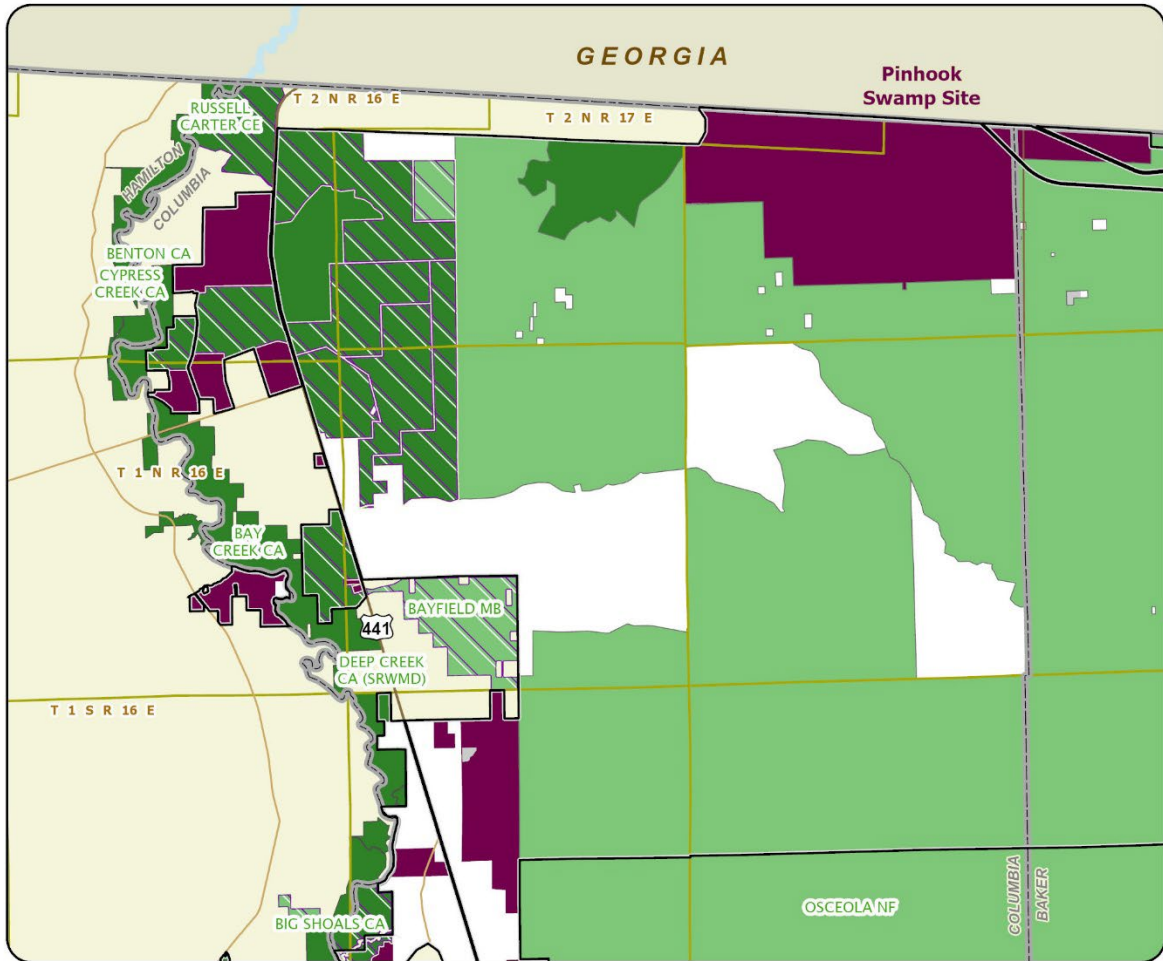


PINHOOK SWAMP: OVERVIEW

BAKER, COLUMBIA, AND HAMILTON COUNTIES

- Map 1 Pinhook Swamp Site
- Map 2 Pinhook Swamp Site
- Map 3 Deep Creek Drainage Tract Site

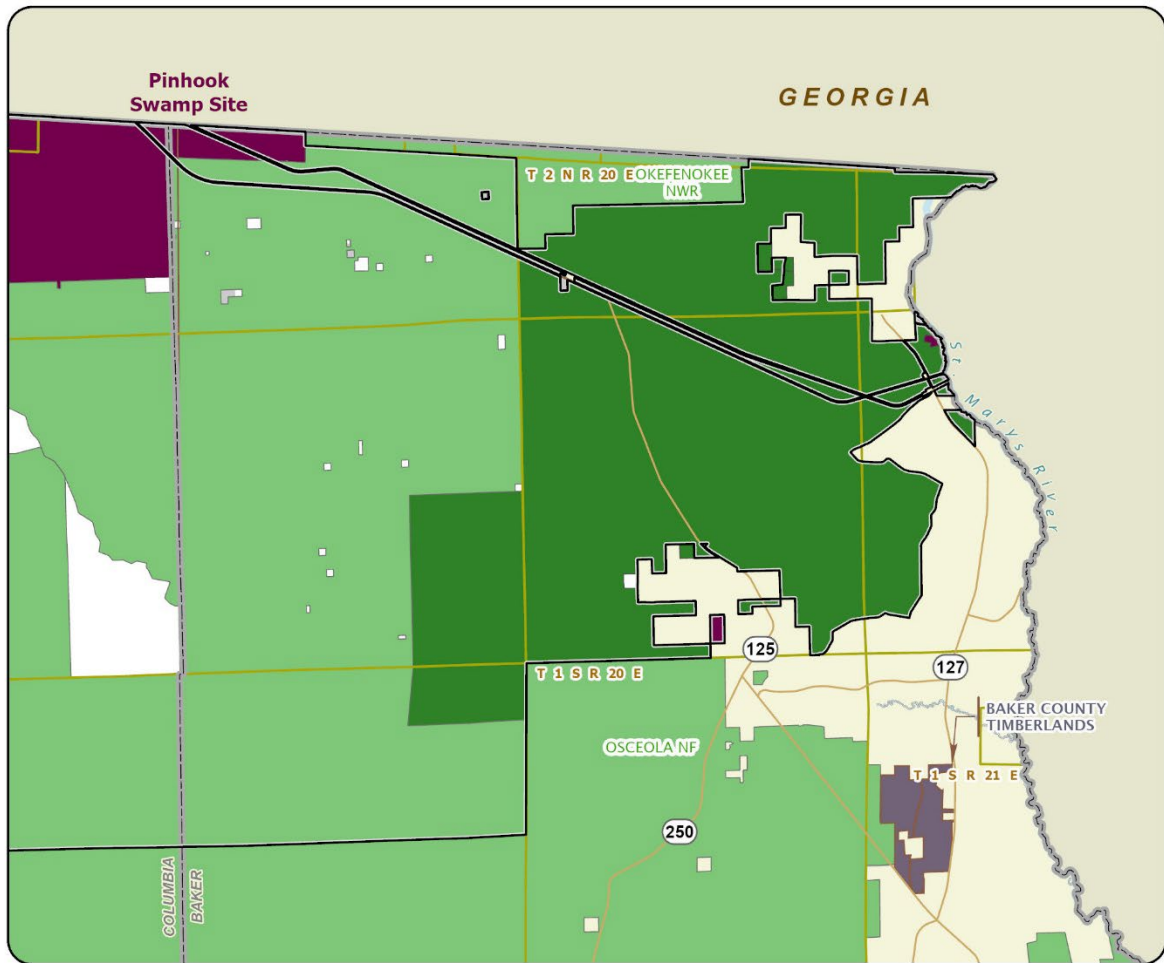




PINHOOK SWAMP: MAP 1

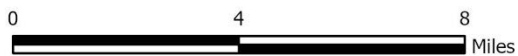
BAKER, COLUMBIA, AND HAMILTON COUNTIES

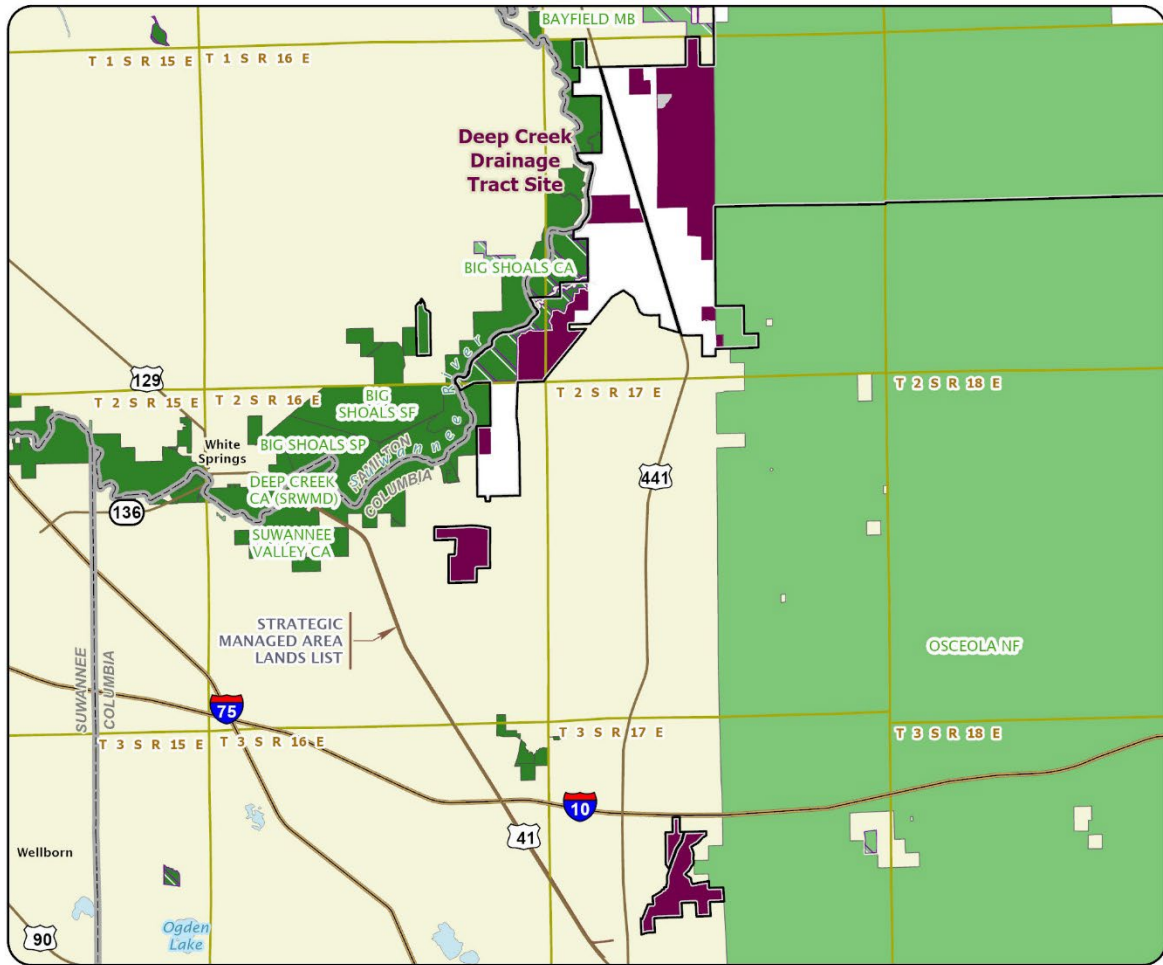




PINHOOK SWAMP: MAP 2

BAKER AND COLUMBIA COUNTIES





PINHOOK SWAMP: MAP 3

COLUMBIA AND HAMILTON COUNTIES

