

# Adams Ranch

Less-Than-Fee

Osceola

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| <i>Year Added to Priority List</i>            | 2007          |
| <i>Project Acres</i>                          | 34,540        |
| <i>Acquired Acres</i>                         | 1,549         |
| <i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>                 | \$1,442,155   |
| <i>Remaining Project Acres</i>                | 32,990        |
| <i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i> | \$117,550,812 |

## Purpose for State Acquisition

The goal of the Adams Ranch Florida Forever project is to protect the open rangeland and native prairie that support many rare species with large habitat requirements within Adams Ranch. and to protect portions of a working ranch managed according to historic traditions that allow for the continued protection of an important and biodiverse assemblage of imperiled vertebrate wildlife. The project will also buffer the Three Lakes WMA from development, avoiding fragmentation of the landscape and facilitate resource management on a landscape scale through prescribed fire, maintenance of hydrological regimes, and habitat protection.

This project meets the Florida Forever goals of increasing protection of biodiversity by acquiring priority habitat for such rare species as the eastern indigo snake and the bald eagle; and increases the acreage of landscape linkages and conservation corridors, by contributing connection to the nearby Adams Ranch conservation easements of the FWS and DEP. Other Florida Forever goals are to protect waters and wetlands of the state, and aquifer recharge.

## General Description

The Adams Ranch project is located in southern Osceola County. 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 Bombing Range Ridge Florida Forever project are no more than 10 miles to the west of the project. The Mills Ranch and Escape Ranch Conservation Easements lie approximately 3.5 miles to the east. Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park is approximately 8.5 miles to the south.

Adams Ranch is a working ranch with large acreages of improved pasture for beef cattle and sod production. Improved pasture covers approximately 34 percent of the proposed area. The great majority has been planted with Bahiagrass.

The natural communities present within the matrix of agricultural land 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 hydrology.

Nearly 60 percent of the area is designated by the FWC as a SHCA for a variety of rare and imperiled species. Adams Ranch not only provides habitat for listed species, but also for many species of neotropical migrant birds species during the spring and fall migration. Adams Ranch also provides good habitat for important for game species including white-tailed deer, wild turkey and northern bobwhite quail that depend on the dry and wet prairie, mesic and scrubby flatwoods, marshes and hammocks for cover, roosting nesting and forage.

### FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

| FNAI Elements         | Score   |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Eastern indigo snake  | G3/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   |
| Osprey                | G5/S3S4 |
| Little blue heron     | G5/S4   |
| Tricolored heron      | G5/S4   |

### Public Use

Adams Ranch is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide for 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 CARL program in 1986 by the FNAI. A portion of the original proposal is now part of Three Lakes WMA, but the majority remains in private ownership.

### **2007**

On June 15, 2007, the ARC added Adams Ranch to the A list of the Florida Forever Priority List. This less-than-fee project was sponsored by TNC in a proposal submitted on December 29, 2006, with 11,023 acres. After the request from landowners to remove the 4-H Ranch, the project has about 7,159 acres and a 2007 assessed taxable value of \$10,638,040.



**2010**

In 2010, the DACS 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, the ARC placed this project into the Florida Forever category of Less-than-Fee projects.

**2015**

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

**2017**

On October 17, 2017, 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, about 3,898 acres, from the project boundary. This reduced the project's size to 7,128. This change eliminates a potential connection to the Three Lakes WMA. The project still connects to the existing Adams Ranch conservation easements of the DACS and the USFWS to the southeast.

**2021**

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

**Coordination**

TNC, Osceola County, and the FNAI 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.

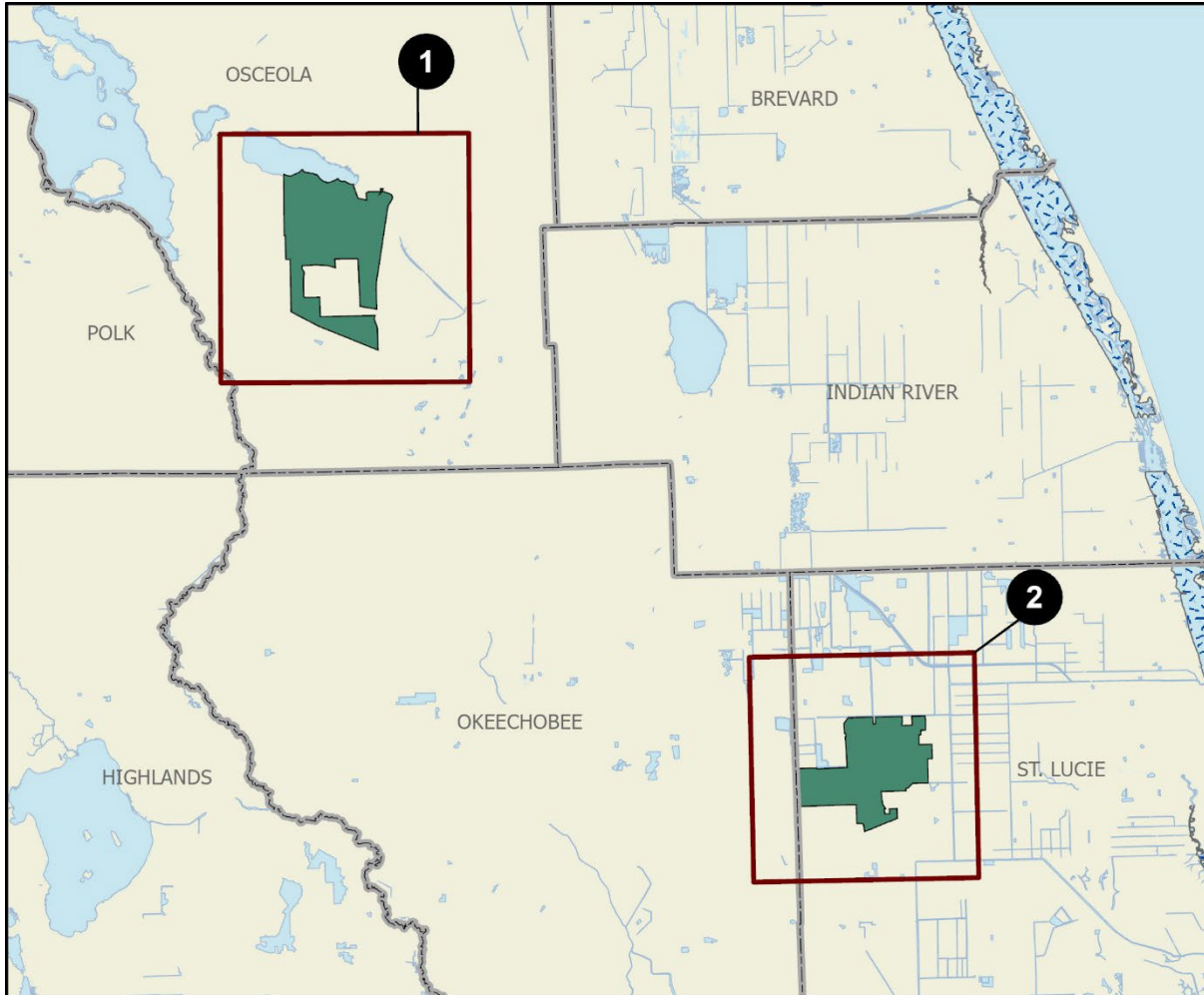
**Manager(s)**

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 OES.

**Management Prospectus**

OES will periodically monitor the conservation easement, while the management will be conducted by the property owner.





**ADAMS RANCH: OVERVIEW**

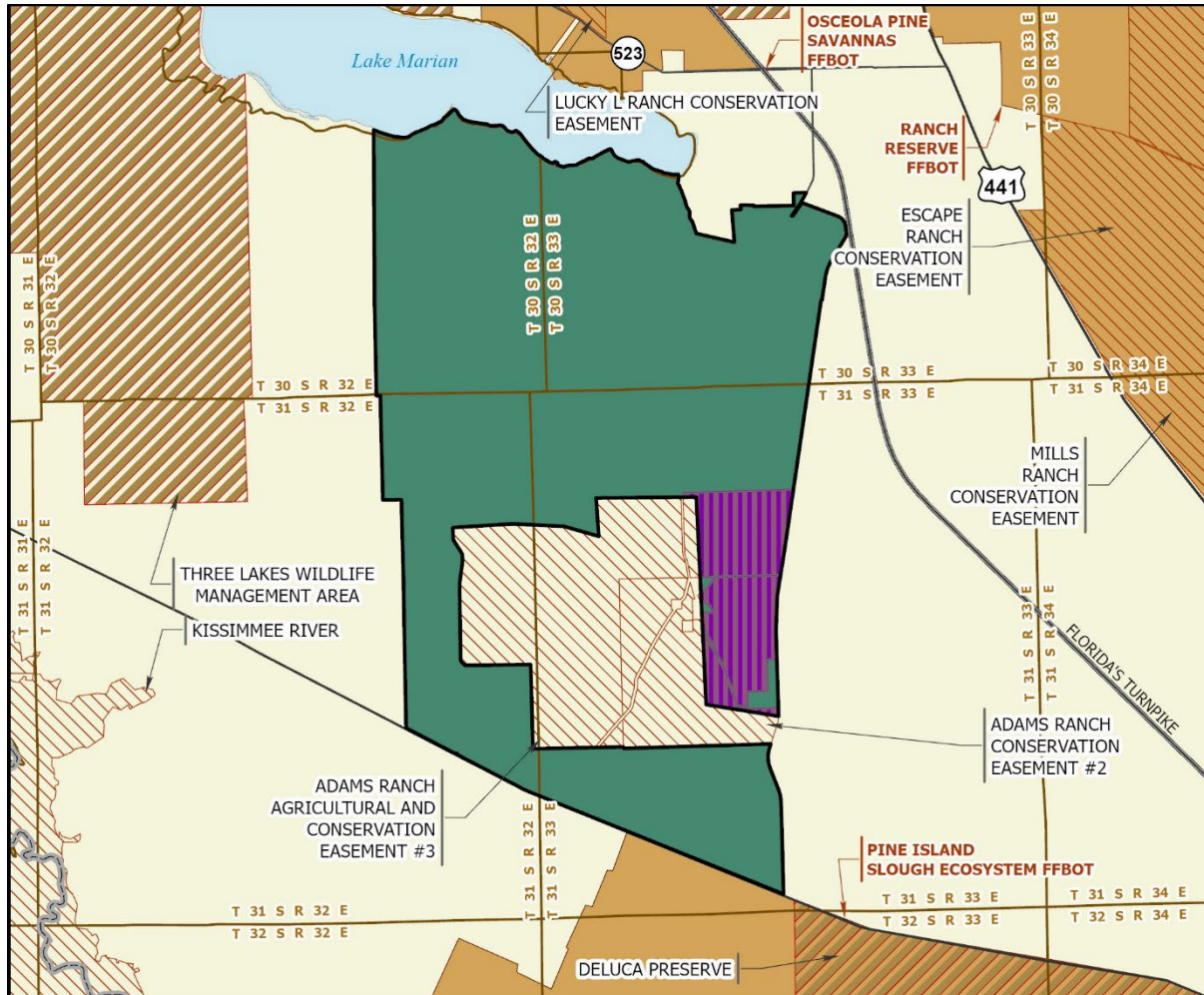
**OSCEOLA AND ST. LUCIE COUNTIES**



FEBRUARY 2022

Map 1: FNAI, February 2022





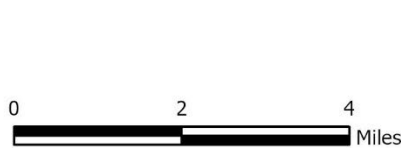
**ADAMS RANCH: MAP 1**

**OSCEOLA COUNTY**

-  Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
-  Acquired for Conservation (Less-Than-Fee)
-  Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
-  State Owned Conservation Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands
-  Other Florida Forever BOT Projects

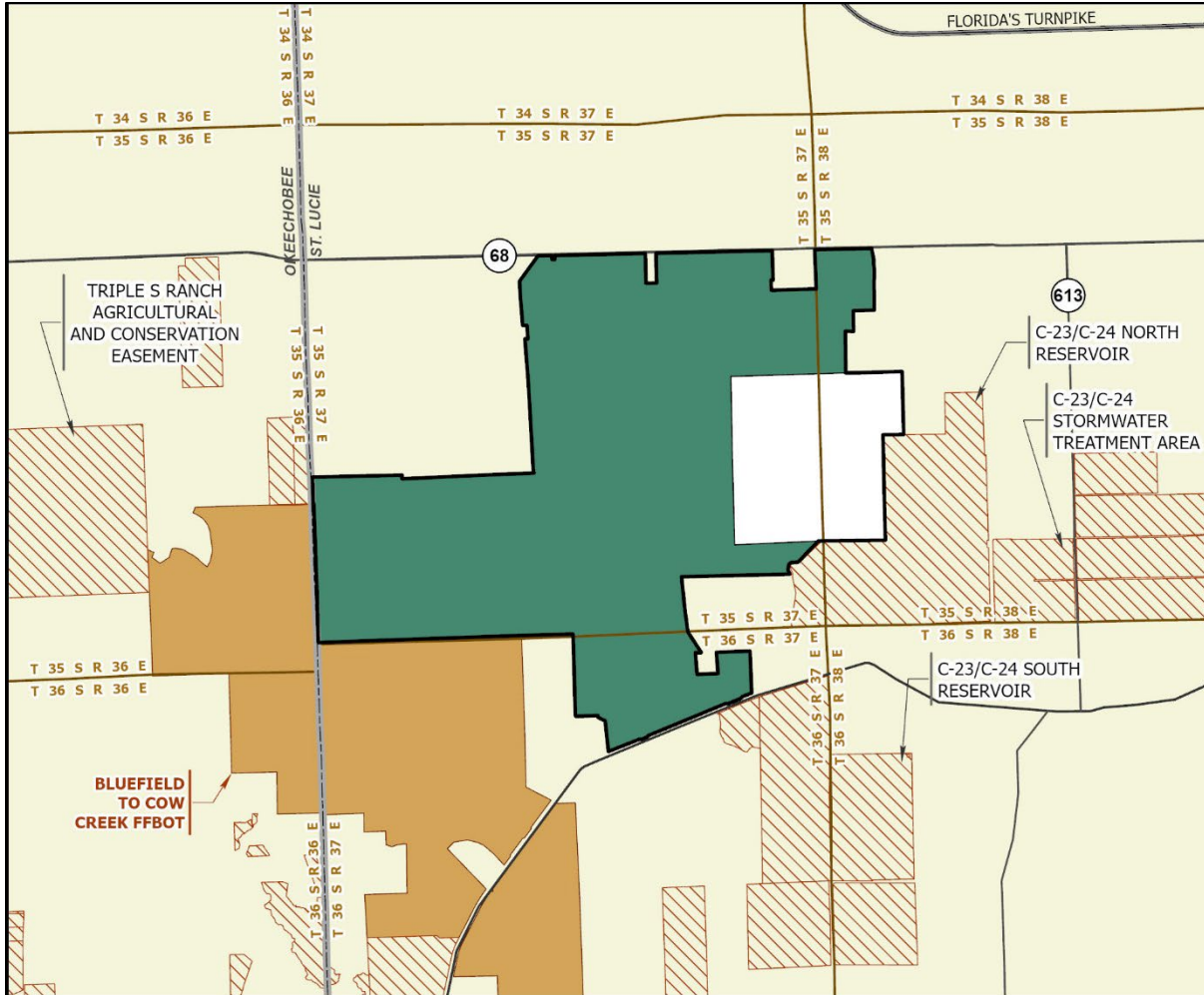


FEBRUARY 2022



Map 2: FNAI, February 2022





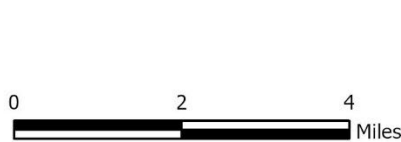
**ADAMS RANCH: MAP 2**

**ST. LUCIE COUNTY**

-  Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
-  Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
-  Other Conservation Lands
-  Other Florida Forever BOT Projects



FEBRUARY 2022



Map 3: FNAI, February 2022