

Catfish Creek

Partnerships & Regional Incentives

Polk

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	1990
<i>Project Acres</i>	19,480
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	16,248
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$49,414,766
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	3,231
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$6,193,067

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Catfish Creek project will protect an especially scenic example of Lake Wales Ridge scrub and a portion of Lake Pierce shoreline. The high, sandy Lake Wales Ridge, stretching south from near Orlando almost to Lake Okeechobee, was originally covered with a mosaic of scrub, flatwoods, wetlands, and lakes. The scrub is unique in the world—it is inhabited by many plants and animals found nowhere else—but it has almost completely been converted to citrus groves and housing developments. The project will allow the public to enjoy camping, fishing, and swimming in this unique and beautiful natural area. It will also protect an important archaeological site on Lake Pierce. The Florida National Scenic Trail, a cross-Florida hiking and non-motorized trail, is also planned to cross this project. The trail is a congressionally designated national scenic trail.

General Description

Catfish Creek is a diverse natural area extending over high scrub ridges, interspersed with lakes, next to the pristine shore of Lake Pierce. Natural communities include sandhill, scrub, scrubby flatwoods, mesic flatwoods, xeric hammock, bottomland hardwood forest, basin swamp, sandhill upland lake, wet flatwoods, blackwater stream, seepage slopes, and floodplain swamp, all in excellent condition. The tract harbors at least 19 rare plant and animal species state listed as endangered or threatened. Rare or endangered animal species include the bald eagle, wood stork, gopher tortoise, and scrub jay. The 1993 addition on Snodgrass Island contains a potentially important archaeological site. The project is threatened by agriculture and eventual residential development.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Florida scrub-jay	G1G2/S1S2
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
Morris' tiny sand-loving scarab	G1/S1
Archbold cembrionid beetle	G1G2/S1S2
Scrub little mole scarab	G1G2/S1S2
<i>Florida blazing star</i>	G2/S2
<i>Lewton's polygala</i>	G2/S2
Nocturnal scrub velvet ant	G2/S2
Sandyland onthophagus beetle	G2/S2
Florida sandhill crane	G5T2/S2
<i>scrub pigeon-wing</i>	G2G3/S2

Public Use

This project is designated for use as a state preserve, with such uses as hiking, camping, fishing, and nature study.

Acquisition Planning

Phases

Phase I: (essential) Rolling Meadows (acquired), TNC (acquired) and Palo Alto (acquired); Phase II: Imagination Farms, Progress Homes (acquired) and K-Rocker. Phase III: Section two which is subdivided (state has acquired all of section consolidated by Bowen).

1992

In 1992, TNC acquired 68 acres in this project and in August 2007 donated it to the state.

1999

On October 21, 1999, the LAMAC added 6,991 acres and designated it as essential.

2002

In August 2002, the ARC added the Rolling Meadows Ranch to the project. On December 5, 2002, the ARC added the K-Rocker Tract to the project.

2003

On December 5, 2003, the ARC moved the project to the Group B list.

2011

On December 9, 2011, the ARC moved the project to the Partnerships and Regional Incentives category of Florida Forever projects.

Coordination

TNC sponsored this project, assisted in providing information in the preparation of the project, and in discussions with some of the major landowners. TNC and SFWMD are considered acquisition partners for this project.



Management Policy Statement

The primary goals of management of the Catfish Creek project are conserving and protecting environmentally unique and irreplaceable 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. Also, the project can conserve and protect significant habitat for native species or endangered and threatened species, provide areas, including recreational trails, for natural-resource- based recreation; and preserve significant archaeological or historical sites.

Manager(s)

DRP will manage the project, less that portion known as Snodgrass Island.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation

The sensitive resources in the Catfish Creek project—sandhills, a large lake, and high-quality scrub with its rare plants and animals—qualify it as a state preserve.

Conditions affecting intensity of management

The project is a low-need management area emphasizing resource protection while allowing compatible public recreational use and development.

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

Within the first year after acquisition, management activities will concentrate on site security, natural and cultural resource protection, and the development of a plan for long-term public use and resource management.

Revenue-generating potential

No significant revenue is expected to be generated initially. After acquisition, it will probably be several years before any significant public use facilities are developed. The amount of any revenue generated will depend on the nature and extent of public use and facilities. With emphasis on resource protection, and with minimal public use, future generated revenues are not expected to be high.

Cooperators in management activities

No local governments or others are recommended for management of this project area.

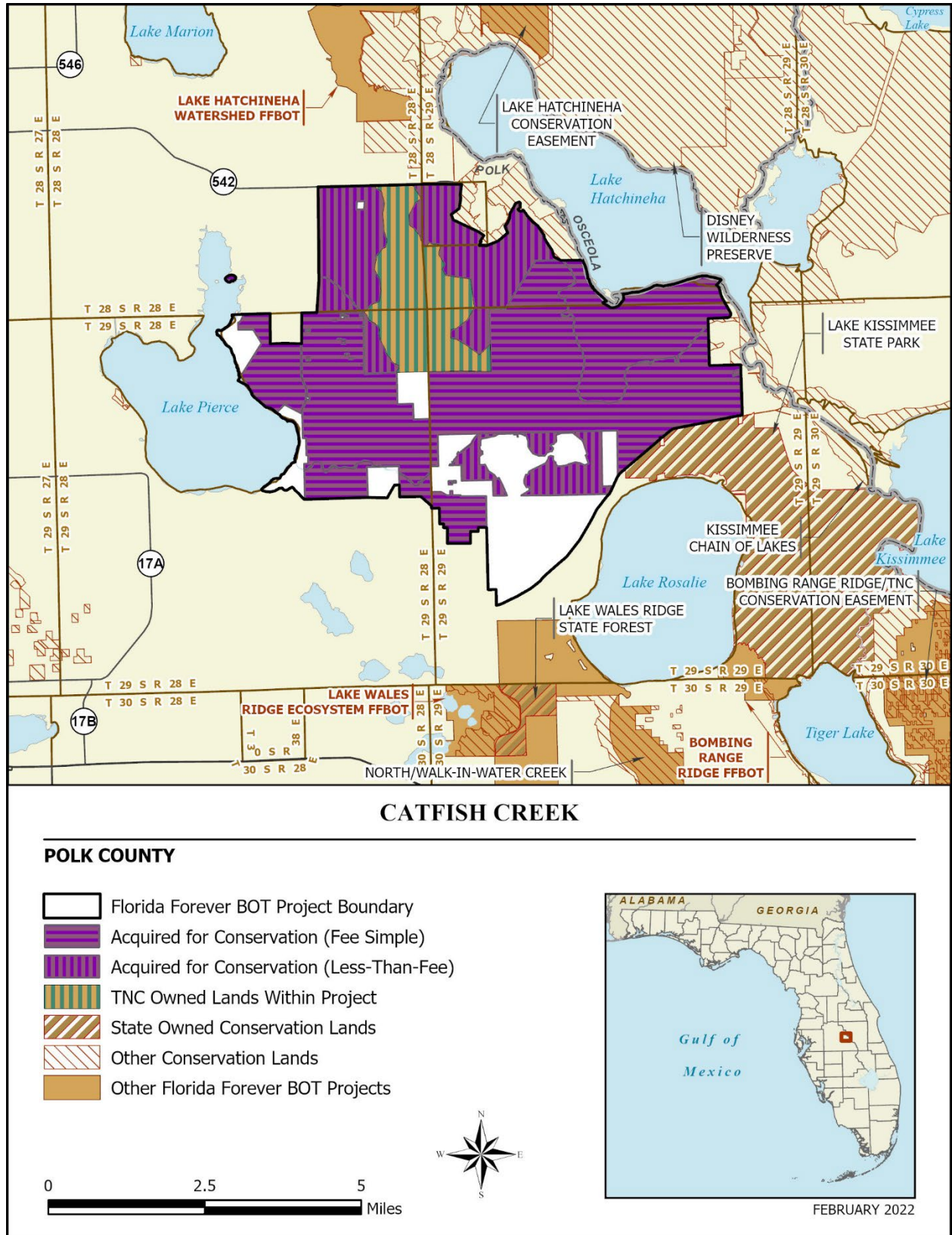


Management Cost Summary

<u>DRP</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	CARL	not provided
Salary	\$22,167	not provided
OPS	\$0	not provided
Expense	\$5,712	not provided
OCO	\$6,978	not provided
FCO	\$8,640	not provided
TOTAL	\$43,497	not provided

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





Map 1: FNAI, February 2022