

# Hall Ranch

## Partnerships & Regional Incentives

Charlotte

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| <i>Year Added to Priority List</i>            | 1997         |
| <i>Project Acres</i>                          | 8,519        |
| <i>Acquired Acres</i>                         | 1,015        |
| <i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>                 | \$0          |
| <i>Remaining Project Acres</i>                | 7,503        |
| <i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i> | \$17,835,657 |

### Purpose for State Acquisition

The Hall Ranch project will preserve a corridor of natural slash pine flatwoods, marshes, and cypress swamps from Charlotte Harbor to Telegraph Swamp. The project will add land to the Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area and protect habitat for species such as the Florida black bear, red-cockaded woodpecker, crested caracara, and southeastern fox squirrel. The project will enlarge a conservation lands along the rapidly growing coast of southwest Florida in which the public can hunt, hike, and camp. It will also protect habitat for Florida black bear and enlarge the area in which the public can hunt, hike, and camp.

### General Description

Hall Ranch, adjacent to Babcock-Webb WMA, includes good quality South Florida slash pine flatwoods and depression marshes, with a few other natural communities. The area is more significant for rare animals like black bear than for plants (no rare plants are known). It includes part of Shell Creek (the water supply for Punta Gorda) and the head of the important Telegraph Swamp. It would contribute significantly to the wildlife corridor coming from the WMA.

No archaeological sites are known. The area is vulnerable to development and conversion to intensive agriculture; since development pressures are low, endangerment is moderate.

### **FNAI Element Occurrence Summary**

| <b>FNAI Elements</b>      | <b>Score</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Florida black bear        | G5T4/S4      |
| Red-cockaded woodpecker   | G3/S2        |
| Crested caracara          | G5/S2        |
| Southeastern fox squirrel | G5T5/S3      |

### Public Use

This project qualifies as a WMA, with uses such as hunting, various sorts of trails, camping, and picnicking, among other activities.

## Acquisition Planning

### **1996**

Negotiations on the essential or core parcel have been unsuccessful and have reached an impasse (or the owners are not willing to consider a sale to the state). This project consists of one major owner—the Hall Ranch Corporation. The essential parcel is the Hall ownership south of State Road 74. There are multiple small ownerships scattered throughout the Hall ownership north of SR 74. This project was ranked for the first time in December 1996.

### **2001**

On April 6, 2001, the ARC transferred this project to the “B” Grouping.

### **2011**

On December 9, 2011, this project was placed in the Partnerships and Regional Incentives category of Florida Forever projects.

### **2018**

In 2018, a 592-acre easement was acquired through the Grassland Reserve Program (federal). The 1,000-acre increase noted for 2018 also includes a 409-acre adjustment that was made to GIS data layer and maps for acreage acquired in the project, where the Babcock/Webb WMA boundary line overlaps this project boundary.

## Coordination

FWC is considered an acquisition partner on this project.

## Management Policy Statement

The primary objective of management of the Hall Ranch project is to preserve and restore the mosaic of pine flatwoods, hammocks, and wetlands between the Babcock-Webb WMA and Telegraph Swamp. Achieving this objective will provide a refuge for threatened animals like the Florida black bear and red-cockaded woodpecker, preserve an area of natural lands extending from Charlotte Harbor to Telegraph Swamp, and, by expanding the wildlife management area, provide the public with a large area for natural-resource-based recreation. The project should be managed under the multiple-use concept: management activities should be directed first toward preservation of resources and second toward integrating carefully controlled consumptive uses such as hunting and timber harvesting.

Managers should control access to the project; limit public vehicles to one or a few main roads; thoroughly inventory the resources; restore the hydrological disturbances; burn fire-dependent pine flatwoods in a pattern mimicking natural lightning-season fires, using natural firebreaks or existing roads for control; reforest pine plantations with original species; strictly limit timbering in old-growth stands; and monitor management activities to ensure that they actually preserve resources. Managers should limit the number and size of recreational facilities, ensure that they avoid the most sensitive resources, and site them in already disturbed areas when possible. The project includes much of the undeveloped land between the Babcock-Webb WMA and Telegraph Swamp and consequently has the size and location to achieve its primary objective.



**Manager(s)**

FWC

**Management Prospectus****Qualifications for state designation**

The Hall Ranch project has the resource diversity to qualify as a WMA and will provide the public with a large tract for activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking and wildlife observation.

**Conditions affecting intensity of management**

The Hall Ranch proposal generally includes lands that will require moderate to intensive resource management including frequent fire, roller chopping and some timber management to open the thicker pine stands. The primary management needed for the perpetuation of the natural communities on the area would involve continuing the frequent fire regime already established and control of human access. Additional management projects will involve gradual restoration of improved pasture and agricultural fields into native habitat. On portions of existing disturbed areas, native and nonnative agronomic plantings may be used to benefit both game and nongame wildlife on the area and to promote special hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities for the general public. Development of facilities, as on all wildlife management areas, would be kept to the minimum level necessary to assure quality recreational experience for those members of the public interested in less infrastructure and other disturbance factors.

**Management implementation, Public access, Site security and Protection of infrastructure**

During the first year after acquisition, emphasis will be placed on site security, posting boundaries, public access, fire management, resource inventory and removal of existing refuse. A conceptual management plan will be developed by FWC, describing the goals and objectives of future resource management. Long-range plans will stress ecosystem management and protection and management of threatened and endangered species. Essential roads will be stabilized to provide all weather public access and management operations. Programs providing multiple recreational uses will be implemented. An all-season prescribed burn management plan will be developed and implemented with conventional and biologically acceptable guidelines. Management activities will strive to manage natural plant communities to benefit native wildlife resources. Timber resources include pine flatwoods (62 percent), cypress domes/strands (4 percent) and xeric hammock (2 percent). Where appropriate and practical, these resources will be managed using acceptable silvicultural practices as recommended by FFS. Environmentally sensitive areas will be identified, and appropriate protective measures will be implemented to those areas. Unnecessary roads, fire lanes and hydrological disturbances will be abandoned or restored as practical. Minimal infrastructure development will be required to allow public access, provide facilities for the public, and provide security and management of the property.



**Revenue-generating potential**

About 62 percent of the Hall Ranch consists of pine flatwoods that could be managed to offset operational costs. Future revenue from timber resources will depend on successful reforestation and management of already existing pine stands. Another revenue source would include cattle grazing which would help reduce fuel loads and provide fire line maintenance by the lessee. Additional revenue would be generated from sales of hunting licenses, fishing licenses, wildlife management area stamps and other special hunting stamps and other user fees.

**Cooperators in management activities**

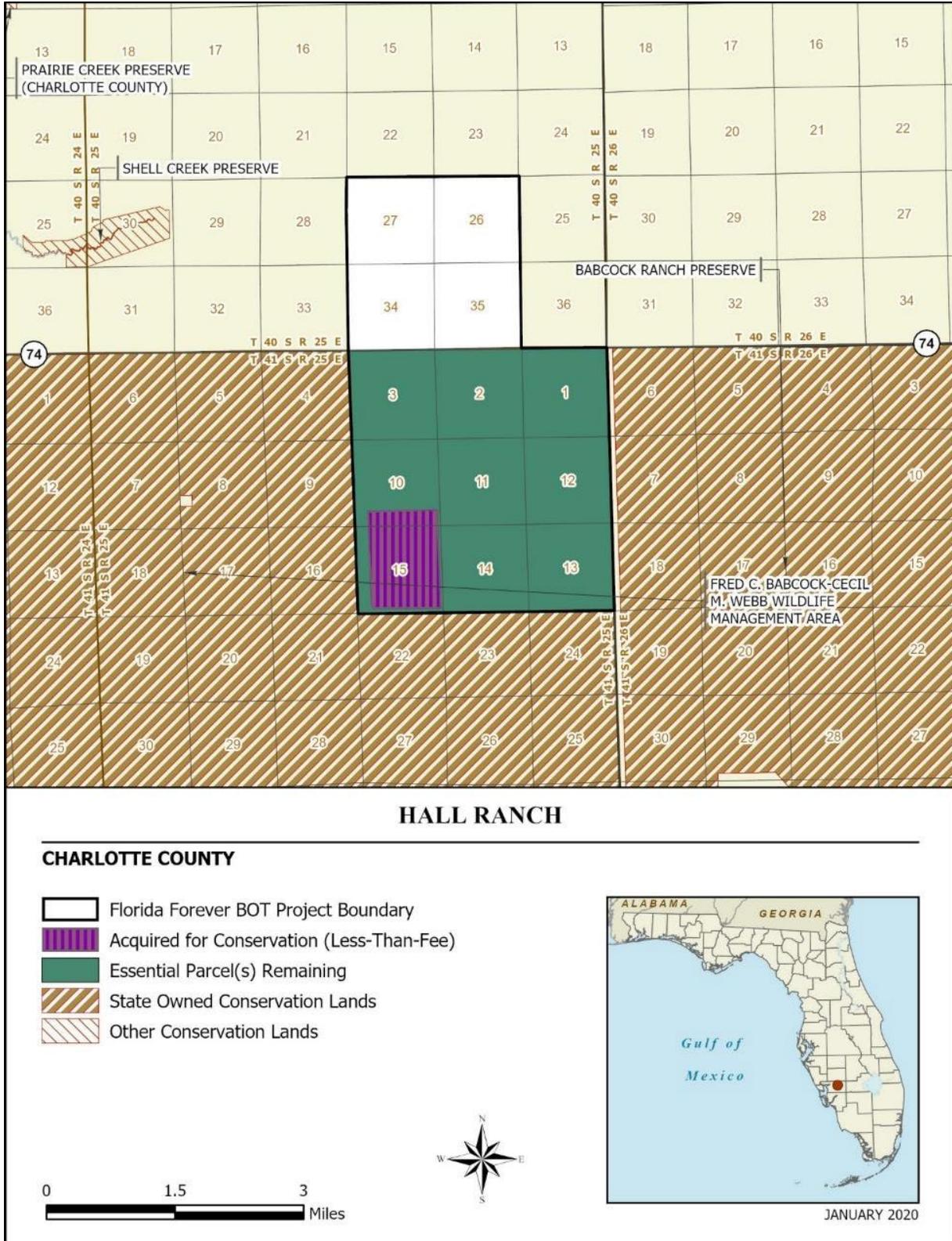
FWC will cooperate with other state and local government agencies in managing the area.

Management Cost Summary

| FWC             | Startup   | Recurring |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Source of Funds | LATFF     | LATF      |
| Salary          | \$59,415  | \$59,415  |
| OPS             | \$5,000   | \$5,000   |
| Expense         | \$32,000  | \$32,000  |
| OCO             | \$48,128  | \$0       |
| FCO             | \$0       | \$0       |
| TOTAL           | \$139,543 | \$86,415  |

*Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted*





Map 1: FNAI, January 2020