

Hixtown Swamp

Critical Natural Lands

Madison

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	1993
<i>Project Acres</i>	24,479
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	2,293
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$200,331
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	22,186
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$28,318,292

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Hixtown Swamp project consists of a complex of cypress swamps, marshes, and ponds, an important overwintering and nesting site for wading birds, and has been spared the intensive tree-farming practices of the surrounding uplands. The project will conserve these swamps and marshes, thereby protecting wading-bird rookeries and wildlife habitat as well as a possible Spanish mission site and other important archeological remains. It will provide the public with a large area in which to hunt, hike, or simply observe wildlife.

General Description

Hixtown Swamp is one of the largest cypress-dominated basin swamps in northern Florida. The moderately disturbed core swamp is a mixture of cypress swamp, freshwater marsh, and open marsh ponds (50 percent), as well as shrub swamp (20 percent), and disturbed uplands, which are mostly silvicultural/agricultural land. There are no well-defined channels or streams associated with the swamp. At least during high water, the waters of Hixtown Swamp flow slowly southward, and the swamp is functionally a part of the much larger San Pedro Bay ecosystem. Hixtown Swamp is regionally significant as habitat for both game and nongame wildlife. It is particularly important as an overwintering area for waterfowl and supports large numbers of sandhill cranes. Twenty-one archaeological or historical sites have been recorded within this project, including perhaps a Spanish mission site. The project has high cultural-resource value. Timber harvesting is the greatest current threat to the area.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements	Score
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
Bird Rookery	G5/SNRB
<i>incised groove-bur</i>	G3/S2
Eastern diamondback rattlesnake	G3/S3
Little blue heron	G5/S4
White ibis	G5/S4

Public Use

This project is designated as a WMA, with uses such as hiking, picnicking, camping and wildlife observation.

Acquisition Planning

1993

Phase I (essential): Mitchell (aka Musselwhite), GandG, Miller, Collins, Genecer, Muggee and Gillman (contingent upon 50 percent donation). In 1993, the project had an estimated tax assessed value of \$9,542,800.

2011

On December 9, 2011, this project was placed in the Critical Natural Lands category of Florida Forever projects.

Coordination

SRWMD is an acquisition partner.

Management Policy Statement

The primary goals of management of the Hixtown 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, in order 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 preserve significant archaeological or historical sites.

Manager(s)

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation

The size of the Hixtown Swamp project, and its importance to wildlife, particularly its value as an overwintering area for waterfowl, qualify it as a WMA.



Conditions affecting intensity of management

This natural wetland system now generally requires basic resource management and protection, but it is in danger of being modified hydrologically in order to drain the area for timber and agricultural production. Pine plantations and agricultural areas on the uplands will require restoration. Depending on the nature and extent of public recreational use determined by the management planning process, there may be additional needs for management of public-use facilities.

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

Within the first year after acquisition, management activities will concentrate on site security, natural resource management and conceptual planning. Public-use facilities will be developed in subsequent years.

Revenue-generating potential

No significant revenue is expected to be generated initially. As public use increases, modest revenue may be generated.

Cooperators in management activities

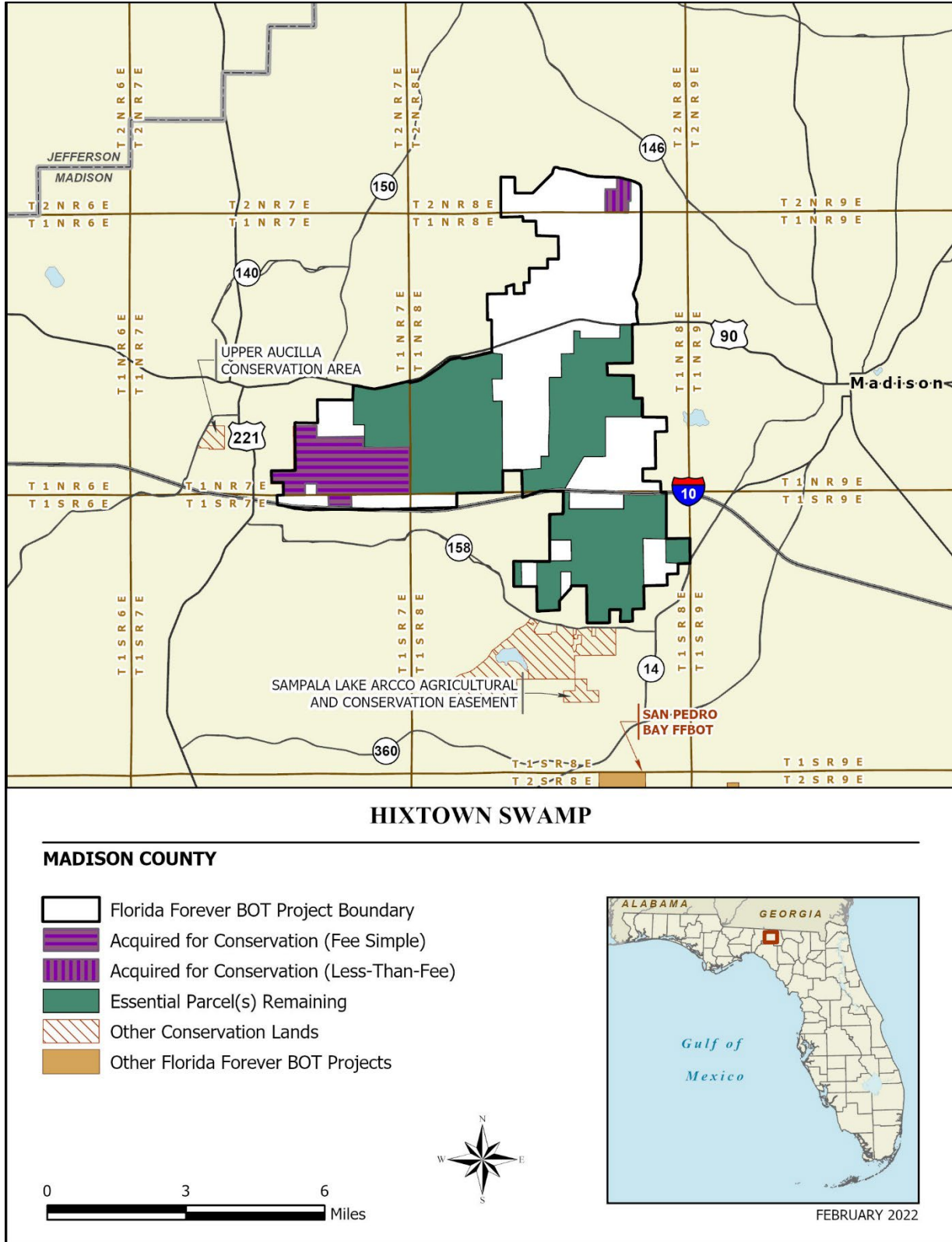
FFS is recommended as a cooperator to assist in reforestation of the upland areas.

Management Cost Summary

<u>FWC</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	CARL or successor	CARL or successor
Salary	\$180,000	\$180,000
OPS	\$5,500	\$5,500
Expense	\$45,500	\$40,000
OCO	\$124,800	\$10,000
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$355,800	\$236,500

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





Map 1: FNAI, February 2022