

Osceola Pine Savannas

Critical Natural Lands

Osceola

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	1995
<i>Project Acres</i>	46,628
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	23,389
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$46,260,334
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	23,239
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$97,761,135

Purpose for State Acquisition

A wide range of wildlife uses the open rangelands of pastures, pine flatwoods, and palmetto prairies in Osceola County. The Osceola Pine Savannas project will conserve a large part of these lands, maintaining a link of natural lands between the Bull Creek and Three Lakes Wildlife Management Areas. Preserving these lands will help ensure the survival of wildlife including swallow-tailed kite and the caracara. Together with the two wildlife management areas, this project provides a large area for the public to enjoy hunting, wildlife observation, and other activities.

General Description

The project covers an area of old beach ridges and intervening swales, with high-quality, longleaf-pine flatwoods interrupted by cypress strands, cypress domes, and wet prairies. There are also extensive dry prairies and patches of oak or sand pine scrub, all of which are natural communities of the Kissimmee Prairie. It is an important habitat to wildlife requiring extensive natural areas such as sandhill crane, wood storks, and crested caracara, and several more, including the federally endangered Florida grasshopper sparrow. Much of the land is used as unimproved range and disturbed areas are mainly improved pastures in the south end. Two archaeological sites are known. Any construction of roads or ditches will destroy the unique character of the project, but development pressure is low. This project may also help complete the Florida National Scenic Trail, a statewide non-motorized trail that crosses a number of Florida Forever project sites.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements	Score
Swallow-tailed kite	G5/S2
Striped newt	G2G3/S2
Red-cockaded woodpecker	G3/S2
Eastern indigo snake	G3/S2?
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Crested caracara	G5/S2
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
<i>scrub bluestem</i>	G1G2/S1S2
Arogos skipper	G2G3T1T2/S1
<i>celestial lily</i>	G2/S2
Berry's skipper	G2/S2
Loammi skipper	G2/S2?

Public Use

The project will be designated as a WMA, with such uses as hiking, wildlife observation and hunting.

Acquisition Planning

1994

On December 7, 1994, the LAAC added the Osceola Pine Savannas project to the CARL 1995 Priority list. This fee-simple acquisition, sponsored by FNAI, consisted of approximately 42,491 acres, multiple owners, and a 1993 taxable value of \$32,430,057.

Essential tracts were determined to be those owned by Robertson, McNamara, Equitable Life (acquired), Donovan, Montsococa, Redding, Keen, Kennedy, Henderson, Campos, and the Mormon Church. The Canaveral Acres subdivision was designated essential when Dr. Broussard consolidated a significant number of parcels.

1998

On October 15, 1998, the LAAC designated two additional parcels as essential: a 229-acre tract adjacent to the Equitable Life ownership and a 17-acre tract between two other large tracts.

2002

On June 6, 2002, the ARC moved this project to Group A of the Florida Forever 2002 Priority list and approved a 2,279-acre addition to the project boundary. It was sponsored by Dr. William Broussard, consisted of two owners, and had a 2001 taxable value of \$695,238. The Broussard property consisted of 1,282 acres, will be acquired as a conservation easement, and monitored by OES. The Vanosdol property consisted of 997 acres to be purchased as fee simple.

2006

The FWC acquired 904 acres of this property in 2006.



On August 11, 2006, the ARC approved a fee-simple and less-than-fee, 5,529-acre addition (aka Lucky L Ranch) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by TNC and FWC, consisted of 5 ownerships, 25 parcels, and a 2005 taxable value of \$1,504,685. The parcels have been designated as essential.

2007

In October 2007, the BOT acquired 1,430 acres from William Broussard that is to be managed as a conservation easement.

2008

In June 2008, 1,649.8 acres were purchased in FWC's Three Lakes WMA (Lucky L Ranch-11 Limited Partnership ownership) for \$11,651,000 from FWC's Florida Forever funds, with the FWC to manage the property.

2010

On October 15, 2010, the ARC approved a 557-acre (\$6,691,997 just value) reduction to the project boundary due to residential/commercial/infrastructure development.

2011

On December 9, 2011, the ARC placed this project in the Critical Natural Lands list of projects.

Coordination

SJRWMD and the FWC have acquired over 19,007 acres (Triple N Ranch WMA) in the northern one-third of the project area. FWC has also acquired 1,920 acres adjacent to the southern boundary and has completed a 1,921-acre acquisition centrally located within the project boundary. They have also acquired a large "essential" tract in the central portion of the project (Equitable Life).

Management Policy Statement

The primary objective of management of the Osceola Pine Savannas project is to preserve and restore the integrity of the extensive functional ecosystems, ranging from pine flatwoods, dry prairie, and scrub to marshes and cypress swamps, that now extend from the Bull Creek to the Three Lakes WMA. Achieving this objective will protect habitat for several endangered species of wildlife that need large natural areas to survive, such as Florida grasshopper sparrows, Florida sandhill cranes, Audubon's crested caracaras, and American swallow-tailed kites. It will also provide to the public over 100,000 acres in which to enjoy natural-resource-based recreation, such as hiking and hunting.

The project would 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 logging. Managers should control access to the project; limit public motor vehicles to one or a few main roads; thoroughly inventory the resources; restore hydrological disturbances; burn the fire-dependent pine flatwoods in a pattern mimicking natural lightning-season fires, using natural firebreaks or existing roads for control; reforest pine plantations and improved pastures with original species; prohibit timbering in old-growth stands; and monitor management activities to ensure that they are actually preserving 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. This project includes most of the undeveloped land between Bull Creek Wildlife Management Area and Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area and consequently has the size and location to meet its primary objective.

Manager(s)

FWC will manage the Osceola Pine Savannas. OES will monitor any conservation easements unless otherwise noted.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation

The Osceola Pine Savannas project has the resource diversity to qualify as a WMA.

Conditions affecting intensity of management

The project generally includes lands that are low-need tracts, requiring basic resource management and protection.

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

Within the first year after acquisition, activities will concentrate on site security, public access, fire management, resource inventory, and the removal of any existing trash. A conceptual management plan will be developed that describes the goals of future resource management on the site. Long-range plans for this property, beginning one year after acquisition, will stress the protection and management of threatened and endangered species. Programs recreational uses will also be implemented. A burn management plan will be developed and implemented using conventional and biologically acceptable providing multiple guidelines. Management activities will also strive to manage natural plant communities for the benefit of native wildlife. Where appropriate and practical, forest resources will be managed using acceptable silvicultural practices as recommended by FFS. A resource inventory will be used to identify sensitive areas that need special attention, protection, or management.

Unnecessary roads, fire lines and ditches will be abandoned or restored. Infrastructure will be kept to the minimum necessary for public access and management.

Revenue-generating potential

While the pinelands have significant economic value, their value to the area's wildlife may be even greater. A \$25 management area stamp would be required to hunt on the area. A management area stamp could also be required for all users. Additional revenue would be generated by sales of hunting licenses and special hunting stamps (i.e., archery stamp, turkey stamp, etc.).

Cooperators in management activities

SJRWMD and FFS are recommended as cooperating managers.

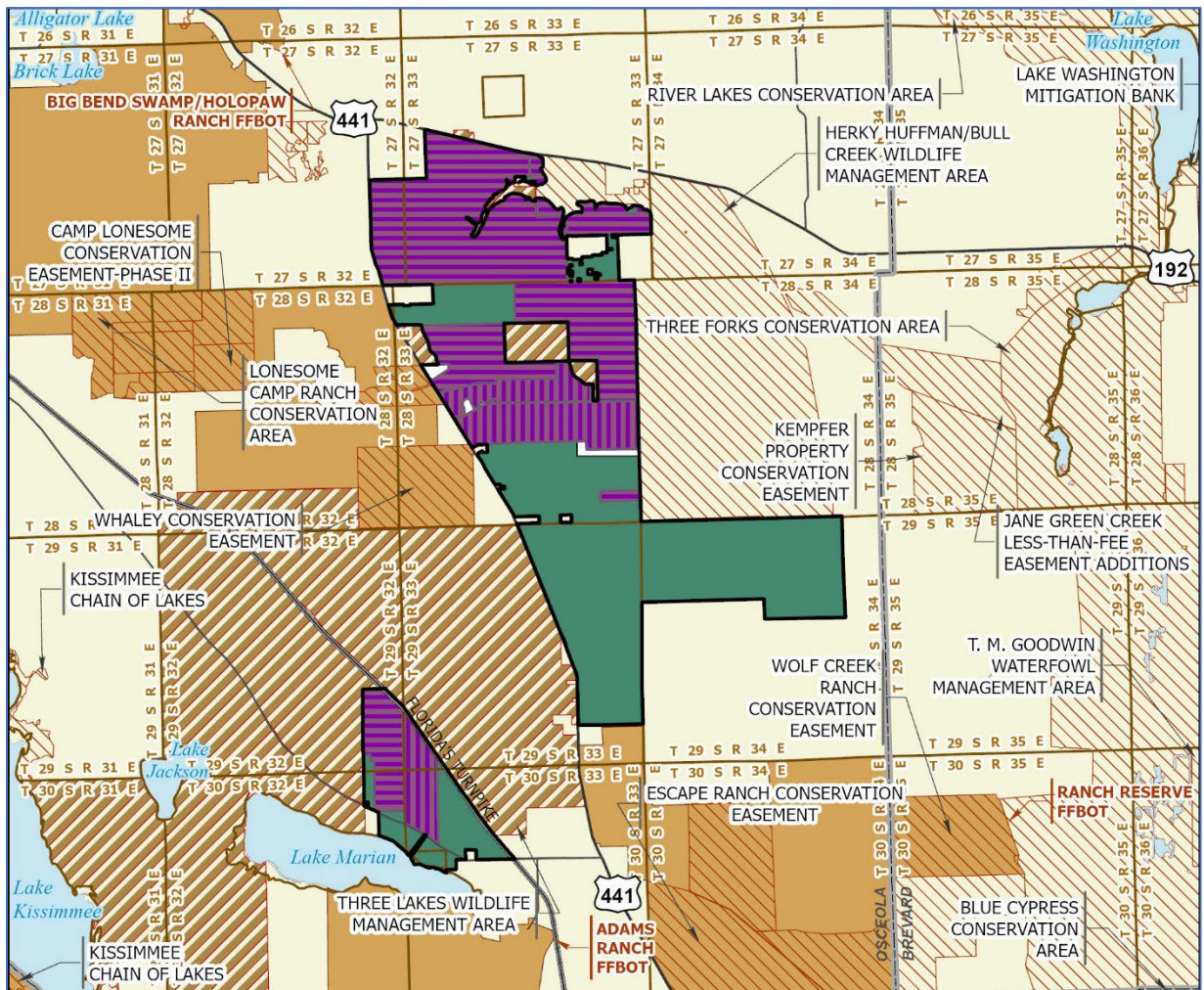


Management Cost Summary

<u>FWC</u>	<u>1996/97</u>	<u>1997/98</u>
Source of Funds	CARL	CARL
Salary	\$74,645	\$114,485
OPS	\$0	\$30,500
Expense	\$55,473	\$131,525
OCO	\$0	\$308,148
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$130,118	\$584,658

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





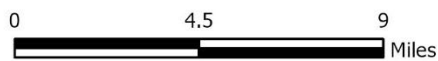
OSCEOLA PINE SAVANNAS

OSCEOLA COUNTY

-  Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
-  Acquired for Conservation (Fee Simple)
-  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 1: FNAI, February 2022

