

Peace River Refuge

Less-Than-Fee

DeSoto

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2010
<i>Project Acres</i>	3,878
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	844
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$1,350,000
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	3,033
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$9,489,147

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Peace River Refuge project will preserve the water quality and habitat of the Peace River and its tributaries, protect water quality for the downstream Charlotte Harbor Estuary, and conserve habitat for aquatic and upland wildlife associated with the floodplains, rivers, creeks and estuary. The project will support state water quality and quantity by protecting the Peace River floodplain and associated wetlands.

General Description

The Peace River Refuge is in central DeSoto County, southwest of the city of Arcadia. Beginning at SR 70 in Arcadia, the proposal extends a total of approximately seven miles south, flanking the Peace River on both sides for six river miles and then bordering the east side of the river for four more river miles south of CR 760. Additionally, the eastern portion of the proposal contains frontage along Joshua Creek, a Peace River tributary. Most of the proposal's eastern boundary is formed by an abandoned railroad grade located less than one mile west of US 17. Although the proposal is mainly contiguous, it contains inholdings consisting of a six-acre parcel fronting the east side of the river and many smaller lots on the western half of the property. Overall, the site is primarily hardwood forested uplands, however, bottomland forests and open point bars are associated with the river and old meander features of the floodplain. Approximately 88 percent of the proposal can be classified as natural communities.

Most uplands on the proposal are mesic hammock with a live oak canopy over a predominantly saw palmetto understory. While flooding from the Peace River likely inundates many of these hammocks occasionally or even annually, the land is dry for most of the year.

Much of the land on the northeastern portion of the proposal has been converted to improved pastures. Scattered oaks are common throughout these pastures. Various other clearings are scattered on the property, including areas with standing structures (hunt camps, bridges, and remnants of old buildings such as a sawmill on the western side of the property).

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements	Score
Round-tailed muskrat	G2/S2
Wood stork	G4/S2
Little blue heron	G5/S4

Public Use

The Peace River Refuge is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide for public access.

Acquisition Planning

2010

On June 11, 2010, the ARC added the Peace River Refuge project to the Florida Forever list in the Less-Than-Fee category. The project had an estimated tax assessed value of \$12,567,267.

2021

DEP acquired a 771.20-acre conservation easement in DeSoto County from Peace River Preserve, LLC.

Coordination

There are no known acquisition partners currently.

Management Policy Statement

As a less-than-fee acquisition, the Peace River Refuge would be managed for conservation purposes by the landowner as outlined in the conservation easement.

Manager(s)

If acquired as less-than-fee, management responsibility of the Peace River Refuge 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.



