

Limestone Ranch

Less-Than-Fee

Hardee County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2012
<i>Project Acres</i>	6,382
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	0
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	6,382
<i>2024 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$38,530,018

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Limestone Ranch project will afford additional resource protection for the Peace River and its associated natural communities. The project will do this by providing a buffer for Limestone Creek, a tributary of the Peace River, and protecting floodplain and aquifer recharge areas. The project will also protect habitat for numerous imperiled and rare species such as the eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon cooperi*).

General Description

Limestone Ranch is located just west of the Peace River, with the southeast corner straddling a half-mile section of the river. The property is bisected by Limestone Creek, which flows eastward into the Peace River. The proposed project is adjacent on its western boundary to Horse Creek conservation easement (Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)) and north of the Peace River Refuge Florida Forever project. Access to the property is east of the community of Limestone off County Road 663 (which also runs through the western portion of the project).

Limestone Ranch is a mosaic of flatwoods, forested wetlands and pastures. Major natural communities include mesic and scrubby flatwoods, bottomland forest and widely-scattered depression marshes. Over half of the tract is dominated by natural communities that appear to be in good to very good condition. Invasive exotic plants are relatively infrequent on the property.

The disturbed portion of the land comprises improved pastures and agricultural fields. For the ranch's cow-calf operation, cattle grazing is the primary use of the improved pasture. However, there is a 92-acre citrus grove outparcel in the southeast section of the property at the end of Jim Williams Road.





FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Bachman's sparrow	G3/S3

Public Use

Limestone Ranch is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide for public access. However, the owner has hosted Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission-coordinated youth hunts annually on the property and expressed interest in continuing to offer that periodic recreational opportunity.

Acquisition Planning

2012

On June 15, 2012, the Acquisition and Restoration Council added this project to the Florida Forever Priority List as a Less-than-Fee project with an estimated tax-assessed value of \$18,830,416. The property is in one ownership and the owner is anticipating selling it in one transaction.

Coordination

No acquisition partners have been identified.

Management Policy Statement

As a less-than-fee acquisition, Limestone Ranch would be managed by the landowner as outlined in the conservation easement.

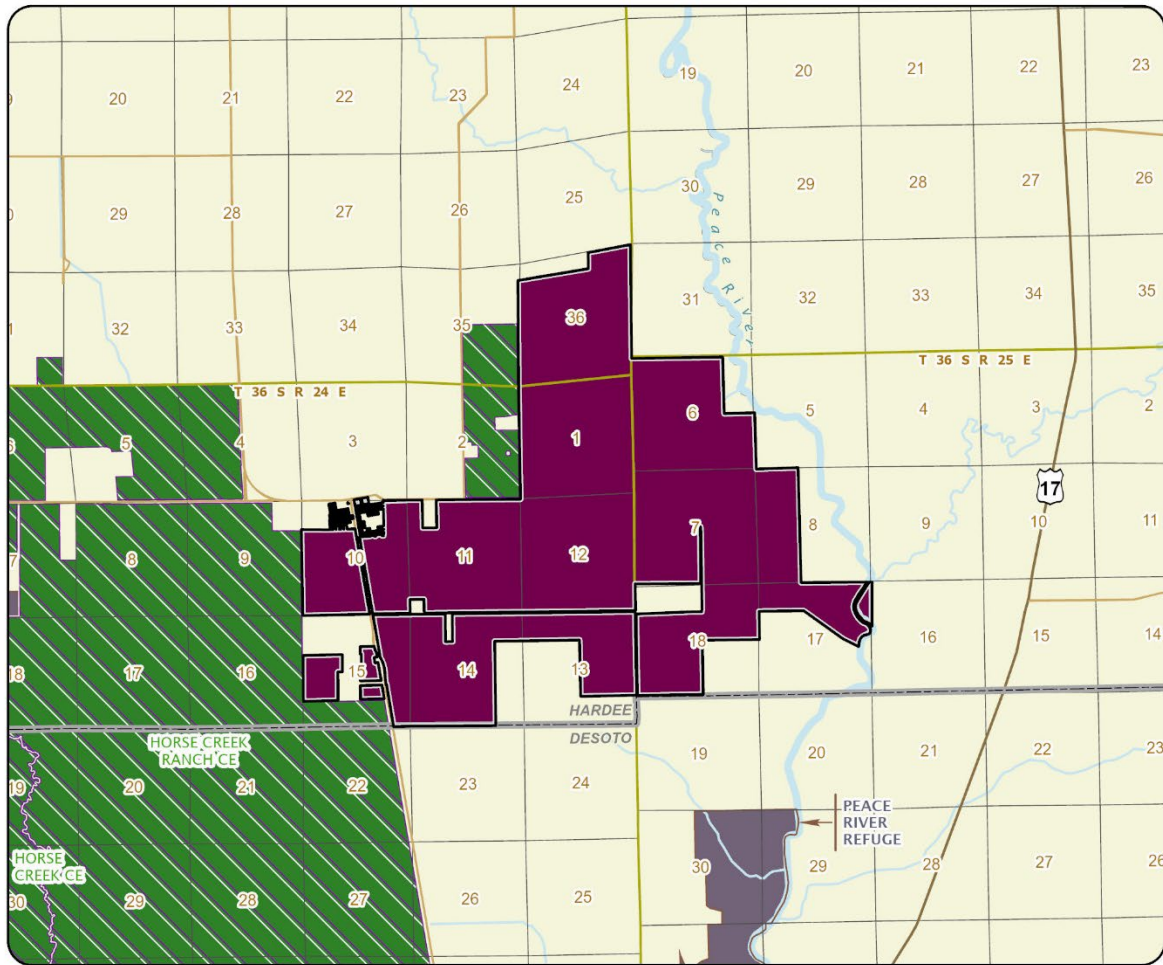
Manager(s)

If acquired as less-than-fee, management responsibility of Limestone Ranch would remain with the landowner. Periodic monitoring of the site's management to confirm continued conservation easement compliance would be coordinated by DEP's Division of State Lands.

Management Prospectus

DEP's Division of State Lands will periodically monitor the conservation easement, while the management will be conducted by the property owner.





LIMESTONE RANCH

HARDEE COUNTY

