

# Save Our Everglades

Substantially Complete

Collier County

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <i>Year Added to Priority List</i>            | 1984      |
| <i>Project Acres</i>                          | 217,680   |
| <i>Acquired Acres</i>                         | 217,668   |
| <i>Remaining Project Acres</i>                | 12        |
| <i>2024 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i> | \$116,626 |

## Purpose for State Acquisition

The Save Our Everglades project will conserve three large tracts of a landscape of cypress swamps, marshes, slash pine flatwoods and tropical hammocks. Water slowly flows through the forests to the mangrove swamps of the Ten Thousand Islands, preserving the flow of water to the rich estuaries of the Gulf Coast. The project connects and extends existing conservation lands, which will help to save the last of the Florida panther (*Puma concolor coryi*) and a host of other rare animals and tropical plants and allow the public to enjoy this unique landscape for years to come. The Florida National Scenic Trail, a cross-Florida hiking and non-motorized trail, is also planned to cross this project. The trail is a congressionally designated national scenic trail.

## General Description

This project includes important hydrological connections among Big Cypress National Preserve, Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park and Everglades National Park. It serves as the headwaters of the largest strand swamp in the nation—the Fakahatchee Strand. Natural communities on the property include cypress forest, pine forest, hammock, mixed swamp forest, wet and dry prairies and freshwater marsh. The area is known to support many endangered, threatened or rare species, including a large variety of rare orchids and other epiphytes, as well as the endangered Florida panther and endangered Florida bonneted bat (*Eumops floridanus*). There is believed to be good potential for archaeological sites within the area. The project is threatened by drainage and other changes in water flow through the area, by oil and gas exploration and perhaps by limerock mining.





### FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

| <u>FNAI Elements</u>         | <u>Score</u> |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Florida panther              | G5T1/S1      |
| Eastern indigo snake         | G3/S2?       |
| Swallow-tailed kite          | G5/S2        |
| Florida black bear           | G5T4/S4      |
| <i>ghost orchid</i>          | G1/S1        |
| <i>Seminole hoary-pea</i>    | G1/S1        |
| Florida bonneted bat         | G1/S1        |
| <i>Curtiss's hoary-pea</i>   | G2/S2        |
| <i>Small's flax</i>          | G2/S2        |
| <i>Tampa vervain</i>         | G2/S2        |
| <i>clamshell orchid</i>      | G4G5T2/S2    |
| <i>pineland jacquemontia</i> | G2/S2        |

### Public Use

The project will provide a preserve/reserve, wildlife and environmental area, and a forest, allowing such uses as fishing, hunting, hiking, camping and nature appreciation. The project may also help complete the Florida National Scenic Trail, a statewide non-motorized trail that crosses several Florida Forever project sites.

### Acquisition Planning

#### **1996**

Completing the Collier Exchange on December 18, 1996, resulted in public protection of an additional 83,070 acres in the Big Cypress National Preserve Addition and an additional 4,110 acres in the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge.

#### **2003**

On April 18, 2003, the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) transferred 1,615 acres in Hendry County to the Panther Glades Florida Forever project.

#### **2006**

In 2006, ARC moved this project from Group A Small Parcels list for acquisition to the Group B Small Parcels list.

The National Park Service (NPS) continues to pursue consolidation efforts in the Big Cypress National Preserve Addition. The Conservation and Recreational Lands Program (CARL) focused on acquiring land in Golden Gate Estates South. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USWFS) acquired and manages 28,410 acres (including Collier Exchange lands). CARL received \$25 million of Federal "Farm Bill" funds for the Golden Gate portion of this project. All the acreage in this project is considered essential. In June 2009, approximately 3 platted acres were purchased for \$8,276.





## **2011**

On December 9, 2011 ARC placed this project in the new Substantially Complete category of Florida Forever projects. This project will remain on the Florida Forever Priority List until all court settlements are resolved.

### **Coordination**

The Department of Transportation, NPS, U.S. Department of Agriculture and USFWS are all acquisition partners in this project area.

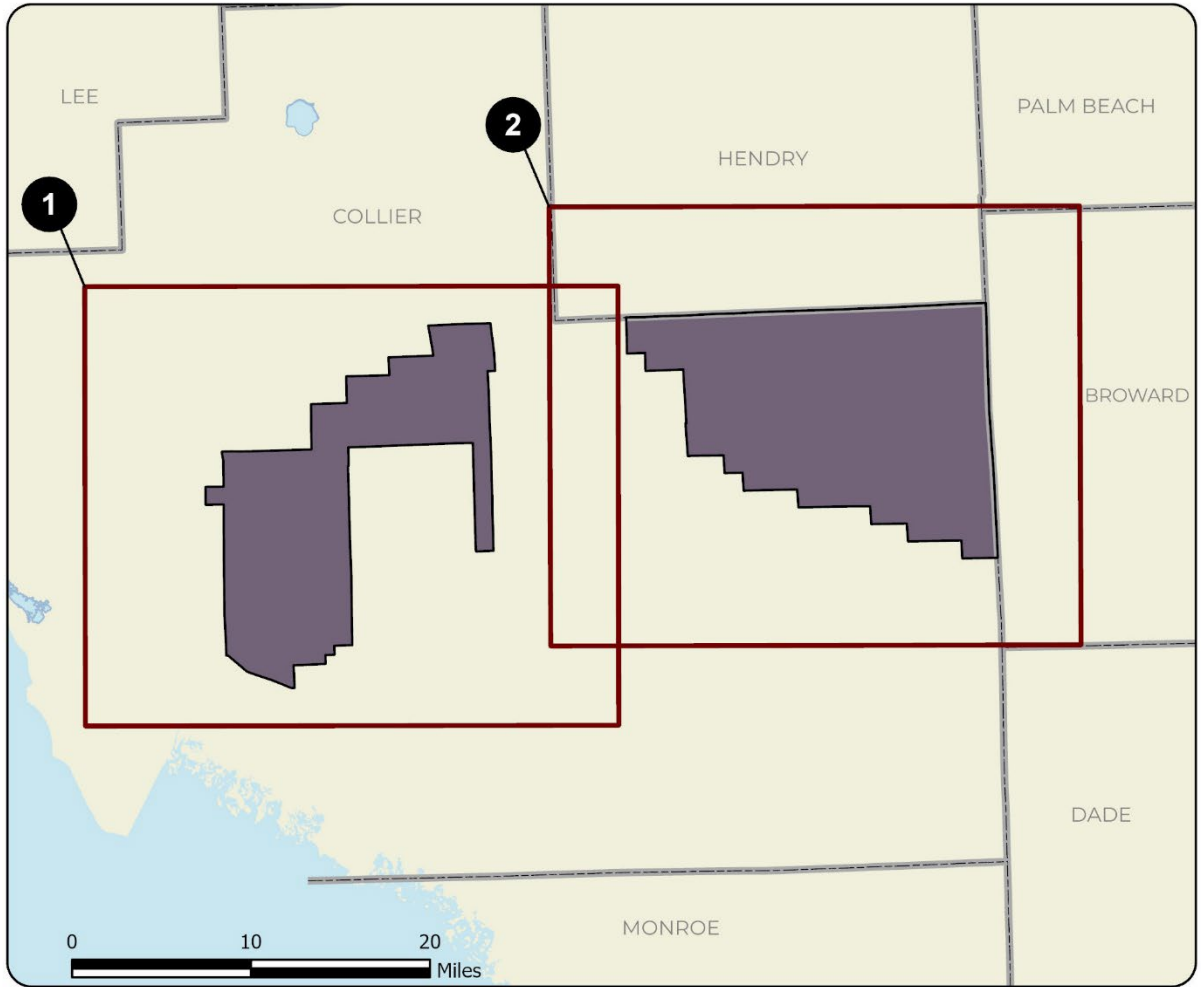
### **Management Policy Statement**

The primary goals of management of the Save Our Everglades project are: to conserve and protect environmentally unique and irreplaceable lands that contain native, relatively unaltered flora and fauna representing a natural area unique to, or scarce within, a region of this state or a larger geographic area; to conserve and protect lands within areas of critical state concern; to conserve and protect significant habitat for native species or endangered and threatened species; and to conserve, protect, manage or restore important ecosystems, landscapes and forests to enhance or protect significant surface water, coastal, recreational, timber, fish or wildlife resources which local or state regulatory programs cannot adequately protect.

### **Manager(s)**

NPS will manage the Big Cypress National Preserve Addition; USFWS will manage the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge; the Florida Forest Service will manage all the Golden Gate Estates South; and the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Recreation and Parks will manage that portion of the Golden Gate Estates South lying east of the Fakaunion Canal - less the old resort hotel, its associated compound and the sewage treatment plant.

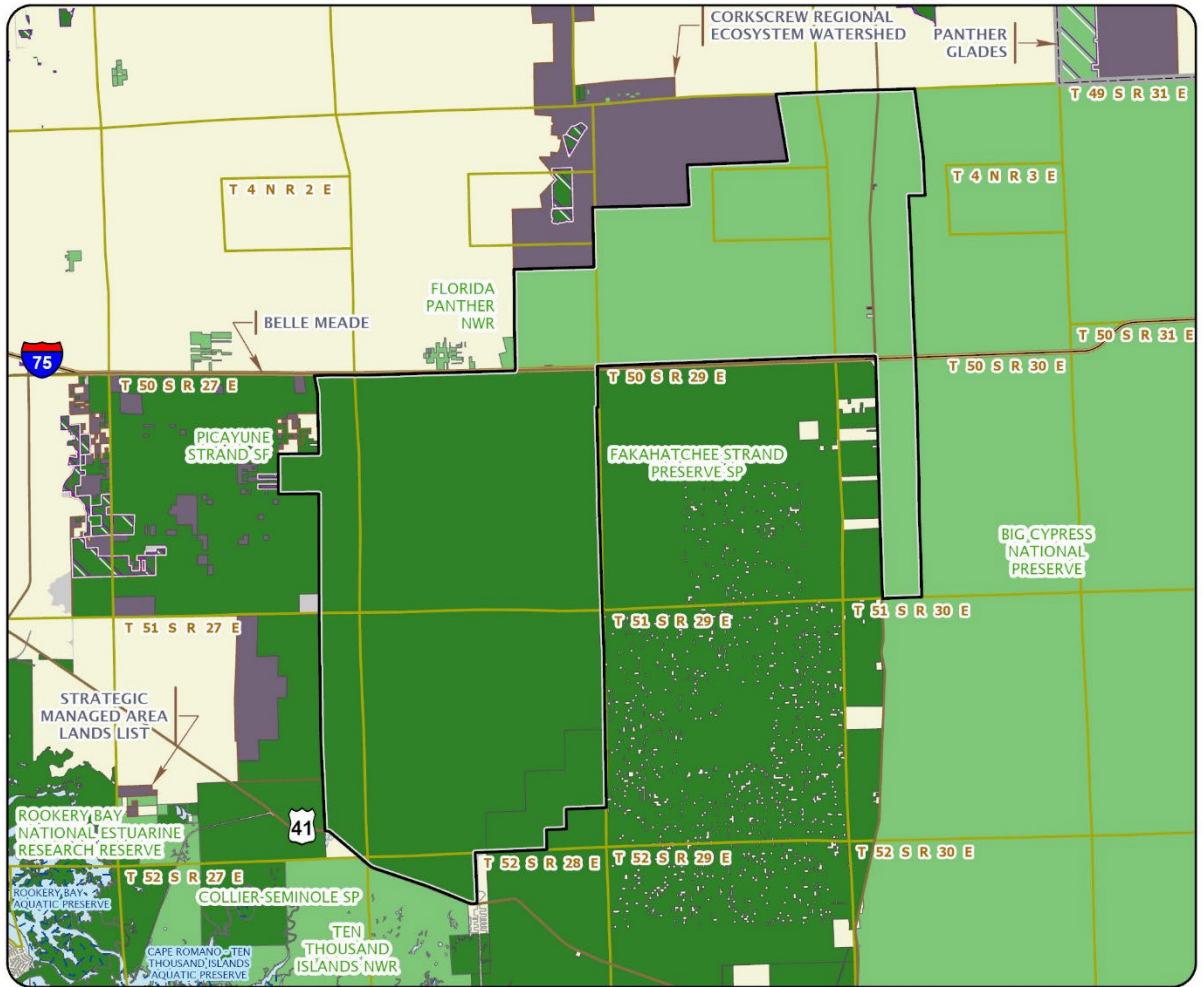




### SAVE OUR EVERGLADES: OVERVIEW

#### COLLIER COUNTY

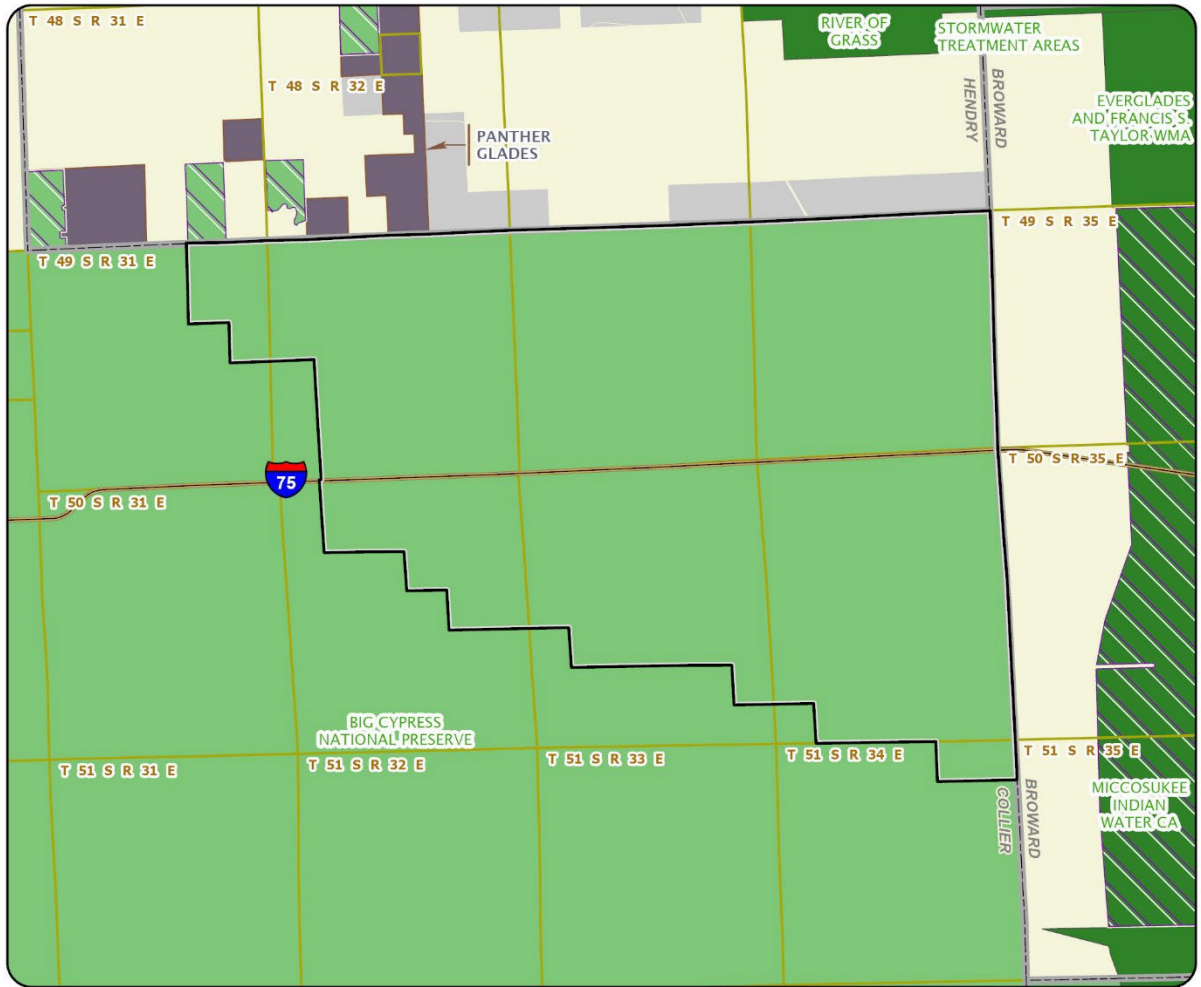




### SAVE OUR EVERGLADES: MAP 1

#### COLLIER COUNTY





SAVE OUR EVERGLADES: MAP 2

COLLIER COUNTY

