



GOPHER TORTOISE RECIPIENT SITE ANALYSIS

Gopher Tortoise Recipient Site Analysis

The feasibility of using a portion of a State Park, or any other state lands, as a gopher tortoise recipient site in accordance with 259.032 F.S. is dependent upon the following criteria:

- The site contains a minimum of 40 acres of contiguous suitable upland tortoise habitat that meet the criteria for soil and vegetation listed below:
 - Soil criteria: An area on site of at least 40 contiguous acres must meet *acceptable* criteria per the Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines (July 2020, subsequent revisions). *Acceptable* soils include those moderately well-drained to excessively drained, with a midpoint of the upper limit of the water table (DWT) value of 45 centimeters (18 inches) or greater.
 - Vegetation criteria: An area on site of at least 40 contiguous acres must meet *acceptable* habitat features, including average herbaceous cover of at least 30% and average canopy cover of 60% or less. Improved pasture cannot exceed 40% of the total expected recipient site unit and must include a minimum of 10% patchy shrub cover if improved pasture is present.

Should a portion of a State Park, or any other state lands in question, meet the above criteria in its current state, the FWC would consider those areas to be feasible as a potential gopher tortoise recipient site. Should a portion of a State Park, or any other state lands have the potential to meet the above listed criteria in the future with appropriate habitat management, the FWC may consider those areas to be potentially feasible as a gopher tortoise recipient site at that time. Should habitat conditions improve through proper management on a public lands site to the point that those lands meet the *acceptable* criteria listed above, the public lands manager should contact FWC staff at that time. The managing agency should make the determination that gopher tortoise recipient site management does not conflict with the primary management objectives of the lands under review. If the lands meet the acceptable criteria listed above, coordinate with FWC staff on this determination.

For further details regarding these criteria, please see pages 30-36 of the [FWC's Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines](#).