

ITEM 17:

Consider a 10-year update to the Triple N Ranch Wildlife Management Area Management Plan (Lease Nos. 4116 and 4226).

LOCATION:

Osceola County

APPLICANT:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

DSL STAFF REMARKS:

Background

Adjacent to the small town of Holopaw in Osceola County, the 16,430-acre Triple N Ranch Wildlife Management Area (TNRWMA) is an excellent example of native pine-palmetto flatwoods scattered with wet and dry prairie, cypress domes, oak hammocks, and oak scrub. This rich tapestry of natural areas provides important habitat for a diverse assemblage of imperiled and common wildlife species.

Scenic Crabgrass Creek, a tributary of the St. Johns River, snakes across the area. On the TNRWMA limited hunting increases your chances of harvesting a mature deer or Osceola turkey. A network of well-maintained and marked roads provides ample opportunities for hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding. TNRWMA also offers on site shooting range facilities and other recreational opportunities including camping and wildlife viewing.

TNRWMA is managed by FWC to conserve the important natural communities on site that provide habitat for a wide range of imperiled and more common wildlife species and for fish and wildlife- based public outdoor recreation. The TNRWMA is owned by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund and the St. Johns River Water Management District. The FWC has lead management authority for all resources within the established boundary.

Management Plan Overview

Through the services of the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), FWC has mapped the natural and anthropogenic community types on TNRWMA. FNAI has identified and mapped a total of 25 community types within the TNRWMA. The primary vegetative communities found within the TNRWMA are mesic flatwoods and dome swamp.

The FWC has developed the Florida Landscape Assessment Model (FLAM) as a Geographic Information Systems-based assessment tool that incorporates a wide variety of landscape and wildlife species data. The FLAM evaluates the Florida landscape based upon important natural resources and habitat needs of wildlife to identify ecologically significant lands in the state, and to assess the potential impacts of management and land-use changes. The FLAM was developed to provide technical assistance to various local, regional, state and federal agencies and entities interested in wildlife needs and conservation in order to: (1) determine ways to avoid or minimize project impacts by evaluating alternative placements, alignments and transportation corridors during early planning stages, (2) assess direct, secondary and cumulative impacts to habitat and wildlife resources, and (3) identify appropriate parcels for public land acquisition for wetland and upland habitat mitigation purposes. The FLAM ranks habitat from a 0-10; a rank of

10 being of greatest value. The FLAM (2020) indicates that the TNRWMA has a very high mean wildlife value of 9.4.

The Division of Historical Resources (DHR) observations are broken down into five categories: archeological sites, resource groups, historical structures, historic bridges and historic cemeteries. Examination by GIS indicates that an early American (19th to early 20th century) logging road/railroad grade crossing has been identified on the southern portion of the TNRWMA. This site may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. There is also artifact scatter that identifies the site of the Holopaw Schoolhouse, which brings the total of identified sites on the TNRWMA to two historical resources.

The FWC has adopted a comprehensive approach to the planning and administration of fish and wildlife resource based public outdoor recreational opportunities for the TNRWMA. To accomplish this, the FWC has worked with recreational stakeholders and the general public to develop a Recreation Master Plan for the TNRWMA. This plan will be used to further design and develop appropriate infrastructure that supports the recreational use of the area by the general public. The TNRWMA Recreation Master Plan includes planning for parking, trail design, and area resource interpretation.

The Florida Legislature requires that all land management plans include long and short-term goals. These goals must be measurable objectives, and short-term goals must be achievable within a two-year planning period. Pursuant to section 253.034, Florida Statutes, the Division of State Lands began compiling the short-term goals from each land management plan approved since July 1, 2016. The Division has included short-term goals from this management plan as part of this item.

Management goals presented in the draft plan include:

- Improve extant habitat and restore disturbed areas.
- Maintain, improve, or restore imperiled species populations and habitats.
- Monitor, maintain, improve, or restore game and non-game species populations and habitats.
- Remove exotic and invasive plants and animals and conduct needed maintenance and control.
- Provide public access and recreational opportunities.
- Protect water quality and quantity, restore hydrology to the extent feasible, and maintain the restored condition.
- Manage timber resources to improve or restore natural communities for the benefit of wildlife.
- Protect, preserve, and maintain historical resources.
- Develop the capital facilities and infrastructure necessary to meet the goals and objectives of this management plan.
- Enhance fish and wildlife conservation, resource and operational management through development of an optimal boundary.
- Develop appropriate adaptation strategies in response to projected climate change effects and their potential impacts on fish and wildlife conservation, resources, and the operational management of the TNRWMA.
- Provide access and use of the TNRWMA to current cooperative managers and continue collaborative management and research efforts.

Public Involvement

The FWC conducted a Management Advisory Group Meeting on September 2, 2020, resulting in the top three ranked ideas:

- Continue prescribed fire program on the area, including prescribed fire frequency for fire adapted communities, and burning during appropriate burning seasons.
- Continue deer management program on the area.
- Provide more information to the public regarding the management area’s recreational uses.

Results of this meeting were used by the FWC to develop management goals and objectives and to identify opportunities and strategies for inclusion in this Management Plan.

A public hearing, as required by section 259.032(10), F.S., was held on October 15, 2020. Questions and comments during the testimony period primarily related to potential adjacent property concerns regarding future roads.

Surplus Lands

The evaluation of TNRWMA by FWC has determined that all portions of the area are being managed and operated for the original purposes of acquisition and remain integral to the continued conservation of important fish and wildlife resources, and continue to provide good fish and wildlife resource based public outdoor recreational opportunities. Therefore, no portion of the TNRWMA is recommended for potential surplus review.

State Land Management Review Team

A Land Management Review (LMR) was conducted in August 2019. The review team found that the property is managed in accordance with the purposes for which it was acquired and the management practices, including public access, are in compliance with the management plan. No recommendations were offered by the team.

The 2019 LMR notes were reviewed as part of developing this plan and the agreed upon changes and recommendations were made to this management plan.

DSL STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the management plan.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

- APPROVE
- APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS: _____
- DEFER
- WITHDRAW
- NOT APPROVE
- OTHER: _____

Triple N Ranch Wildlife Management Area

Land Management Plan Short Term Goals

Goal (ST)	Details of Goal	Objective	Details of Objective	Action	Details of Action	Performance Measure
6.5	Public Access and Recreation Opportunities	A	Provide Public access and recreational opportunity	6.5.1	Establish a primitive campsite along the FNST	Primitive Campsite along the FNST established
6.5	Public Access and Recreation Opportunities	A	Provide Public access and recreational opportunity	6.5.2	Establish a designated walk-in entrance from Holopaw Community Park	Designated walk-in entrance from Holopaw Community Park Established

Source: Florida DEP, Office of Environmental Services, Revised 2019.

LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARYLead Agency: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)Common Name of Property: Triple N Ranch Wildlife Management AreaLocation: Osceola County, FloridaAcreage Total: 16,430 acres

Acreage Breakdown:

<u>Land Cover Classification</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent of Total Area</u>
Agriculture	440.77	2.69%
Artificial Pond	29.91	0.18%
Baygall	206.45	1.26%
Canal/Ditch	21.95	0.13%
Clearing/Regeneration	103.11	0.63%
Depression Marsh	745.87	4.55%
Developed	79.59	0.49%
Dome Swamp	2,393.66	14.59%
Dry Prairie	387.38	2.36%
Firebreak	46.19	0.28%
Hydric Hammock	696.18	4.24%
Linear Feature	6.70	0.04%
Mesic Flatwoods	7,857.21	47.89%
Mesic Hammock	44.73	0.27%
Pasture – Improved	1,083.72	6.60%
Pasture – Semi-Improved	85.19	0.52%
Restoration Mesic Flatwoods	104.23	0.64%
Restoration Scrubby Flatwoods	91.67	0.56%
Road	308.89	1.88%
Scrub	34.05	0.21%
Scrubby Flatwoods	307.28	1.87%
Spoil Area	1.89	0.01%
Wet Flatwoods	307.50	1.87%
Wet Prairie	1,018.49	6.21%
Xeric Hammock	5.06	0.03%

*GIS-calculated acreage for land cover classification varies slightly from actual total acreage.

Lease/Management Agreement No.: 4226 and 4116 (Appendix 12.1)

Use: Single _____

Multiple X

Management Responsibilities:

Agency FWC

Responsibilities

LEAD, LESSEE (Wildlife Management Area, resource protection, law enforcement)Designated Land Use: Wildlife Management AreaSublease (s): NoneEncumbrances List: one cattle grazing contract, a utility line easement, and two housing agreementsType Acquisition: Fish and Wildlife Habitat Program; Save Our Rivers; and Preservation-2000Unique Features: Natural: Natural communities including mesic flatwoods, dome swamp, and wet prairieArchaeological/Historical: Two documented within TNRWMA.Management Needs: Habitat restoration and improvement; public access and recreational opportunities; hydrological preservation and restoration; exotic and invasive species maintenance and control; imperiled species habitat maintenance, enhancement, and restoration.

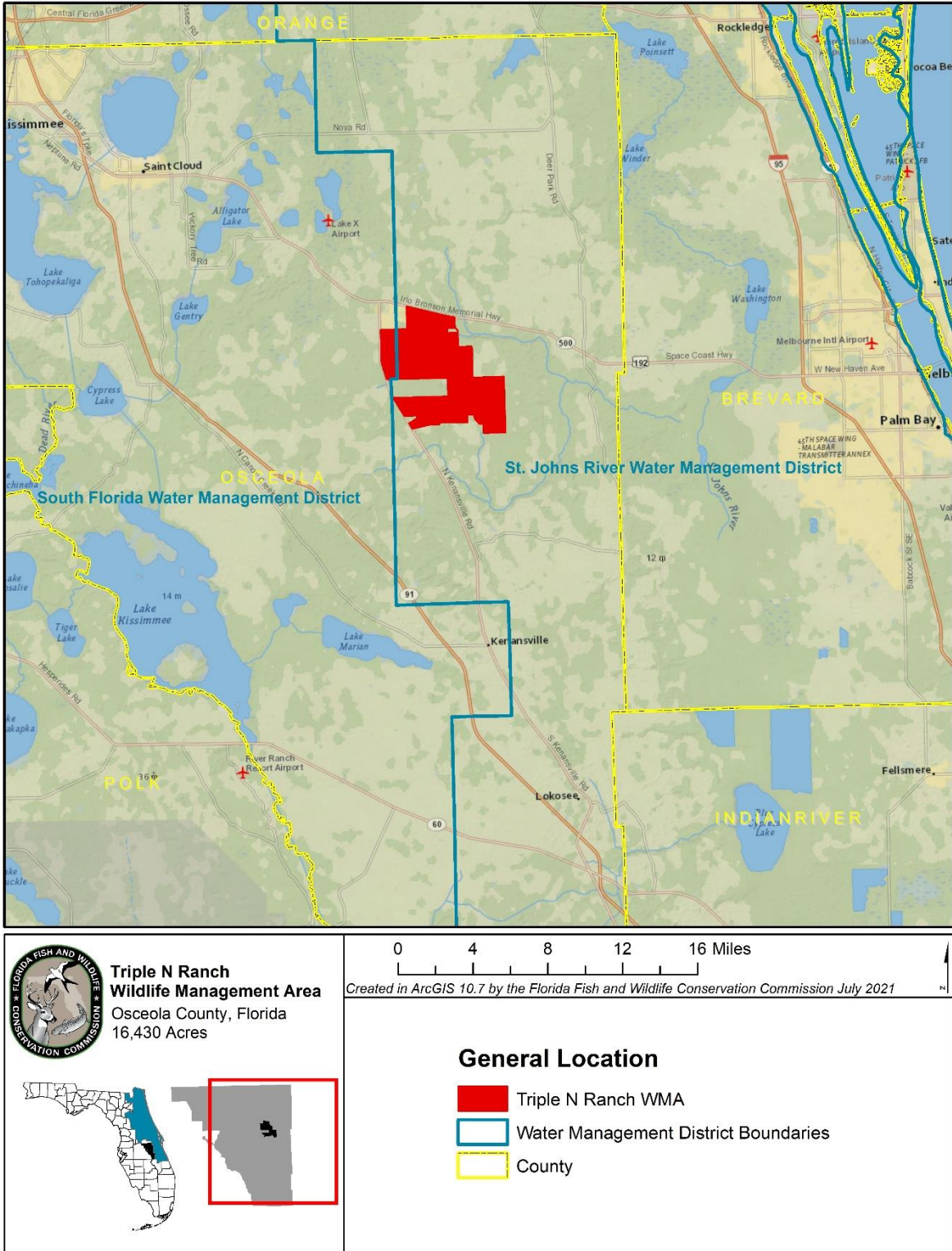


Figure 1. General Location of the TNRWMA

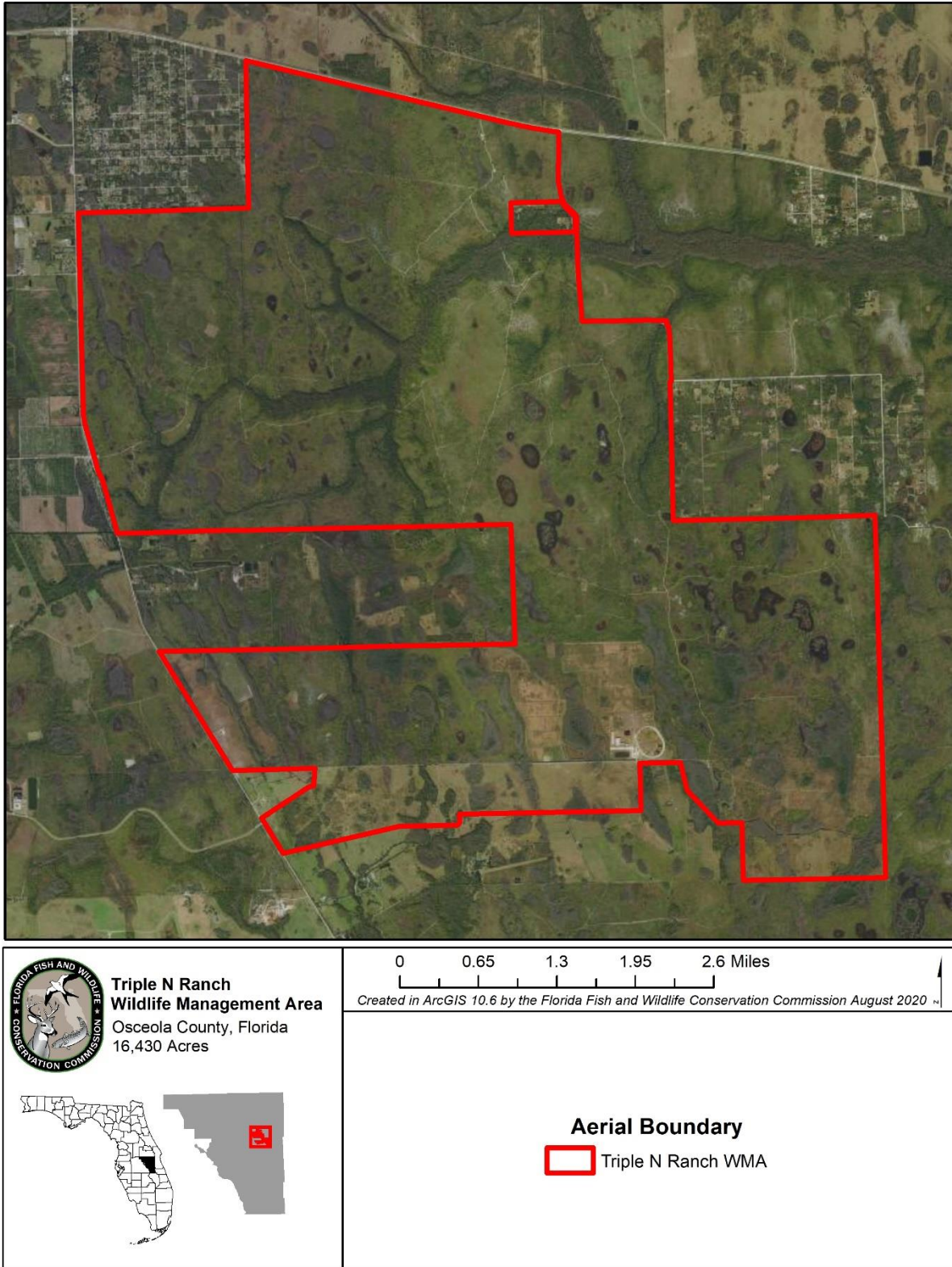


Figure 2. Aerial Imagery of the TNRWMA

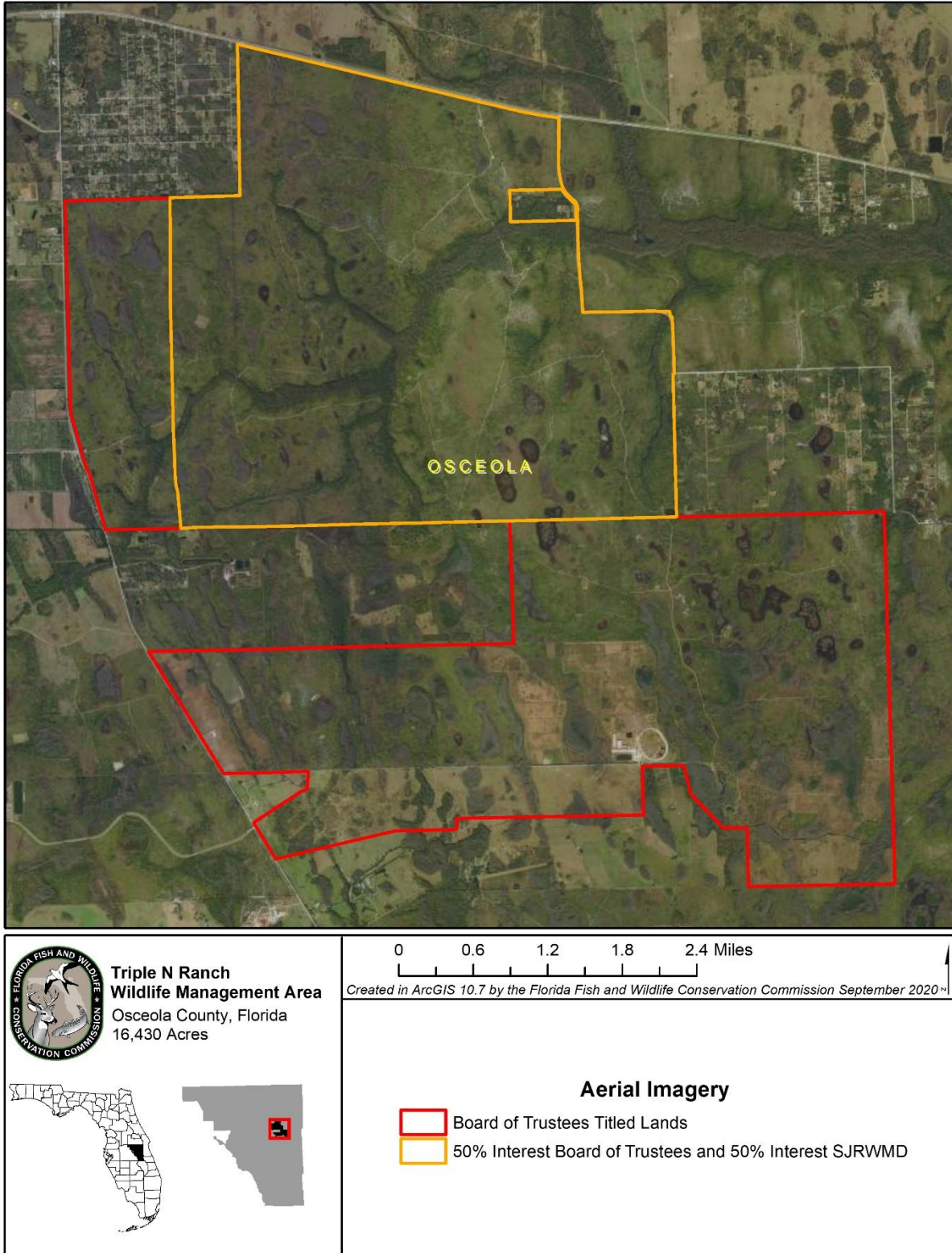


Figure 4. Title Interest on the TNRWMA

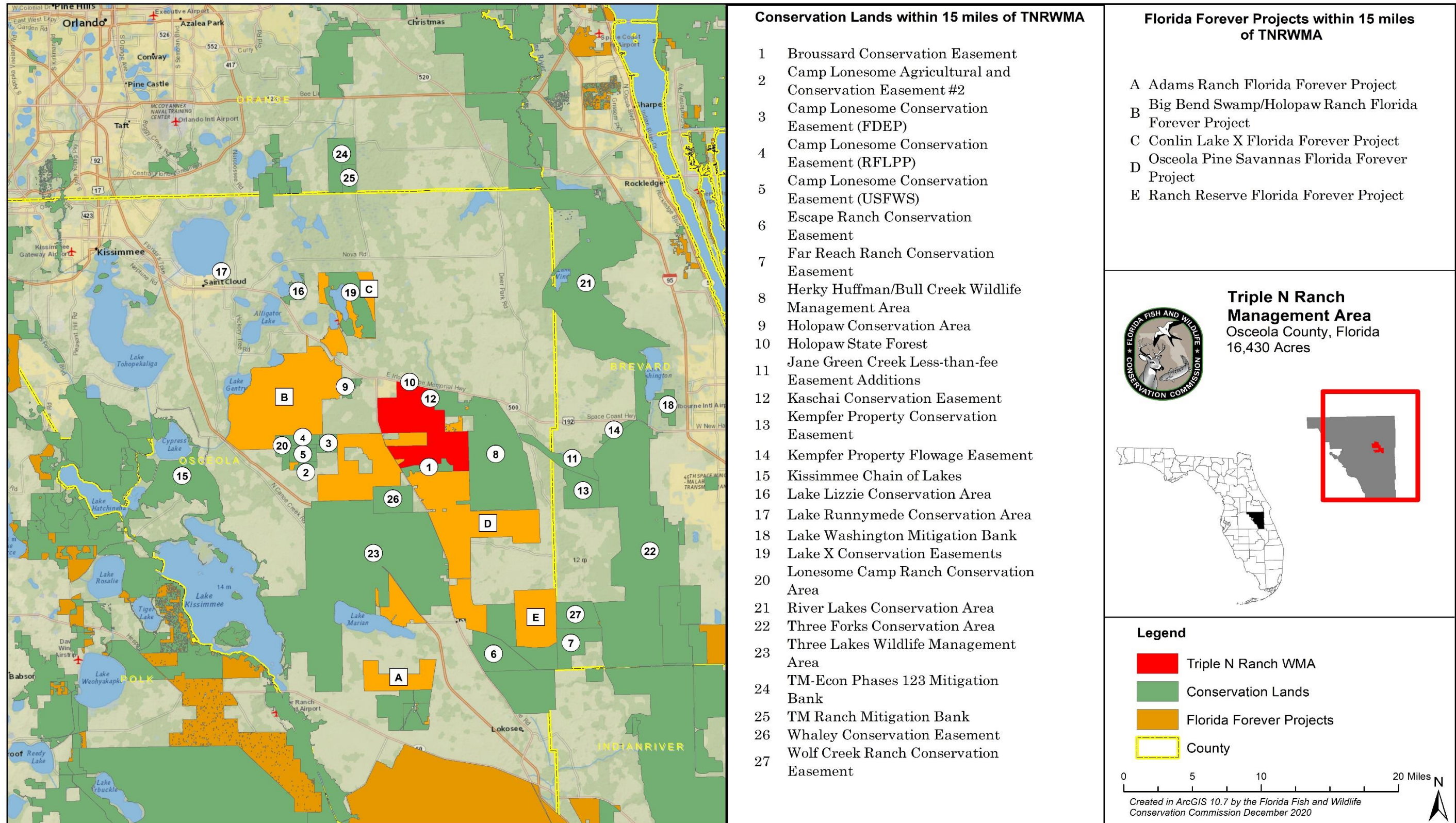


Figure 5. Conservation Lands and Florida Forever Project near the TNRWMA

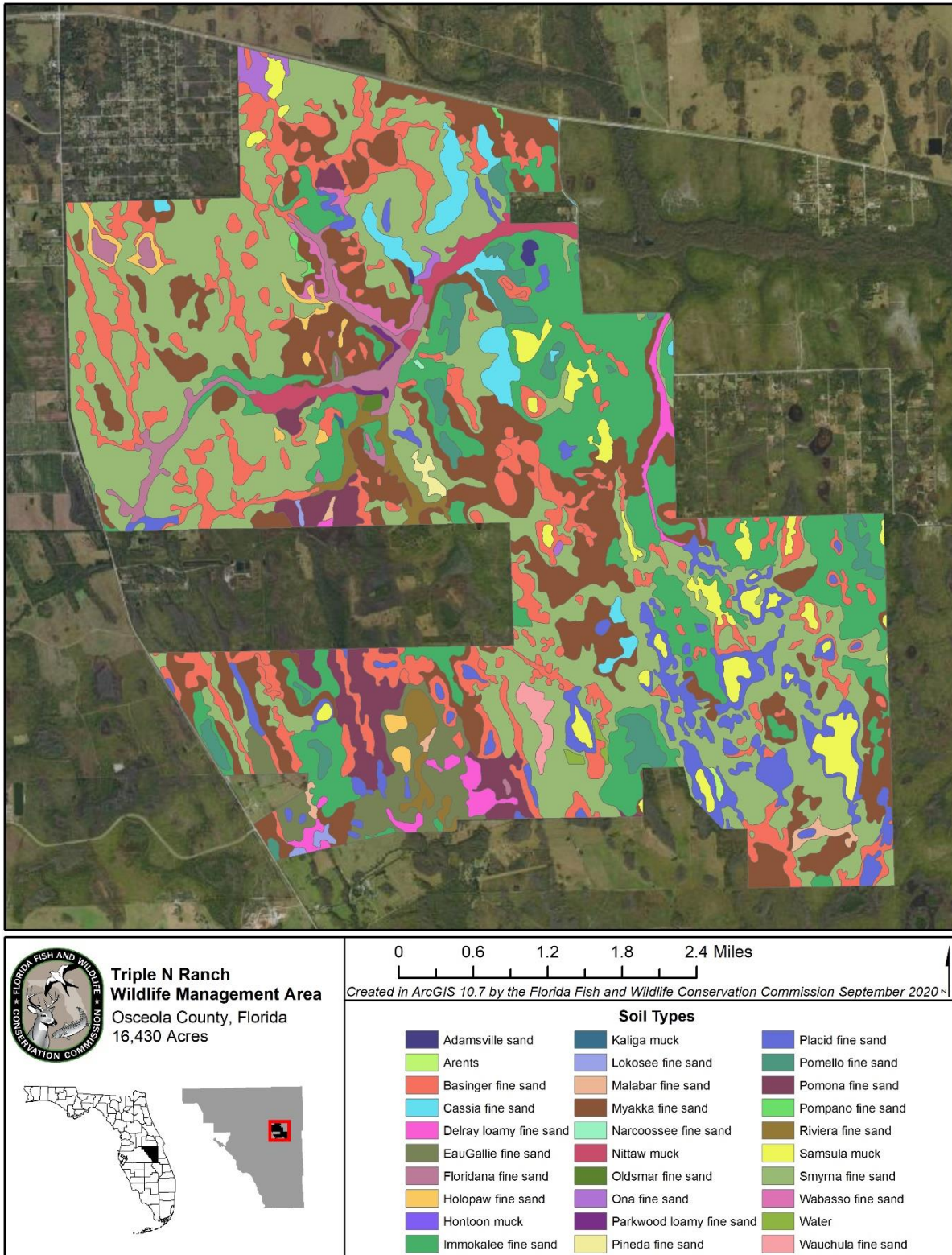


Figure 6. Soil Types found on the TNRWMA

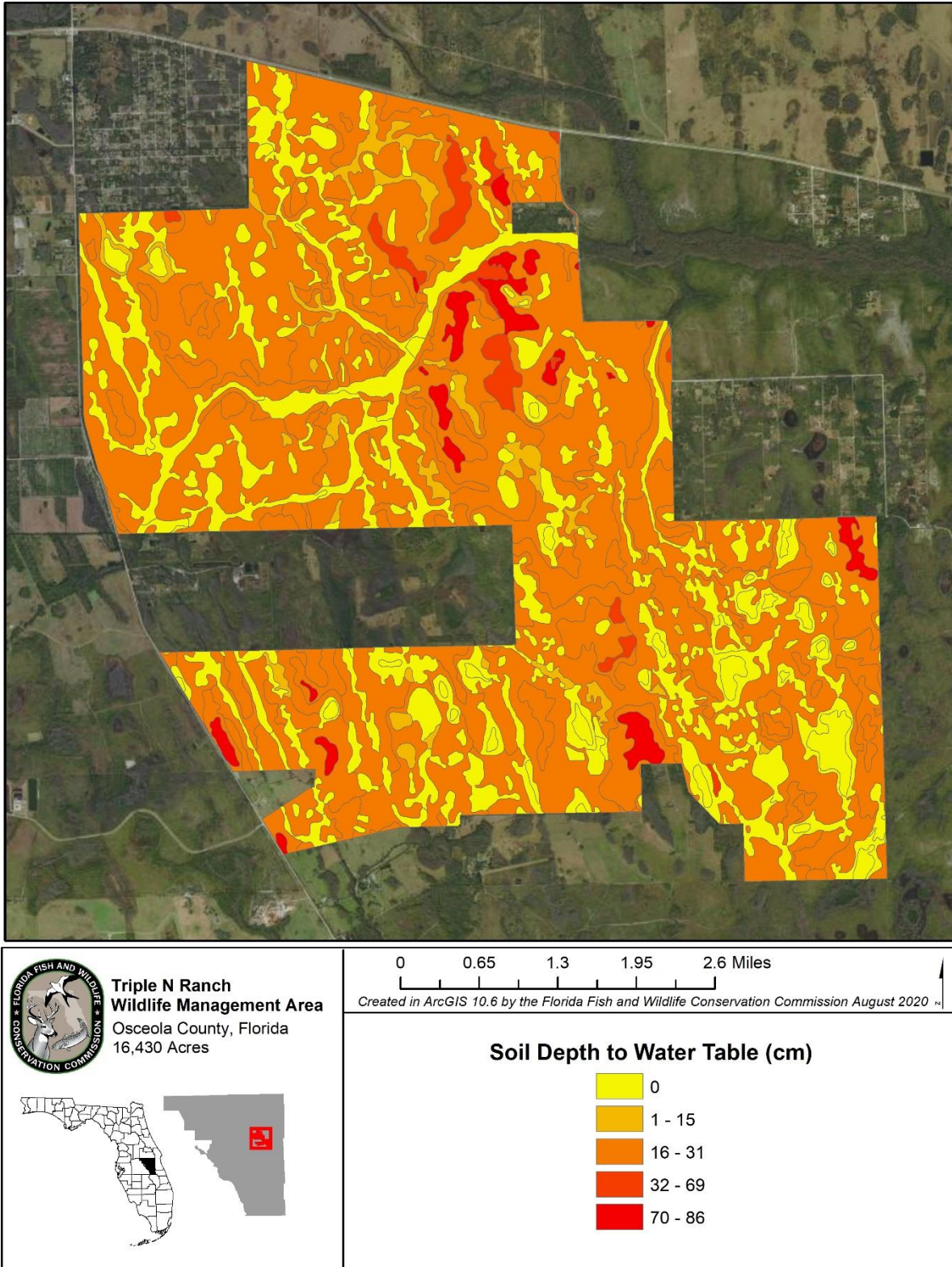


Figure 7. Soil Depth to Water Table (cm)

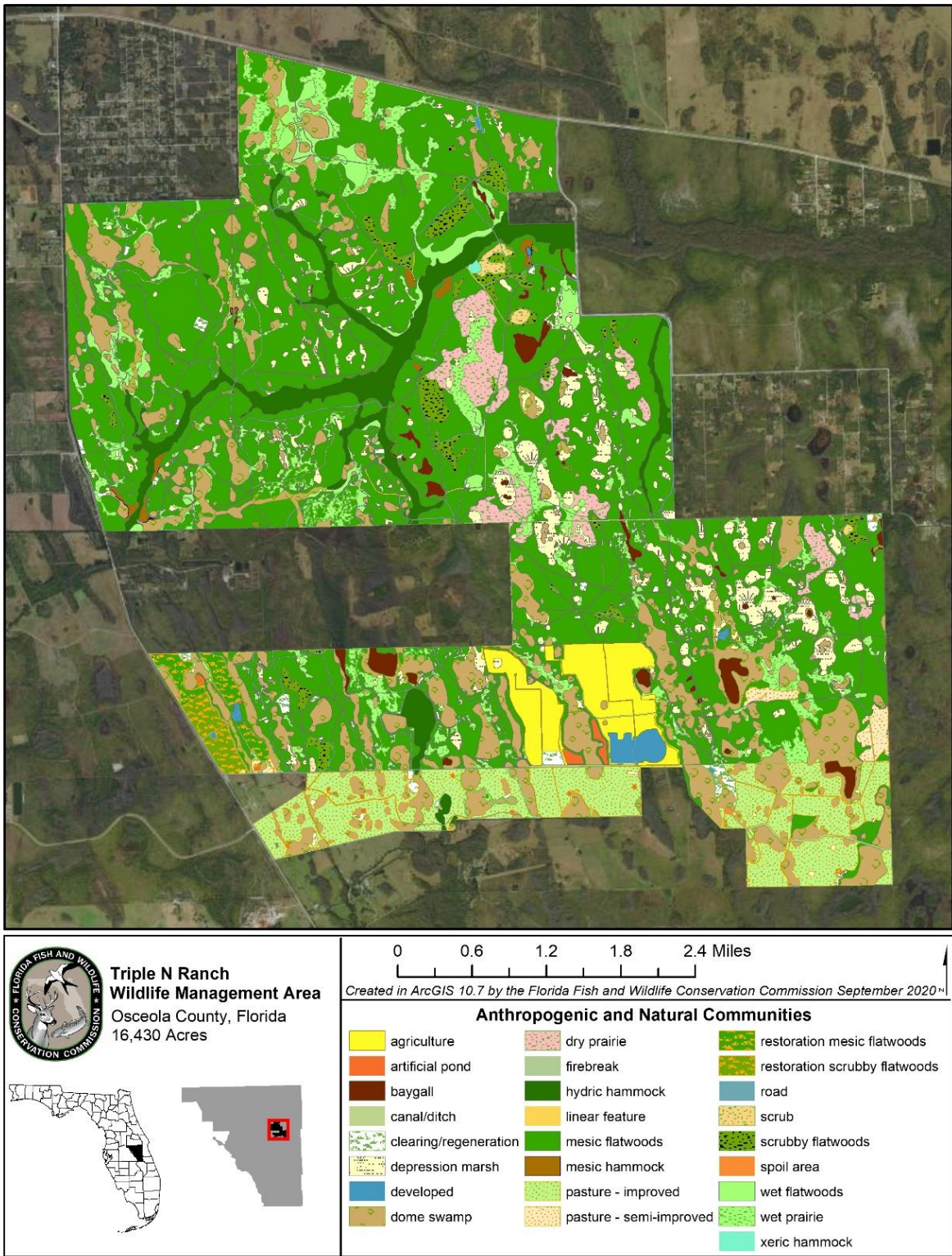


Figure 8. Anthropogenic and Natural Communities found on the TNRWMA

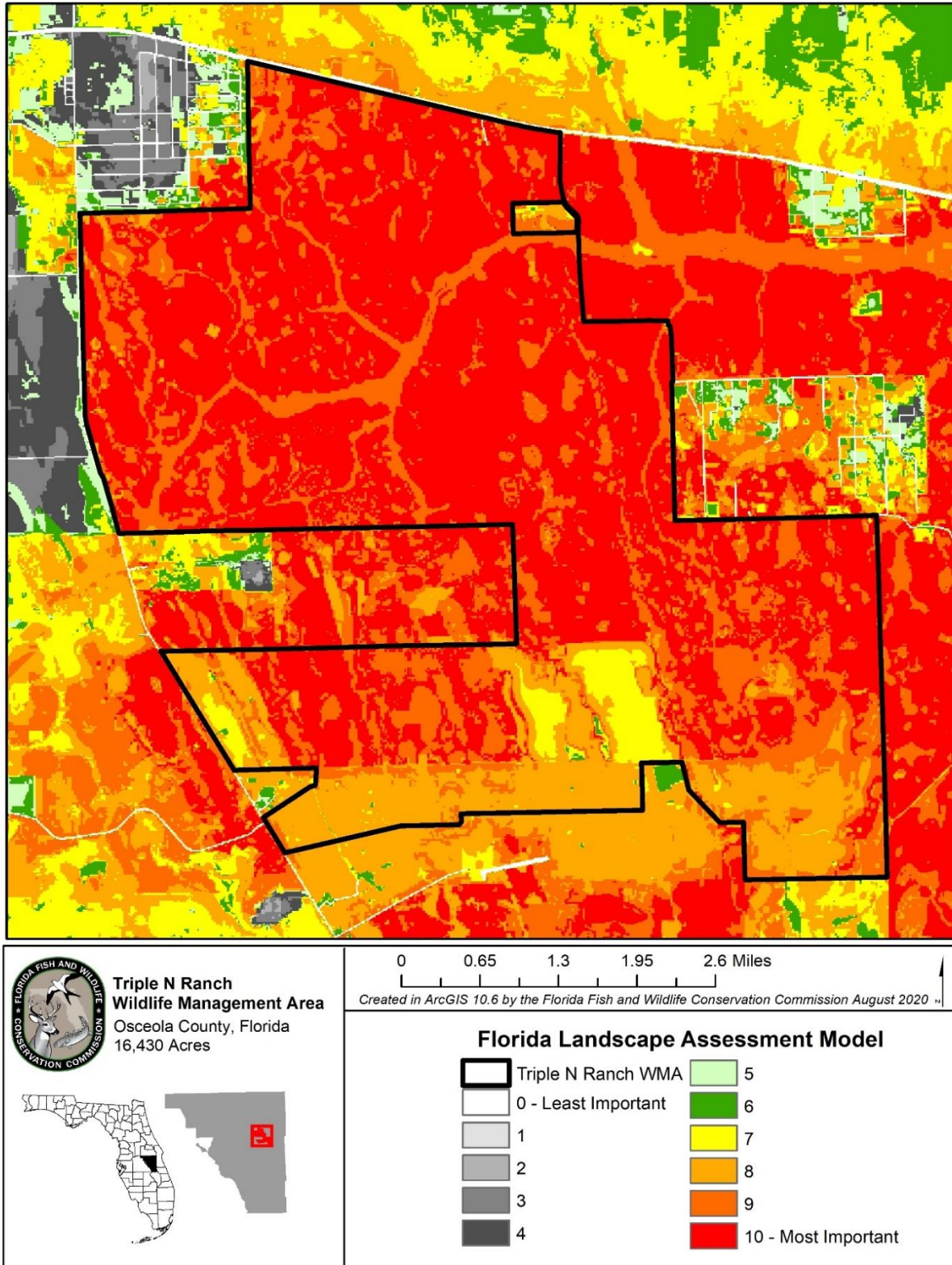


Figure 9. Florida Landscape Assessment Model of the TNRWMA

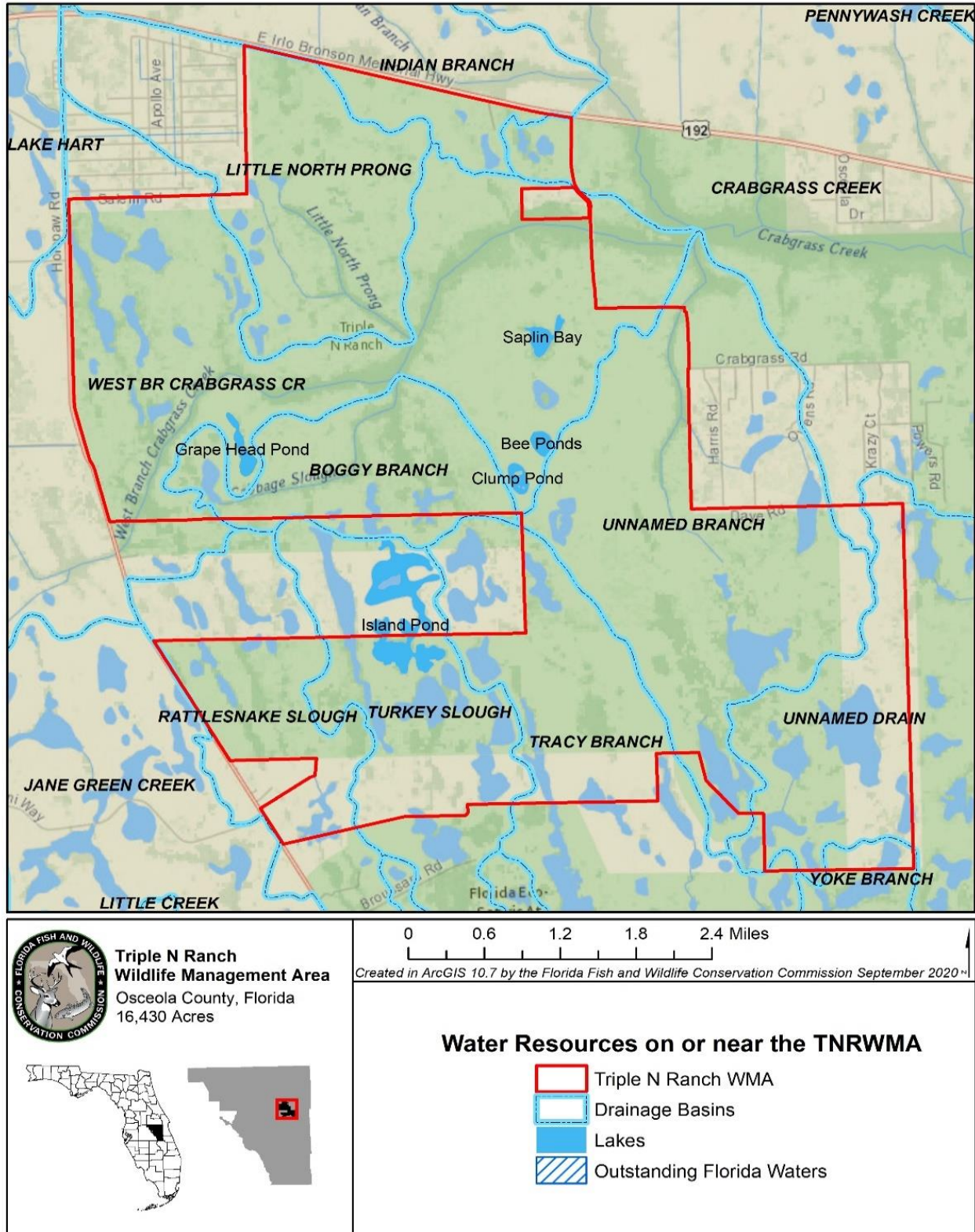


Figure 11. Water Resources on or near the TNRWMA

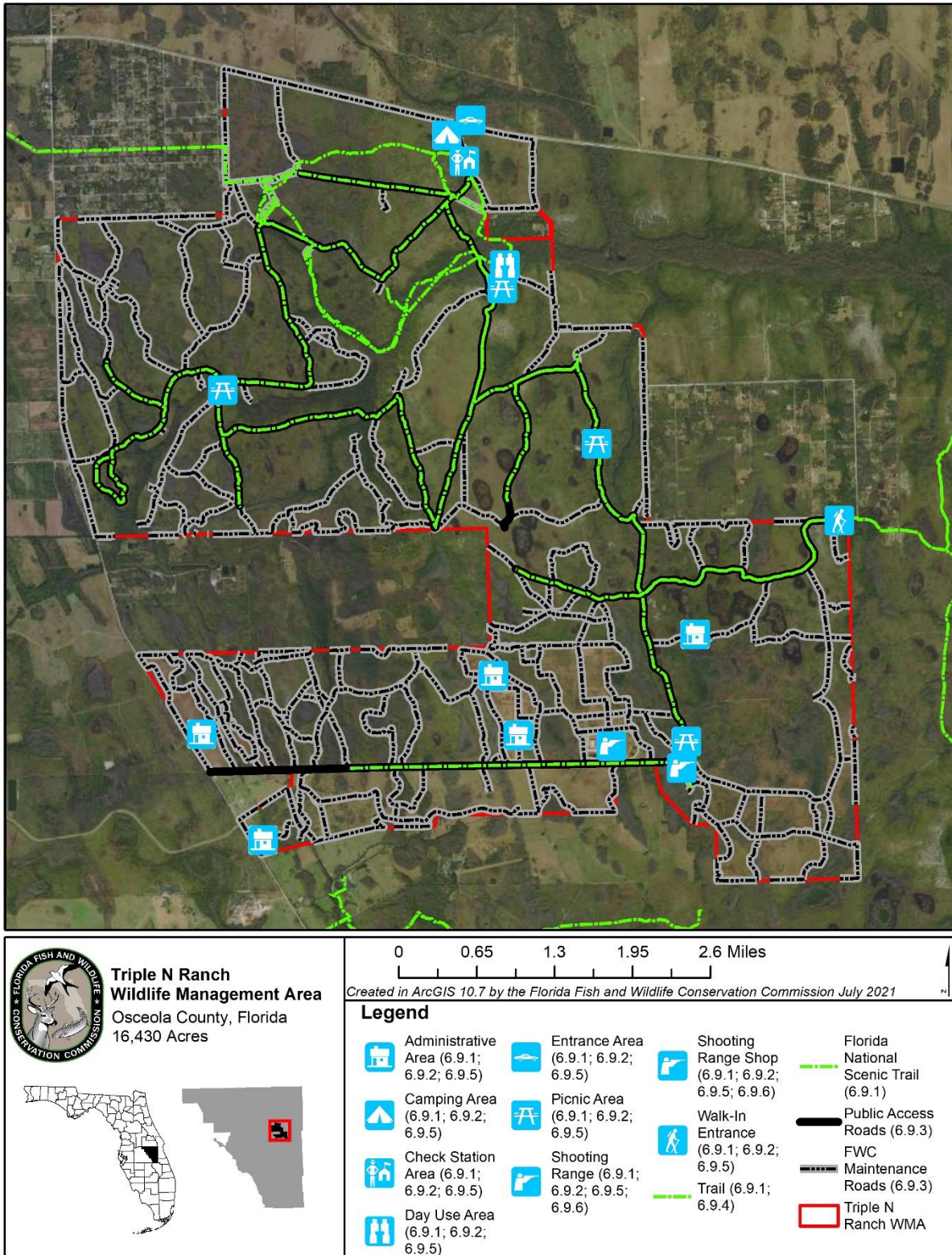


Figure 12. Facilities on the TNRWMA