

Hall Ranch

Partnerships and Regional Incentives

Charlotte County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	1997
<i>Project Acres</i>	8,519
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	1,015
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$0
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	7,504
<i>2021 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$18,082,582

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Hall Ranch project will preserve a corridor of natural slash pine flatwoods, marshes and cypress swamps from Charlotte Harbor to Telegraph Swamp. The project will add land to the Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area and protect habitat for species such as the Florida black bear, red-cockaded woodpecker, crested caracara and southeastern fox squirrel. The project will expand public resource-based recreation within the rapidly growing region of southwest Florida.

General Description

Hall Ranch is in Charlotte County, adjacent to Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area. It includes good quality South Florida slash pine flatwoods and depression marshes, with few other natural communities. The area is more significant for rare animals like black bear than for plants (no rare plants are known). It includes part of Shell Creek (the water supply for Punta Gorda) and the head of Telegraph Swamp. It would contribute significantly to the wildlife corridor coming from the wildlife management area. No archaeological sites are known to occur on-site, but the area is vulnerable to development and conversion to intensive agriculture.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
Red-cockaded woodpecker	G3/S2
Crested caracara	G5/S2
Southeastern fox squirrel	G5T5/S3

Public Use

This project qualifies as a wildlife management area with uses such as hunting, hiking, camping and picnicking.



Acquisition Planning

1996

Negotiations on the core parcel have been unsuccessful and have reached an impasse (or the owners are not willing to consider a sale to the state). This project consists of one major owner, the Hall Ranch Corporation. The essential parcel is the Hall ownership south of State Road 74. There are multiple small ownerships scattered throughout the Hall ownership north of State Road 74. This project was ranked for the first time in December 1996.

2001

On April 6, 2001, the Acquisition and Restoration Council transferred this project to Group B of the Florida Forever Priority List.

2011

On December 9, 2011, this project was placed in the Partnerships and Regional Incentives category.

2014

On January 16, 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture established a 638.77-acre conservation easement as part of its Natural Resources Conservation Service Grassland Reserve Program.

2018

In 2018, a 592-acre easement was acquired through the Grassland Reserve Program. The 1,000-acre increase noted for 2018 also includes a 409-acre adjustment that was made to GIS data layer and maps for acreage acquired in the project where the Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area boundary line overlaps this project boundary.

Coordination

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is considered an acquisition partner on this project.

Management Policy Statement

The primary objective of management of the Hall Ranch project is to preserve and restore the mosaic of pine flatwoods, hammocks and wetlands between the Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area and Telegraph Swamp. Achieving this objective will provide a refuge for threatened animals like the Florida black bear and red-cockaded woodpecker, preserve an area of natural lands extending from Charlotte Harbor to Telegraph Swamp, and, by expanding the wildlife management area, provide the public with a large area for natural-resource-based recreation. The project should be managed under the multiple-use concept: management activities should be directed first toward preservation of resources and second toward integrating carefully controlled consumptive uses such as hunting and timber harvesting.

Managers should control access to the project; limit public vehicles to one or a few main roads; thoroughly inventory the resources; restore the hydrological disturbances; burn fire-dependent pine flatwoods in a pattern mimicking natural lightning-season fires, using natural firebreaks or existing roads for control; reforest pine plantations with original species; strictly limit timbering in old-growth stands; and monitor management activities to ensure that they actually preserve resources. Managers should limit the number





and size of recreational facilities, ensure that they avoid the most sensitive resources, and site them in already disturbed areas when possible. The project includes much of the undeveloped land between the Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area and Telegraph Swamp and, consequently, has the size and location to achieve its primary objective.

Manager(s)

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is the recommended manager.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for State Designation

The Hall Ranch project has the resource diversity to qualify as a wildlife management area and will provide the public with a large tract for recreational activities.

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

The Hall Ranch project includes lands that will require moderate to intensive resource management including frequent fire, roller chopping and some timber management to open the thicker pine stands. The primary management needed for the perpetuation of the natural communities in the area would involve continuing the frequent fire regime already established and control of human access. Additional management projects will involve gradual restoration of improved pasture and agricultural fields into native habitat. On portions of existing disturbed areas, native and nonnative agronomic plantings may be used to benefit both game and nongame wildlife in the area and to promote special hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities for the general public. Development of facilities, as in all wildlife management areas, would be kept to the minimum level necessary to assure quality recreational experience for those members of the public interested in less infrastructure and other disturbance factors.

Management Implementation, Public Access, Site Security and Protection of Infrastructure

During the first year after acquisition, emphasis will be placed on site security, posting boundaries, public access, fire management, resource inventory and removal of existing refuse. A conceptual management plan will be developed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission describing the goals and objectives of future resource management.

Long-range plans will stress ecosystem management and protection and management of threatened and endangered species. Essential roads will be stabilized to provide all weather public access and management operations. Programs providing multiple recreational uses will be implemented. An all-season prescribed burn management plan will be developed and implemented with conventional and biologically acceptable guidelines. Management activities will strive to manage natural plant communities to benefit native wildlife resources.

Timber resources include pine flatwoods (62 percent), cypress domes/strands (4 percent) and xeric hammock (2 percent). Where appropriate and practical, these resources will be managed using acceptable silvicultural practices as recommended by the Florida Forest Service. Environmentally sensitive areas will





be identified, and appropriate protective measures will be implemented to those areas. Unnecessary roads, fire lanes and hydrological disturbances will be abandoned or restored as practical.

Minimal infrastructure development will be required to allow public access, provide facilities for the public, and provide security and management of the property.

Revenue-generating Potential

About 62 percent of the Hall Ranch consists of pine flatwoods that could be managed to offset operational costs. Future revenue from timber resources will depend on successful reforestation and management of already existing pine stands. Another revenue source would include cattle grazing which would help reduce fuel loads and provide fire line maintenance by the lessee. Additional revenue would be generated from sales of hunting licenses, fishing licenses, wildlife management area stamps and other special hunting stamps and other user fees.

Cooperators in Management Activities

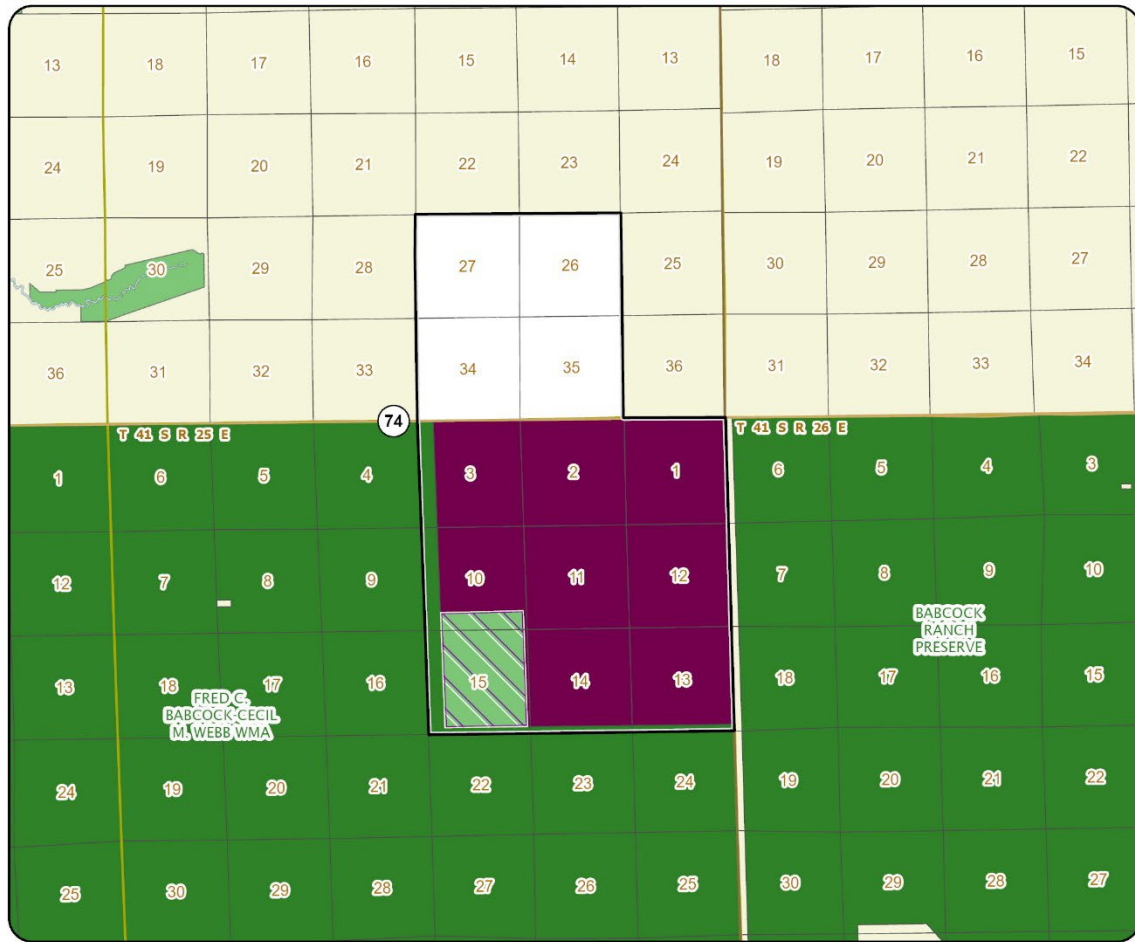
The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will cooperate with other state and local government agencies in managing the area.

Management Cost Summary

FWC	Startup	Recurring
Source of Funds	LATF	LATF
Salary	\$59,415	\$59,415
OPS	\$5,000	\$5,000
Expense	\$32,000	\$32,000
OCO	\$48,128	\$0
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$144,543	\$96,415

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





HALL RANCH

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

