Green Swamp-Pine Island Recharge Area  
Lake County

Purpose for State Acquisition
The primary purposes for acquisition of the Green Swamp-Peace River Headwaters Florida Forever (FF) project are protection of the water supply of central Florida, particularly recharge for the Floridan Aquifer; protection of several rivers; preservation of a large area for wildlife; and provision of areas for public recreation.

Managers
Since this project is proposed primarily as a less-than-fee acquisition, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of State Lands Office of Environmental Services (FDEP/DSL/OES) will monitor most of the project lands acquired. (See Acquisition Planning section below for managers of land already acquired within the boundary.)

General Description
The project is 30,687 acres, comprising 13 distinct natural communities and other landcover types. Natural communities make up about half of the proposal; and various types of agricultural, rural residential, and mined lands make up the remainder. The natural communities are almost entirely wetlands; several large lakes and numerous basin swamps and depression marshes are interspersed in a complex mosaic with the disturbed landcover types.

Geographically, the project is south of SR 50, north of CR 474, and west of Lakes Minnehaha and Louisa. It is bounded to the west, south and southeast by two other Green Swamp FF projects (Green Swamp-Hilochee Corridor and Green Swamp-Withlacoochee River Headwaters). Its boundary is contiguous with five publicly managed conservation areas. Hydrologically, the project is split lengthwise (north-south) into two major drainage basins. Almost three-quarters of the project is in the Oklawaha River watershed, draining east and northeast. The remaining quarter is the Withlacoochee River watershed which drains west. The northern portion of the project includes an area identified as the Groveland Karst Region; it is sandhill karst with solution basins, a region of the most active collapsed sinkhole development, and the principle recharge area of the Floridan aquifer. Most of the area (98%) meets the FF Evaluation’s Measures for Aquifer Recharge.

Eight archaeological sites are listed in the Florida Master Site files within this area, but its extensive lakes and wetlands suggest a moderate to high potential for significant archaeological and historical sites that have not been discovered yet.

Few rare species have been documented within the project (see FNAI Elements). Based on habitat, there is potential for all 36 of the rare species identified for the original Green Swamp project to occur here. About 94% of the area meets the FF Evaluation’s Measure for Ecological Greenways and 10% is within a Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) Strategic Habitat Conservation Area.

From an urban planning perspective, the project has a moderate potential for being developed or subdivided, or losing significant natural attributes or open spaces. It is a short drive from Clermont and the Disney World complex. Development potential is higher on the north side near Groveland and Clermont. It is located within an Area of Critical State Concern. The current and future land uses are mostly agricultural and low-density residential, but a portion of the area just south of Grove

| Green Swamp - Pine Island Recharge Area  
| FNAI Elements |
|---|---|
| Gopher Tortoise | G3/S3 |
| Bald Eagle | G5/S3 |
| Florida Sandhill Crane | G5T2T3/S2S3 |

3 rare species are associated with the project.

Placed on List  
2012

Project Area (GIS Acres)  
30,687

Acres Acquired (GIS)  
202

at a Cost of  
$337,101*

Acres Remaining (GIS)  
30,485

w/Estimated (Tax Assessed) Value of  
$253,652,976**

*Includes acreage acquired/funds expended by SWFWMD/ SJRWMD. **Based on project Just Value, 2010.
land is designated for one dwelling unit per five acres.

**Public Use**

As a less-than-fee project, public access to the land is expected to be minimal. The landowner typically retains all hunting and fishing rights in negotiated land use agreements and conservation easements, including the rights to lease lands for hunting. Monitoring of easements and agreements will be accomplished by the DSL.

Any public use of these lands needs to be linked to the environmental services of aquifer recharge and surface water protection they provide, as well as serving as ecological greenway and wildlife habitat.

**Acquisition Planning**

At the 6/10/2011 the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) approved the reevaluation and redesign of the 233,598-acre Green Swamp Florida Forever project, added to the list in 1992. ARC removed from the original Green Swamp project boundary about 14,448 acres of land that were either developed or otherwise unmanageable, then divided the remaining acreage into four projects. The Green Swamp-Pine Island Recharge project covers 30,687 acres in Lake County and includes 2,072 parcels with multiple owners. About 203 acres of the land within the project boundary have been acquired for conservation (46 acres in Lake Louisa State Park and a 150-acre conservation easement).

**Coordination**

The Green Swamp Land Authority (GSLA) worked with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) in acquiring lands within the boundary. In 1999, the GSLA’s responsibilities passed to the FDEP.

**Management Policy Statement**

The Green Swamp project lands acquired through alternatives to fee-simple should be managed to accomplish the following: conserve and protect lands within areas of critical state concern; conserve and protect significant habitat for native species or endangered/threatened species; and conserve, protect, manage, or restore important ecosystems, landscapes and forests in a manner that enhances or protects significant surface water, coastal, recreational, timber, fish or wildlife resources.

**Management Prospectus**

**Qualifications for state designation** The Green Swamp-Pine Island Recharge Area land is essential to a clean, adequate water supply for Central Florida.